

话说移民

ПИСАННЯ МІГРАНТІВ

Emigráns írások

Γραφές της Μετανάστευσης

Krijime migrantësh

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Direttore scientifico:

Donata Meneghelli

Redazione:

Dipartimento di Filologia Classica e Italianistica dell'Università di Bologna

Via Zamboni, 32 - 40126 Bologna - Tel. 051 2098574

e-mail: redazione.scrittoremigranti@unibo.it - www.mucchieditore.it/scrittoremigranti

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Charlotte Smith's Cross-Border Narratives

TIZIANA INGRAVALLO

In a period of intense upheaval, global migration and revolution, Charlotte Smith calls into question the concept of national identity and reinvents an idea of community in terms of new forms of internationalism and cultural exchange. The transnational scope of Smith's literary enterprise introduces a new, progressively radicalized antinationalist ideal of citizenship. She broadens and changes the perception of geographical and cultural space in literature by modifying and removing borders and offering new reflections on cosmopolitanism.

As political debate intensified in the wake of the French Revolution, Smith perceived that the novel could be a useful means of supporting the cause of radical reform and realized that its link with politics was a powerful one. Keenly interested in the political and cultural issues of her time, she was strikingly outspoken in her support of the French Revolution and its revolutionary principles. She travelled into revolutionary France to see for herself what was happening, and her interest in the motivating ideals of the French Revolution never faded even when, like other liberals in Britain, she expressed disappointment at the increasing violence of the Terror. Closely acquainted with William Godwin, who introduced her to his intellectual and political circle, she examined how revolutionary ideals could be put into practice. Revolution led her to explore the possibility of true social change and the reform of society.

During the feverish 1790s she wrote numerous novels, three on the Revolution, *Celestina* (1791), *Desmond* (1792), and *The Banished Man* (1794). At the peak of her literary fame, when she was seen politically as an English Jacobin and associated with radical female thinkers and novelists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Robison and Mary Hays, her works – partly as a result of the emerging ideas of nation and national canon – were suddenly categorised as non-canonical and marginal on account of their transcultural horizons.

Smith's novels on the Revolution were her personal response to the enormous exodus of political refugees from revolutionary France. Britain was directly affected by the influx of French citizens fleeing their country as Robespierre's Terror took hold. In the climate of political uncertainty

across Europe, many writers found inspiration in a subject that had divided opinion from the beginning of the Revolution: the dispersal of émigrés across the Continent. In fact, many novels linked to the Revolution explore the exceptional circumstances of forced migration caused by the revolutionary wars. In France the revolutionary novel very quickly became the émigré novel (Labbe 2016, 130) and this literary vogue spread across Europe. The main characters in many works, such as Smith's *The Banished Man*, *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800), Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* (1814) or Mary Robinson's *Hubert de Sevrac* (1796), are exiles who are forced to leave their country and roam the Continent in search of refuge and safety.

Through peripatetic characters of different nationalities, Smith illustrates how Europe was transformed by the displacements of people and shifting borders resulting from the revolutionary wars, and it is within the transnational framework – which energises Smith's cosmopolitanism in the face of intensifying nationalism (Hanley and Kucich 2008, 97-98) – that the specific character of the French émigré phenomenon should be considered. In fact, *émigré* novels pose an important challenge to the association of novel and nation that many scholars, including Benedict Anderson, have sought to establish. Smith's work is an international invention that counters the idea of the British novel at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the symbolic form of the nation-state and underlines how unprepared the writers of traditional accounts of nations and history were for the 1790s.

Smith uses the plight of revolutionary émigrés to propose new, modern transnational communities that deliberately reject the idea of national borders. Her cosmopolitan vision, a defining feature of her Romanticism, expands geographically in a number of her novels. In some cases her heroes, for whom exile is never-ending, even reach the New World. Her «banished men» leave for the Continent and, as a result of their experience of endless exile, achieve a new status, that of citizen of the world. Smith's émigrés define themselves in these cosmopolitan terms in the face of emigration experiences that become a cross between exile and liberation.

Smith does not substantially modify the geography of emigration of the time. Her characters' geographical movements reflect historical reality; they pass through the most popular destinations and end up in the places where real émigrés generally settled. These places recount the his-

tory of emigration, which is also a history of numerous crossings, interactions, relations and multi-layered integrations.

In the 1790s many émigrés could be found in London and along the South-East coast; there were more in Britain than in any of the other countries neighbouring France. As a consequence, many English writers, mainly female, adopt emigration as a central theme. Female progressive writings on migration stress a new interplay between politics and a modern revolutionary sensibility, which is bound up with a rare faith in the power of human sentiment to transcend national boundaries and bring about a shared humanity. Sympathy is expressed for the political refugees who, burdened with misfortune and condemned to wander in acute isolation, became suffering wanderers across Europe. In *The Banished Man* female characters function as benevolent forces of history: they show pity for the émigré hero and provide him with aid and relief.

Although in many parts of England the French were viewed with suspicion and prejudice, in the opening scenes of the novel Charlotte Smith chooses to relate the arrival of a *good émigré* from France, who receives hospitality in a castle near the French borders. The protagonist's ensuing travels through a range of European countries illustrate how emigration as a plot device is by definition something that involves the crossing of borders.

The novel *The Banished Man* is set after the September Massacres, when the terrifying turn taken by the Revolution prompted a real and even larger exodus. As Reboul maintains: «Mostly motivated by politics until 1792, departures between 1792 and late July 1794 have been linked to fear and political radicalization» (2017, 3). Faced with choosing between emigration and execution, the nobility of the Ancien Regime naturally chose emigration. Smith focuses on the turning point in the emigration experience when exile ceases to be voluntary (Carpenter and Mansel 1999, xv). The opening scenes depict the protagonist as a fugitive, in flight from the French republican army. Then, together with the Marquis de Touranges and the Abbé de St. Remi, D'Alonville, a French royalist chevalier «without a home, without even a country», sets out on a journey away from danger. The members of the group share the same destiny, experiences and beliefs; its make-up illustrates how the Revolution, which had started as anti-noble, had by 1792 become strongly anti-mo-

narchical and anti-clerical¹. The presence of the abbot in the group, for example, is a reminder that a great many emigrants were priests² while the story about the young Marquis, told by the abbot and then related by D'Alonville to the Englishman Ellesmere, highlights the large number of aristocrats in the émigré population and the distressing circumstances of their precarious lives.

Allied to the first houses in France, and boasting of blood, second only to that of royalty, it is more difficult for him than for most others (and we have none of us found it very easy), to submit to the innovations that the revolution has made. At its commencement de Touranges was among those who resisted, with the most resolution, the concessions demanded of the nobility; when they became inevitable, he still remained near the king, to whom he was personally attached; but as he could neither approve of the continual diminution of power which he had been taught to consider as sacred, nor conceal his detestation of the democratic faction that was making such rapid strides towards the total destruction of monarchy, he soon become so obnoxious to these men that his stay was injurious to his master, and dangerous to himself; after the 20th of June this was so evident, that he was at length prevailed upon to retire. (Smith 1794, 95)

Smith's interest in the existential condition of émigrés is inseparable from aesthetic considerations. Before the account of the characters' travels through a series of different places, she provides a description of the time the first great exodus of French refugees takes place. Only after the large crowd of newly-arrived émigrés gathers in Vienna, can the forward march of the plot begin and the narrative progress.

D'Alonville felt not that consolation which arises from the contemplation of fellow sufferers in calamity; on the contrary, his heart sunk in reflecting on the sad condition to which so many brave men were reduced, and the deplorable state of the country whence they were driven [...]. Among his fellow-travellers were the aged and the helpless, who knew not where to find

¹ «It was therefore scarcely surprising that at least two-thirds of those who had left the country by the time of the king's death were either nobles or clerics. It seems likely that many of the rest were dependent in some way on these two categories» (Carpenter and Mansel 1999, xv).

² «In July 1790, the French National Assembly adopted the *Constitution Civile du Clergé*. This bill subordinated the Catholic Church to the French State. By November 1790, the clergy was bound to take an oath to protect the Constitution. In protest, several non-juring clergymen and nuns left France» (Reboul 2017, 4).

shelter for their weary heads; and who seemed to repent that they had not submitted their necks to the stroke of the executioner, rather than have been driven forth to linger out, in foreign countries, their few and miserable days. Women, who had been accustomed to the elegancies of life, were now accompanied by helpless children, wandering round the world without the requisites of existence. (Smith 1794, 64)

Collective emigration, as seen through D'Alonville's eyes, involves a sense of exclusion, estrangement and alienation. In the first part of the novel, the hero's wanderings are not related in lengthy descriptive passages. The encounters with foreign countries do not inspire nostalgic memories of his lost home, but lead to hallucinatory evocations of scenes of sufferings seen or experienced: «Tous ces champs de carnage». "Such", continued D'Alonville, "are the spectacles which continually haunt my imagination"» (Smith 1794, 112).

Smith's concern over the status of the refugees is connected to their dual plight as emigrants, hopelessly caught between inhospitable asylum and a homeland to which they can no longer return (Labbe 2016, 102). As William Doyle observes: «Political exile is as old as history; but the émigré was a creation of the French Revolution» (Carpenter and Mansel 1999, xv). The emigrant is a rising character in the European novel of the period, an exile, persecuted and scorned, who suffers emotional and material dispossession, and has to live with a suffering awareness of failed national belonging.

The dilemma was twofold. First of all, the French legislation that quickly followed the increasing waves of migration had stripped the émigrés of their possessions:

Reinforced by its military victories, the Republic banished in perpetuity those who, crossing the geographical and political boundaries, had metaphorically become aliens to the revolutionary projects. Law voted between 28 March and 5 April 1793 decisively identified the migrant group with the enemy. The so-called émigrés lost their French citizenship. Their possessions became national properties. Meanwhile, the political structure of the emigrant population in the British Isles was further renewed to the rhythm of measures taken by the French Republic. [...] The most restrictive laws against emigration were not abolished before the general amnesty of 1802. (Reboul 2017, p. 6)

Secondly, Britain, where the majority of displaced people from France ended up, became an inhospitable place for them. They were viewed with distrust by both the British authorities³ (who kept a register of foreign residents and set up an *Alien Office*) and society at large. For the ordinary people of England, the narrator tells us, all foreigners are considered French and sullied with crimes unknown before in the history of mankind («while the English with one hand rescued, with the other they seemed disposed to draw the sword against a whole people», Smith 1794, 113). On his first arrival on English soil, D'Alonville perceives the repressive nature of British law and its highly-developed system of surveillance of foreign subjects. This makes London, in particular, an extremely uncomfortable place to be. Smith offers a detailed reconstruction of the historical experience of landing in England that mirrors representations of emigration in the British imagination⁴. Moreover, it is clear that Smith's émigré is representative of all the upper classes in conflict with their social inferiors⁵:

[W]hile the mob had abused both D'Alonville and Ellesmere as Frenchmen on their going on shore, the authorized enquiries of the Custom-house, evidently indicated unusual suspicion and mistrust. It was at the period when every foreigner was suspected of being a Jacobin, and when there were undoubtedly many agents of that society sent round Europe, at once to inform their club of the disposition of other countries, and to blow up every spark of spirit, resembling that which had occasioned in their own so dreadful a conflagration. To the antipathy which the inferior class of the English have been taught to entertain against every other nation, but particularly against the French, together with the numbers that had lately taken shelter in England, was now added [the doubt that] every foreigner was an incendiary; and the assurances of Ellesmere, on behalf of his friend, were hardly sufficient to secure him from molestation. (Smith 1794, 112)

³ After King Louis XVI and his family attempted to flee, legislation was passed in France to make emigration illegal.

⁴ From the nationalist perspective, the émigrés became a standard trope. «In Britain, anti-revolutionary and exilic literature printed in French and in English delighted in the staging of noblemen thrown into the torments of exile, poverty and even beggary in the midst of foreign countries and societies» (Reboul 2019, 7). D'Alonville's arrival in the immense capital of the British empire «was not very flattering, not much calculated to raise his depressed spirits» (Smith 1794, 113). The scene illustrates the general sorrow of the newly-arrived individuals, who remain anonymous.

⁵ In France the National Assembly deprived the aristocracy of economic control over the lower classes.

By aiding the emigrants, Britain demonstrated its national pride and moral superiority. Nevertheless, the *Alien Act* passed in 1793 reflected the inequities of British institutions. It was conceived as a means of observation and control of the large number of French refugees that had entered the country following the French Revolution, and enabled the government to order the deportation of foreigners or to arrest them in the event of their refusing to leave.

Writings on migration illustrate how French emigration compelled the British to address a range of pressing questions regarding liberty, justice, and national identity. Progressive writers used the emigration crisis as a means of national self-criticism, to depict Britain not as a land of freedom but as a nation in need of reform, and at the same time they stressed the universal dangers of nationalism. The plight of the emigrants revealed the inadequacy of any notion of liberty rooted in nations. The central chapters of *The Banished Man* are dominated by recurrent exchanges of opinions and reflections on the national character: the migrants and the more privileged English travellers run into each other for the first time and engage in cross-cultural, and even multilingual, conversations that urge the avoidance of national prejudice.

De Touranges said, «one is surprised to hear French, and even good French, if it were not for the vile accent it is spoken with, from the mouth of those half-savage».

«Who do you qualify», enquired the Abbé «with the name of half-savage?»

«Those Englishmen», replied De Touranges.

«And why so?» enquired St. Remi.

«Because I can consider them otherwise», answered the Marquis.

«I think you are wrong, however», replied the Abbé. «I know no nation of Europe more enlightened, more respectable, at least so they appear to me, even from the little I know of them, by the translation we have of their best authors [...]».

«You might as well judge of the wit of the Spaniards from the French version of Don Quixote. The Spaniards, however, have little of what is properly called wit, as English of any kind of genius. As to the latter, they are a nation to whom we owe almost all the evils that war has brought upon France; and the greatest of all evils, that which has now destroyed her». [...] de Touranges had ceased to listen, and gave no other answer, than that he thought the English a proud, ferocious, and hardly civilized people; and the man they had lately seen was a just specimen of the nation. (Smith 1794, 89-90)

As the international party traverses the Continent, its numbers swell and it becomes increasingly heterogeneous; at the same time, its members move ever further away – both geographically and ideologically – from their national identities⁶.

Charlotte Smith perceives that novels on migration can play a role in challenging social constructs that lead to marginalisation. She has in mind an all-inclusive political system in which every man and woman has truly equal rights. Her novels support a broadly radical political agenda including women's rights, abolition of slavery, political reform and so on. Exiles' stories of suffering, based on the exceptional circumstances of forced migration, promote a new culture of empathy. According to the historian Lynn Hunt, in that period, after the publication of the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen*, which attracted attention on the subject of rights, novelists sought to create a sense of equality and empathy through passionate involvement in the narrative. Smith's writings on migration include empathetic passages that provide a model for socio-cultural transformation in which there is no marginalisation. Accounts of suffering produce an imagined empathy through the observation of pain that showcases extreme situations as deserving examples, as for instance when D'Alonville provides succour to the unfortunate Polish exile who is «more miserable than even his friends and himself» (Smith 1794, 97).

[D'Alonville] was struck by the sight of a woman kneeling by the side of a wretched bed, where lay a figure, on which her eyes were fixed with a look of hopeless despair [...]. The expressive tone of distress, however, needed not words to make vibrant an heart which, like D'Alonville's, had been accustomed to suffer. (Smith 1794, 97-98)

The relation of suffering is key to the crucial role of storytelling in instilling in readers a form of psychological identification that can elicit a sense of social equality and strengthen social relationships.

⁶ On the other hand, the chapters that follow the arrival of the French hero in Britain adopt the tone and style and even the irony of a novel of manners. Very often travel writings at the time scrutinized the customs and manners of «neighbouring nations». In the same way, Smith analyzes the contemporary social situation in England and the social class of those in the host country with whom the émigrés had dealings, mainly aristocrats who are in the process of losing their political and social power. In this respect, manners are another way to underline the peculiarity of national character.

Hunt maintains that empathy was a cultural practice and a skill that could be learned. So, through novels readers learned to feel empathy beyond their own class, gender and national borders. In Smith's works displaced protagonists meet at national borders and create transnational communities based on equality and caring interconnections. This notion of community depends on empathetic individuals who can relate to others beyond immediate family relationships, religious affiliations or even nations. Her novels posit «imagined empathy» as the foundations of human rights rather than an «imagined community» as the foundations of nationalism. To become members of a community, individuals have to be able to empathize with others. The émigré novel shows that human rights depend on each individual's behaviour towards other people and that they cannot remain a mere doctrine. Since «nothing is so difficult as to enter into the sentiments of others» (Smith 1794, 122), in *The Banished Man* those wandering from place to place acquire the «habits of mingling in various scenes of life» (*ibid.*), develop compassion for the unhappy and become «interested for everybody in distress» (*ibid.*). The traditional travel narrative is transformed, not simply so as to describe the social and historical conditions of the countries visited, but to make emotional suffering visible, and even socially and nationally recognizable: «The cheerful and sanguine temper, so much the general character of the [French] nation, supported many of these gallant unfortunate men amidst difficulties and mortifications, under which men of any other European nation would have sunk» (Smith 1794, 75).

Smith's story of emigration is not confined to the political. *The Banished Man* explores the emotional dimension of emigration by narrating the lives of a heterogeneous migrant group. Wanderers' narratives make up the bulk of the work. Smith's émigré novels portray in detail characters from different countries and depict the circulation of ideas and people in that period. The French political refugees very soon meet other «friends», in particular a Polish republican and an English idealist. These encounters initiate a process of transnational traversals and exchanges, not simply confined to the idea of cosmopolitan exile, which is very often defined as one of the main features of Smith's novels. Ellesmere, the Englishman, on his returning from a visit to the Continent «to acquire the European languages» (Smith 1794, 90) and understand the spirit, the culture and even the military tactics of different countries, performs the function of coun-

teracting rooted national prejudices thanks to his ability to sympathize with others, speak different languages and converse at length with the foreign people he encounters. He himself indulges in remarks on national character to correct former judgements and «blame[s] himself for having so hastily conceived some dislike» (Smith 1794, 96). Like Jane Austen's protagonists, Ellesmere is involved in a process of prejudging and re-judging. Accordingly, he severely reproaches his narrative counterpart and compatriot Melton, for harsh judgments based upon national stereotypes. In spite of having travelled around Europe, the latter can speak no language but English and remains convinced of the supremacy of England. His persistent prejudices lead to him becoming a disruptive presence in the community of travellers. Gradually, as «all those sentiments of respects and affection» between the other members develop into a «disinterested and preserving friendship» (Smith 1794, 125), Melton will leave and go his own way.

«I suppose [French emigrants] will now over run every country in Europe. For my part I cannot love them nor ever did».

«But it does not appear, my friend», rejoined Ellesmere, «that Italians please you better».

«Oh! Damn them – squeaking, fiddling, scraping, persidious rascals».

«Or Germans?» added Ellesmere.

«Humph! Yes they are a little better. I think they have a little more of Englishmen about them».

«Or Spaniards, or Portuguese?»

«Oh curse them; I hate them, though I know very little of them. They are fellows one knows hardly any thing about».

«Or Russians, or Swedes, or Danes, or Dutchmen?»

«Dutchmen! Hah! The most cheating money-getting, narrow-souled, bargain-driving scoundrels! – No, damn me, a Dutchman is worse – ».

«Worse than a Frenchman?» cried Ellesmere.

«No, nothing can be worse; but I think they are almost as bad».

«Not one nation of Europe then has the honor of being held in any degree of esteem by you; but my good friend, might you not be able to judge better of their characters, if you could speak their languages?» (Smith 1794, 91-92)

Depictions of the other are constructed through dialogues, discourses and visual experience. Displaced people reflect on a wide range of political opinions, give accounts of the situation in their homelands, offer their

views on the countries they visit and discuss important concerns of the day. Opinions are coloured by different political and cultural viewpoints, but their meetings transcend the limits of comparison of national differences. The emigrants and wanderers with «naturally good» hearts who crowd the novel share not only the status of exile but also a connected history. Ellesmere reflects on a much more evident truth: «how nearly the people of all countries are alike». So, every «private and public history» (Smith 1794, 93) related is embedded in a transnational narrative. For this reason, the paths that intersect and the moments of interaction between wandering characters, who would otherwise be condemned to solitude, are important structural devices: «Such moments constitute the novels' almost paradoxical sense of community, in which the isolated but repeating biographies of the wanderers allow these characters to recognize that they are not alone» (Sodeman 2009, 139). Conversation with a new friend has the «power to soothe» thoughts of sad import and wounded minds, and even to relieve the sick: «[D'Alonville's] heart, chilled and depressed by his late disappointment, was expanded and cheered with the hope of having found a friend» (Smith 1794, 94).

The political experiences of the members of the group are dissimilar, but, according to Ellesmere whose “romantic” spirit leads him to identify with others' distress and recognizes affinities between fellow exiles, all of them detest «tyranny and injustice under whatever semblance they [appear]» (Smith 1794, 99). As the different characters become familiar with each other's innermost thoughts and personal qualities, the group becomes more tightly knit and, as a result of their shared experiences, a powerful bond is formed. Social status and political opinions matters less than «the soothing offices of friendship». In Smith's novel deep human interactions help to determine the evolution of social identities, and in particular, of aristocratic identity during the revolutionary era. Regardless of the émigrés' geographical origins and destinations, the very fact of their migrating leads to a transformation of individuals and societies (Wiley 2008, xi).

Smith's refugees join together not to hatch counter-revolutionary plots but rather to widen their «circle of friends». Even meeting points for émigrés, such as inns, hotels, lodging-houses, generally political hubs for the counter-Revolution, are places where the refugees can learn the latest news from France and, more often than not, find friends.

In *The Banished Man* émigrés always give a description of their status⁷. Heroes' personal stories of dispossession and banishment, repeatedly told during their travels, in various circumstances to different individuals, have a universal resonance. As D'Alonville notes, any variations in their accounts depend only on «local or domestic events» (Smith 1794, 106). Their tales present worlds of rootlessness and despair in a variety of places in order to provide a critique of unfair treatment in law and institutionalized intolerance⁸. The universality of the aversion to violence and tyranny is emphasized by the diverse nationalities of the émigrés. The Polish republican Carlowitz, a figure borrowed from sentimental fiction, offers insights into the pressures and hardship of exile. He relates his own sufferings, physical and psychological, caused by his having repudiated ties to his homeland, and, as a result of a beneficial “contagion”, suddenly awakens the sympathies of his fellow wanderers, opening up new possibilities for community with other exiles.

The *frontier* is, then, a recurring topographical location in the émigré novel, and the exiles who cross national borders enrich the narrative with eyewitness accounts of events or situations they encounter while traveling – with difficulty – from one country to another. Smith's fiction depicts the European landscape against the background of the tumultuous political upheaval of the 1790s, a decade of ongoing military activity, political uncertainties and the constant shifting of borders. Throughout the novel the reader is provided with glimpses of historical events pulsating with the violence generated by the French Revolution. Public history impacts greatly on family stories and intertwines directly with their private lives. It seems that precariousness is everywhere and that life involves a continual struggle to find the fortitude with which to face the prevailing political and historical forces that are uprooting individuals. Everyone, emigrants and hosts alike, becomes alienated. Migration is not merely a plot device but also represents a process of displacement of identities.

⁷ Charlotte Smith had a personal connection with French emigration: her daughter Augusta married a French émigré in 1793.

⁸ Ellesmere, brought up by his father to work in the legal profession, abandons it and embarks on a military career: «on a nearer view he became disgusted with the rugged features and incomprehensible manners of English jurisprudence» (Smith 1794, 94).

In an account of the characters' arrival in Berlin – as in other European towns – topographical or geographical descriptions⁹ are supplanted by history¹⁰. The emigrés have lost any sense of geographical orientation, and no physical details about the location are provided. Places emptied of national and political features become suitable settings for unstable and provisional identities. Space and identities must be reconfigured.

However changed might be the spirit of the government since the death of Frederic the Great, long established modes of life, and the actual preparations for other campaigns, which might repair the errors of the last, still gave to Berlin the appearance of a great garrison, rather than of the capital of a kingdom. [...]

Many families, of whom the fathers or husbands were gone or going to the army, had retired from Berlin to pass the time of their absence in the country, and among these was Madam Lewenstirn, the niece of the Abbé de St. Remi, whose husband had received orders to depart immediately for Flanders with a regiment he had raised, and who had already taken leave of his wife, and was on the point of quitting Berlin when the Abbé and his friends arrived there. (Smith 1794, 107)

Very often, in the land chosen as a refuge, the émigrés gather together in international communities that Smith describes as cosmopolitan «circles of friends» which embrace utopian alternatives and forge new imaginative possibilities. Émigrés arrive in foreign countries as outcasts, non-citizens without rights. They then transform themselves into enlightened citizens of the world importing new ideas and a modern globalizing philosophical view. Revolution and the experience of constant exile exalt Smith's pro-

⁹ It is worthwhile noticing that Charlotte Smith has always been praised for her detailed geographical descriptions and her portrayal of natural scenery (Sodeman 2009). The beauty of nature and a loco-descriptive style of language are in evidence at the end of the novel when the characters become naturalized in a new space open to utopian and transnational possibilities (Wiley 2008, 33).

¹⁰ Michael Wiley analyses the historical meaning of the hero's first stop in Koblenz after leaving the castle with the Rosenheim family: «[C]ontemporary readers would have recognized [it] as a site circumscribed by the social and political power structures of monarchical France. In July 1791 the Comte d'Artois and the Comte de Provence, who later would become Louis XVIII, had set up an exiled government and court in this town [...]. In describing D'Alonville's experience in Koblenz, Smith engages with a popular contemporary criticism of the profligacy of the exiled court. As quickly became apparent to the rest of the world, the French in Koblenz were living beyond their means. Expecting to return to France with an early victory over the republicans, many of the emigrants brought little money, but they nonetheless attempted to replicate their luxurious existence at Versailles» (2008, 26-27).

tagonists, female and male, to an emancipatory status which is both multilingual and transnational. In the novel friendly conversations in different languages explore other ways in which exilic phenomena triggered by the French Revolution bring about unexpected modern processes of cultural transfer. French émigrés were agents of cultural and social reconfiguration.

At the end of the novel characters regain their lost social orientation. Thanks to the broadening geographical sweep of emigration, the multilingual characters in *The Banished Man* find new places to form a «little society». Transformations of personal, social, national identities are reflected in shifts of geographical location. As Toby R. Benis (2003, 300) points out, characters achieve fulfilment spatially and construct a more appropriate identity. They reconfigure new spaces that replace the places they have lost. Thus, in the last chapters naturalistic and geographical descriptions re-emerge as settings for new social communities grounded on principles that go beyond those of nationhood¹¹.

French emigration had a lasting impact on social, political and cultural modernity in global terms and on a global scale. Hanley and Kucich included Charlotte Smith's fiction in their critical global studies, *Nineteenth-Century Worlds* (2008), as one of the most significant expressions of early formations, or pre-formations, of globalization beginning around the dawn of the nineteenth century. Her communities of «friends» shrink distances and produce a de-territorialized sense of connections between widely differing individuals and societies.

According to Smith, the citizen of the world is a clear representation of an international and cosmopolitan mingling of class and race. The cosmopolitan ideal can be achieved through marriage. Marital unions bring together the members of different nations and classes. The cross-cultural marriage is, in fact, one example of a cosmopolitan feminism to which Smith pays particular attention. Female characters¹² embody a sentimental interpretation of history and society. They inspire a kind of society of

¹¹ «The mountains which bound the lovely vallies we passed, are so majestic, so sublime, that the pencil might give some idea of them, but the pen dares not undertake it. On the summits of many, are level platforms; among the cliffs of other, are convents, churches, hermitages, or houses of the inhabitants of singular form; and these look down upon a variety of scarred rocks, starting in some places from amidst cospes of the brightest verdure, in others extending their broken and rugged masses, tinted only with plants that love a shallow soil» (Smith 1794, 182, II).

¹² In the novel particular attention is devoted to female education and women's role in the family and society. Male characters make continuous comparisons and observations on this topic in relation to different national characteristics.

love that contrasts with the European societies of war. In the same way, a beneficial and healing religious process is illustrated by the abbot, whose duty is «to follow the fate» of people in distress.

Charlotte Smith conceived of citizenship not only politically but also in concrete terms, physically and emotionally. International, interfaith and interracial marriages would produce hybridized future generations. Racial hybridization constitutes a revision of an earlier vision of cosmopolitanism that Ann Mellor (2006) defines as «embodied». This revolutionary idea of citizenship involves commitment to a multilingual, multicultural and united Europe freed from national prejudices and religious conflicts. Politically, it involves crossing transnational borders and informs a developed vision of humanitarianism capable of widening «circles of friends».

In defiance of the bleak state of revolutionary Europe, Charlotte Smith's writings on migration look beyond national boundaries and seek to construct an international vision and worldwide social relations.

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TIZIANA INGRAVALLO, *Charlotte Smith's Cross-Border Narratives*

Smith's novels on the Revolution were her response to the great exodus of political refugees from revolutionary France. She adopts exiles' stories to outline the exceptional circumstances of forced migration and provides deep insights into the pressures and hardship faced by émigrés. In addition, she introduces a new conceptual approach to readings of this new «age of exile». Her novel *The Banished Man* (1794) views the experience of estrangement and alienation in foreign countries as potentially beneficial. Displacement across the Continent becomes culturally productive and the dynamic of migration forces the characters to re-imagine their personal, social and national identities in relation to a multilingual, multicultural and united Europe.

Le narrazioni transnazionali di Charlotte Smith

I romanzi sulla Rivoluzione di Charlotte Smith furono la sua risposta al grande esodo di rifugiati politici dalla Francia rivoluzionaria. La scrittrice adotta le storie degli esiliati per delineare le circostanze eccezionali della migrazione forzata e fornisce approfondimenti sulle pressioni e le difficoltà affrontate dagli emigrati. Inoltre, introduce un nuovo approccio concettuale alle letture di questa nuova «era dell'esilio». Il suo romanzo *The Banished Man* (1794) considera potenzialmente vantaggiosa l'esperienza di estraniamento e alienazione in paesi stranieri. Lo spostamento in tutto il continente diventa culturalmente produttivo e la dinamica della migrazione costringe i personaggi a re-immaginare le loro identità personali, sociali e nazionali in relazione a un'Europa multilingue, multiculturale e unita.

اداب المهجر

ემიგრანტთა ხელწერა

Scrieri Migrante

Γραφές της Μετανάστευσης

话说移民