

# Voices of the french revolution in smith????????s the emigrants assignment

[History](#)



Voices of the French Revolution in Smith's *The Emigrants* In Module 3, the class was presented with reading regarding the French Revolution and how it affected writing during that era. In the discussion board, I analyzed Charlotte Smith's *The Emigrants*. Our textbook, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, states that Smith was ostracized in a conservative piece written by Richard Polwhele for writing about the plight of refugees during the French Revolution (p. 1448). Generally, she was revered as one of the greatest poets of the Romantic Period, which was a huge feat considering that there weren't many well-known female poets at the time.

By examining *The Emigrants* further, I hope to better understand the female voice during the French Revolution and the Romantic Period. *The Emigrants* is an 800 line poem lamenting of the French Revolution and those displaced by the bloodshed. Smith's attempt to express the hopelessness of the people ranging from religious representatives to lower-class citizens was brilliantly executed with lines like, " To those, who shrink from horrors such as War / Spreads o'er the affrighted world? With swimming eye, / Back on the past they throw their mournful looks, / And see the Temple, which they fondly hoped / Reason would raise to Liberty, destroy'd / By ruffian hands" (Book 2, line 45-50). The speaker remarks about looking back on the beginning of the war and hoping for positive change. Instead of progress and better conditions, the people were displaced as their communities were torn down by the " ruffians. " Hope throughout the classes quickly soured from hope to fear and despair as they had no control over their destinies as the French Revolution continued and war ravaged the country.

Smith was an integral figure in the writing scene during the French Revolution because she was willing to speak out against the war and compose pieces such as *Emigrants* to give a voice to those who would otherwise remain unheard during that era. Also, as stated before, it was not common for women to publish their work back in that time, so that made her musings that much more unique and significant. The Norton Anthology lauded Smith for *The Emigrants* by saying, " It both evokes the suffering endured by political refugees from France and links their plight to that of the poet herself... (p. 1448). I think it is true in their inquiry to say that her poem arouses the feelings of suffering in the reader. Smith used varied and expressive vocabulary to elicit vivid imagery of the scenes the displaced were confronted with. I believe that it was important for her to make a connection between herself and the refugees to make the poem more personal, herefore making the story that unfolded more poignant for the audience. Personal connections always make writing more relatable for people, which makes them more likely to read it.

In closing, *The Emigrants* connects with the French Revolution and the Romantic Period because it was a time when women began finding their voices in the world of literature, which in turn gave many other people voices. Many writers during the time wrote about the disparaged, but Charlotte Smith and other women were important because they had more odds stacked up against them than the men. ad things of substance to say and that some of them were women at that!

It was a new concept and it went to show that the times were changing and it was the perfect time for people from average walks of life to express themselves in writing. Works Cited Greenblatt, Stephen. "Charlotte Smith." The Norton Anthology of English Literature. 9th ed. New York: W. W. Norton &, 2013. 1448. Print. Williams, Seth. "British Women Romantic Poets Project-Charlotte Turner Smith." British Women Romantic Poets project. N. p. , 1999. web. 23 sept. 2013.