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UNVEILING OBJECTIFICATION:
THE GAZE AND ITS SILENT POWER IN THE NOVELS OF FRANCES BURNEY

by

JENNIFER JOANNE WINGFIELD

Under the Direction of Murray Brown

ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to portray how an objectifying intra-diegetic gaze influences and constructs the plot devices Frances Burney uses in her four novels: Evelina, Cecilia, Camilla, and The Wanderer. Burney creates a literary reality within her four novels' narratives and breaks that reality down with the influence of the gazes and judgments of her novels' characters upon each of her heroines. The gaze is an almost microscopic examination that objectifies and depersonalizes all of Burney's heroines. Burney shows how the gaze shifts perspectives and manipulates that which it objectifies. Burney places her audience and her heroines into unfamiliar situations and then she shows the costs and benefits of reasserting one's gaze. This thesis will show how Burney portrays the power of objectification in her novels upon her heroines, and the consequences that arise from the tensions of bombarding social gazes in all their duplicitous forms.

INDEX WORDS: Gaze, Intra-diegetic, Objectification, Frances Burney, Novels, Evelina, Cecilia, Camilla, The Wanderer and Objectification

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in the College of Arts and Sciences
Georgia State University

2006

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

1 INTRODUCTION 1

 Literature Review 6

2 BLUSHING FOR AND IN SOCIETY: THE GAZE AND ITS MISIDENTIFYING EFFECTS IN EVELINA 12

3 THE GAZE’S FRAUDULENT REDUCTION OF WOMEN INTO OBJECTS OF PROPERTY IN CECILIA 26

4 SPYING AS A MEANS OF DETERMINING A WOMAN’S WORTH IN CAMILLA 39

5 “THE ACCUSATION OF APPEARANCES”: PERFORMING AT THE MERCY OF PRESUMPTION IN THE WANDERER 54

6 CONCLUSION 67

WORKS CITED 69

Introduction

Writing is a form of seeing and just as observations depend upon the witness, compositions' interpretations depend upon the reader. How an object is seen, recognized, or perceived cannot be controlled or determined by the object itself—the observed is under the control of the gaze of the observer. The gaze itself can be intoxicating and charming, or sobering and unpleasant. In the novels of Frances Burney, the gaze is a powerful agent between her heroines and the characters that judge them. Burney unleashes and reveals the powerful force of the gaze, and its effects upon each of her heroines in her novels. As a female writer, she makes a valuable contribution to the novel as a budding genre in late eighteenth-century England by using the motif of the gaze. Additionally, by relying on the new forms used successfully by her predecessors Defoe, Richardson, Behn, Smollett, and Fielding, Burney develops throughout her literary career her own style that constantly relies on-- while it fears and woos-- the power of the gaze and its objectification.

In this thesis, I plan on looking at how Burney portrays the influence the gaze has upon each of her heroines: Evelina, Cecilia, Camilla, and Juliet. The gaze I plan on examining is one that is intra-diegetic, or one that is between each of Burney's heroines and her fellow characters. Mainly, I will focus on how the gaze of the other characters overwhelms each of Burney's heroines, and it threatens to misidentify them with its power. As objects of the gaze, all of the heroines find that they are at the mercy of judgmental onlookers, and these often ill-conceived judgments threaten the heroines' individual identities. The gaze that is upon each of Burney's heroines is a microscopic examination that objectifies, depersonalizes, and oftentimes misidentifies the heroines. The gaze has the ability to shift perspectives, take on various forms, and manipulate that which it objectifies.

In order for Evelina, Cecilia, Camilla, and Juliet to maintain their true individual identities-- despite their presence in the spotlight of the gaze-- they must learn by way of experience to gain the ability to recognize the gaze on their own terms, and they must learn how to protect themselves from its misconstruing influences. Ultimately, each heroine overcomes the gaze's judgmental control and they all maintain their own essence.¹

As a prolific writer with a career spanning over sixty years, Burney developed a style that will show its influences in the works of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. However, Burney admits that as a young woman and as a novelist trying to break into a relatively new literary market she often struggled under the pressure of social conflicts and criticism that accompany authorship. This struggle of perception-- this often vain effort to control how one is perceived-- is central to her novels and to the terms of their authorship. Burney's novels show the influences of many of the novel's popular subgenres-- romance, the sentimental, the Gothic, epistolary-- as well as the moral tale and the influence of conduct literature. Like Austen, Burney borrows wisely and learns a great deal from her own reading, but her skill exceeds the sum of its parts and this excellence is most evident in her characters. Her new and multi-dimensional heroines are forced to deal and cope with their surroundings while they are forced to contend with the power of the gazes that surrounds them.

In the late Eighteenth century, England was in the midst of major political, economical and social changes. In reaction to these changes, class and gender systems faced the tensions of immanent reformation and restructuring. Meanwhile, novelists of this volatile era began to sharpen and expand the genre's parameters by portraying these changes.

¹ The concept of the "gaze" has been a predominant theme in literary studies: i.e Lacan's studies on the "mirror stage" and Foucault's studies on the "medical gaze." For the most part the gaze has been defined as how the audience perceives an object in a text or in a performance, rather than how characters within a text perceive other characters. For additional information, please see Laura Mulvey's discourse in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."

Richardson's Pamela broke class barriers by maintaining a moral stance amid the onslaught of rakish offenses. Other novels at the time often reflected a disconnection between the traditional and the modern. Because of the increasing prevalence of fear of the unknown, novels portraying outsiders and foreigners as evil beings became increasingly prominent. The Gothic novel first established its roots in the works of Horace Walpole and it was further developed by Ann Radcliffe and many others. Thus, social observation in novels became more common on many different levels, especially in women's writings. Novels allowed a voyeuristic permission of sight into what was inaccessible in the social world. Perspective moved from being only present within one-dimensional sentimental stories to multi-dimensional presentations of the various classes pitted against each other. Consequently, fiction writing was suspect in the eyes of many when its portrayals of social life presented something other than what was conventional. Women authors in particular used their novels as a means to portray what they wanted the public to see, and oftentimes they faced the judgmental views the public held for novels and novel reading. Burney was well aware of the critical opinions that surrounded novels as a genre. Regardless, she created a body of literary work that was grand in scope, yet central in theme, in order to transcend the delineating criticism of women and female authorship.

Burney's characters are theatrical, lively, and colorful, but they are constantly under the watchful and misidentifying gazes of their fellow characters. With her keen eye for detail, Burney produces natural and probable characters and situations. The heroines are beautiful and morally sound; however, they find themselves among the greedy and dissipated within all levels of society. Set within themes of entrapment and confinement, female mobility and lack of mobility are prominent motifs in Burney's narrative structures. Oftentimes the sense of entrapment goes beyond the literal sense. The invasive gazes of

onlookers attempt to confine and possess the heroines, and the women in Burney's works are often perceived as forms of currency or as commodities; this, while their respective worth or value is tested through multiple series of tests and trials. At times these trials are comedic and sometimes they are frightening, but in all instances, the heroines are under the scrutiny of the supporting characters' objectifying gazes.

Formally speaking, Burney employs a shifting of gazes that frames her novels' narratives, and she utilizes the genre of romance in order to portray the sequence of shifting and changing gazes surveying Burney's heroines. Although all four of Burney's heroines come from comfortable homes and backgrounds, they soon find themselves amid merciless observers who constantly throw their judgmental gazes upon them. Despite the heroines' supposed comfortable life at home, the present lack of parental figures and authority influences all four of the novels; indeed it is this principal danger, that of an unknown and unsafe world, that drives all of Burney's fictions. With the exception of Camilla, all of Burney's heroines are fatherless in some sense. Burney's father figures in her novels are absent, removed and dispassionate; and as children, all of Burney's heroines are wards--illegitimately displaced persons. The 'home' and everything the term entails with regard to stability and love becomes the sought after object, and all of Burney's heroines are similarly dispossessed. Such a heroine is susceptible to being preyed upon, of course, and each of Burney's plots relies heavily upon the precariousness of the heroine's position and their many narrow escapes. Although the heroines seek guidance and develop greater self-reliance as they make their way, ultimately, Burney's heroines remain isolated and in dangerous or precarious circumstances until they are recognized by a father or husband figure.

Although Burney was a prolific diarist and a promising playwright, I have chosen to focus my studies on how Burney's uses the motif of the objectifying gaze within all of her

novels. The gaze of Burney's era is inescapable for Burney as a woman and as a novelist, and I will argue that she was fully aware of such oppression. Thus, she turns the gaze into an innovative narrative technique and creates four bodies of literature that transcend time. As Burney progressed and gained experience as a working author, the gaze as a narrative device becomes more and more oppressive upon her heroines in each of her novels. Ultimately, she produces a vast and innovative contribution to the genre of the novel and women's writing.

Literature Review

Perhaps due to her influence on writers such as Jane Austen, Burney has achieved a place within the literary canon as a major contributor in the formation and evolution of the novel, especially as a female author within a literary canon that was predominately male. Recent studies have pointed out that Burney goes beyond simple characterizations; she expands her characters and forces ideological contradictions upon them. Within the past twenty years, there has been a renewed interest in the works of Burney due to the contributions of many feminist critics of her works. For instance, scholars such as Betty Schellenberg, Julia Epstein, Juliet McMaster, Marjorie Dobbin, and Kristina Straub have examined how important female authorship is during the late eighteenth century and how Burney's work uncovers the numerous contradictions of female authorship within a patriarchal society.

Since then, various specific issues, themes and motifs in Burney's novels have been brought to light that had been previously ignored. Elements of the Gothic have been examined by Sara Salih. Sara Austin, Elisabeth Rose Gruner, Virginia Cope, and Toby Olshin have considered Burney's depictions of familial relationships and their importance in eighteenth century literary scholarship. Andrea Henderson, Miranda Burgess, and Catherine Keohane have all looked at Burney's use of economic motifs. Justine Crump, John Hart, and Darryl Jones have studied how politics in Burney's day played a role in her novels. However, it is female authorship, and Burney's portrayals of it in all of her writings, that receives the most attention among literary critics.

In her studies of Burney, Kristina Straub argues that Burney's novels are fraught with contradictions and ambiguities because of a woman's sense of powerlessness in a patriarchal environment, and that powerlessness collides with a woman's need for independence in ever-

changing social environment. Straub argues that Burney should not be perceived as a double-woman-- a woman with two conflicting sides. Rather, Straub argues that Burney's novels reveal Burney's desires for recognition as a literary figure, and yet Burney desires to be a "proper" woman-- one who upholds and adheres to the social strictures of the "domestic sphere." Straub limits the majority of her focus to Evelina and Camilla in an attempt to demonstrate that Burney felt a need to "gain 'unfeminine' control over self-identification while retaining the traditional power of femininity" (Straub, 8). Straub argues not only that this struggle is more prevalent in these two works, but also that resignation and a sense of hopelessness pervade her last two novels. I would argue that the struggle for femininity and unfeminine control is evident on a number of levels within the narrative constructs of all her novels, and this struggle should be examined. There is an evolution of perception of society and the heroines in all of Burney's works that should not be overlooked because of the aesthetic preferences of the reader. Burney's need to gain control never subsides-- it changes and evolves. With the appearance of Evelina, we see an author who is facing the public for the first time. After Burney gained public esteem and recognition as the author of Evelina, one might expect that her subsequent novels would be more confident, but in fact, they become increasingly muted and self-conscious.

Margaret Doody shows how Burney's life is an ever-present source for Burney's writing. Doody's extensive biographical study of Burney provides a broad and comprehensive survey of Burney's works and shows how the historical contexts in which Burney lived reveal the preponderance of autobiographical material that pervades Burney's works. Doody states that Burney's keen insight into her world and her own experiences are the main sources of Burney's material. "Understanding her world, she also understands how to experiment with the novel as a form" (Doody, 3). Doody's work combines literary theory

with biographical context in order to demonstrate how Burney's penetrating social observation is fraught with a sense of unease and self-consciousness with regard to her own celebrity. Writing for Burney was a means to portray and perhaps deal with her own insecurities. As Doody deftly intertwines Burney's life in her works, Doody does not point out how the heroines' conflicted sense of self is the result of how the public perceived Burney and how Burney dealt with that in her fiction. Burney uses that self-consciousness as a narrative technique in her novels. Doody's focus rests on the biographical elements in Burney's life that had the most impact on the plot structures of the novels. I hope to rely on much of Doody's in-depth and biographical analysis in order to portray the ways that Burney used the gaze as a narrative structure.

Joanne Cutting-Grey looks at Burney's fiction from a different perspective. Cutting-Grey has taken up the correlation between naming and identity, and she stresses the notion that to be female is to be unnamed and to be male is to be named. In her feminist readings of Burney's novels, Cutting-Grey argues that Burney seeks to juxtapose this patriarchal statute by finding names for her heroines. I would like to take this notion further and argue that to assume a name would entail being seen and recognized by the social gaze. In Burney's novels, this patriarchal society is metaphorically illustrated by the gaze and its power of influence. I will show how Burney finds legitimate names for her heroines despite the patriarchal gazes that would otherwise leave them nameless. The heroines overcome the gaze and give themselves an identity and a voice when they would otherwise go unnamed and unheard.

Barbara Zonitch provides an interesting look at the violence in Burney's novels by pointing out that Burney is reacting to the decline of the aristocracy and to the detrimental effects that decline had upon women. "Burney's preoccupation with violence originates in

the fear that the death of aristocratic social domination subjects women to the escalating violence of the modern world” (Zonitch, 14). Burney’s heroines have no place to turn for care and protection in the new society where they are constantly subjected to the “social shaming” of the evolving judgmental gaze of the modern world. I contend that the escalating violence in Burney’s novels reveals that without a functioning traditional aristocratic structure, the reins on the social gaze are loosened. The gaze is defined in this context by being made up of the rules and boundaries prescribed by society. Without traditional class boundaries, the gaze becomes more powerful and unpredictable against women. Frightening social upheavals of the time are portrayed through the literary gaze of Burney and through the eyes of her heroines, and at times, the gaze on Burney’s heroines feels familiar and is welcome because it originates from the family and from a traditional patriarchal society. However, when that traditional patriarchal society breaks down, and the social contract ceases to function, the gaze embodies the violence Zonitch describes. Burney’s novels become violent, hostile, and brutal when she exposes her heroines to the modern world without the protection of a stable home and all the institution implicit in the social contract.

For Burney, writing is the outlet through which she can effectively and safely confront the gaze and expose its motivations and even its violence during this period when women faced an uncertain status and therefore, an uncertain future. Julia Epstein, in her book The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women’s Writing, provides an excellent portrayal of Burney’s use of violence and how authorship for women relieved violent tensions that were prevalent during Burney’s time. Epstein examines the multiple forms of violence in Burney’s works and shows how Burney uses these forms of violence to reveal the anxieties and obstacles for women authors in the eighteenth century. Epstein also explores how the social networks in the eighteenth century cut off a woman’s independence

because of these networks' advocacy of "conduct-book prescriptions for modesty, deference, and quiet virtue on the one hand and its conflict with a woman's drive for self-expression, for acknowledgement of their importance as mothers and as participants in family enterprise, or simply for an autonomous sense of self, on the other" (Epstein, 7). Writing, Epstein argues, provided for Burney an outlet in which she could escape from the constraints of societal restrictions and live an independent life. Burney's real and fictional worlds are fraught with violence, constraint, entrapment, and restriction, and Epstein demonstrates how Burney reveals through her literary worlds what Burney herself faces in her own reality and how she eventually withstands it. I agree with Epstein that, in the battle with the limitations imposed by society's gaze, writing is a fortress. My thesis will show how Burney employed her writing talents to reflect and perhaps deflect the gaze on her as a woman and as an author.

Of all of the articles I have read about Burney's writings, Heidi Kaye's article "'This Breast- It's Me': Fanny Burney's Mastectomy and the Defining Gaze" has been the closest in its theoretical content to the scope of my project. After her painful mastectomy, Burney uses the act of writing to relieve some of the anxieties she faces while being medically observed by male doctors. "Burney uses language relating to looking, observing, and controlling through the power of the gaze. In her narrative, sight can be turned into a measure of control for the one who directs the reader's imaginative sight" (Kaye, 43). To be gazed upon while in such a vulnerable state was unbearable for Burney. She attempted to expunge her pain of being gazed upon by writing the detailed account of the operations. As Burney writes, she reveals how the veil that was over her eyes did not protect her and keep her from visualizing the doctors seeing her in her vulnerable and painful state. Kaye points out, "The gaze has been seen as a masculine power in our patriarchal culture, through which women are positioned as objects, not subjects" (Kaye 43-42). The feeling of being objectified and

scrutinized as a medical object by a male authority was more painful than the actual operation was for Burney. Burney's pain and suffering under the objective gaze culminates in this journal account, and although the operation occurred well after her first three novels were written, I will argue that Burney, since her first writings were published, always felt the patriarchal objectification of women and patriarchal objectification is depicted in all of her fiction. It is this journal entry that demonstrates most clearly how she perceived the world that perceived her.

Blushing For and In Society:
The Gaze and its Misidentifying Effects in Evelina²

The principal occupation of Evelina (1778) is the barrage of embarrassing situations an innocent country girl finds herself in when she is subjected to the pressures of the gazes of surrounding characters as she is introduced into society. Burney first wrote a version of this novel anonymously when she was fifteen years old and then she burned the manuscript because she was self-conscious of her writing and because she was embarrassed to be seen as an author-- a masculine stigma that many female authors faced during her time.³ Burney wrote Evelina again when she was in her early twenties, and this work is reminiscent of Burney's self consciousness as an author in the sense that Burney's heroine, Evelina, becomes overwhelmed when she finds herself unjustly judged by other characters. Ultimately, all of Burney's heroines in her subsequent novels embody a fear of being judged and misrepresented by the gaze. However, Evelina differs from Burney's other novels in that it is a farcical comedy, and it is an epistolary novel that is told by the heroine herself. This novel also stands apart from her other three because Burney wrote Evelina in secret—she did not have anyone overseeing this particular work.

Throughout the novel Evelina gets attention in situations where she is powerless—as does Burney's heroines in her subsequent novels. This unwelcome attention comes completely unsolicited and it comes in many assorted situations. Evelina is often misidentified by the gazes of the other characters. Embarrassment allows her to hide from the gaze behind a veil of prudence and innocence in public, but in private, her letters' and journals' commentary reflects and reveals a keen sense of her awareness of the propriety or

² All references are to: Evelina or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World, (W.W. Norton and Co. New York- 1965).

³For further information, please see Julia Epstein's work on Burney's anxiety of authorship in Epstein's work: The Iron Pen (1989).

the impropriety of any given social situation, as well as a fear of the consequences or repercussions of entering into a forbidden discourse.⁴ Although Evelina is shielded by her genuine innocence, her lack of experience often leads to her becoming confused, self-conscious and unable to act or speak appropriately or at all during times of social pressure. She is trapped between being innocent and appearing innocent. Evelina blushes for the shameless society in which she finds herself, and she blushes for her presence, interaction, and participation within this shameless society. Evelina chronicles these shameful moments in her journals and letters in such a way that she also reveals a special discourse that Burney uses in order to demonstrate the hold the social gaze has upon Evelina, and perhaps on all young females of her generation.

In public, Evelina is often silent when under the gaze of other characters, but in private, she writes, and her writing assists her in understanding and distinguishing the factors that put her under these social pressures incurred by the gazes upon her. Her private desires, as well as Burney's authoritative and editorial commentary, are subtly revealed to the public. Through Evelina, Burney makes public the problems associated with women and women's identity through her writing. In her preface, Burney states that she aims to:

avoid what is common, without adopting what is unnatural, [and I] must limit the ambition of the vulgar herd of authors: however zealous, therefore my veneration of the great writers I have mentioned, however I may feel myself enlightened by the knowledge of Johnson, charmed with the eloquence of Rousseau, softened by the pathetic powers of Richardson, and exhilarated by the wit of Fielding and humour of Smollett, I yet presume not to attempt pursuing the same ground which they have tracked; whence, though they may

⁴ Please refer to [The Iron Pen](#) by Julia Epstein.

have cleared the weeds, they have also culled the flowers; and, though they have rendered the path plain, they have left it barren. (ii)

Burney realizes that by writing and publishing, she places herself within a male-dominated realm and this awareness both invigorates her authorship of Evelina and invades it. This self-consciousness of her place in the literary market makes Burney an acute observer of embarrassment, which is “both a response to social law and an immediate manifestation of a flux of social power. Embarrassment is a single example of an inner emotion that also is its outward and visible sign” (Doody, 59). Burney employs this power dynamic in Evelina’s plot’s structure by portraying scene after scene of Evelina’s embarrassing accounts of the assorted gazes that are thrust upon her.

In order to erase her “obscure birth” (Olshin, 29), Evelina travels through various social settings attempting to contact her father who has disowned her and her mother. Since Evelina is considered by outsiders to be illegitimate, her only currency that distinguishes her worth as a woman is her ability to remain morally sound and to give her father unconditional respect and affection despite his desertion of her and her mother. Evelina must prove that she can maintain her end of the dutiful bargain of filial loyalty, and of maintained innocence, in order for her father to reinstate her name and inheritance. Thus, Evelina’s moral ground is shaken by repeated instances of embarrassing moments, scenes in which she finds herself exposed and falsely identified by those around her. Because the novel is written in an epistolary form, the reader experiences Evelina’s anxieties as she records her various accounts. Evelina’s letters frequently relate her anxiety at being constantly thrust into the social spotlight where she must endure being misinterpreted, and misunderstood and misjudged, and her letters also reveal her attempts to maintain her integrity as she maneuvers within the social spotlight.

Evelina begins her journey innocently enough with the intent to see the splendors of London; however, London and its society also see her and turn their gaze back on her as well. London should be about seeing “sights” (26), and they lure Evelina out to balls, operas and public gardens. London, along with all of its various societal constructs, is immediately aware of her inexperience. She writes that she is “too inexperienced and ignorant to conduct myself with propriety in this town, where everything is new to me, and many things are unaccountable and perplexing” (37). Her journey quickly evolves from being an innocent lark about town where Evelina is just a mere observer of London’s sights into being a journey in which the town she observes turns its eyes upon her and seeks to dissolve her innocence. As she gathers experience, powers of discrimination develop apace and the world opens to her. Later in the novel, Evelina states, “London now seems no longer the same place where I lately enjoyed so much happiness; everything is new and strange to me” (157). As Evelina finds herself in more embarrassing situations, she is even more disillusioned by the city’s splendors. “Yet I cannot but lament to find myself in a world so deceitful, where we must suspect what we see, distrust what we hear, and doubt even what we feel!” (244).

Innocence for Evelina, however, is a problematic state when she realizes she must fend off the gaze of the London’s society. Although innocence is her most marketable feature, it is subject to be preyed upon. At the same time, innocence disguises her actual self and inhibits her from any experiences. Often, Evelina is labeled as “coquette” or a “rustic” when her embarrassment is misidentified by those who surround her. Society’s gaze does not recognize Evelina or know her name; therefore Evelina must make her innocence her name—or it must be her defining quality to outside observers. On the stage of life, abandoned by her father and without means, Evelina has only the label of innocence to

distinguish her. The cover of innocence with its necessary blushing pervades her personality, keeping Evelina

[M]isunderstood and wrongly identified because she cannot yet arrange a social personality, a mask that will protect the self she both is and wants to be. The struggle toward identity is complicated because identity cannot be acquired on Evelina's own terms. No individual is free to choose the means by which we are both formed and represented. (Doody, 45).

Innocence protects her, but the Evelina sees how her it is often misinterpreted. Her innocence must take on an evolved form rather than one that is literal. Evelina cannot remain completely innocent or else her innocence will blind her from the gazes around her. However, she cannot lose her innocence, or else she has lost her remaining semblance of worth. Writing allows Evelina to express an awareness of her situation on paper rather than in public; thereby, she maintains her appearance of innocence to outside society.

Not only is Evelina's identity defined by her innocence, her name is associated with her identity and it too is called into question by the judgmental society in which she finds herself. Her search for her name is another source of shame and embarrassment. Her paternal and maternal lines are in question. Evelina is a product of her parents' blemished past and she is forced to maintain her identity on her own terms independent from her parents. Evelina attempts to deflect the gaze of various social situations without her past revealing itself, and although Evelina and her legacy are unknown in society, she cannot go unnoticed due to her beauty and innocence. This leads to concerns of legitimacy for Evelina because her beauty and innocence are often preyed upon by misconstruing gazes.

In order to fend off the gazes that judge her, Evelina's journaling and her commentary reflect a social awareness of acts of propriety and impropriety. However, she often becomes

confused and self-conscious and unable to act or speak when she feels the gaze upon her. She is trapped between being innocent and appearing innocent because

correct social appearance itself includes a contradictory comportment of innocence: unworldly enough to appear guileless or diffident, yet sophisticated enough to recognize dissimulation and artifice, subtle enough to discern deception and fraud, and poised enough to withstand male aggression. (Cutting-Grey, 47)

Burney's innocent character is not a stock, one-dimensional character that embodies innocence. "Evelina is not a tabula rasa of innocence" (Cutting-Grey, 46) on which episodes of experience are etched into her character. Evelina is a writer, and she is a writer who portrays conflicting responses to the social gazes that surround her.

As Evelina looks for ways to deflect the gaze that is upon her in her new surroundings, the additional task of seeking a parent for protection from the gaze becomes an important theme. Evelina is without a mother figure, and her paternal name is problematic. Evelina's father has deserted her and will not own her, and Mr. Villars attempts to fulfill the role of father just as he had for Evelina's mother. Mr. Villars is keenly aware of Evelina's vulnerability and the impending misfortunes Evelina will face as she sets out into the social world she was sequestered from as a child. This world threatens to uncover the truth about her identity and past, and without family, she has no protection from society's critical gaze. Mr Villars writes:

When young people are too rigidly sequestered from [society], their lively and romantic imaginations paint it to them as a paradise of which they have been beguiled; but when they are shown it properly, and in due time, they see

it such as it really is, equally shared by pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment. (7)

Mr. Villars's reactions to Evelina's letters help Evelina negotiate these social experiences. He attempts to show her that society's appearances are paper-thin and behind them lie dark and ulterior motives that will prey upon her innocence. When Evelina grows confused and embarrassed, she realizes that society's appearances are often false.

Like a flower grown in the shade and hidden from the sun, Evelina has been hidden from the gaze, and her soul is young and soft and vulnerable. We understand that Mr. Villars knows this full well and he resists sending Evelina off where she will certainly be exposed to the harsh light of society's criticisms. He tries to persuade a dispassionate society to have pity and compassion for Evelina. "Can your Ladyship be serious in proposing to introduce her to the gaieties of a London life? Permit me to ask, for what end, or for what purpose? A youthful mind is seldom totally free from ambition; to curb that, is the first step to contentment, since to diminish expectation is to increase enjoyment" (12). The gaze of surrounding characters is heartless and relentless in its battle to prey on and embarrass the innocent. Evelina faces a danger of prejudicial examination and judgments. Given that Mr. Villars also sheltered Evelina's mother from certain destruction by these elements, one may say that he has spent his life protecting others from the forces that now threaten Evelina.

Knowing that men will see "she has too little wealth to be sought with propriety by men of a fashionable world" (8) and knowing these men will try to take advantage of her innocence, Mr. Villars appeals to the gaze's paternal side when he writes to Lady Howard, "I send her to you innocent as an angel and artless as purity itself" (9). Knowing how arbitrary and unfair such judgments can be, Mr. Villars warns Evelina that the gaze of society is ruthless and without conscience and it will take her innocence with pleasure. "Remember,

my dear Evelina, nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman; it is at once the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things” (150). At the same time Villars reminds Evelina not to rely on her innocence for protection. “Alas, my child! – that innocence, the first, best gift of Heaven, should, of all others, be the blindest to its own danger, -- the most exposed to treachery, -- and the least able to defend itself, in a world where it is little known, less valued, and perpetually deceived!” (289). Innocence is a precious commodity for a girl without a family and without a fortune. Evelina does not have any familial protection to guard it either. What she does have to protect her is her writing. Her letters are honest and observant portrayals of the society she is in, and they are not motivated by underhanded motives. Like Richardson’s Pamela, she recognizes that her audience can see through her writing and that knowledge reinforces her need to retain her innocence.

Mr. Villars serves as an audience and as an internal guide for Evelina when she finds herself in shameful situations that threaten her character. Evelina tells him, “Unable as I am to act for myself, or to judge what conduct I ought to pursue, how grateful do I feel myself, that I have such a guide and director to counsel and instruct me as yourself!” (146). Mr. Villars knows that recognizing the operation of the gaze is not enough. Evelina has to learn to defend herself, and this defense will necessarily involve her greater and more mature understanding; she must learn to copy, as it were, and to return the gaze. To do so, however, is to engage in artifice that innocence cannot know. He writes that “we are slaves of custom, the dupes of prejudice, and dare not stem the torrent of an opposing world, even though our judgments condemn our compliance!” (149), and Evelina takes these warnings seriously as she continues her journeys. She finds that the people around her have lost any sense of self-preservation because they are the mercy of societal constructs. Once she has realized this and even though she is yet a novice, Evelina can navigate. It is our witnessing the

impediments, or the central scenes in this process of acculturation that is so compellingly attractive within as well as without.

One may judge for the sake of argument that the make-up of any individual character in this novel rises or falls and is, in a sense, defined by its reaction to Evelina's defining innocence. Simply stated, Mr. Villars and Lord Orville gaze upon Evelina as they seek to preserve her innocence while Lovel and Willoughby seek with their immoral gazes to destroy it. If Evelina were to remain completely innocent, she would be duped and she would eventually fall victim to Willoughby and Lovel's ulterior motives. However, in her writing, she is able to distinguish honor where honor appears and treachery where it appears. "The Evelina who writes reveals a more evaluative knowledge of her worlds than the Evelina she writes about" (Cutting-Grey, 48). The awareness that Evelina expresses in her letters demonstrates that Evelina is gaining the experience she needs in order to obtain her own power of observation. However, Evelina must conceal her awareness because it conflicts with her innocent appearance. In public, Evelina is often timid and embarrassed and, because she is afraid of appearing badly, she remains silent. In private, writing assists her in coming to terms with the factors that put her in and keep her in social duress. For example, Evelina is ill at ease and tongue-tied as soon as she is introduced to Lord Orville. They meet at a party and we first see Evelina's discomfort become apparent when she writes about her inability to speak around someone so "superior" (19). She seems to understand that this superior gaze from Lord Orville will not diminish just because it makes her uncomfortable. "It now struck me that he was resolved to try whether or not I was capable of talking upon any subject. This put so great restraint upon my thoughts, that I was unable to go further than a monosyllable, and not even so far, when I could possibly avoid it" (21). Every encounter

with Lord Orville is filled with confusion and anxiety for Evelina, and her embarrassment does not abate as the novel progresses.

This novel, like many novels of its period, expresses and in a sense benefits from the tension among the social classes, and how the gaze is a tool that is often used to judge where one fits into society. Birth and wealth must be superior in a setting where the accomplished and educated female has relatively little value; it provides for an uncomfortable, yet comedic tension. It is largely owing to this tension that Evelina often feels powerless and confined, or embarrassed and inferior because her low social status is unjustly judged by the societies in which she finds herself. Part of the process for Evelina to overcome the stigma of inferiority that the gaze has place upon her is to negotiate the company of the Mirvans as well as the Braughtons-- two families who are representative of the mercantile and bourgeois society that is this novel's setting. While on the surface and in the presentation, her encounters and associations with these groups appear farcical-- the perceived ill-consequences for the heroine (for Lord Orville must always witness them as well) are highly serious. Yet, Evelina successfully negotiates many layers of social strata, and weathers numerous attacks on her character-- and they seem to come from all quarters.

Madame Duval offers a significant threat in this regard in that she misidentifies Evelina, and in turn she misidentifies herself. Madame Duval professes herself to be a legitimate relative of Evelina, and if Evelina recognizes this claim, it will place her in a defamed state. Even so, and with no small degree of irony, Madame Duval is herself embarrassed at Evelina's country upbringing and sees her as a rustic. "She said she had been considering what a shame it was to see me such a poor country, shame-faced thing, when I ought to be a fine lady; and that she had long, and upon several occasions, blushed for me" (109). Evelina often finds herself blushing for Madame Duval as she is Mirvan's constant

dupe and is blind to her own lack of status and lowly social standing. Madame Duval is ashamed of Evelina's supposed illegitimacy even though Madame Duval was little less than a barmaid herself. When Madame Duval places Evelina within the company of scandalous women, it is Evelina who recognizes the impropriety of their situation and how other characters will possibly perceive her in this situation, not Madame Duval. Evelina writes, "Indeed, it is wonderful to see how easily and how frequently she is deceived" (221). These words are evidence that Evelina is developing an understanding that allows her to gaze upon reality clearly, and morally, and she preemptively addresses those people and situations that formerly might have cast her in an ill light with their gazes.

Evelina disrupts the inequality of social structures created by the gaze of other characters by placing the moral life above the affluent life; she thereby collapses the upper and lower classes and considers everyone on a single based scaled. It is not only this that shows her own virtues to best advantage- it is only the most worthy of characters who recognizes her status. Debased characters, with their debased gazes, skew her character for their own purposes. They impose thoughts and characteristics upon her. Evelina begins to feel ashamed of the new society she finds herself in. "I fear you will think this London journey has made me grow very proud; but indeed this family is so low-bred and vulgar, that I should be equally ashamed of such a connections in the country, or anywhere" (83). It is now Evelina's turn to show that she is above this class-based society she finds herself in. Her standards are vastly different than those that have been prescribed by the gaze of society.

Since Evelina's innocence is targeted and preyed upon so often, she wonders if she is to blame for her involvement in these embarrassing situations. "I fear I must seem rather to invite than to forbid the offers and notice I received" (208). It is at the height of her bewilderment when Lord Orville enters the scene and casts his gaze upon her. Evelina often

tries to hide from his eyes because she knows that she is unable to explain her situations. Perhaps the most revealing scene of embarrassment in the novel occurs when she attempts to write to Lord Orville in order to clear her name. Her letter is intercepted and rewritten by Willoughby. Evelina's only protective tool, the act of writing, is thus altered by an outside influence. When Willoughby rewrites her letter, her meaning and intentions are lost, and thereby, misinterpreted. In turn, the letter she believes to be from Orville is not really from him. Upon first reading, Evelina believes that Orville is in love with her and she is unable to hide her happiness at this news. When she rereads the letter a second time, it is as if she has an entirely different letter. Evelina alters her perspective, and with embarrassment, she realizes that Orville's appearance is not what she thought. "Upon a second reading I thought every word changed, -- it did not seem the same letter, -- I could not find one sentence that I could look at without blushing" (242). Within a few sentences we see that Evelina is indeed in love with Orville, but her love does not blind her to impropriety. Upon a second reading of the letter, she finds that his intent is not noble. His words reflect an insidious and ulterior motive. Again, Evelina must rely on her own moral fabric, and perhaps the experience she has gained thus far, in order to protect her from what she perceives as villainous behaviors. She hides her feelings from herself and from Orville in order to protect herself and her integrity.

Up to this point, Evelina has managed her feelings so well that she is perhaps unaware that she is in love with Lord Orville-- even though the reader and Mr. Villars see it very clearly. Eventually, the power of social recognition leads her to win the game and collect the prize-- a distinguished and legitimate husband and name. Lord Orville serves as the quiet spectator whose ultimate recognition will decide her fate. Lord Orville's recognition of Evelina reinstates her credibility and character. He is the one who sees her worth and he does not take advantage of it as does the rest of society does. He states:

I am convinced, that whatever might appear strange in her behaviour, was simply the effect of inexperience, timidity, and a retired education; for I find her informed, sensible, and intelligent. She is not, indeed, like most modern young ladies, to be known in half an hour: her modest worth, and fearful excellence, require both time and encouragement to show themselves. (329)

Lord Orville's perception of Evelina never falters throughout the novel, but he waits until her identity is validated before he publicly recognizes her.

In the end, Evelina is a rowdy tale that traverses the many layers of Burney's society. As we learn through Evelina's journey from the country into a London society filled with characters quick to judge her, she has only her reputation, her character, and the texts it generates to represent her true worth—her true self. While away from her warden, Mr. Villars, Evelina has no protection from those who attempt to steal her innocence. Through her writing, Evelina is able to recognize how the gaze of her society, along with its duplicitous motives, can attempt to steal her innocence. She obtains the experience needed to overcome the shock and embarrassment of this realization, and she finds herself able to maintain her morally upstanding identity until she is recognized and validated by Lord Orville. Until she is given the protection of a husband or a father, and although Evelina is young, alone, and a woman, she must rely on her own sense of identity for protection from the onslaught of other characters' gazes. Through Evelina's writings, Burney reveals that it is acceptable to be embarrassed of and resistant to a society that attempts to force its ridiculous misinterpretations upon her heroine. While almost all of the characters that surround Evelina impose their prejudices upon her-- ones that do not correctly define her character-- only the most worthy of characters, Lord Orville, has the ability to recognize and

validate her identity. As we will see in the next few chapters, Burney continues using the gaze as her predominant novelistic motif. However, her future heroines do not get to have their voice and thoughts heard as does Evelina as they endeavor to overcome the pressures of gaze in that they are not portrayed by Burney in the first-person.

The Gaze's Fraudulent Reduction of Women into Objects of Property in Cecilia⁵

Cecilia (1782) was Burney's next novel. The success of Evelina changed the gaze's attack on Burney and similarly, the gaze's attack on Burney's heroines changed. After the fame and notoriety of Evelina, Burney felt some pressure from her father and from the public to repeat the success and to publish again.⁶ Burney's father's guest list at their home was a who's who of eighteenth century personalities which included Johnson and Garrick, and Burney had to daily bear the weight of publishing successfully. This judgmental pressure she faced proved to be damaging to her writing. Burney wrote a play called "The Witlings," but it failed and it was never performed⁷. After the ill success of her play "The Witlings," Burney then opted to write a novel as her next work. Thus, Cecilia was written, and like Evelina, it was an instant hit.

Unlike Evelina, the heroine, Cecilia, is not the author of her story. Her story is told by an outsider and the reader does not have the insight into her thoughts and actions as with Evelina. In Cecilia, the gaze of other characters is filled with fraud and hypocrisy towards the heroine, and in turn, Cecilia's own gaze is suspect when she cannot see, or recognize, those who disguise their ulterior motives toward her; therefore, her identity and fortune are at stake. Cecilia must gain the experience needed in order for her to learn how to see more clearly the fraud and deception many of the characters in her society have in their intentions toward her. In addition, Cecilia must learn how to use her own gaze as protection until her hero, Delville, learns how to see her, and thereby validate her true identity and worth.

⁵ All references are to: Cecilia or Memoirs of an Heiress, eds. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody (Oxford University Press- 1999).

⁶ Doody, Margaret.

⁷ For further information, please refer to "Frances Burney: The Life in the Works" by Margaret Doody. Doody offers a deep analysis of the failure of Burney's "Witlings" and its effects upon Burney's future novels

Cecilia's character is similar to that of Evelina: both are young, attractive, and morally-sound orphans who find themselves introduced into high society and are subject to society's critical scrutiny and objectification. When we are introduced to Cecilia, we learn that her last living relative, her uncle, has passed away and she must find a home with one of the three male associates her uncle has chosen for her until she comes of age. Unlike Evelina, however, Cecilia is entitled to a large fortune and to financial independence when she comes of age in within the next few months after the novel's plot begins. And like Evelina, Cecilia's name is problematic for her. Should Cecilia marry, her husband must take her name, and this effectively inhibits her courtship with a worthy man; it also subjects her to greedy fortune hunters who would eagerly satisfy the name clause of her inheritance in order to gain her estate.

Innocence was Evelina's protection against the social gaze; Cecilia's inheritance offers her the same sense of protection. Cecilia's inheritance and her independence are susceptible to the fraud and deceit that often accompanies the gaze of other characters around her. Like Richardson's Pamela and Clarissa, Burney uses the genre of romance to portray Cecilia's journey to gain the facility and independence she needs in order to learn who her friends are and who her enemies are as new relationships are formed and called into question. Cecilia herself is looked upon as property, thus she brings into the forefront the issues of the new commercialism that are prevalent in the late eighteenth century. The questions arise: can Cecilia's grand visions of benevolence and charity withstand this new world of consumerism, and can Cecilia learn to distinguish friends from enemies? In didactic literature of the time, beggars are of a certain stereotype and are easy to spot. For Cecilia, these stereotypes do not hold up and her perspective does not allow her to distinguish those in need of and worthy of charity and from those who do not. Thus, the appearances and

disguises of her new commercial society veil Cecilia's eyes, barring her from extending charity successfully and distinguishing friends and enemies.

Formally speaking, Cecilia is a departure from Evelina. Burney chooses to write in third-person prose that allows her narrative to contain her own omniscient commentary on her heroine's story. The narrative style in Cecilia is mature and self-conscious. It contains wonderful characterizations and descriptions reminiscent of Evelina, but the naiveté of Evelina is replaced with a more cynical and hardened tone. "Cecilia was not girlish 'scribbling' but an attack upon the world, a judgment not meditated by the girlish naïveté of an Evelina. And here Burney had taken up not the easy targets like bad-tempered sea captains, painted old coquettes, and cits, but the great world itself; she had looked into society's, rather than her heroine's embarrassments" (143). The gaze in the environment of her heroines changed as well. Society's openly judgmental gaze on the innocent Evelina matured into disguised plots and concealed intentions toward Cecilia. It seems that Burney projects on to Cecilia her expectation to be duped by the new friends she made after she became famous and renowned for Evelina. "Cecilia has no artless ingénue narrator, but a sober, strong, and ironic third person narrator, daring to speak out with authority about the nature of the people of the work and of the world itself" (Doody, 101).

After Burney was recognized for Evelina, her perspective changed, and Burney's motives for writing changed. Writing no longer served the purpose of pleasure as it did in her adolescence. Its function changed into an occupation, an activity exposed to the judgmental gaze of the public.

The psychological conditions under which Burney wrote Cecilia, were, then considerations of conflict between love and work-- her feminine sense of subservient relationship with masculine authority made her genuinely,

sincerely obedient- a socially defined form of love-- but this love was at odds with her desire to direct and control her own writing projects-- a desire to be empowered by and in her own work. (Straub, 110)

When Evelina was written, Burney did not necessarily have critics and readers in mind. She wrote to fulfill her need to portray a world she imagined rather than experienced. With Cecilia, however, Burney was forced to contend with the literary gaze of the world founded by commercialism and the theme of commercialism permeates throughout this novel as Cecilia fights to retain her marketable value.

In the late eighteenth century, England underwent major social changes due to the increasing presence of mercantilism and global trade. As we see in Evelina, the once severely segregated class system of the past was dissolving into a blended class society that is steeped in consumerism. In her introduction to this novel, Doody states “The world that Cecilia enters in is a complex and greedy society displaying all the attributes of a developing commercialism, including a credit system and a high flush of consumerism” (xvii). Women however, remained dependent minorities despite changes in their economic status. Cecilia’s character reveals the many issues a woman faces when her need for independence conflicts with customs and conventions that were becoming obsolete in this changing society. Like Evelina’s character, Cecilia finds herself introduced into high society and subject to society’s objectification. Like, Evelina, Cecilia is an orphan, and society places her at the mercy of various wards. However, Cecilia will inherit a large fortune when she comes of age, but her inheritance comes at a price. To keep her fortune, should she marry, her husband must take her name. This binding proviso dissuades a creditable suitor from the pursuit because it is unflattering; and it is therefore consequential that any man seeking her hand must be regarded with suspicion.

In this new commercial society based in credit, charity was a social act that played a significant role Cecilia. During the eighteenth century, the act of charity “was being cast as a socially important activity” (Keohane, 381) and it is what Burney uses to create a foundational theme in this novel. As consumerism changed, the act of charity changed from being a purely aristocratic activity to becoming an increasingly middle-class one. The need to regulate charity was a prominent issue due to frequent mismanagements of it. Burney portrays charity as an act that should transcend the public eye. She feels that it should go beyond appearances and demonstrate a humanity that is lacking in society. But the gaze draws Cecilia’s charitable acts under its microscope where her charity is scrutinized and judged. It is a difficult task for Cecilia to distinguish those who are actually worthy of charity. Disguises and lies often blur the identities of those who may actually need assistance with those who are merely lazy.

In addition to charity, other financial processes, such as credit and debt, were utilized to distinguish a person’s worth. Many businesses thrived on credit and its risks, and with it, came new issues of financial dissipation. Command of personal credit could hide financial problems and “produce the illusion of wealth and confidence” (Keohane, 382). The illusions of wealth and splendor that credit can buy provided Burney many avenues to explore in an effort to unveil the realities of wealth and poverty in the society Cecilia portrays.

Show and spectacle are prominent motifs in Burney’s society, and despite elaborate appearances, the spectacles that surround her heroine are empty beyond the thin layers of appearances. Cecilia’s society can only find amusement in the vapid spectacles around them, and she too is forced to perform under its clutches. Cecilia’s fortune “had afforded her... mixing with people of fashion, had served to prepare her for the new scenes in which she was soon to be a performer” (9). Cecilia recognizes that these new sights in which she is

perceived as a performer are mere theatrical constructs, but she is ambitious in the beginning of the novel in her attempts to overcome the spectacles she encounters. She hopes to “shew some taste and discernment in her choice of friends, and she resolved to select such only as by their piety could elevate her mind, by their knowledge improve her understanding, or by their accomplishments and manners delight her affections” (55). But her understanding is quickly tested when she is confronted with numerous fortune-hunters. While Cecilia is confident that by using her moral compass, she will be able to distinguish friends from enemies, the gaze uses adulation to mask intentions and character. Cecilia is “a novice in the art of admiration” (50) and she cannot “discern a thief in disguise” (603). Flattery disguises ulterior motives, and Cecilia’s ability to correctly understand people and their true motivations is impaired.

This is the age of the masquerade, and disguise is everywhere in Cecilia’s society. People play it out openly in the game of masquerade-- a popular party theme of the eighteenth century. The game of masquerade hones the skills of disreputable people who masquerade in real life to take advantage of their prey. These masquerade scenes in Cecilia serve to provide a forum in which people can transcend social classes as they hide unknown and unrecognized behind their disguises. When Cecilia is introduced into society, she finds herself immediately involved in the game. As she participates in the masquerade, she becomes an object that is reduced to a masked character even though she is not in costume. Sir Robert Floyer, disguised as a Turk, relentlessly pursues her. Mr. Belfield, dressed as Don Quixote, attempts to fight for her honor. The Turk, a malicious foreigner, combats a satiric and self-made hero in a fictitious duel for Cecilia’s attentions. As they play out their spectacle of a battle in this masquerade, Cecilia is overwhelmed by all these pursuits and antics. The white domino eventually rescues her. It is not until a little later that we find out

that the domino is her hero, Mortimer Delville. It is significant that Cecilia first meets Delville at a masquerade and she cannot identify him. He is dressed in white and the color of his costume leads the reader to question his worth. Perhaps the whiteness in his costume means that he is pure in his intentions toward Cecilia. But with the ever-present duality that surrounds these characters, the reader cannot help but suspect that the whiteness he wears means that he is a non-entity-- a man without a character. Doody points out "his bland appearance is a good indication of the young man's dependence on others to supply an identity for him, and of his inability to give himself away" (Doody, 134). This scene of masquerade represents a highly mannered and symbolic sequence of events that reveals and hides the many faces of ulterior motives that test Cecilia's ability of discernment. Cecilia is becoming socially educated within the confusion of the masquerade. Cecilia is exposed because she does not wear a costume. She is defenseless and guileless, and therefore she is easy prey.

Despite Cecilia's endeavors to turn Robert Floyer away, he relentlessly pursues her hand in marriage. Floyer's constant pursuit represents how women in Burney's time were objectified and seen as property by the gaze of men. When a woman marries, her literal worth is transferred to her husband. Floyer seeks to increase his financial status by taking over Cecilia's. His greed blinds him to her character's worth. Instead, he sees the financial gain he can acquire should she agree his marriage proposal. Cecilia "became the object of [Floyer's] attention, though neither with the look of admiration due to her beauty, not yet with that of curiosity excited by her novelty, but with the scrutinizing observation of a man on the point of making a bargain, who views with fault-seeking eyes the property he means to cheapen" (34). Although Cecilia is overwhelmed by his pursuit of her, she does recognize his intentions, and she does not fall prey to his empty flattery.

Under the gaze of this patriarchal society, without a father figure for protection, Cecilia turns to Mr. Moncton for guidance. Like Floyer, Moncton masquerades his intentions, but unlike Floyer, Moncton does not overly flatter Cecilia. Rather, he offers protection and advice. Cecilia is led to believe she can trust him and look to him for advice while she is still a minor. “The little knowledge of fashionable manners and of the characters of the times of which Cecilia was yet mistress, she had gathered at the house of this gentleman, with whom the Dean her Uncle had been intimately connected: for as he preserved to the world the same appearance of decency he supported his wife, he was every where well received” (8). Seeing how crafty Moncton is, the reader wonders if Cecilia may not have the faculty to realize that Moncton too is a fortune hunter who is after her wealth. His character is more conniving and deceitful than Floyer’s, and he hides his nefarious intentions from Cecilia very well. His gaze watches Cecilia’s every move, and he waits for an opportunity to take advantage of her inability to discern his ulterior motives. Mr. Moncton’s character is centered on his inability to use his observational powers for noble purposes. When Cecilia is introduced to him, he is married to a much older and extremely irritable and unpleasant woman. Right away we see that he has married this horrible woman for her fortune and we cannot help but sense that he will eventually prey on Cecilia. “So shortsighted is selfish cunning, that in aiming no further than at the gratification of the present moment, it observes the evils of the future, while it impedes the perception of integrity and honour” (8).

As Moncton patiently bides his time, he watches and waits for his chance to strike. Cecilia, at the same time, is seeking a fortress where she can wait until the time comes when she can claim her independence. Cecilia’s uncle prescribes in his will that Cecilia can have her choice of three guardians to watch over her until she comes of age and gains her

independence and inheritance. However, none of these selections fulfill the role of father and protector for Cecilia. One option, Mr. Briggs, is miserly to the point of absurdity.

Yet, in her serious reflections, she could not but think herself strangely unfortunate that the guardian with whom alone it seemed proper for her to reside, should by parsimony, vulgarity, and meanness, render riches contemptible, prosperity unavailing, and economy odious: and that the choice of her uncle should thus unhappily have fallen upon the lowest and most wretched of misers, in a city abounding with opulence, hospitality, and splendor, and of which the principal inhabitants, long eminent for their wealth and their probity, were now almost universally rising in elegance and liberality. (374)

A second father figure, Mr. Delville, is portrayed very differently. Burney introduces his old castle before we meet him. “The grandeur of its former inhabitants was everywhere visible, but the decay into which it was falling rendered such remains mere objects for meditation and melancholy” (457). This man is cold and wrapped up in his search for a name. And her last choice, Mr. Harrell, is the least likely to give her protection. He is more likely to squander her inheritance and ruin her reputation.

Without the protection of a guardian, Cecilia, like her predecessor Evelina, is constantly misinterpreted, and she, too, is in need of protection. She searches for someone who is experienced and trustworthy and who can interpret the intentions and motivations of the other characters. Although Mr. Albany is not a legal guardian, his observations of Cecilia assist her in her own journeys. He is the moral voice no one heeds, and although society scoffs at him, Cecilia alone takes serious account of his moral assertions. “Fixing his eyes upon Cecilia...” he exclaims, “Ah lovely, but perishable flower! How long will that

ingenuous countenance, wearing, because wanting no disguise, look responsive of the whiteness of the region within?" (292). All of Cecilia's masculine and female relationships tend to fail her. This is Burney's way of demonstrating the difficulties that exist when trying to form relationships outside of the family while under the constant gaze of an unfeeling society. Although Cecilia has three guardians, all three fail to protect her and she is forced to abide by their guardianship, or lack thereof, until she comes of age.

As we saw in Evelina, being part of society is defined by seeing and being seen. Ironically, the society that requires visibility can blind its members to the most apparent truths. The blindness of Mrs. Harrel proves to be permanent. She is ruled by society and she cannot see how her and her husband's dissipation will ultimately become their demise. "Mrs. Harrel, with much simplicity, assured her she did nothing but what every body else did, and that it was quite impossible for her to appear in the world in any other manner" (193). Likewise, Lady Honoria's character serves as an instrument that thrives on bringing the reserved nature of Cecilia into view. Her antics bring about much observation upon the feelings that Cecilia vainly tries to hide. Meanwhile, Cecilia believes she has found a friend in the stately Mrs. Delville, but her "friend" scrutinizes her actions. Mrs. Delville "never ceased to watch her" (498).

Although Mrs. Delville is a close and admired companion of Cecilia, her fears and prejudices cloud her never-ending judgmental gaze. She and her husband represent those who cannot let go of the patriarchal past, and so their reputation is wrapped up in the societal weight and status of their name. Although their son desires to be with Cecilia, their "name" is more sacred than their son's love. "Their favorite principles were too early imbibed to be now at this late season eradicated. Slaves that we all are to habits, and dupes to appearances, jealous guardians of our pride, to which our comfort is sacrificed, and even our virtue made

subservient, what conviction can be offered by reason, to notions that exist but by prejudice” (564). As Delville tries to convince Cecilia to marry him in secret, he reveals Burney’s own struggles with the power of objectification of the world around them.

What evil threatens our union that is not imaginary? In the general commerce of the world it may be right to yield to its prejudices, but in matters of serious importance, it is weakness to be shackled by scruples so frivolous, and it is cowardly to be governed by the customs we condemn. (676)

Again the significance of the name and its artificiality surfaces in Cecilia and proves that it has power over all her intentions even though it is an invisible entity.

Elements of the Gothic arise during Cecilia and Delville’s attempt to elope, and this calls into question that what *appears* to the characters’ gaze may not be truly real in this novel. As the reader has seen thus far, there is always the question of who is really a friend conflicting with who is an enemy. Cecilia finds herself questioning her own judgments because of these questions and this puts her in a state of confusion and anxiety when she agrees to marry Delville. (351). Delville can only propose to Cecilia in a covert manner because he too is under the pressures of his parents’ judgmental gaze. The name clause in her fortune causes him to hide from the public as he informs Cecilia of his love for her. Delville attempts to persuade Cecilia to marry him in a clandestine manner due to his parents’ eminence in such matters. Their wedding fails because an unseen and unknown witness who mysteriously objects to their union just as they are about to exchange vows. Cecilia realizes that this unknown person is portraying the reaction that society will have when her unsanctioned marriage is revealed. She immediately recognizes that she cannot consent to marry Delville in this clandestine way even though she had agreed at one point to go through

with a secret marriage. She struggles with herself and with the society she fears will judge her actions ill.

In accepting him, she was exposed to all the displeasure of his relations, and which affected her most, to the indignant severity of his mother: but not another obstacle could be found that seemed of any weight to oppose him. In refusing him she was liable to the derision of the world, to sneers from strangers, and remonstrance from her friends, to becoming a topic for ridicule, if not for slander, and an object of curiosity if not of contempt. (622)

As soon as Cecilia denounces her secret wedding plans, she finds herself driven into a state of madness and solitude and “she found herself shut up in a place of confinement, without light, without knowledge where she was, and not a human being near her!” (898). Cecilia can no longer trust her own eyes and she succumbs to madness. When she is reduced to this state, Mr. Albany recognizes her and restores her to Delville. It is when Delville recognizes her and declares his devotion to her that Cecilia’s sanity and identity are restored.

In Cecilia, Burney’s authoritative voice changed from what we have seen in Evelina. The theme of innocence in Evelina transforms into a theme of experience for Burney’s heroines in her subsequent novels. Like Evelina, Cecilia also learns to recognize that society does not have her best intentions at heart when it casts its eyes upon her. Friends become enemies and enemies become friends. Burney states, “but though discernment teaches us the folly of others, experience singly can teach us our own!” (218). Cecilia must endure the pain of experience in order to obtain eventual “visionary happiness” (320) that she will have when she can distinguish friends from enemies, and fraud from authenticity. Ultimately Cecilia finds her identity and establishes her name by learning how to turn her own gaze upon evil-doers; thus, she resists the disguised temptations put in her path. Fraud in her relationships

and fraud in her finances reduce her to a piece of property. She was tested but not defeated by this new world of charity and debt, and she learns to trust her own vision in order for her to obtain future happiness.

Spying as a Means of Determining a Woman's Worth In Camilla⁸

Eight years after the publication of Cecilia, Burney wrote her third novel Camilla (1796), a novel full of intrigue that portrays characters spying on friends, family, neighbors and strangers as they seek to uncover dark secrets and hidden intentions. No one trusts or is trusted by anyone. The heroine Camilla Tyrold's character and filial loyalty are tested time and time again as her family and friends examine and interpret her every move. Being spied upon places Camilla and other female characters in situations in which they are trapped, confined and restricted. They must be careful of any outward sign they could potentially reveal that could be seen and misunderstood by a world that never ceases scrutinizing them. Camilla under the watchful eyes of: Edgar Mandlebert, the man she loves, Miss Margland, the governess of her rival, Indiana, Dr. Marchmont, who is Edgar's instructor, and the rest of Camilla's family. Edgar and the other characters judge Camilla with their eyes in order to ascertain her worth. To protect herself from the pressures of the ever-present gaze, Camilla endures long bouts of silence and she suffers immensely because of that silence. Camilla's reaction to the many gazes around her is to repress her speech and her feelings. The restraint in her emotional expression ultimately breaks her down and she suffers from an emotional collapse when she loses her identity. As in Cecilia, Camilla too must learn how to combat the spying gazes upon her by gaining the experience she needs to maintain her essence until her hero can accurately recognize her, and thereby restore her identity.

Camilla is more plot-driven than Burney's first two novels. Burney wrote Camilla primarily for money. Camilla's narrative differs formally from the previous two novels in that here Burney takes up the sophisticated practice of presenting scenes from varying points

⁸ All references are to: Camilla or A Picture of Youth, eds. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian Bloom (Oxford University Press-1999).

of view. Early in the novel in the chapter aptly titled “Two Ways of Looking at the Same Thing,” Edgar shows Indiana and Camilla the cottage he has set up for a family who is in need of charitable relief. The two girls have completely different views on this family’s new abode that Edgar has constructed. Indiana displays boredom and she worries about how she looks. In contrast, Camilla expresses genuine concern for the needy family and she finds Edgar’s donation to be generous. During this chapter, Edgar uses his gaze to spy on and measure the two girls’ reactions to his donated cottage. Characters’ different perceptions on a mutual event are often portrayed in order to illustrate their personalities theatrically. Charity, and a character’s reaction to it, is a prominent defining tool. When Camilla is charitable, this eventually leads her to salvation-- but only if the charitable acts are witnessed by a worthy gazer. Her charitable acts can be construed as benevolent, or they can disguise ulterior motives and deceitful purposes-- as in Richardson’s Clarissa. The act of charity is a stylized presentation of courtly and mannered behaviors.

Before writing this novel, Burney had spent the previous five years as Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte. These years provided Burney with a rare inside look into court life, but these years also left her ill and miserable. She found she was unable to write because her time and energy were spent dealing with Queen Charlotte’s eccentric behavior and her need for constant attention. Once Burney left the Queen’s employment, she began writing Camilla.⁹ In the meantime, she married General D’Arbly and had a son; thus, themes of family and children filter through this novel’s narrative more so than her previous two novels. Despite Burney’s happiness in her marriage, themes of familial anxieties are again brought to the fore in Camilla. The reader sees outsiders who keep an eye on Camilla’s

⁹ Please see Justine Crump’s article on Burney’s The Wanderer and how Burney’s time spent with royalty plays a part in her novels.

family and they try to see their inner secrets, but not even the closest relative can see into another's soul. "It is a skeptical novel about the difficulty not only of making choices, but of seeing the truth" (Doody, 214).

Another mannered but effective practice is Burney's frequent allusions to the gaze in Shakespeare's *Othello*. In the chapter "The disastrous Bushkins," Camilla is forced to literally play a part in a "miserably represented" version of *Othello* (318). As in the play, themes of spying, betrayal, and wrong impressions are prominent as Camilla navigates around and amid various gazes. Readers, along with Camilla, need to discern what these characters' motives are when they make their judgments and when they respond to being judged. To do this, the reader watches the characters make observations, and as a spy on the characters, the reader determines the accuracy of the conclusions the characters reach. Unlike Cecilia and Evelina, "in Camilla, the hero and heroine are themselves contaminated by the desire for power, which is no longer only a matter of snobbery or social oppression, but an activity of the human heart itself; a grasping at what is denied" (Doody, 255). In Camilla, outward show and actions are not as apparent and reliable as they were in Burney's first two novels.

The game of setting up people in situations where they can be tested and then observing them and judging them is a major component of the theme of the gaze in this novel. Edgar is supposed to marry Indiana, but he is attracted to Camilla; therefore, as the characters grow up, Edgar's gazing games and tests persist so he can validate the choice of his wife. The only device Edgar trusts to help him fully discern Indiana and Camilla's worth is his own eyes. While spying on Camilla and Indiana, Edgar quickly sees the different reactions of the characters when they are in his gazing spotlight. The difference between Camilla's character and Indiana's is that they each have different perceptions of themselves.

At a party, “the eyes of Camilla sparkled with delight as she surveyed all around her the gay novelty of the scene; the heart of Indiana beat with a pleasure wholly new, as she discovered that all surrounding her regarded her as the principal object” (61). Camilla enjoys the sights around her while Indiana enjoys the sights upon her. Burney portrays the effects of the seduction of gazing admiration through the character of Indiana. “Coquetry is as fascinating to those who practice it, as to those whom it seduces” (810). “Indiana, who now seemed scarce to live but while arraying, or displaying herself” (812) is often compared to Camilla who does not seek the gazing spotlight. Indiana is like the Camilla of Virgil whose “female lust for ornament is her undoing” (Doody, 240). But as the reader learns later in the novel, in various social situations, Camilla too is subjected to being gazed upon as if she is an ornamental object: much like Indiana is. Whether or not she will be seduced by the gaze’s false flattery remains a test that she must constantly face and overcome.

Edgar is not the only character interested in using the gaze when comparing Indiana with Camilla. Miss Margland, Indiana’s governess, is another character whose suspicious eyes infringe upon Camilla. Edgar stages the spying games to test the characters with the hopes of discovering who they really are and what motivates them, but Miss Margland stages the spying games to portray the characters in a light that will gratify her self interests. Miss Margland is artful at placing Camilla in unbecoming situations so that Edgar perceives Camilla as a deceiving coquette. In the meantime, Miss Margland attempts to puff Indiana’s beauty up to Edgar and she tries to sell him on Indiana’s external qualities. This serves her interests in that she is unable to marry now that she is without a fortune, and she is past her prime. She knows that she can latch onto Indiana and live vicariously through her should Indiana and Edgar marry. Miss Margland feels that Indiana’s beauty is the most prized quality in a wife. Ironically, Miss Margland has lost whatever beauty she has ever possessed

and she maintains that it is the most precious asset a woman can have. Here Burney not only stresses that love must transcend physical attraction, she poses and presents various female characters who stand at different, yet tragically similar stages in what must be a continual loss of physical charm and, therefore diminishing power.

Attempting to make sense of what he sees, Edgar goes to Dr. Marchmont for guidance. Edgar's observations are distorted by the motives of Miss Margland, and the guidance he receives from Dr. Marchmont is laden with ulterior motives as well. Marchmont has had three unhappy marriages, and he warns Edgar not to quickly pass judgments when deciding on his wife. Marchmont convinces Edgar to watch Camilla's behavior carefully in order to ascertain her worth. "The course of careful 'observation' Marchmont recommends is ridiculous, for the observer is fallible like the observed" (Doody, 227). Marchmont's previous wives hid from him their true characters. Marchmont tells Edgar that his experiences show that women are capable of presenting their most favorable sides until they win the prize of marriage. It is not until it is too late when Marchmont learned that his wives were either only interested in his fortune, or they were empty and uninteresting mates who would render any relationship unhappy. Essentially, Marchmont warns Edgar to be wary of Camilla's appearances. He advises Edgar to watch with whom she associates. Marchmont feels that this will reveal any ulterior characteristics that had been up to that point hidden from view.

Just as hard as the spies in Camilla try to dig deep into the motivations of those observed, the ones under the spotlight try to withhold the treasures of their inner selves from the pressures of distorting gazes. Though the interests of the main characters would be better served through open and honest communication, stealth and silence stymie the relationships and keep the associations separate. There are two rules in Camilla according to Doody.

Rule A. *Camilla's Rule*. A young woman must never allow her love for a young man to become visible, especially to the object of it, until he has made an unreserved declaration that is a proposal of marriage. Rule B. *Edgar's Rule*. A man must never propose to a woman unless he is sure her heart is now entirely his own. (Doody, 230-231)

Edgar and Camilla are caught up a never-ending circle. They are dancing in a stylized performance where they can never meet in the middle. Camilla will not tell Edgar of her love until Edgar tells her of his. Edgar will not tell Camilla of his love until she shows his judgmental gaze her love.

There is an old adage that admonishes one to learn from the mistakes of others, but those adhering to this adage soon find that one learns much more from one's own mistakes. Edgar, with his spying gaze, watches for and avoids some mistakes, but the watching makes him so careful that decisions are made with great difficulty and he is very hesitant to take any risks. Edgar tries to be sure he does not make any mistakes, and being overcautious is his central mistake. Edgar Mandelbert:

was observant of the errors of others, and watched till he nearly eradicated his own. But though with difficulty he bestowed admiration, he diffused, both in words and deeds, such general amity and good will, that if the strictness of his character inspired general respect, its virtues could not less fail engaging the kinder mode of affection. (57)

Spying on Camilla, Edgar looks for perfection and uses his eyes to peer into her actions and judges her in order to ascertain her worth. At the same time Camilla is trying to hide herself from his investigative gaze. Just as Camilla hides and represses her feelings for Edgar, Edgar is hiding and repressing his feelings, waiting until he is sure Camilla is flawless. Edgar

cannot trust what he thinks, so he relies on the power of his gaze for verification of Camilla's actions. The gaze, however, proves to have its faults and it blinds Edgar to Camilla's true character.

Men looking over and picking out their wives can be compared to shoppers strolling down the street and peering at the vendor's wares—for this valuation, this activity, and determination of worth is another similar form of objectification. As Sara Austin states in her essay on Camilla,

novelists of this period drew on analogies between the positions of young women on the marriage market and novels on the literary marketplace, and sought to distinguish their novels and heroines from commodities through experiments in form and characterization. (Austin, 274)

Mr. Dubster and Mrs. Mitten are two characters who represent the world of commodity that is breaking down the boundaries of the genteel—much like the market does to the literary and artistic value of the novel. Mr. Dubster and Mrs. Mitten effectively reduce the Tyrols, Camilla's family, into mere objects of commodity whenever they are introduced in the novel. Mr. Dubster's home is vulgar and below genteel standards. Camilla and Eugenia, Camilla's sister, feel trapped and objectified when they are there. In turn, Mrs. Mitten puts Camilla on display as they travel through town window-shopping. Mrs. Mitten poses a danger for Camilla, because she forces Camilla further away from her family and into a world of debt and obligation.

The vulgar act of window-shopping without the intent to buy is representative of 1790's courtships and romantic desires, and this activity is often portrayed as an even worse evil than gambling. It is devoid of risk and passion. To merely gaze around the market, both literally and in terms of courtship, represents the changing commercial atmosphere in the

1790's. Marketing relationships shifted from personal ones to more non-personal ones. The goods are openly displayed and ogled at much like Camilla is as she maneuvers amid the various social scenes. "In *Camilla*, casual shopping provides the paradigm for a form of sexual desire that is self-serving, calculating and fickle. The desire to see everything while focusing on nothing suggests both a promiscuity of interest and an ultimate aloofness" (Henderson, 77). Women in the market and novels in the market have similar problems. They are reduced and objectified and therefore subjected to public scrutiny. Mr. Tyrold tries to warn his daughter of the dangers of loving someone without having a firm reciprocity of affection. Women are susceptible to their owners, or husbands and the only way to be safe is to be a "nobody" (Austin, 285). Mr. Tyrold warns Camilla her not to become coquettish and she must ward off the market's endeavors to reduce her to becoming an object to be procured.

At times, Camilla is left alone with Miss Mitten, and her association with Miss Mitten proves to be unsightly to the gaze of onlookers. In order to escape the vapid conversations with her, Camilla sets out to walk with her around town. As they window-shop around town, they draw severe speculation from observers. They are gawked at and perceived to be madwomen and shoplifters. "Some supposed they were only seeking to attract notice; others thought they were deranged in mind; and others, again, imagined they were shoplifters, and hastened back to their counters, to examine what was missing of their goods" (608). When Camilla is observed participating in what was seen as a vulgar act of window-shopping with Miss Mitten, she is interpreted as improper and even as a potential thief. This act reduces her class status because she is now associated with this outwardly crude social blunder of looking without buying. Although Camilla tries to hide herself and her mortification of being gazed upon in this light from Edgar, she fails in this endeavor. Edgar is ever watchful and he

witnesses her in this offensive situation regardless of her endeavors to hide. Edgar sees that Camilla is in company with Mrs. Mitten, who “displayed the low bred society to which she had been accustomed” and he questions her worth (611). The window-shoppers, Camilla and Miss Mitten, become objects for the crowd they pass through to gaze upon-- much like the goods in the store windows.

After Camilla notices Edgar’s disdain for her when she is in the company of Miss Mitten, Camilla attempts to find more estimable companions. She befriends Mrs. Arlbery, and later Mrs. Berlington, but these two relationships are also harmful for Camilla’s character in the eyes of Edgar. Mrs. Arlbery “was utterly careless of appearances” (194) and this characteristic is distasteful to the watching Edgar. However, Camilla is attracted to Mrs. Arlbery’s ability to shun conventions. “You are made a slave in a moment by the world, if you don’t begin life by defying it” (246). Mrs. Arlbery tells Camilla to stop wasting her time on Edgar. He will ultimately leave her because he has over-analyzed Camilla’s character-- this according to Mrs. Arlbery. Mrs. Arlbery tells Camilla that Edgar watches her so closely because he fears she may be putting up false appearances in order to obtain his fortune. Camilla desperately wishes that she could prove to Edgar that she is not after his fortune, but she knows she cannot acknowledge that she even has feelings for him. Edgar, however, spies on Camilla with his judgmental gaze fearfully when she spends time with Mrs. Arlbery.

Camilla’s attempts to appear in a favorable light and avoid Edgar’s investigative gaze are in vain. When Edgar finds out that Camilla visits Mrs. Arlbery against his wishes, he’s so disappointed at her “indifference” that he judges her to be a “slave to the love of pleasure” (354). Edgar vows to forget Camilla, but he continues to spy on her. For instance, they all go to the Pantiles and participate in its ball-like atmosphere; here, we are introduced to a group of fops who are of the “ton” or of fashionable society. Mrs. Arlbery explains her

associations with them when she exclaims, “We are almost all, my good General, of a nature so pitifully plastic, that we act from circumstance, and are fashioned by situation” (398). Mrs. Arlbery embraces this mentality, and Edgar judges it to be destructive to Camilla as he watches Camilla interact with her. When Edgar confronts Camilla with his concerns, Camilla tells him that she will try to disengage herself from the associations with Mrs. Arlbery and Mrs. Berlington. This agreement suggests that the couple will eventually reconcile and put an end to all of this merciless watching and judging.

Edgar and Camilla begin well, but misinterpreted observations soon estrange them again. An example of these mistaken evaluations occurs when the prominent, but highly self-centered, Lady Alithea and her entourage make an appearance at a social gathering. Because he wants to only associate with those whom he deems of superior class value, Sir Sedley largely ignores Camilla. When Mrs. Berlington enters the room, Mrs. Arlbery leaves because she is no longer the center of attention, but once Mrs. Berlington interacts with Camilla, Camilla suddenly becomes fashionable and sought after. Sir Sedley becomes attentive and the Major never leaves her side. All of Camilla’s actions throughout this exchange amaze Edgar, and when he sees Camilla dancing with the Major, he is devastated. Edgar does not know that Camilla has no real control over her reception or acceptance. Edgar is alarmed at the “intoxicating” effects of all this new admiration.

Has she discretion; has she fortitude, thought he, to withstand public distinction? Will it not spoil her for private life; estrange her from family concerns? Render tasteless and insipid the conjugal and maternal characters, meant by Nature to form not only the most sacred of duties, but the most delicious of enjoyments? (444)

Although he once believed that Camilla was perfect for the role as his wife, when he sees her in this social setting and observes the attention she commands, he comes to question his past observations. While her charitable behaviors and her modesty had proven time and time again that she was not like the coquettish Indiana, her associations with fashionable society now lead Edgar to conclude otherwise. The power of this new society has overwhelmed and affected Camilla's character-- at least in Edgar's eyes. Once again he vows to break off his attachment with Camilla, and she is left not knowing what has angered and estranged him.

Camilla seeks refuge from the various critical gazes by retreating back to her home. But now she is changed by her experiences. Camilla attempts to hide her despair, but her father has the ability to perceive her unhappiness. Mr. Tyrold is aware that there is some unknown reason barring Camilla and Edgar from uniting. He warns her not to reveal her feelings by saying something, or expressing, to Edgar inadvertently in an unguarded moment. Mr. Tyrold tells Camilla to repress her speech, and reveal her feelings by actions rather than words. Camilla takes the advice until Edgar has an accident-- a horse kicks him-- and Camilla cannot hide her concern and her love for him when she witnesses the accident. She knows she has revealed too much when she overhears the maids gossiping about her reactions, and she tries to separate herself from the group. Camilla decides to visit Mrs. Arlbery in order to free her from all this scrutiny, much to Edgar's dismay. This is not acceptable behavior according to his code of manners. When the male is wounded, the female must come to his aid and never leave his side. Camilla fails in Edgar's eyes. He misconstrues her reasons for leaving him, so he shuns her. Camilla, not understanding his anger, vows never to see him again in order to spare herself the pain of his presence. Despite their intentions, upon their next encounter, the two recognize the truth of their love for each other and they become engaged.

Although the end of volume four leaves the story with the two lovers engaged, Burney begins the final volume by destroying the engagement when Edgar sees Camilla in what appears to him as being an unforgivable situation. Edgar is forced to listen to Mr. Westwyn describe Camilla as being a coquette who used his son badly. Camilla, in an attempt to avoid Mr. Westwyn's son Hal, instead focuses her attention on Lord Valhurst. But Lord Valhurst takes advantage of finally gaining Camilla's attentions, and he unexpectedly proposes to her. Camilla refuses, but Edgar interprets her behavior as being coquettish. Edgar does not trust that Camilla is who he thought she was and he believes she is just flaunting her coquettish power over men. "How is her delicacy perverted! What is become of her sensibility? Is this the artless Camilla?" (705). Camilla hopes that Edgar will see she has no designs for anyone other than him, and she is elated because she feels her voice has finally been heard. However, her happiness and intentions are misinterpreted. Edgar seeks her out and breaks off the engagement forever. "But what is so hard to judge as the human heart?" (703).

Ultimately, it is Camilla's inability to find the wholesome relationships she has with her family outside of her home that destroys her relationship with Edgar. Much like Cecilia, Camilla's fortunes rise and fall at the whim of the ill-informed and overly-critical. "In all of her novels, Burney has shown the effect of attacks upon the body, shame and embarrassment making the person shrink and cringe" (Doody, 242) and Camilla is no different. Camilla is constantly subjected to Edgar's gaze, and the gaze of many others, and as counter to the patriarchal authority, the family stands as a "bulwark against the alienating commodification characteristic of the market" (Austin, 279). Home is Camilla's sanctuary where no one is judged so cruelly. In the chapter "A Maternal Eye," Camilla's mother's views come to the forefront. She has a vast "depth of observation," and she can see that Camilla's worth as a

woman is greater than Indiana's (217). In this chapter she reveals her vision of an ideal wife. While Camilla closely resembles the ideal, Indiana is just a "beautiful doll" (221) who cannot provide the necessary companionship required of a wife. Mrs. Tyrold laments that Edgar's blindness stunts his relationship with Camilla, and Mrs. Tyrold, much like her husband, advises her daughter to display indifference to Edgar in order to protect herself. Although secrecy is a detestable quality to Camilla, she complies with her parents' advice and represses her feelings for Edgar.

Camilla relies on her family and her home for support, but even Camilla's domestic felicity is compromised when she hides her brother's dissipated troubles from the eyes of her family. Camilla's brother Lionel coerces her to use their trusting uncle to lend him all of the Tyrolds' money in order to settle some gambling debts. Lionel squanders the borrowed money and flees the Tyrolds' home thus he leaves Camilla with the burden of seeing her family go bankrupt. Camilla realizes that her secrecy has used her family's trust cruelly and she realizes that she has destroyed her last means of support. This horrible concealment, combined with her hidden love for Edgar, causes Camilla to break down and flee her home. The overbearing repression of her true appearance ultimately breaks her down and she suffers an emotional collapse. She turns into a homeless wanderer.

When Camilla learns that her father has been imprisoned for her debts, she cannot face her mother's maternal eye. She laments, "My errors have all been doubled by concealment" (831). Camilla feels she is responsible for the disgrace of her beloved family, and when she returns to her home, she finds it completely changed. "Every thing looked desolate, all the family seemed to be vanished" (852). Camilla, looking back on her experiences, realizes she has lost her innocence and a sense of self. Her home has changed in her eyes because her home is not her home without her family. Camilla, now dispossessed,

flies from her home and wanders aimlessly, wishing only for death. It is at this point when she comes across a funeral procession. During Camilla's breakdown, she sees the dead body of Eugenia's philandering husband, Bellamy. Bellamy "was now where no human eye could follow, no human judgment overtake him" (871). Death seems to be Camilla's only chance of escaping the onslaught of judgments against her. Death comes in her visions and her dreams and she finds herself slipping into a madness that almost overwhelms all of her senses. The only cure for the madness is the recognition and forgiveness of her parents and of Edgar. Camilla's identity is about to succumb to the death of madness. She is materially and emotionally impoverished without the support of her family. Ultimately, her mental state is so compromised that visions and nightmares overwhelm the once happy and tranquil mind of Camilla. "Gazing on the corpse of the Male, Camilla gazes at dead law, absence of authority, abstraction, and false names, the (temporary) end of Law of the Father" (271). In this sense, madness allows for freedom from the constraints of observation.

Although madness has broken Camilla away from the onslaught of pervading observations, she is now without a home and without an identity. Both are restored to her when Edgar recognizes her in her madness. While Camilla is virtually unrecognizable, Edgar finally sees that all of his judgments have been in error and that his relentless watching has distorted Camilla's good character. He too has learned that he must make Camilla his wife and family and thereby create a new and safe domestic circle where he, Camilla, and the rest of the Tyrols' can find safety from outside distorting social eyes.

"The characters in *Camilla*, Edgar probably most of all, go through intellectual processes of seeing, conjecturing, concluding, and these intellectual processes of decoding and construction lead them to absurdity" (Doody, 249). In this sense Camilla is a novel of

education. Camilla must learn when to reveal her true feelings and when to hide them from outside gazes.

The gaze upon Camilla comes from people who constantly spy on her every move. “Burney wants the reader to see a host of connections, with the focus on the story of the self-deceiving heart and ironic desire, in an uneasy society where many different deserving hearts and self-centered imaginations operate “(Doody, 215). Burney, without overtly criticizing eighteenth-century marriage customs, incorporates a sense of condemnation on the patriarchal familial system where women find themselves trapped in domestic roles and are diminished as the objects of exchange. Camilla’s deep loyalty and devotion towards Edgar marks him as both a brother and husband, thereby making subversive the traditional marriage exchange by combining romance with filial obligations. Camilla too, bucks the system by possessing more virtuous and domestic attributes, which in turn make her more marketable in the eyes of Edgar.

“The Accusation of Appearances”:

Performing at the Mercy of Presumption in Burney’s The Wanderer¹⁰

Burney’s final novel, The Wanderer (1802), depicts how an audience’s judgment of performance is at the mercy of presumption. In this novel, Burney implements the tradition of the Gothic, and The Wanderer is much more serious in tone than Burney’s previous novels. The Wanderer is the story of an (at first) unnamed and solitary heroine who although very talented and beautiful-- too beautiful perhaps-- has no connections and not only lacks protection and privilege of an aristocratic woman of her accomplishments, it appears as though she has no family at all. The Wanderer’s heroine is a foreigner of dubious background who finds herself in English society. Themes of pursuit and being overwhelmed by dark and evil forces are combined with themes of debt, lack of fortune, dependence, charity that exist in Burney’s previous three novels. These topics are examined and extended further when they are joined with themes of integrity, morals, fortitude, and self-maintenance.

The heroine in The Wanderer clearly knows herself, but she cannot reveal her true identity to the curious and gazing characters around her. Unlike the heroines in Burney’s previous novels, the heroine in The Wanderer has the ability to go on stage where she can act and perform and maintain her various disguises. The heroine uses disguises and role-playing in order to protect herself from the pressures of the gazes upon her. In turn, the heroine can manipulate how she appears, but her integrity and moral standing always remain intact. Despite her endeavors to conceal her true identity, the heroine, just like Burney’s previous heroines, is victimized by the gaze and she has to face the public as who she really is.

¹⁰ All references are to: The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties, eds. Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford University Press- 1991).

As in Evelina, Cecilia, and Camilla the roles of names and naming, or lack of name in the instance of The Wanderer, define and redefine the heroine; and the social gaze threatens to judge the heroine solely on her lack of name. In The Wanderer, Burney withholds the heroine's name until half way through this novel. Although readers are offered a close and intimate glimpse into this wandering heroine, and they learn her name, the heroine's true identity and past is not revealed until the end of the novel. The wandering heroine is watched by society as she maneuvers through diverse social networks, and Burney reveals an unseen and foreign side and character of this particular heroine. The Wanderer craves and needs society in order to survive, yet at times she hides from it, or is banned from it because she is misunderstood and lacking a legitimate name.

In this work, Burney offers a portrayal of the combating themes that occurred during the French Revolution. In Burney's final novel, some anti-Jacobin sentiment becomes mixed somewhat with Jacobin sentiment. Jacobin novels tend to reveal the voices of rebellion of the disenfranchised and marginalized. Although Burney had been close to the anti-Jacobin Edmund Burke, her relationship to him disintegrated as time went on. Her journals reveal that her admiration for him slowly turned into boredom. In her fiction, anti-Jacobin sentiment became somewhat mixed with Jacobin sentiment. This mixture is largely illustrated in The Wanderer-- especially in the debates and comparisons between Elinor and Juliet (a.k.a Juliet). By means of performances and appearances, we see a discussion between what is considered radical and what is considered conservative play out within this novel's plot. There is a conflict between "the urge to rebel and an urge to conform" (Doody, 333). This sets the stage for Juliet's "difficulties."

Although Burney continues to play on many of the same themes as in her previous novels, The Wanderer's plot structure is mysterious and puzzling. The Wanderer was written

after Burney's painful mastectomy, and this novel is more painful in its tone. In addition, the manuscript, much like the unnamed heroine, made the treacherous and secret journey from France to England under similar circumstances as those described in The Wanderer. Unlike Burney's previous novels, this particular work has a historical context: the 1790's and the French Revolution. Burney wanted to "unite" the two countries with this novel (Doody, 317). Burney may have felt there was a general misunderstanding of the political rebellion because The Wanderer is not necessarily political even though its political and historical context is important to its plot development. Because of this tumultuous political background in the novel, should Burney's Wanderer find herself recognized, she will be doomed. The Wanderer is fleeing from some mysterious danger that she cannot disclose. The intrigue begins with a group of people boarding a boat late at night in darkness and obscurity. The reader must discern who the escapees are and from what they are escaping. The reader learns quickly that The Wanderer is traveling alone, and The Wanderer is pursued by a mysterious past that she is forbidden to reveal. Immediately, the predominant themes of taking flight and wandering in search of safety let Burney illustrate how an audience's judgment of performance is at the mercy of presumption. The unnamed heroine must rely on disguises and performances in order to survive in a society where she is without familial support. These disguises hide the Wanderer's identity and allow delayed and false recognitions to sway society toward incorrect judgments. To have faith in this nameless heroine means that one does not have faith in the aristocratic myth. Almost all of those who surround her fail at seeing her true character and a social reordering must take place.

When first introduced to the wandering heroine, the reader is afforded only a description of the unnamed woman's disguise. Her face is darkened by paint and she barely speaks. Her accent is hard to place. When offered a better glimpse of the Incognita's face,

the reader sees that the stranger is bandaged as if she is the victim of the war which she and her fellow travelers are escaping. As time passes, the stranger's painted face washes away and we see that this woman is beautiful, and she obviously comes from a well-bred and well-educated background. However, this heroine will not reveal anything from her past--including her name-- even if it could garner some safety from the others. Ultimately, the gaze of the society around finds her mysterious and secretive manners unacceptable. The society she finds herself in begins to construct her identity. They even assign The Wanderer a name when they see her pick up a letter addressed to "L.S." The heroine and her name are constantly warped by their misconstructions. Society misunderstands what it hears and how it is pronounced and they call her "Ellis."¹¹ This name remains with the stranger for most of the novel. By assigning a name to the stranger, society labels her with its suppositions about her character. They do not stop for one moment to question their own observations. Rather, they hold them to be true, as we will see in the case of Lady Howell. The stranger can only reveal to them that she has many talents in the performing arts. She can sing, play the harp, and she can act.

Early on in the novel Juliet demonstrates that she has a penchant for performing. During a play she is forced to act in, "her voice, from seeming feeble and monotonous, became clear and penetrating; it was varied, with the nicest discrimination, for the expression of every character, changing its modulation from tones of softest sensibility, to those of archest humour; and from reasoning severity, to those of uncultured rusticity" (80). Her ability and talent to take on different characters do not go unnoticed by Harleigh, the only one around Juliet who has the ability to distinguish her from the rest of society. "Harleigh, however, alone perceived her excellence" (84). He can also perceive that although Juliet can

¹¹ For the sake of clarity, I will refer to the heroine as "Juliet."

perform beautifully in a fictitious play, she despises being made an object of the gaze and being subjected to judgmental observations. Juliet dislikes being made an “object of sport” and being “stared at like a wild beast” (54-55). During another performance, Juliet finds herself alone and unknown, yet overwhelmingly watched. “Embarrassed, irresolute, vainly seeking some kind eye to invite her on; but how advance, where no one addressed, or seemed to know her?” (307). Panic overwhelms her during this performance and she sinks into herself. Her performance is subdued and introverted, but her audience does not seem to notice that she has become introverted and almost hidden within herself in order to escape their gazes. No one from the crowd attempts to help her because they cannot see that she is succumbing to their scrutiny.

Juliet’s revulsion at performance conflicts with her need to perform for her survival in society. Her legitimacy is constantly called into question because she is an alien to English society, yet she claims she is not a foreigner. Juliet is forced to prove her legitimacy without revealing her past, but this proves to be an impossible task. “The mystery that hung about her was rather thickened than cleared, and the less she appeared like an ordinary person, the more restless became conjecture, to dive into some probable motive, for the immovable obstinacy of her concealment” (76). Later in the novel she states, “Appearances are against me; and to appearances are we not all either victims or dupes?” (275). Juliet is “bound to silence,” yet she is subjected to scrutiny, and she cannot defend herself. Burney shows she is concerned “with naming, identity and legitimacy” (Jones, 9). Her central character, Juliet, seeks a name and an identity-- much like the main character in Evelina but Juliet must rely on her performances and her disguises in order to protect her from her mysterious past. However, the masks Juliet works hard to uphold disintegrate under the watchful members of

her society. Society relies on the power of their gaze and presumptions, and when Juliet betrays that, they are unable to accept her into their group.

The leader of the society in which Juliet is forced to stay is the nasty and bitter Mrs. Howell. Mrs. Howell automatically believes that Juliet is an imposter because of Juliet's clandestine behavior. "Innocent?" repeated Mrs. Howell, with an air of inexorable ire; 'without a name, without a home, without a friend?-- Innocent? Presenting yourself under false appearances to one family, and under false pretences to another?" (133). Mrs. Howell relies on names and connections in order to verify Juliet's worth and credibility. "Taking a haughty attitude to others, condemning individuals and groups to inferiority has been the cardinal sin of society in The Wanderer" (Doody, 360) and Mrs. Howell's character is representative of this particular theme. The Wanderer's underlying moral stance is that of advocating integrity over class when it judges its characters. Mrs. Howell's gaze is unable to look past surface appearances, so her judgment is misguided and erroneous. Juliet is trapped by the presumptions of Mrs. Howell's gaze, and she cannot defend herself.

Deeply hurt and strongly affected, how insufficient, she exclaimed, is a FEMALE to herself! How utterly dependent upon situation-connexions-circumstance! How nameless, how forever fresh-springing are her DIFFICULTIES, when she would owe her existence to her own exertions! Her conduct is criticized, not scrutinized; her character is censured, not examined; her labours are unhonoured, and her qualifications are but lures to ill will! Calumny hovers over her head, and slander follows her footsteps! (275).

Mrs. Howell endeavors to banish Juliet from her society. Mrs. Howell's assumptive gaze is one of the many reasons Juliet must wander aimlessly in society looking for a home.

Other members of Mrs. Howell's society watch Juliet as well. Elinor Joddrel sees that the object of her affections, Harleigh, is intrigued by Juliet rather than by her and this exposure devastates Elinor. Burney juxtaposes the characters of Juliet and Elinor in order to show two sides of women and how the gaze affects each side. In The Wanderer, Burney provides "two female characters [who] embody the two sides of the debate on the propriety of free expression for women" (Doody, 259). Juliet embodies the woman constrained by her hidden expression. Although Juliet is a talented actress, she faints when she is on stage. In contrast, Elinor Joddrel bucks propriety and is able to express herself in elaborate performances. Elinor has spent some time studying in France where she has embraced modern ideas of the Revolution. Juliet and Elinor differ in that Juliet is watched and Elinor is a watcher. As Harleigh watches Juliet, Elinor watches him. "Elinor was all eye, all scrutiny, but all silence" (120). For example, Elinor tells Juliet, "Nobody knows my feelings, and nobody understands my reasons. So every body is at war against me in the dark" (152). Elinor despises being perceived in the dark. Unlike Juliet, Elinor craves to be recognized. Elinor uses a disguise to get into a concert and attempt suicide in public. Juliet stays the suicide attempt by fainting. When Juliet awakens from her fainting fit, she realizes that she must leave "the fatal sight of Harleigh" (363) in order to save Elinor from her suicidal tendencies. Juliet finds herself wandering again looking for a place to call home. But Elinor's watchful eye is inescapable for Juliet. Elinor constantly sets up scenes for Juliet and Harleigh to act out their love for one another. In her mind, everyone is an actor catering to the conventions of their society. Elinor abhors the obscurity in which women find themselves. She goes against convention and professes her love to Harleigh. Another instance of Elinor's use of disguise occurs when she gets Harleigh and Juliet to meet her at the cemetery. She was "half-hidden behind a monument, a form in white; whose dress

appeared to be made in the shape, and of the materials, used for our last mortal covering, a shroud” (579). Like Juliet, Elinor struggles with appearances that women must uphold in society. Elinor claims she will end up in obscurity if Harleigh does not love her back. “Suicide is a reflex of extreme distaste for reality and sometimes reality is distasteful” (Doody, 341). Thus a debate between what is spiritual and physical ensues. Elinor the watcher disdains what she cannot see.

Harleigh represents the argument for spirituality when he tries to convince Elinor that there is a better world beyond the distasteful one she perceives she inhabits. “Ah, why, to intellects so strong, a heart so liberal, a temper so gay, is there not joined a better portion of judgment, a larger one of diffidence, a sense of feminine propriety, and a mind rectified by religion, not abandoned, uncontrolled, to imagination?” (401). The French Revolution provided a forum for feminist revolution. Mary Wollstonecraft was an enormous contributor to feminist defiance. In Wollstonecraft’s *Maria, or The Wrongs of Women*, the judge condemns Maria to imprisonment in a madhouse after a trial on her fidelity. Burney too uses the emblems of prisons and madhouses in The Wanderer to illustrate how women are confined by the presumptions of society’s gaze. Burney lets society’s judgmental eye serve as a moral audience to Elinor’s theatrical and rebellious behaviors and performances. Elinor acquiesces to Harleigh’s wishes for her to become more socially and mentally stable, but her performance merely masks her true revolutionary sentiments.

As the Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte during the French Revolution, Burney experienced first hand the new mode of mental therapy, which Justine Crump terms as “moral management” when Burney witnessed the madness of King George III (Crump, 330). Moral management discards the traditional therapies of restraint. This new therapy promoted a more uninhibited and unconfined atmosphere in addition to more conducive and

healthy environments for the mentally ill. Doctors who utilized the moral management technique argued that they can instill a sense of rationality into the minds of the mentally ill, especially with the doctors' penetrating and all seeing gazes. Through constant surveillance, patients learn to suppress their deviant behaviors. In The Wanderer, Burney portrays Elinor's fits of madness as being vehicles for "her defiance of wider social prescriptions" (Crump, 331). Harleigh serves as a therapist in a sense who employs "moral management" in order to persuade Elinor that she is acting improperly and irrationally. He seeks to fight "her revolutionary feminist principles by invoking conservative social and political standards as moral imperatives" (Crump, 333). In turn, Elinor uses the same argument to fight for her revolutionary ideologies. Rather than continuing in the debate, Harleigh utilizes a moral management tactic of not hearing her. He takes on the role of a conservative paradigm that will not even listen to her arguments; thereby, he refuses to cater to her madness. Burney's last novel was subject to some dismissive criticism among her readers and her peers. Even though the author attempted to explain in her preface that her intentions were to promote conservative ideologies, she still seems to have lent a sympathetic ear to revolutionary thought by portraying Elinor in such a sympathetic light. "Any expression of concurrence with Jacobin or feminist principles is sufficient to confer the double taint of irrationality and immorality" (Crump, 340).

Juliet chooses to leave Harleigh and Elinor to their debate and she wanders through various scenes in search of a place where she can work and sustain herself financially without being subjected to scrutinizing gazers. In all of her novels, Burney reveals the difficulties women have when they attempt to become independent. Although Juliet does not want to become an object in the public eye, her circumstances force her to use her performing talents in order to make a living. As a woman, Juliet does not have many options

for sustaining a livelihood. Employment brings self-sufficiency, but its options are limited for Juliet and for women during this time. Burney argues that drudgery can be demeaning and she advocates that women should be educated so that they have more options should they choose a life of self-maintenance. Juliet seeks to become a music teacher-- a profession Burney used in remembrance of her father. However, Juliet's teachings go unpaid due to her patrons' refusal to pay what they owe for her instruction. Not paying the tradesperson is a serious offense and one that is frequently taken up in literature as an indication of aristocratic decadence. Ultimately Juliet finds that she is unable to pay her own debts and she must seek new employment. Juliet is placed in a position to do needlework. "It was here that she saw, in its unmasked futility, the selfishness of personal vanity. "The good of a nation, the interest of society, the welfare of a family, could with difficulty have appeared of higher importance than the choice of a ribbon, or the set of a cap" (426). This new situation repulses Juliet. She finds herself thrust into the public spotlight again and she dreads the gazes that will be bestowed upon her in the public shop. Juliet disdains the act of high society members not paying for its luxuries, and she recognizes that the laborers who worked hard for someone else's extravagances are subjected and demeaned into a lowly state.

In order to escape the demeaning work and the public place of the needlework shop, Juliet becomes a companion to the sarcastic Mrs. Ireton. Mrs. Ireton, whose "restless eye roved incessantly from object to object, in search of various food for her spleen"(479), objectifies everything around her for her own personal amusement, and Juliet cannot escape Mrs. Ireton's gaze. Mrs. Ireton's character and Juliet's situation as her companion closely resembles some of the antics Burney endured when she was Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte. Burney relies on her observations of Queen Charlotte when she depicts the

cranky Mrs. Ireton. This nasty woman constantly watches Juliet, and Juliet must endeavor to contain her anger at being overwhelmed by Mrs. Ireton's gaze.

It is when Juliet is almost brought to the point of madness that another Wanderer named Gabriella recognizes Juliet at a graveyard. In this Gothic moment the reader finally learns Juliet's real name is not "Ellis" as they previously believed. As in Cecilia, the role of the name defines and redefines the Juliet's character. The heroine is Juliet to some and Juliet to those who are closest to her. This recognition comes at a price, however. On learning Juliet's name, the reader is close to the past, and the past foreshadows the future dangers Juliet must face. Once Juliet's name is revealed, the reader realizes that the dangerous past she sought to hide from is close to finding her. Her disguises are not protecting her from its recognition.

Juliet's disguises have betrayed her when she learns that the mysterious man that has been following her is her dreaded husband, and he recognizes her despite her disguises. In a tense series of scenes and chapters, this evil man, who wants her only for her fortune, relentlessly pursues Juliet. The closer he gets to finding her, the more the reader learns of her mysterious past. Juliet is fleeing from France and its revolution because an officer has married her against her will for her family's fortune. In order to protect her innocence, Juliet attempted to hide from this man's nefarious intentions by fleeing to England. When Juliet learns that her husband is close to finding her, she becomes a wanderer once more, but now her wandering is more frantic. Juliet tries to present herself as a mere traveler, but she still finds herself gazed at in wonder by outside observers as she grows more and more fatigued by her flight. "[S]he lost, to the vulgar observer, her appearance of innocence" (668). Juliet's fear of being recognized overcomes her abilities to perform and she now appears in a vulgar and disreputable manner.

Harleigh's recognition of Juliet's true character-- a character that transcends aristocratic norms-- saves Juliet from her past. When Harleigh observes Juliet, he sees beyond what society judges to be a dubious imposter. He argues that Juliet's "conduct has rather been exemplary and irreproachable from the moment that she has been cast upon our knowledge" (613). Other than Harleigh, Lady Aurora Granville is the only other character that seeks to determine what is noble in Juliet's character. Her observations of Juliet lead her to believe that Juliet is not an imposter. When Juliet's identity is revealed, it is also revealed that she and Lady Aurora are actually sisters, but Juliet could not divulge that information until all of the uncertain questions that surround her have been cleared.

When all is finally revealed, the characters, along with the reader, can understand the secrecy. After her husband is killed, Juliet finds her honor, identity and her family are restored. Juliet's past is revealed, and she can now own her family. "Her situation appeared to her now to be as extraordinary, as it was sad and difficult. Entitled to an ample fortune, yet penniless; indebted for her sole preservation from insult and from famine, to pecuniary obligations from accidental acquaintances, and those acquaintances, men!" (816). The Wanderer is exonerated when she assumes her identity and stops running from her past and is "no longer consigned to disguise, to debt, to indigence, and to flight!"(816).

As Juliet wandered, she longed to throw off her disguises, but she was forced to keep them on. Juliet craves society, yet hides from it, or is banned from it because of her being misunderstood as an imposter and as an impoverished nameless interloper. Readers are offered a close and intimate glimpse into the heroine's anxieties as she struggles for a sense of identity. Burney's heroines are watched as they maneuver through diverse social networks, and the unseen sides and characters of women are revealed. Burney ultimately argues for "the need for wider sympathies" amid a world refusing to see beyond what is

socially in place (Doody, 331). Mystery pervades this novel. “Living in history means living in dread. Life in history is life in mystery” (Doody, 319). Under the searching gaze of English society the mysterious Wanderer performs in order to survive and she exists at the mercy of presumption. She asks to be accepted on appearance’s sake only. Time and time again she demonstrates superiority at all levels, looks, musical talents, charm, style, and grace. Juliet challenges society’s belief in the validity of its myths. They cannot recognize them as one of their own and they are unable to justify the present power structure.

Conclusion

Burney's novels reflect the power of the gaze in the world of characters that surrounds her heroines with its constant objectification. Ultimately, Burney does not provide her reader with an ideology. While her novels offer broad and comprehensive analysis of the social network's inability to embrace her heroines and provide for them, her revealing paradoxes do not necessarily show a right side or a wrong side to the problem at hand: rather she shows the contradictions that exist and she pits these contradictions one against another in her patriarchal society. Her novels offer broad and comprehensive analysis of the social network's ability to oversee her heroines and to dictate the motivations of her heroines.

In order to combat this control of the gaze of their fellow characters, all of the heroines in Burney's novels rely on performance, and each heroine seeks to create a new power in her respective performance as they resist classifications. Through their performances, they act outside of the roles that are prescribed to them by society. In each of Burney's novels, after enduring many trials, her heroines rise above the influence of the powerful gaze. They all began their individual journeys untainted by the pressures of societal judgments, and they all are confronted with the tensions and contradictions of the society in which they must maneuver. Indeed, these conflicts force them to the brink of madness. Happily, at the end of the heroines' struggles with the gaze there is a stable and unselfconscious marriage environment.

Burney's fiction posits that what is "seen" is merely a representation of our own prejudices and she shows her readers, and the culture at large, to reexamine the validity of appearance and the prejudices associated with them. Family, friends, critics, and strangers (whether these people are fictional or non-fictional, biographical or non-biographical) all participate in the critical act of making social distinctions. The social eye is inescapable and

oppressive, and Burney as an author and as a woman fights these battles with these constant overseers, no matter what shapes they take. By revealing her voice and her identity through the voices and identities of her heroines, Burney succeeds in effectively portraying the struggle with and against the social gaze even though the historical contexts shift from the domestic to the courtly and finally to the revolutionary. Despite the shifting contexts, the gaze always remains a significant and inescapable presence.

Francis Burney's astute insight and observations of her social environment reveal society's warped visions and blindness, and she effectively portrays this insight in all her novels by using the gaze's various power structures between her heroines and her other characters as a common motif. Burney's heroines are morally sound, practical, and rational, yet they find themselves preyed upon and victimized by the gaze. Each heroine almost loses her identity to the gaze's power and they each come precariously close to succumbing to obscurity. Burney shows that by means of education, experience, recognition, and awareness, the heroines are capable individuals who have the ability to rescue themselves from drowning in the obfuscation that was created by the gaze of outsiders. In each of her novels, Burney illustrates how the gaze has the potential to have total control over her heroines, and then she turns the gaze back onto itself by proving that the power of the gaze is not as strong and controlling as it appears to be. By enabling each of her heroines to resist the gaze's onslaught upon her identity, Burney returns that all-seeing power back to the one who was once under the gaze's scrutiny.

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