Frances Burney's Musical Inheritance: Performance, Professionalism and Feminine Identity in Eighteenth-Century Culture

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

Frances Burney's early experiences of performance culture in her father Charles's musical household uniquely informed her own professional identity. The imagined continuity between the authorial body and its textual product parallels the physical exposure associated with performance professions, especially for women in a gendered artistic culture. Burney's relationship with the literary hostess Hester Thrale illustrates the perpetuation of gendered models of cultural production and consumption in fashionable literary society. Burney's attempt to maintain an emotional, rather than intellectual, friendship with Thrale resists the cultural commodification that attends literary celebrity. The meritocratic, artistic-professional ethos of the Burney household offers an alternative to the producer-consumer paradigm of the fashionable drawing room. Burney's correspondence with her sister Susan creates a microcosm of this ungendered, egalitarian creative household, and elevates the privacy of the domestic family as a creative space uninflected by specular relations.

Burney's novels increasingly interrogate the eighteenth-century obsession with visibility; her *Court Journals* relate the infiltration by specular relations of even this most private of spaces, which is manifested in her later novels, particularly *The Wanderer*. While cultural participation and specialisation offers her heroines the potential for the development of an autonomous identity, the visibility of cultural artefacts invites appropriation of that identity by others. Furthermore, her novels demonstrate the increasing violence with which female authorial bodies are threatened through association with their public, textual product. *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* is the pinnacle of Burney's separation of private and professional identity. In rendering a public version of her father's life, Burney mobilises her professional persona in order to

shield the familial, domestic privacy in which true creativity is possible. Burney claims narrative authority that both invokes and supersedes her father's. This narration of her own creative origins is the ultimate metaphor for her confident literary autonomy.

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Introduction

In *Thraliana*, Hester Thrale refers to her friend Frances Burney as having 'the Grace of an Actress not a Woman of Fashion – how should it? The Burneys are I believe a very low Race of Mortals'.[1] Thrale's remark is rather uncharitable, invoking as it does the social gulf between the two women that was impossible for Burney to forget. Thrale, who herself was 'a Woman of Fashion', was the patron of Burney's father, Charles Burney, a music teacher and, later, a historian of music, whom the Thrales employed to teach music to their eldest daughter. Burney's friendship with her father's employer was thus founded on terms of inequality. Thrale's comment is, however, intensely revealing: the distinction between the 'actress' and 'the woman of fashion' pinpoints Burney's problematic social status both as an artistic producer herself, and as a member of an artistic-professional family who were at the heart of London's performative culture. Burney's upbringing in a musical household occasioned her early introduction to the contradictory social position of creative professionals who, as the producers of high culture, were paradoxically ranked amongst the lower strata of society. Her commentary upon, and often concern for, the reputations of the performing women around her manifest her recognition, in them, of her own liminal social position. Furthermore, her engagement with, and representation of, different forms of cultural production and cultural consumption on which the fashionable society of the late eighteenth century is predicated, is uniquely informed by that upbringing. While this important musical context has been recognised by Burney's critics as influencing her representation of performance culture – particularly in *Evelina* (1778) – the impact of the specific creative-professional ethos of her father's household on her own

[1] Hester Thrale, *Thraliana*, ed. by Katherine C. Balderston, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), i. 368.

construction of a professional identity has been neglected. Betty Schellenberg, in her convincing account of Burney's deliberate adoption of professional, print-based authorship, pinpoints Burney's 'apprenticeship in the Streatham circle' as formative in the construction of her professional identity. While Schellenberg also recognises the importance of 'her previous initiation to the print trade as her father's amanuensis and copyist', she ties Burney's experiences of creative professionalism exclusively to the literary elements of Charles Burney's career.[2] However, I will demonstrate that this professional 'apprenticeship' began much earlier, in the alternative conversational salon at St. Martin's street, amongst Charles Burney's diverse social network of musicians, artists, actors and writers.

In his recent study of the interplay between music and romanticism, Gillen D'Arcy Wood has noted this neglect, which he himself begins to redress in a chapter devoted to Burney's fiction. Wood claims that 'the scholarly estrangement of music and literature is grounded [...] in the Romantic-era formation of the disciplines', which constituted an attempt to separate externalised luxuries (music included) from the internalised self-realisation that characterised romantic ideologies of authorship.[3] This, he argues, has resulted in a lack of serious attention to the relationship between musical and literary styles. Wood contrasts Burney's earlier 'wild and compelling polyphony' in *Evelina* to the later 'uniform polite language' of *Camilla* (1796) and *The Wanderer* (1814), and characterises this change as a reaction against her father's fashionable aesthetic of '*galant*'.[4] Wood's work is an important opening in a serious consideration of Burney's literary output in its broader context as one of many types of cultural production, and offers a thoughtful study of Burney's stylistic inheritance from her

[2] Betty Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 159.
[3] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 19.
[4] Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture*, p. 53.

father's musical career. However, Wood does not enter in detail into the social and cultural implications of Burney's twin status both as a writer and as the daughter of a musician, which will form the basis of my analysis. Furthermore, Wood reiterates the narrative of rejection and resistance that has prevailed in much recent criticism; I will argue, conversely, that rather than a rejection of musical culture, Burney's later fiction represents a refined and intensified examination of the problematic relationship between performer and spectator that pervades even the most private of spaces.

In order to fully understand the particularities of Burney's experience, it is crucial to appreciate the nature of the social and professional context in which she began her literary career, and the particular position of the Burney family. The social history of music in the eighteenth century is complicated by a bifurcation of the profession into two branches of differing social status. In her detailed study, Deborah Rohr observes that music as a liberal art had 'a high status career track securely linked to Church and universities [...] and an essential social value due to its role in the services of the Anglican Church' but that there was also a 'lower-status artisanal branch' of secular musicians. By the mid eighteenth century, Rohr claims, Church musicians had become 'less significant in the profession as a whole', and even the cachet of this branch of the profession, and of a musical degree, was in decline.[5] Nevertheless, Church- and university-sanctioned musicians retained a respectability that was problematic, if not impossible, for most secular musicians. Whilst the specialist technical knowledge and skill required for a musical career was comparable with that of other rising professions – such as the legal and medical – this was not formally recognised outside the universities (at which only a minority of musicians were educated) due to the absence of any central

[5] Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 9.

regulating body.[6] Thus the award of Doctor of Music from Oxford University was a significant moment for Charles Burney, and the Burney household as a whole, as it elevated him from the status of artisan to that of man of letters.

Despite Charles Burney's ascent to university-sanctioned status, his social status as a musical professional remained equivocal, as did that of his family. This is evidenced by Burney's impulse to rewrite family history, in particular the professional activities of her father and her sister Esther (the wife of a professional musician and a talented performer herself). Burney claims that Esther, a child prodigy on the harpsichord, 'since her marriage, [had] almost entirely given up Practising'. However, her rapidly expanding family required support from her husband's (less rapidly-expanding) teaching practice: in order to help showcase his talents, she in fact frequently joined her husband in duets at her father's private musical evenings. As Burney puts it, 'we have, at present, concerts so frequently that she has been prevailed upon to recover her fingers a little'.[7] Not strictly within the public domain, private recitals still represented a commercial opportunity, particularly for the secular musician. Rohr argues that

> Before 1850, solo recitals were not offered with any hope of financial gain, but were rather means of advertising in the hope of establishing reputations and expanding teaching practices.[8]

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[6] Although a 'Fund for Decay'd Musicians' had been established in 1738, becoming the Royal Society of Musicians by Royal Charter in 1790, it remained essentially a benevolent organisation that had no licensing powers. Rohr, *Careers of British Musicians*, p. 10.

[7] Frances Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-), i. 230.

[8] Rohr, *Careers of British Musicians*, p. 116.

Burney's unwillingness to acknowledge the professional motivation behind her sister's performances reveals her discomfort with the reality of her family's professional and social status. The use of recitals as a 'means of advertising' configures musical talent as a saleable item, and reinforces associations of musicians with artisans and the labouring classes.

Burney's diaries have long been recognised by historians of music as an important primary source, offering as they do an insider's account of the performance culture of late-eighteenth-century London. The Burney family were regular in their attendance at the Italian Opera, often being invited to exclusive rehearsals, and their social network extended to all manner of creative professionals. Bred in a family of musical specialists, Burney was in a unique position of access to those creative professionals both within designated performance spaces – such as the Opera House, the Theatre, and the Pantheon – and in the privacy of the exclusive musical party, in which the binary of spectator and performer could be effaced because musical specialism was universal and thus inconspicuous. Outside of that private, specialised environment, however, Burney was witness to the problematic conflation of cultural production with physical exposure, particularly for female performers. Kristina Straub has observed that 'whereas the discourse of professionalism helped to legitimate actors' "feminine" excess it intensified the contradictions between femininity as a public spectacle and the emergent definition of the middle-class woman as domestic and private, veiled from the public eye'.[9] As I demonstrate in Chapter One, the tension between public professionalism and private femininity that dogged women in performance professions provides a crucial context, both for Burney's first novel, and for her early negotiations with, and resistance to, her new-found literary celebrity. The figure of the *prima donna*

[9] Kristina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 89.

is particularly appropriate to illuminate Burney's social context, as it combines the elements of celebrity and technical ability with ambiguous social status and commodification. The savage and sexualised dismemberment of *prima donna* Lucrezia Agujari threatened in the anonymous satire *The Silver Tail* (1775) foreshadows the ravenous, cannibalistic desire of Burney's readers to consume her body as well as her fiction.[10] As a woman of inferior class elevated by her artistic talents, Burney would face much of the prejudice that attached itself to family friend, and fellow mimic, Jane Barsanti, in her able ventriloquism of a diverse social spectrum. Through Burney's accounts of the careers of Agujari, Barsanti, and the 'English' opera singer Cecilia Davies, I interrogate the role of a female musician as artist/art-object, and suggest that this commodification is symptomatic of a gendered artistic culture.

The commodification of musical professionals, and specifically the system of patronage and apprenticeship which formed their traditional career route, is the spectre that haunts Burney's important friendship with Hester Thrale. Burney's 'apprenticeship' at Streatham, as Betty Schellenberg describes it, is troublingly reminiscent of Charles Burney's musical apprenticeship, in which his patron, Fulke Greville, had effectively bought him from Thomas Arne.[11] Although ostensibly released from the articles of that apprenticeship, Charles Burney became a humble companion and the grateful recipient of Greville's patronage, both financial and social. However, Burney herself resists this type of relationship with Thrale, and shows a desire to retain professional autonomy, breaking away from the patronage system that

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[10] Anonymous, *The Silver Tail, A Tale. In Two Heroic Epistles, From Mr. S—Z of the Exchequer, to Signora A**J**E; with Signora A****J**'s Answer to Mr. S***Z*, in two parts (London: S. Bladon, 1775), pt. 1, annotation to copy held at Harvard University Houghton Library. Repr. in *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CW3311394553&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 23 February 2009].

[11] Greville apparently paid Arne £300 in lieu of the final three years of Charles Burney's apprenticeship. See Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 13-4.

she has been schooled in by her father. The friendship is further complicated by Thrale's own literary ambition and talent, and she offers a competing model of literary womanhood that interacts strangely with Burney's professional self-fashioning, as my examination of Burney's letters to Thrale, and of *Thraliana*, will reveal.

While Thrale herself *is* 'a Woman of Fashion', Burney has no claim to the hereditary or financial status this required. Her social ascent is then the result of professional success, both on her father's part and on her own. This combination is in itself troubled by the traditional dependence of professional musicians such as Charles Burney on patrons such as the Thrales, and the equivocal social status such dependence entailed. Burney's relationship with Thrale thus functions both as a private friendship and an act of social condescension on Thrale's part in cultivating the daughter of an employee. This patronage dynamic was part of a larger problem that would come to inform all of Burney's writing, both private and published. The anxieties of status that undercut Burney's friendship with Thrale are symptomatic of a cultural obsession with visibility that Burney depicts disrupting social and artistic value: while Thrale attempts, by the designation of 'actress', to separate her fashionable self from Burney's performative one, this articulates precisely the problematic relationship of fashionable consumer and cultural producer with which Burney is primarily concerned. In order to properly understand this relationship, it is necessary to read Burney's writings within the context of London's diverse artistic culture and specifically, the role of female creative practitioners in that culture.

Thrale's designation of Burney as an 'actress' is not without foundation. In *Evelina* Burney not only demonstrates her intimate, specialised knowledge of popular entertainments but shows herself to be an able producer of another popular cultural product, in the form of a novel. Thus Burney's entrée to the Thrales' Streatham salon is

made both as a commercially successful entertainer and as a recipient of Thrale's patronage, whilst also instigating a brief but genuine and affectionate friendship. In Chapter Two, I place Burney's experience of the Streatham salon in triangular relation to two other important conversational models: firstly, the private, patronal and socially exclusive gatherings of the Bluestocking hostesses Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Vesey; secondly, the diverse and meritocratic grouping that frequented Charles Burney's house in St. Martin's Street. As Schellenberg has argued, the Streathamites were largely a literary-professional coterie who favoured public patronage through print, as opposed to the private circulation of the Bluestockings; yet Thrale's role as hostess maintained a dynamic of patronal influence that disrupted the relatively egalitarian nature of the salon. As Schellenberg remarks, this role effectively marginalised Thrale as distinct from the creative professionals to whom she played host. As a result, I will argue, Thrale embraces a model of creativity dependent on conversational display – and thus on specular relations between creative producer and audience – of the very kind that Burney wished to eschew. Through Burney's correspondence with Thrale, and their respective memoirs, I interrogate Burney's self-construction as a literary professional in the context of a gendered artistic culture, her resistance to the patronal dynamics of their relationship and, ultimately, to Thrale's bid for creative authority. Burney's correspondence with Susan Burney offers a contrast to the structure of reflexivity with which she resists Thrale's attempts at intellectual community, instead constructing an epistolary microcosm of the meritocratic Burney household through the specialised musical discourse she maintains with her sister.

The relationship of spectator and performer, of producer and consumer, is crucial to both Burney's fiction and her authorial self-construction, and this relationship is central to my thesis. In *Evelina* and *Cecilia* (1782) the act of cultural consumption

becomes in itself a performance, disrupting the value of artistic products by reconfiguring all forms of artistic participation – even listening – as luxurious display; in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, written after Burney's stifling years of court service, the insistent visibility of all forms of cultural participation infiltrates even the private spaces of elite society. Ann Bermingham observes that 'as a retreat from the demands of public life, the domestic sphere was an important site of cultural consumption'.[12] Burney's increasing concern with self-representation even within domestic settings is symptomatic of the pervasiveness of the economy of production and consumption that moves out of the public entertainment spaces of *Evelina* and ultimately even into the drawing rooms of private homes. In Chapter Three I chart this shift in emphasis, by way of Burney's court journals, in which public misconstructions give way to the problem of representing the private self in a society that is dependent on visual symbols of cultural participation – such as dress, books, and even physical movement – to the exclusion of the non-visible. Drawing on Richard Leppert's important study of private music-making, I argue that in *The Wanderer*, Burney exposes the emphasis on the visible bodily presence of the performer as inimical to the proper appreciation of the aural creative product of musical art, and by extension, to creative autonomy itself.[13] Furthermore, I will demonstrate the potential that Burney identifies in the development of the ultimate privacy of the internal self through intellectual (arguably 'non-visible') pursuits such as reading, writing, and listening.

In Chapter Four I deal explicitly with the creative nature, or otherwise, of Burney's own literary pursuits in the context of female literary authority. *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (1832), as Janice Thaddeus points out, is the closest thing Burney

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[12] Ann Bermingham, 'Introduction', *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, ed. by Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-22, (p. 10).
[13] Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

produced to an autobiography: in this biography of her father, Thaddeus claims, 'Burney knew she was writing her own life'.[14] As I will argue, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* is not merely Burney's autobiography thinly disguised as biography; it also offers Burney's most assured claim to a distinct literary authority and professional identity that is both separate from, and indebted to, her father's. Jane Spencer has noted the confluence, and sometimes conflict, of paternal and literary authority under which influence Burney's creative persona was formed. She notes that while Burney seemed to imagine herself as part of an exclusively masculine literary lineage, she looked to that lineage for an alternative to the professional model her father offered: 'Charles Burney the author-father had a rival: the paternal line of earlier writers who offered Burney a tradition to join'.[15] Burney's *Memoirs* thus not only have much to say about Burney's professional self-construction in relation to her father, who was both a creative professional and man of letters; they also document Burney's claim to a literary authority within what Clifford Siskin has identified as an increasingly gendered professional culture.[16] In order to appreciate the boldness of Burney's artistic claim, I read her *Memoirs* in parallel with Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins's *Anecdotes, Memoirs and Biographical Sketches* (1822) and *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions* (1824). As Thaddeus briefly notes, Hawkins's *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs* offer a crucial counterpoint to Burney's *Memoirs*. Hawkins, who was born within a decade of Burney, was a fellow novelist and the daughter of Charles Burney's professional rival, musicologist John Hawkins. While both women offer somewhat protective and memorialised versions of their respective fathers, they each have something very different to say about the creativity of literary production, and the nature of narrative authority. As I will

[14] Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 198.
[15] Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and the Canon, 1660-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 49.
[16] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 55.

demonstrate, in reframing her literary career through the lens of her father's musical one, Burney lays claim to her hereditary status as an artistic practitioner whilst simultaneously disclaiming the necessarily public dimension of her father's artistic professionalism through what is, paradoxically, her embracing of public patronage in the form of print culture.

Throughout these four chapters I will trace not only Burney's conception of herself as an artistic producer, but the nuances of the relationship between spectator and spectacle that informs her strict separation of public and private identity. This self-conception becomes particularly complicated, however, by Burney's persistent efforts to become a successful playwright. Barbara Darby's monograph on Burney's plays, *Frances Burney: Dramatist,* is an important milestone in the serious consideration of Burney as a dramatist, and rightly treats these works as concerted, professional productions by a skilled practitioner.[17] However, as Ellen Donkin has observed, Burney's relationship with the stage is complicated by the requirement for the writer to be physically present in the performance space, both backstage and at rehearsals; in order to collaborate with the actors in the refinement of that final artistic product, the performance, Burney's presence at rehearsals is necessary, but unforthcoming.[18] Unlike the self-contained material object of a published text, then, the textual production of the playwright is both ephemeral and continuous with their bodily presence, so Burney's favoured method of privatised professionalism is unavailable to her in this genre. Furthermore, the final, performed, play is not solely the product of the playwright, but also of the creative activity of the performers. For this reason, a separate analysis of the different and highly complex relationship of producer and consumer that attends

[17] Barbara Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist: Gender, Performance and the Late-Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).
[18] Ellen Donkin, *Getting into the Act: Women Playwrights in London 1776-1829* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 136.

Burney's plays, only one of which was performed in her lifetime, although needful, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

However, in a thesis primarily concerned with 'performance', it is important to recognise the dialogue between Burney's plays and her other work. To this end, I offer in a brief coda a reading of two of them, *The Witlings* and *The Woman-Hater*. My choice here has been governed by the particular relationship between the two plays, as *The Woman-Hater* revisits the themes of the earlier play along with its central character, Lady Smatter. Thus the later play represents a progression from the first, both in terms of fictional temporality, and in *The Woman-Hater's* emphasis on the increasingly physical appropriation of textual objects, which develops the concerns with authority, conspicuous intellectualism and cultural consumption established in *The Witlings*. This reading will draw together the broader concerns of my thesis, and in so doing illustrate the distinctions to be made between the spectacle Burney creates, and the careful spectatorship with which she creates it.

Chapter One

The Author of *Evelina*: Literary Celebrity and Performance Culture in Eighteenth-Century London

The occasion of Charles Burney's award of Doctor of Music was momentous enough to prompt his daughter Frances to write a verse letter to him on the occasion. The letter was humorously addressed 'to Dr. Last', alluding to a comedy by Samuel Foote, in which the character of Last, a shoemaker, is awarded a physician's licence.[1] This allusion resonates acutely with Charles Burney's elevation from artisanal to professional status, and it is not surprising that Burney should be wary of her father's response, noting in her journal that 'I had frighten'd myself not a little before he came lest he should be angry at my *pert* verses'.[2] It is not clear whether it is the verses themselves, or her writing of them, that Burney would characterise as '*pert*'. While the dedication makes a humorous allusion to her father's elevation from lower-class origins to professional status, the verse letter itself is steeped in literary, rather than musical, references, suggesting that Burney is concerned with her own artistic origins as well as her father's:

> O aid me, ye muses of ev'ry Degree,
> O give me the Standish Mulberry Tree
> Which was cut for the Author of Ferney;
> O give me a Quil [sic] to the stump worn by Gray,

[1] The comedy by Foote that Burney alludes to is *The Devil Upon Two Sticks*, first performed in 1768.
[2] Frances Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-), i. 78-9. Further references to this edition will be indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *EJL*.

And Paper which cut was on Milton's Birth Day,

To Write to the great Doctor Burney! (*EJL*, i. 76-7)

In establishing a provenance amongst Keate, Gray and Milton, Burney is not only drawing attention to the literariness of her own endeavour, she is also invoking the literary man as a context for her father as a man-of-letters. Keate, the 'author of Ferney', was awarded an ink standish in return for completing a commission to award the actor David Garrick the freedom of Stratford-Upon-Avon.[3] Burney's reference to this incident thus aligns her father with fellow professional performer Garrick, and herself with Keate as literary envoy. While conjuring a kind of literary provenance for her own work, then, this is defined against the performative context of Charles Burney's achievements. Imagining him in his role as 'dread Doctor Burney', a severe academic, Burney burlesques the supposed transformation in her father's physical appearance before and after the conferral of his doctorate:

'Tis true the Time's short since you last was in town
Yet both fatter & Taller you doubtless are grown
Or you'll make but a poor Dr. Burney.
For I never can think of a Doctor, not big
As a Falstaf [sic], or without a full-bottom'd wig. (*EJL*, i. 77)

Burney here sets up a comic contrast between her father and the Falstaffian and rather theatrical figure that he confounds expectation by *not* resembling. In so doing, she dissociates her father (and by extension her family) from a highly conspicuous

[3] See *EJL*, i. 77 n. 73.

performative – and therefore potentially vulgar – image, attributing to him by contrast an implied refinement and understatement. While Burney is keen to distinguish between her own literary ambition and her father's necessarily performative artistic achievements, then, she still seeks to mitigate that performativity by imaginatively separating her father's professional reputation as 'Dr. Burney' from his private, domestic persona.

Burney's verse letter demonstrates an early awareness of the public desire to *see* the man (or woman) of letters in person. Burney plays with expectations of what a 'Doctor of Music' *should* look like, thus acknowledging the existence of those expectations. Even before her own fame as an author was established, Burney was acutely conscious of the fascination with the body of the literary or artistic producer as continuous with their artistic product, and this consciousness arose from her early experiences in her father's artistic-professional household. Her parody here is thus highly prescient: just as Charles Burney's professional achievement becomes (or, rather, resists becoming) part of his projected image, Burney herself would come to be conflated with the eponymous heroine of *Evelina* (1778). After her first appearances as a publicly acknowledged author, Burney expresses her surprise at the interest the public take in her person to Samuel Johnson, and she records his response in her journal:

> *Dr J.* Pho, – fiddle faddle, – do you suppose your Book is so much talked of, & not yourself? – do you think your Readers will not ask questions, & inform themselves whether you are short or Tall, young or old? (*EJL*, iii. 221)

Johnson's retort, as recorded here, emphasises the physical exposure associated with publication. Betty Schellenberg has outlined the way in which this bodily identification

of author with text is potentially both effaced and re-inscribed by print (as opposed to manuscript) publication. Schellenberg asks:

> to what extent, then, did an individual writer's experience of the eighteenth-century print marketplace [...] depend upon the physical body and its affiliations, and to what extent did the disembodied mechanisms of print replication and distribution offer an opportunity to transcend those particulars?[4]

Schellenberg suggests that Burney's increasing alignment with a print-based model of authorship offers an opportunity to eschew such 'affiliations', and 'establish an authorial identity that freed her, to a significant extent, from the limitations of an essentialized feminine identity'.[5] However, the act of publication involved exposure of the text to an unregulated audience, and regardless of the extent to which the author's personal identity was disclosed, it was nonetheless liable to speculation. The parallel of 'your Book' with 'yourself' suggests that Burney's 'Book' and her 'self' are scrutinised in the same way; that is, in physical terms. Therefore the 'Book' and the 'self' become mutually representative, and by placing one in the public domain, Burney necessarily exposes the other. Her 'Book' becomes an extension of her body, and contributes to the creation of her public image, just as the conferral of Charles Burney's doctorate has the potential to create an image of 'dread Doctor Burney'. By allowing Johnson to articulate the problem on her behalf, Burney is able to appear to resist this consequence of literary fame, whilst still acknowledging its presence. Furthermore, Burney's writing of this 'scene' is typical of her journals, in which she often retains a disingenuous appearance of modesty by a vicarious performance through others' voices. What is at

[4] Betty Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 15-6.
[5] Schellenberg, *Professionalization*, p. 144.

stake here, then, is how a female, and an artist, should construct herself as a professional.

In denying performance, Burney effectively performs a suitably modest identity that separates her private body from her artistic output. As Harriet Guest has observed of women's writing from 1730-60, 'some kind of display, some not entirely negative and invisible definition, seems to be compatible with feminine propriety, and implicit to the ideal of pious retirement' but that these publications 'may "expose" or make visible femininity in ways that are both necessary to social propriety and "obscene" or inadmissible'. Guest argues that 'the bourgeois feminine ideal is cast in terms of an aristocratic and in some senses incompatible conception of feminine propriety', and emphasises the way in which the aristocratically-inflected ideal of 'feminine visibility' is one which, paradoxically, takes place in the retirement of the courtly sphere.[6] While publication (as opposed to private, manuscript circulation) had the potential to efface class and gender difference, it similarly effaced this safeguarding privacy in which proper feminine display had been traditionally enacted. The socially indeterminate nature of public patronage required an even stronger enactment, then, of gender difference which, as Guest argues, is part of 'a bourgeois morality' in which 'minute stratifications of social position' are no longer a sufficient marker of social identity.[7] The equivocal social position of her family means that Burney's own social status is absolutely dependent upon performing just such a bourgeois, gendered identity, in which the female body is visible in the *right* way. Crucially, Burney must also avoid exposing herself, that is, becoming visible in the *wrong* way, and it is for this reason that publication risks the creation of a grotesque professional persona for her, just as the professional status of a 'Doctor of Music' threatens to distort Charles Burney's true

[6] Harriet Guest, 'A Double Lustre: Feminity and Sociable Commerce, 1730-1760', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23:4 (Summer, 1990), 479-501 (484).
[7] Guest, 'A Double Lustre', 482.

body into a Falstaffian monstrosity. The theoretical detachment of print culture from the authorial body is, it seems, imperfect: Burney's early experience of this, through the lens of her father's dual pursuit of musical performance and lettered professionalism, would serve to emphasize the necessity of carefully maintaining a separate authorial persona in order to prevent her private 'self' becoming, like her 'book', available to the scrutiny of an unregulated public. Her encounters with performance professionals through her father's artistic-professional household would underscore the dangers, for a female artistic professional, of the objectification of those performers along with the cultural commodities they produce.

In the above verses, Burney deliberately rejects the Shakespearean figure of 'Falstaf' – a character identified with vulgarity, cowardice and corruption – as a model for her father's image. In so doing, she also rejects any association between her father's performative career and contemporary anxieties about the dubious morality of secular musicians, and especially of music teachers. Richard Leppert observes that music was viewed as 'non-developmental and expressive of stationary time' and therefore 'peripheral to men's lives and fundamentally improper for them to engage in'.[8] Music had begun to lose its status in the education of the gentleman, 'degenerating at best to that of a polite and essentially optional accomplishment', but remained acceptable as an element of female education largely because of its nature as just such a polite accomplishment.[9] The perception of music as non-developmental, however accurate, accorded well with the eighteenth-century conduct literature that, as Nancy Armstrong has argued, was so concerned with the demarcation of women's leisure time. Armstrong writes that 'the matter of how to occupy women's idle hours commanded as

[8] Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 29.
[9] Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 16.

much attention in conduct books as did her economic behaviour'.[10] While feminine 'accomplishments' such as drawing, sewing and music theoretically offered a safely non-developmental means of occupying this leisure time, the nature of some of these accomplishments as potentially pleasure-giving was also inherently threatening:

> Renouncing the idea of female labor and yet recognizing the dangers of leisure, authors of conduct books generally insisted that the activities comprising the domestic arts – and therefore a woman's duty – had to be carefully supervised precisely where they seemed the most frivolous.[11]

In this context, the male music teacher was viewed with suspicion. Not only did he construct his career from a specifically feminine pursuit, but one which could also be seen as productive of pleasure, thus possibly frivolous and potentially corrupting. In addition, the unprecedented private access of the music teacher to the wives or daughters of his social superiors invoked anxieties of class miscegenation: the indeterminate social status of this 'Profession of Artisans', as Deborah Rohr has acutely termed it, rendered the private music lesson an opportunity for physical interaction between genteel young women and men of inferior social position.[12] The seduction of a young woman by her music master was a common trope in cartoons and in popular fiction, as Leppert notes.[13]

These anxieties were compounded by the influx of foreign musicians (both performers and teachers) into England, and particularly London, throughout the

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[10] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 99.
[11] Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, pp. 99-100.
[12] Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[13] Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 56.

eighteenth century. The King's Theatre in Haymarket, which had begun staging Italian Opera in 1705 (as the Queen's Theatre), largely relied on foreign musicians and composers, particularly Italians. The Pantheon, which opened in 1772, employed a similar strategy of importing leading performers from the continent. Charles Burney himself was instrumental in the recruitment of these musicians: as he remembers in a letter to Lady Crewe, he had '100 Guineas a year as foreign secretary to engage singers from Italy and Germany' on behalf of the managers of the Pantheon, in which he had also 'purchased a share wch. cost me £700'.[14] This influx of foreign musicians, according to Leppert, 'was viewed by the natives as an invasion', and the association of 'new' secular music with continental Europe (in particular Italy) in turn invited associations with Catholicism.[15] These musical migrants also met an increasing demand for music as a passive entertainment in English high society. For the English upper classes in the eighteenth century, music was something purchased rather than performed; it was a luxury, rather than an activity, and therefore the performers themselves (often imported) attained the status of luxurious commodities. As 'foreign secretary' to the Pantheon, Charles Burney was directly implicated in this luxurious import trade, and may well have been responsible for the recruitment of Lucrezia Agujari, an Italian operatic celebrity who, as I will discuss below, would also come to be associated explicitly with imported luxury goods.[16] Charles Burney's role, which was to select and negotiate with the most celebrated operatic performers on the continent, demanded a combination of the specialist knowledge of a musical practitioner

[14] Charles Burney to Lady Crewe, 18 April 1806. Repr. in Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney: His Life, His Travels, His Work, His Family and His Friends*, 2 vols (London; New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), ii. 177.
[15] Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 20.
[16] For an account of Charles Burney's involvement at the Pantheon, see F. H. W. Sheppard, 'The Pantheon', in *Survey of London, Volumes 31 and 32: The Parish of St. James, Westminster, Part 2. North of Piccadilly* (London: Published for the London County Council by the Athlone Press, 1960-1963), pp. 268-283. Repr. in *British History Online*, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=41477 &strquery=Pantheon> [accessed 04 April 2012], n. h.

and the refined taste of a polite consumer, along with considerable business acumen. This threefold role was then a precarious balance between the socially disparate positions of artisanal labourer, tradesman and connoisseur that Charles Burney maintained with considerable success throughout his life.

Rohr argues that the equivocal professional and social status of English musicians, in contrast to the high status of the profession on the continent, rendered the English unable to compete with the sheer number and quality of foreign musicians. She observes that 'very few English singers achieved success at the Italian Opera'. Paradoxically though, in light of the factors that gave precedence to foreign musicians, this disadvantage rendered the English musician who *could* compete with their foreign counterparts something of a celebrity: 'the female English singer – one who fulfilled the requisite ideals of femininity and cultural nationalism – could offer an important alternative to the much more threatening voices and deportment of the Italian opera singers'.[17] Furthermore, the ability of the British musical profession to produce a singer of a quality that could displace Italian performers both at home and abroad spoke directly to the 'mercantilist strategies of import -substitution' that Maxine Berg identifies as part of a 'national [response] to the international expansion of the luxury and consumer-goods trade', so combating an economic as well as a moral invasion.[18]

In a 1775 journal letter to Samuel Crisp, Burney echoes this prejudice in her comparative estimate of two opera singers, Agujari and her British contemporary Cecilia Davies. Following an account of a visit from Agujari, Burney throws that singer's behaviour into relief by introducing Cecilia Davies to her narrative thus:

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[17] Rohr, *Careers of British Musicians*, pp. 105, 12.
[18] Maxine Berg, 'From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-century Britain', *Economic History Review*, 55:1 (2002), 1-30 (1).

> And now I have said so much of this great *Italian* singer, I will condescend to mention our great *English* singer, Miss Davies. (*EJL*, ii. 79)

Invoking the pre-eminence that Italian performers had attained in the Opera, Burney introduces the 'English' singer (Davies was in fact Irish, but in Europe had been known as '*la Inglesina*') as being more modest in her claims for attention. She parodies Agujari's 'imperious' self-assurance by noting her own 'condescen[sion]' in moving from discussion of the lofty Italian singer to the humble 'English' one. In Cecilia Davies, Burney presents a performer of the very type that Rohr outlines, 'one who fulfilled the requisite ideals of femininity', emphasising the contrast between Davies and Agujari:

> Modesty, & an unassuming Carriage, in people of Talent & Fame, are irresistable [sic]. How much do I prefer for an acquaintance, the well-bred & obliging Miss Davies, to the self sufficient and imperious Bastardini though I doubt not the superiority of her powers as a singer. (*EJL*, ii. 80)

Burney makes an important distinction here between artistic and personal merit: although she elevates Davies as a model *female* performer, it is clear that while Agujari does not fulfil Burney's ideal of feminine behaviour, she is the better musician. Nicknamed 'Bastardini' in reference to her illegitimate birth, Agujari is already outside conventional structures of social respectability. Furthermore, Burney identifies the specific manner in which Agujari fails to conform to ideals of respectable femininity: she is 'self sufficient and imperious', rather than 'modest and unassuming'. Agujari's 'self sufficiency' denotes independence from, and implied superiority to, the private

musical community that the Burneys are part of, membership of which depends upon a combination of domestic sociability and musical proficiency. In London musical culture, particularly for a female performer, social and artistic personas needed carefully balancing. The fortunes of professional performers depended both on public and private patronage, and a combination of critical and commercial success: in order to circulate in the private musical circles that often served this patronage function through connection with fashionable society, musicians had to maintain socially acceptable standards of personal conduct as well as high levels of technical ability. Agujari's apparent disdain for her audience relies upon an elevation of inherent musical ability over and above personal celebrity; however, this belies the very essence of her success, which was cemented by public patronage. The considerable sums paid to Agujari were justified, as Charles Burney would later recall, by the resultant revenue she attracted at the Pantheon: 'for, notwithstanding so much was disbursed to the Agujari, much was likewise cleared, and the dividend was more considerable than it has ever been since that memorable era'.[19] Charles Burney also notes Agujari's failure to conform to a domestic ideal of private femininity, and suggests this may have impeded her career in London:

> She would have been as capable of exciting universal pleasure, as admiration, if she had been less violent in the delivery of her passages, and her looks had been more tempered by female softness and timidity.[20]

Charles Burney draws an important distinction here between 'pleasure' and 'admiration': while Agujari's 'violent' delivery excites 'universal [...] admiration' it

[19] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, 4 vols (London: T. Becket, J. Robson and G. Robinson, 1776-89), iv. 504.
[20] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, iv. 504-5.

prevents her from pleasing, as does the absence of 'female softness and timidity' from 'her looks'. While 'admiration' is strictly accorded to her ability, the 'universal pleasure' she fails to excite is bound up with the idea of 'pleasing', and with the polite and sociable 'galant' style of music of which Charles Burney was a champion.[21] This performative success or failure is dependent on expressly gendered qualities, as the 'softness and timidity' Agujari lacks are specifically 'female'; furthermore, these personal, abstract qualities are conceived in concretely visual terms: their absence or presence is determined by 'looks'. The 'violent' delivery insists upon an active, physical agency that is at odds with that requisite 'softness and timidity' which, as I will discuss below, is dependent on an aesthetic of feminine stillness and passivity. Charles Burney was a respected musical specialist – modern musical historians still rely on his accounts of technique and ability – so his emphasis on the 'pleasing' reveals much about the demands upon musical professionals and their relationship with polite society.

Burney's account of Agujari's conduct whilst engaged at the Pantheon suggests that the latter recognised the need to perform a proper feminine identity within the London musical community, even if she failed to convince the Burneys. In a journal-letter to Samuel Crisp, Burney records the strict moral propriety, or at least the façade of it, that Agujari ostentatiously observed. Recounting the insistence with which Agujari advertises her feminine reserve, Burney maintains a cynical tone of narrative objectivity:

> She says she Lives quite alone, & that it is *Charity* to visit her: she proposed cultivating very much with our Family; for she said that she hardly ever saw any body, as she was always *refused* to Gentlemen: she certainly has great merit in

[21] For a discussion of Charles Burney's musical and literary style, see Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 53.

this Conduct, as beside her Talents, she is a fine Woman, & must be very much courted.

(*EJL*, ii. 93-4)

By employing reported speech to record Agujari's claims of propriety, Burney avoids commenting on their veracity, which, by implication, she seems to doubt. Burney's sharp remark that she 'must be very much courted' suggests that Agujari is conspicuous enough to invite sexual attention, in spite of her claims to retirement. No doubt Burney also has in mind the rumours of the singer's involvement with her music master (later her husband), Signor Colla (*EJL*, ii. 75 n. 29). Part of Agujari's appearance of social conformity is her desire of 'cultivating very much with' the Burney family, suggesting that she identifies this family, or rather its musical networks, as offering an entrance into polite artistic-professional society. Part of Burney's cynicism is a recognition of this desire as part of the construction of that persona, and Agujari's insistence on proper feminine delicacy as an attempt to conform to the requirements of that society. However, Burney is also responding to the incongruity between the nature of Agujari's career and the private, domestic identity she presents to the Burneys during their visit. Burney's cynicism, then, engenders just such a conflation of private and professional identity that she would herself resist, recognising the fraught and ambiguous relationship between the professional and domestic self. Although Burney draws a distinction between Agujari and Davies, this distinction relies partly on the problematic idea of Agujari as a luxury 'import' and Davies as a 'modest', local alternative. Agujari's foreignness is a convenient focus for all that is threatening about her artistic production. Burney concedes the inherent physicality of an artistic professional in the form of a foreign and therefore culturally alien woman; however, she is reluctant to

allow this to a culturally proximal figure such as Davies who, like Burney herself, must maintain a properly British feminine identity alongside her professional artistic output.

Agujari's conspicuousness was unavoidable as the principal singer at the Pantheon from 1775-77. Although her exceptional ability is well documented, the interest the British public took in the singer was not limited to her musical performance: they also took an intimate interest in her body. It was rumoured that, as the result of a childhood injury, Agujari had a silver plate in her side. Burney alludes to this in her journal, referring to her as 'this *silver side* lady' (*EJL*, ii. 74). This same rumour is the subject of a satirical verse epistle on Agujari (followed by a fictional 'response' from the singer), entitled *The Silver Tail, A Tale*. A copy of this document held in the Harvard University Houghton Library is annotated, in an unknown hand, with a brief summary of Agujari's history:

> La Signora Aguiari [sic], called the Bastardella, a famous Italian singer, came over in 1774, & was engaged to sing twelve times at the Pantheon during the winter of 1775 at the rate of 1200 guineas. She was a Foundling, and the story was that being exposed on a Dunghill, she was discovered as a [dog?] was eating her hinderparts, which were afterwards supplied with a silver plate.[22]

Although it is unknown when this annotation was made, it is likely that the anecdote about Agujari's 'silver side' was known beyond the professional musical circles of London and was in general circulation amongst the opera-going public. It seems that

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[22] *The Silver Tail, A Tale. In Two Heroic Epistles, From Mr. S—Z of the Exchequer, to Signora A**J**E; with Signora A****J**'s Answer to Mr. S***Z*, in two parts (London: S. Bladon, 1775), pt. 1, annotation to copy held at Harvard University Houghton Library. Repr. in *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CW3311394553&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE> [accessed 23 February 2009]. Further references to this edition are indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *ST*.

either at some point the anecdote has been distorted, and sexualised, to focus on the singer's 'hinderparts', or that Burney has employed a tactful distortion herself.[23] This deliberate confusion about where, exactly, the silver plate is located, is evident in *The Silver Tail*: it contains a reference to both 'thy side board' (*ST*, i. 6) and 'the silver of your shielded bum' (*ST*, i. 8), although the sexual conceit of the work depends on the latter interpretation. The prefatory argument of the epistle makes explicit the material focus of the satire:

> A duty being levied by Act of Parliament on the Luxuries of Life in general, and on Plate in particular – Mr. S—z, a Clerk in the Exchequer, who gives Notice to those who neglect to pay the Duty, amongst the rest wrote to Madam A— to remind her of the Revenue-Laws of this Country; and in the genteelest Manner gave her to understand that he had an Information against a certain smuggled and concealed Quantity which she had in daily Use. In Consequence of such Remonstrance the subsequent Epistles were written. (*ST*, i. preface)[24]

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[23] Lars Troide seems to accept Burney's interpretation. See *EJL*, ii. 74 n. 26.

[24] 'Mr. S—z, a Clerk in the Exchequer' is named in the Houghton Library manuscript as 'Schutz' by the anonymous annotator. Payments to an Augustus Schutz as 'Privy Purse' are recorded in parliamentary records as being made every year from in 1754-57, and in 1755-57 Schutz received payments under 'Gifts, Rewards and Extraordinaries', 'to pay salaries and Bills at Richmond Lodge'. Augustus Schutz was a Hanoverian who had accompanied George III to England on his accession, where he died in 1757. From 1759-61, the payment for 'salaries and Bills at Richmond Lodge' began to be made to a George Schutz, who in 1760 and 1761 also received an award as 'Groom of His Majesty's Bedchamber'. Augustus Schutz's son Thomas would inherit his estate at Shotover, which suggests that this George was probably a younger son who met with preferment at court, taking over his father's responsibilities at Richmond. This seems particularly likely given that his namesake was probably his father's patron, George III. The anonymous author of *The Silver Tail*, writing in 1775, may well have been ironically invoking Augustus Schutz, an immigrant himself, as a past keeper of the Privy Purse, but at a safe historical distance; it is more likely that one of Schutz's descendants, perhaps George, was preferred to a role (presumably that of 'Clerk') in the exchequer through the influence of George III. See 'Thirteenth Parliament of Great Britain: third session (19 January 1770 – 19 May 1770)', *Journals of the House of Commons 1688-1834*, 32 (January 1770), 3 and passim. Repr. in *18th Century British Official Parliamentary Publications* <http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:hcpp&rft_dat=xri:hcpp:rec:jhc-009207> [accessed 11 May 2012]. For the history of Shotover House, including ownership by the Schutz family, see 'Parishes: Shotover', *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford*, ed. by L. F. Salzman et al, 10 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), v. 275-81.

This 'smuggled and concealed Quantity' has, like Agujari herself, the potential to evaluatively disrupt the British market for luxurious goods. The 'silver tail' or plate becomes synecdoche for Agujari's body: as an object of circulation and exchange it is both desirable and potentially corrupting.

Playing on the financial value of Agujari's supposed 'silver tail', the epistle literalises the commodification of the female body, warning that 'They'll have their tax, /Whether within the house, or on our backs' (*ST*, i. 8), suggesting that a sexual payment will be exacted in lieu of a monetary one. The 'concealed' nature of the 'quantity' invokes the popular preoccupation with the relationship between virtue and visibility, and both epistles bear an epigraph adapted from Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, but with a comic reversal. The epigraph to part one reads:

> And does it tempt thy Sacreligious [sic] Hands,
> Or is it what the needy State demands?
> Oh! had'st thou, cruel! Been content to seize
> Things more in Sight – or any Things but these. (*ST*, i. 3)

Reversing Pope's original 'Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!', *The Silver Tail* is concerned precisely with what is 'less in sight' and should remain concealed. This first part constitutes a threat of invasion (and perhaps even dismemberment) in order to retrieve the silver plate that forms part of Agujari's body.[25] This is elaborated in the epigraph to part two, 'being Signoria A**G***E's answer to Mr. S***Z', in which the 'Things more in sight' of part one is replaced with '*Goods* more in sight – or any *Goods* but these' (*ST*, ii. 1). This substitution directly imbues that which is seized – Agujari's

[25] Alexander Pope, 'The Rape of the Lock' [1712], *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, Volume 2: The Rape of the Lock and other Poems*, ed. by Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 79-212 (p. 198, iv. 174-6).

body – with the quality of commodity. That this substitution takes place in the epigraph to the second part of the work, that is Agujari's fictional 'response', rather than the first seems to deliberately suggest that it is Agujari herself who effects the imaginative transformation of 'things' into 'goods', and of her physical self into selection of purchasable wares.

The Silver Tail is a satire on the government's economic policies which mobilises a satirical tradition established earlier in the century. Vivien Jones observes of eighteenth-century culture after Mandeville that 'the traditional morality figure of Lady Luxury takes on renewed energy as the whore of commerce, both the object and the scourge of new consumerist desires'.[26] The persistence of these anxieties into the latter part of the century is evident in *The Silver Tail* which, by working in the tradition of the prostitution narrative, makes explicit the perception of the female musician as available for sexual purchase. Agujari provides a convenient symbol of luxury: she is foreign, female, a musician, and (rumour has it) partially composed of precious metal. This eroticised displacement of flesh with silver is reminiscent of 'confessional' prostitution narratives such as *The Authentick Memoirs of the Life Intrigues and Adventures of the Celebrated Sally Salisbury*, in which courtiers throw gold coins between the eponymous heroine's legs.[27] With this context in mind, the luxury commodity of musical performance (or performers) represents the same kind of moral and economic threat, which, as Jones puts it, 'seduces consumers away from productive labour into un(re)productive spending'.[28] Like the prostitute, the performer offers (unquantifiable) pleasure in return for a (quantifiable) wage. Musical performance is an

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[26] Vivien Jones, 'Luxury, Satire and Prostitute Narratives', in Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, eds, *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 178-189 (p. 178).

[27] Captain Charles Walker, *The Authentick Memoirs of the Life Intrigues and Adventures of the Celebrated Sally Salisbury. With True Characters of her most Considerable Gallants*, 2nd edn (London, 1723), as cited in Jones, 'Luxury, Satire and Prostitute Narratives', p. 178 n. 1.

[28] Jones, 'Luxury, Satire and Prostitute Narratives', p. 178.

intensely physical task, but unlike the sexual performance of prostitution, it bestows intellectual, rather than physical pleasure upon the purchaser. In this manner, music is the conversion of physical effort into a physically indiscernible effect which offers, like the body of the prostitute, a time-limited and unquantifiable pleasure in return for the consumer's investment.

The Silver Tail takes advantage of the stereotype of music as morally corrupting, the writer declaring that 'Religious tabbies too neglect their pray'rs /And give up anthems for an eunuch's airs' (*ST*, i. 15). Closing, Mr. S—z proposes to visit Agujari (who, as Burney reports, above, is 'always *refused* to gentlemen'), promising 'with all the chastity that eunuchs boast /I'll only sip your tea and eat your toast' (*ST*, i. 16). The figure of the eunuch, or castrato, was sexually equivocal: seen as effeminate and so threatening to masculinity. More disturbingly for contemporary readers, as Beth Kowaleski-Wallace argues, the castrato was 'a shadowy presence who raises the spectre of female non-reproductive sexual pleasure' and 'the possibility of sexuality in the absence of a penis'.[29] Invoking the figure of the castrato thus simultaneously invokes dangerous feminine sexual agency that functions outside of traditional marital and familial structures. In the context of the economic argument of *The Silver Tail*, the 'eunuch' figure once more represents Italian singers as a luxurious and pernicious foreign import, and as particularly threatening to heteronormative sexual paradigms. The presence of Italian castrati on the London stage was also perceived as detrimental to English male vocalists, who were effectively out-competed. Thus the sexual and economic threat posed by Italian vocalists, both male and female, was conceptually contingent.

[29] Beth Kowaleski-Wallace, 'Shunning the bearded kiss: Castrati and the definition of female sexuality', *Prose Studies*, 15:2 (1992), 153-70 (154).

The anonymous annotator of the Harvard copy of *The Silver Tail* considers it necessary to mention Agujari's unprecedentedly high 1,200 guinea fee as an explanatory factor in the argument of the piece: the payment of such a huge sum to a foreigner, and to a woman, appears to justify the violence of the satire. Burney herself comments upon the vast sums paid to Agujari:

> We were all of us excessively eager to hear her sing, but as it was not convenient to offer her Pantheon-Price of 50 Guineas a song, we were rather fearful of asking that favour. (*EJL*, ii. 75)

Burney's pointed reference to the monetary value of Agujari's performance resonates with the commodification of the female body that takes place in *The Silver Tail*. While it is Agujari's voice that commands her fee, the act of musical performance is unavoidably physical. Leppert observes that 'a woman who became an accomplished performer [...] became visually prominent, especially if she performed outside the drawing room, particularly if she gave a public recital'.[30] Agujari's performance thus places her body, and by extension her self, in the public realm. The 'recital' she gives suggests a publicised narrative of self-hood, while the pun on 'Tail' and 'Tale' in *The Silver Tail* exemplifies the manner in which body and narrative are intertwined in the mind of the consuming public: to know Agujari's 'tail' or body is also to know her 'tale', with the scarred and reconstructed body telling the story not only of her injury but also of her illegitimacy and abandonment. The fascination with the body and, by extension, identity of the singer is symptomatic of a culture in which artistic producers

[30] Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 39.

become continuous with their artistic product and, simultaneously, their bodily appearance is treated as part of the entertainment.

Although Leppert's analysis of the dangers of performative conspicuousness relate particularly to music as an amateur pursuit, this conspicuousness is equally problematic for professional musicians. The idealised image of a female musician in eighteenth-century culture was essentially a static one, with instruments such as the harpsichord being considered most 'proper' because the physical exertion (of the feet on the pedals) was concealed by the player's skirt. Heather Hadlock, in her essay on the 'armonica' or glass harmonica, also notes this impulse to divorce physicality from female musicianship:

> the armonica, requiring the most minimal motion, promised pure sound that would call attention neither to the sonorous material nor to the body that acts upon it. The erasure of both performer and instrument made this the ideal medium for women's music.[31]

In 1767, Cecilia Davies and her sister Marianne embarked on a tour of the continent, with Cecilia's singing accompanied by Marianne on the glass harmonica. The sisters were introduced to European patrons by letters from Johann Christian Bach, who was at that time resident in London and had seen them perform there.[32] It is appropriate that the singing of Davies, whom Burney identifies with culturally conservative femininity,

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[31] Heather Hadlock, 'Sonorous Bodies: Women and the Glass Harmonica', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 53:3 (2003), 507-542 (509). The armonica, invented by Benjamin Franklin in 1762, was composed of musical glasses, played by gently touching the wetted rim of the glass. It was popular in the 1760s and 1770s, but by the late 1780s, Hadlock says, 'enthusiasm for the armonica's sound was tempered by concern over its physical and moral dangers'. The armonica became widely associated with excessive sensibility, Mesmer, and the supernatural.

[32] Betty Matthews, 'The Davies Sisters, J. C. Bach and the Glass Harmonica', *Music and Letters*, 56:2 (1975), 150-169 (156).

should be associated with an instrument that so acutely embodies this aesthetic of feminine performative stillness. Bach's letters of recommendation for the Davies sisters, written to furnish them with introductions and 'protection' during their travels through Europe, lay great emphasis on the 'excellent character' of both women.[33] In 1769, John Adolf Hasse set a poem by Metastasio as a solo cantata for voice and armonica for the Davies sisters to perform: *L'armonica.* Hadlock observes that the lyric 'thematizes the sisterhood of woman and instrument, the seductive strains of the armonica as well as the soprano voice'.[34] The parallels between the technique of armonica playing and the idealised female musician are striking:

> To play the armonica was to hold a pose, to present a performance of stillness, balance, and silence. Playing, in short, resembled the 'not-playing' depicted in so many contemporary paintings of women seated at keyboard instruments, touching but not pressing the keys.[35]

To duet with her sister's armonica would have imbued Cecilia Davies's singing with a similar quality of effortless 'not-singing', denying her any physical agency, and instead figuring her as a mere musical vessel.

As Burney records, and as Charles Burney's *General History of Music* suggests, Agujari was resistant to such an aesthetic. At a private musical evening with the Burneys, Agujari demonstrates a keen awareness of, and apparent contempt for, this ideology, mocking her own necessary conformity to it in her public performances:

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[33] Matthews, 'The Davies Sisters', 153.
[34] Hadlock, 'Sonorous Bodies', 512.
[35] Hadlock, 'Sonorous Bodies', 511.

> I could not help regretting to her that she should sing at the *Pantheon*, when she was so much formed for the *Theatre*. She made Faces & shrugs, in the Italian way, & said 'oui – *comme une* statue! – *comme une petite Ecoliere*!'[36] – & then she took up a Book, to take herself off when singing at the Pantheon.
>
> (*EJL*, ii. 155)

Agujari's burlesque of the restrictions upon concert (as opposed to theatrical) performance is acute in its observation: she parodies English society's relegation of female musicians to the status of the 'little schoolgirl'. Her performance exposes the contemporary designation of music as an ornamental, and by implication trivial, accomplishment. Agujari is mocking the particular type of musical performance demanded by the Pantheon audience: that is, one which is divorced from physical effort, with the performer appearing like a 'statue'. This denied the possibility of female agency, transforming the female performer into a conduit for disembodied sound, rather than the author of that sound. The performer's physical presence was considered little more than a visual accompaniment to the sound she channelled. This effected an illusion of muteness, that the performer herself produced no sound, remaining motionless in a tableau.

This stillness was in itself intensely ocular however, as Agujari's reference to the 'statue' reveals. Rather than a mobile, active body, the female musician was expected to appear motionless precisely *because* she was herself conspicuous. While physical exertion was considered undecorous, deliberate posing, or the striking of attitudes, was highly sexualised, and was a popular attraction of the sex clubs of the late

[36] 'Yes – like a statue! – like a little school girl!'

eighteenth century and thus associated with prostitution.[37] The notorious Emma Hamilton was famous for her 'attitudes', in which she would recreate famous portraits by posing as their subject, transforming stage into canvas.[38] These attitudes were immediately reminiscent of her somewhat disreputable role as artist's muse to George Romney and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Kate Davies emphasises the way in which Hamilton manipulated her appeal as an art-object:

> Emptying her characters of their narrative connectedness, and obliterating the sense that these personifications could have any continuous purpose other than that of display, Emma Hamilton enacted the aesthetic of a connoisseur's cabinet.[39]

The absence of 'connectedness' and 'continuous purpose' also obliterates any sense of activity or, crucially, agency in the creation of these poses, obscuring Hamilton's role as artistic practitioner and leaving only the consumable artistic product. As Peter McIsaac observes,

> the creative instance [...] was seldom fully acknowledged in women, in part due to the belief that women were at best capable of copying 'real art'. Instead, truly

[37] For the most comprehensive treatment of the performance of 'attitudes' or *tableaux vivants* in the late eighteenth century and beyond, see Kirsten Gram Holmström, *Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967).
[38] The first recorded performance of these 'attitudes' was on 16 March 1787. Flora Fraser, *Beloved Emma* (London: John Murray, 1986), p. 114.
[39] Kate Davies, 'Pantomime, Connoisseurship, Consumption: Emma Hamilton and the Politics of Embodiment', *CW3 Journal*, 2 (2006) <http://www2.shu.ac.uk/corvey/CW3journal/issue%20two/davies.html> [accessed 27th May 2009].

creative aspects of tableaux were generally ascribed to the men who helped stage the performances.[40]

Just as the female musician was seen as a conduit for sound, then, Hamilton is not acknowledged as an artistic producer but as a vessel for the creative abilities of a male artist. As McIsaac remarks, 'tableaux vivants often performed multiple functions reinforced by a gendered division of labour'.[41] This division was dependent on the dual construction of the gentleman-connoisseur as consumer of art-objects, and the 'artistic' female as aestheticised sexual commodity. Hamilton's attitudes explicitly objectified the female body and, in a more socially sanctioned (and less revealing) version of those she had struck for her audience in her early career at Dr. James Graham's 'Temple of Health', embodied an idealised sexual passivity.

Graham's 'Temple of Health' offered a variety of pseudo-scientific 'treatments' (he had travelled to America and France and studied the electrical discoveries of Franklin) including a 'Celestial Bed' that claimed to aid conception. Graham also delivered numerous lectures on his own methods, as a backdrop to which 'the doctor arranged for tableaux to be staged, showing lightly draped young ladies posing as goddesses of Health, Beauty, Wisdom, etc.'; as Hugh Tours tartly observes, 'the sexual innuendoes which liberally bespattered the lectures were as thinly veiled as the young goddesses themselves'.[42] It is generally accepted that Hamilton (as Emily Hart) worked for Graham for a short time at the end of 1780, although there is no evidence to support the assertion that these tableaux were performed naked.[43] Flora Fraser suggests that rather than one of the 'goddesses', 'Emma could have been the "warbling chorister"

[40] Peter M. McIsaac, 'Rethinking Tableaux Vivants and Triviality in the Writings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Johanna Schopenhauer, and Fanny Lewald', *Monatshefte*, 99:2 (2007), 152-176 (157).
[41] McIsaac, 'Rethinking Tableaux Vivants', 156.
[42] Hugh Tours, *The Life and Letters of Emma Hamilton* (London: Gollancz, 1963), p. 18.
[43] Tours, *Life*, p. 19.

who sang off-stage, or she could have played a classical maiden in 1779 or 1780'. She also attributes rumours that Hamilton posed as a life model at the Royal Academy to a 1791 satirical cartoon by Rowlandson on the subject of her by-then famous 'attitudes', which 'shows Lady Hamilton performing her attitudes naked on a model's stage with a host of prurient old men looking on'. However Fraser does appear to credit the story that Hamilton 'danced naked on the dining-room table at Uppark [the country seat of Hamilton's aristocratic lover Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh] – presumably in further pursuit of the admiration of Sir Harry's friends'.[44] Although Hamilton's attitudes only became notorious in the late 1780s, her performances capitalised on well-established cultural prejudices that were already pervasive at the peak of Agujari's British career in 1775, in which female performers were increasingly constructed as physical art-objects rather than artistic agents.

Regardless of the truth of rumours surrounding Hamilton's life, the persistence of those rumours demonstrates the sexual speculation that attached itself to female performance in general and performative stillness in particular. As Lady Hamilton, she re-enacted the kind of sexual subjectivity she performed, in some capacity, in her socially marginal state as an actress and a courtesan, and with immense success. Thus the motionless performance represented an idealised erotic conformity, in which the performer is both submissive and sexually available. Concert performances (at venues such as the Pantheon and in private homes) differed from the Opera in that performances were of music only, without the interpolation of dramatic narrative, so the style of performance required at the Pantheon catered to this ideal of female stillness: the singer could perform the most popular arias without any unseemly engagement with their dramatic context. An opera singer by profession, Agujari must have felt the

[44] Fraser, *Beloved Emma*, pp. 9, 11.

restriction of her engagement at the Pantheon which would have required far less dramatic expression than a stage performance.

This is not to claim that opera singers were considered in the same light as actors or actresses: on the contrary, the Italian Opera in London had been criticised by Garrick (among others) for its disregard for dramatic illusion, with singers often breaking character to perform encores of popular arias, and possessing limited acting skills.[45] Opera singing, whether at the Italian Opera or at concerts, was in fact one of the few socially acceptable performance careers a female artist could pursue, perhaps because of precisely this failure of verisimilitude. Burney's expression of regret, that one 'so much formed for the *Theatre*' should be restricted to the Pantheon, can be read as a comment on Agujari's dubious feminine conduct as well as her artistic ability. The hierarchy of performance spaces in eighteenth-century England is complex, and has particular social implications. While the performance required of Agujari at the Pantheon was, arguably, more in line with ideals of feminine propriety, it was also more publicly accessible than the relatively exclusive Opera House. The King's Theatre was a space specifically designated for musical performance, whereas the Pantheon combined concerts with social spaces, breaking down the distinction between performer and audience. The Pantheon in its turn was more socially exclusive than the pleasure-gardens of Vauxhall and Ranelagh, but it was formed with the same function in mind: it was, for the audience as well as the musicians, a place to perform and be seen, 'a social package, in which the performance occupied a less central position'.[46] The organisation of entertainment at the Pantheon could be said to imitate the kind of private concerts given by the aristocracy, allowing wider access to a traditionally exclusive format. The

[45] Ian Woodfield notes that Garrick 'considered that [Italian opera] had become a circus-like spectacle, rather than a drama in which human emotions are represented in a natural (and thus) compelling manner'. Woodfield, *Opera and Drama in Eighteenth-Century London: The King's Theatre, Garrick and the Business of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 143.
[46] Woodfield, *Opera and Drama*, p. 72.

public accessibility – or, rather, inaccessibility – of performing spaces was crucial in terms of both their respectability and their social caché. As Leppert has observed of private performances,

> audience changed everything, even though the 'domestic' setting remained constant, because an audience must *gain admission* [...] admission to house concerts required entrance through two sets of gates, one commercial, the other social, which at once protected and delineated a highly privatized space, to which access was highly prized.[47]

In performing in public spaces such as the Pantheon, singers were exposed to an audience not regulated by the exclusivity of that domestic environment. However, this audience, and thus this performance space, was regulated to some extent by fashion, and was certainly regulated by money. As a space designed for sociability as well as performance, the Pantheon was a space for conspicuous and, particularly, fashionable consumption.

The relative fashionability and respectability of these different performance spaces would come to be reflected in Burney's first novel, as the titular heroine of *Evelina* is inducted into London society. In her first week in the city, Evelina writes to the Reverend Villars that 'we have not been to half the public places that are now open, though I dare say you will think we have been to all. But they are almost as innumerable as the persons who fill them'.[48] Evelina is overwhelmed both by the sheer variety of entertainments and by the size of the pleasure-seeking public, both of which

[47] Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 205.
[48] Frances Burney, *Evelina* [1778] ed. by Edward A. Bloom, with introduction and notes by Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 50. Further references to this edition will be given, in parenthesis, in the text.

are sprawling and 'innumerable', seemingly beyond control or comprehension. Very rapidly, however, she learns to distinguish between these spaces just as she learns to distinguish between their inhabitants. In her account of her first meeting with her 'low' cousins, the Branghtons, Evelina assumes a cultural authority that belies her limited experience: she writes that they spoke of 'public places, or rather the theatres, for they knew of no other' (*Evelina*, 71). As Vivien Jones remarks, this is untrue – in fact the Branghtons later propose visiting a variety of public entertainment spaces, none of them terribly respectable – but Evelina's early experience of London diversions, under the protection of the Mirvans, is limited to venues appropriate for a genteel young lady to be seen in (71 n.). Furthermore, her disparaging comment follows her recounting of her cousins' assumptions about her country ignorance, so ironically parallels their ignorance of fashionable customs with her own.

The only 'public places' that are mutually familiar to the newly-arrived Evelina and her city cousins are 'the theatres': even within these spaces, Burney has her heroine participate in a variety of modes of spectatorship and cultural engagement, and portrays the tense relationship between exclusivity and sociability. Between her first trip to the theatre immediately upon her arrival, and a subsequent visit after her induction into polite society, Evelina has had the opportunity to 'Londonize' herself (*Evelina*, 27), both in her appearance and her adoption of social mores. The contrast between this first visit to Drury Lane Theatre, at which 'the celebrated Mr. Garrick performs Ranger', and a visit roughly two weeks later, to see Congreve's *Love for Love*, marks a shift in Evelina's understanding of the nature of the theatre as a sociable space. Evelina initially records with irony Mrs. Mirvan's insistence that they 'sit in some obscure place, that she may not be seen', while she herself 'should be alike unknown in the most conspicuous or most private part of the house' (27). Her experience of the theatre on

this occasion is of the performance only: she makes no reference to the theatregoing public, but is concerned entirely with the performers and the performance, in particular that of Garrick, whom she 'could hardly believe had studied a written part, for every word seemed spoke from the impulse of moment' (27). Evelina is so convinced by Garrick's performance that she collapses the categories of art and life, recording that she 'almost wished to jump on the stage and join them' (28).

Burney offers a picture of spectatorship here that is uninflected by fashionable cultural consumption: Evelina is heedless of her position in the theatre, be it 'conspicuous' or 'private', because she does not consider herself to be a visual object. Her exuberant engagement with the performance as representation, as opposed to spectacle, sees her imaginatively participating in that performance, careless of the physical exposure entailed in 'jump[ing] on the stage', and heedless of any audience other than herself, or any object other than the play. By the time Evelina visits the theatre again two weeks later, to see Congreve's *Love for Love*, the nature of her engagement with the performance is altered because her understanding of spectatorship, and participation, has changed.[49] Whereas the verisimilitude of Garrick's performance as 'Ranger' seems to collapse the third wall, the performance of *Love for Love* is barely rendered in the text other than as 'extremely indelicate' and it is Lord Orville, an audience member, who is described as 'entertaining' (*Evelina*, 79-80). The play is, instead, an interruption of, and distraction from, the real entertainment of the evening: 'Miss Mirvan and I were perpetually out of countenance, and could neither make any observations ourselves, nor venture to listen to those of others' (80). The chief business of the evening is to 'listen to' and 'make [...]observations', activities which collapse categories of projection and reception, of listening and speaking, and of seeing (or

[49] Evelina first records visiting Drury Lane on Saturday, April 2; the letter describing the performance of *Love for Love* is 'in continuation' from her letter dated Saturday, April 16 (*Evelina*, pp. 27, 79, 75).

'observation') and producing (or 'making'). The barrier between cultural producers and cultural consumers is indistinct, and the spaces in which the two activities take place are no longer separated: Evelina need not 'jump on the stage' to join this performance. As Kristrina Straub notes, 'the opposition of spectator and spectacle often took the indecorous form of a conflict based on differences of class and sexual "respectability"'.[50] Evelina's innocent desire to join the players on her first visit to Drury Lane is a manifestation of both sexual innocence and vulnerability; however, while her subsequent absorption into the culture of London spectatorship will reinforce the ostensible 'opposition of spectator and spectacle' which, to retain respectability, she cannot transgress, this same culture is one in which that opposition is contradictory and its boundaries permeable.

Burney's text embodies the cultural threat of conspicuous consumption as an activity that in itself physically exposes the consumer. The female observer becomes implicated in the very aesthetic of performative stillness that is applied to the female performer, and Evelina frequently finds that her spectatorship is most conspicuous when she herself is most attentive to professional performance. For example, the attention of the Branghtons is caught by Evelina's *in*attention to the rest of the audience:

> The song, which was slow and pathetic, caught all my attention, and I lean'd my head forward to avoid hearing their observations, that I might listen without interruption; but, upon turning round, when the song was over, I found that I was the object of general diversion to the whole party. (*Evelina*, 94)

[50] Kristrina Straub, *Sexual Suspects: Eighteenth-Century Players and Sexual Ideology* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 4.

Burney here blurs categories of sound and vision: the Branghtons' act of spectatorship or 'observation' becomes audible, interfering with the sound of Millico's singing, and Evelina rather than the Opera itself becomes 'the object of [...] diversion'. The conspicuous fashionable consumption of cultural luxuries, such as Opera, recasts musical art as something to be seen and not heard. So determinedly visual are fashionable models of cultural engagement that even conversational exchange is transformed into a strange blend of display and spectatorship in which 'observation' presents a subject position that is both active and passive, demarcating a kind of active spectatorship that elevates artistic consumption to a position parallel with artistic production. Thus as focus shifts from cultural product to conspicuous consumption, the spaces in which cultural production takes place become implicated in a fetishisation of the visual and by extension the bodily.

This is nowhere more apparent than in Burney's representation of the Pantheon, specifically in its debasement by the fashionable gaze. Long after the building's destruction by fire in 1792, Charles Burney (who as a shareholder had suffered financial loss at the event) would write of the place that 'no person of taste in architecture or music, who remembers the Pantheon, its exhibitions, its numerous, splendid, and elegant assemblies, can hear it mentioned without a sigh'.[51] Evelina, as a 'person of taste', recognises the architectural merits of the building and the quality of performance, but these observations are countered by a correspondent failure of taste in her fellow attendees: Burney contrasts the 'awe and solemnity' with which the Pantheon inspires Evelina with the 'mirth and pleasure' of which it is popularly the site. Contrasting it with the 'gay and thoughtless' Ranelagh, Evelina remarks that 'however, perhaps it may

[51] Charles Burney, 'Pantheon', in Abraham Rees, *The cyclopaedia; or, universal dictionary of arts, sciences and literature / by Abraham Rees... with the assistance of eminent professional gentlemen. Illustrated with numerous engravings by the most distinguished artists*, 45 vols (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Brown, 1819-1820), vol. xxvi. The Pantheon burned down on the 14 January 1792.

only have this effect upon such a novice as myself' (*Evelina*, 106). The contrast of Evelina as nun-like 'novice', and the 'chapel'-like architecture of the Pantheon, with the 'mirth and pleasure' it houses parallels the levity with which accomplished musical performance is treated in this particular performance space:

> There was an exceeding good concert, but too much talking to hear it well. Indeed I am quite astonished to find how little music is attended to in silence; for though every body seems to admire, hardly anybody listens. (106)

Although there is an appearance of attention, there is a disjunction between the audience's own performance, of 'seem[ing] to admire', and their engagement, by listening, with the professional performance of the musicians. This appearance of admiration is presumably a noisy one, as the music is not 'attended to in silence', suggesting that verbal expressions of admiration paradoxically interfere with the reception of the music. In a journal letter of 1780, Burney's sister Susan records a meeting with castrato singer Gasparo Pacchierotti, in which they discuss the merits of the Pantheon as a performance space:

> ' 'Tis so bad a place for Music' – sd I... – 'I beg pardon Ma'am – I insist upon it it is a very *good* place if there was any attention [...] but no place is good for music if there is not silence'.[52]

[52] Susan Burney, Journal entry for 8 March 1780. Repr. in *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Philip Olleson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 128.

Pacchierotti's assertion that it is audience, rather than performance space, that is at fault, suggests a debasement of that space by an audience who do not possess the 'taste in architecture or music' that Charles Burney cites as necessary to an appreciation of the Pantheon. In a letter to Samuel Crisp of 1775, Burney identifies the uncomfortable relationship between musical-social spaces such as the Pantheon and less elevated entertainments: 'Indeed if niether [sic] Agujari or Gabrielli have charms to allure you to the Opera or Pantheon, one may imagine that you are become as indifferent to music, as to Dancing or Horse-Racing' (*EJL*, ii. 160). Burney deliberately counterpoints such low-culture popular entertainments as 'Dancing or Horse Racing' (of which the elderly and prudish Crisp would doubtless have disapproved) with the refinement of musical performance. However, her ironic parallel draws on a sincere anxiety about the devaluing of musical art by reducing it to spectacle. Although Burney claims Crisp would show himself 'indifferent to music' if he failed to attend the Opera or Pantheon, yet it is the 'charms' of Agujari (at the Pantheon), and rival *prima donna* Caterina Gabrielli (at the Italian Opera) that Burney suggests will 'allure' him there. Thus it is the (female) performers, rather than the perform*ance*, that constitute the appeal of those musical entertainments: it is just this 'allure' that seems to invite the sexual speculation Burney hints at, above, in her remark that Agujari 'must be very much courted' (*EJL*, ii. 94).

The type of bodily speculation to which Agujari is subject at the Pantheon is symptomatic of the diminished status of musical performance in relation to the public or sociable nature of its setting. In *Evelina*, Captain Mirvan protests that 'I should be glad to be told, by some of you who seem to be knowing in them things, what kind of diversion can be found in such a place as this here, for one who has had, long ago, his full of face-hunting?' (*Evelina*, 109). Mirvan's speech pinpoints the predatory nature of

'face-hunting' at the Pantheon, a space in which the acquisitive gaze allows the enthusiast of beauty to possess his quarry through relentless ocular pursuit. In a grotesque evolution of Addison's 'Pleasures of the Imagination', the spectating male claims 'a kind of property in everything he sees'.[53] Mirvan's assertion that he has had 'his full share of face-hunting' aligns the ostensibly polite gentleman connoisseurs – Willoughby, Lovel and, to an extent, Orville – with the tyrannical Captain's own younger, vulgar, self. This connoisseurship threatens to pass the boundaries of tasteful, imaginative possession into a physical usurpation of bodily control, threatening dismemberment through conceptual separation of the face from the body. This dismemberment, aligned with possession, becomes a kind of bodily invasion. Straub argues that 'rape becomes the metaphor for a specular relation that exceeds the boundaries placed on public specular behaviour'; in *Evelina*, Burney demonstrates the way in which engagement with artistic production is appropriated in rendering acceptable such excessive 'specular behaviour'.[54] 'The man of polite imagination', Addison proposes, 'can converse with a picture, and find an agreeable companion in a statue'.[55] Burney's representation of the Pantheon demonstrates the way in which artistic spaces accommodate ocular sexual predation by elevating just such an economy of the tasteful gaze. The performance required of Agujari, as a 'statue' or 'schoolgirl', is symptomatic of the aesthetic of eroticised stillness, in which 'companion[s]' are 'agreeable' for visual qualities alone; similarly, the emphasis on her bodily components, particularly her 'silver side', is akin to the dismembering 'face-hunting' described by Captain Mirvan.

This transformation of the Pantheon from tasteful performance space to one of predation and bodily usurpation is effected, it seems, by audience. Even within the

[53] Joseph Addison, 'The Pleasures of the Imagination', *Spectator*, No. 411, June 21, 1712.
[54] Straub, *Sexual Suspects*, p. 102.
[55] Addison, 'The Pleasures of the Imagination'.

relatively exclusive confines of this building, public patronage of a sort can debase the nature of that space. Captain Mirvan's request, to be told 'what kind of diversion can be found' at the Pantheon 'by some of you who appear to be knowing in them things', pinpoints the contingent relationship of 'diversion' and audience: the arbiters of taste are responsible for defining and validating that 'diversion' by dint of their 'appear[ance]' of knowledge. Accordingly, Evelina's estimate of social spaces depends precisely upon her estimate of those inhabitants: the nature of the spaces she frequents, and the way in which she experiences them, appear to be altered by the company she keeps. As Vivien Jones notes in her introduction to *Evelina*, Burney does not 'simply [support] alarmist warnings about such places', pointing out that it is 'precisely the pleasure-garden's mixed, cross-class clientele which enables [Evelina and Lord Orville] to renew their relationship' (*Evelina*, xxix). The social mobility afforded by such pleasurable spaces is in accordance with hierarchies dependent upon taste rather than social class, but this is of course one of the criteria which allows Evelina to ultimately identify herself with the aristocracy rather than with Madame Duval and the Branghtons. However, the sexual threat of the pleasure-garden is merely reconstituted, in the Pantheon, in accordance with a perceived elevated cultural status: sexual threat masquerades here as 'taste'. Both the potential, and the threat, of this entertainment culture echo the danger posed, and opportunity offered, to an emerging artistic professional such as Burney herself, and the musicians she encounters, by these relatively unregulated social spaces. While the unregulated nature of that audience entails textual or bodily exposure outside of the safety of domestic privacy, there is also the potential for that unregulated public to counteract fashionable influence and establish a form of free-market meritocracy through their choice of entertainments.

Evelina's exposure to a mixed clientele in spaces of performance and pleasure reflects the gradual shift taking place in the musical profession from private to public patronage, in which popularity was no longer defined by qualified or privileged individuals, but instead by an anonymous public. Rohr remarks that

> contemporary musicians, theatre managers, and music publishers were deeply concerned with audience preferences. In this way, the audience exerted indirect patronage, which was used as a guide for artistic decisions and professional employment.[56]

This democratisation of musical taste was seen by some contemporaries as damaging to standards, with programmes being dictated by popularity rather than artistic merit. The fraught relationship between the aural and the visual that Burney invokes in *Evelina* is crucial to these anxieties, and responds to the insistence with which artistic appreciation is couched in terms of 'admiration' rather than 'attention'. The superstars of Opera were defined by their celebrity as much as their talent, rendering artistic production indistinguishable from bodily presence. This phenomenon is strikingly evident in accounts of the debut in 1775 of Italian soprano Gabrielli, mentioned in Burney's letter to Crisp (above) alongside Agujari as having the 'charms' to 'allure' him to the Opera. The engagement of Gabrielli was directly calculated by the Opera managers to rival the appeal of Agujari at the Pantheon, and, as Woodfield describes, this calculation was successful:

[56] Rohr, *Careers of British Musicians*, p. 53.

> Any would-be opera reformer in London had to contend with the powerful appeal of a very different kind of drama, of which Gabrielli's debut had been an outstanding recent example. The aristocratic patrons who flocked to the opening night of *Didone* were far less interested in the drama of the plot, than in the intensely personal, human drama of the celebrated singer's first appearance. This was the opera as pure spectacle: intense prior interest; a packed house; the streets outside thronged with disappointed would-be spectators; booing; cheering; a regal entry; ogling of the star's person and dress; vocal gymnastics; bursts of applause, even in the middle of pieces.[57]

The intense interest in the 'person' of the singer herself, in her body rather than her performance, reverses the ideal of the female performer: the music is overshadowed by its vessel, transforming Gabrielli herself, rather than Dido, into the central character. Just as Burney's fame as a writer leaves her open to personal scrutiny, Gabrielli becomes public property, and part of her success is a willingness to break down the separation between performance and performer. The audience respond by a complete disregard for the artistic product, applauding 'even in the middle of pieces'. They are responding not to the song, but to the physical presence of the singer, 'ogling her person' and applauding 'vocal gymnastics', emphasising Gabrielli's physical exertion in performance. This same dramatic, personal appeal contributes greatly to Agujari's popularity, and speculation about her figure and character are symptomatic of this culture of spectatorship that, as Burney's letter to Crisp reveals, emphasises personal and bodily 'charms' rather than artistic merit.

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[57] Woodfield, *Opera and Drama*, pp. 150-1. Gabrielli made her debut in the winter of 1775 at The King's Theatre. She caused the sensation that Woodfield describes by delaying her opening night due to illness, which was strongly suspected by the Burneys to be a pretence. The performance was not cancelled until the last moment, and Burney reports that 'Poor Yates the manager, was obliged to stand at the Door from 5 till past 7 o'Clock, to appease the rage of the disappointed Public' (*EJL*, ii. 166).

In contrast to Agujari, Cecilia Davies seems to have avoided the kind of sexual speculation that her contemporary was subject to in *The Silver Tail*. As noted earlier, her reception seems to have been particularly favourable because of her appellation of *Inglesina*, offering the pleasures of the Italian style without the threat of foreign invasion. In December 1773, Elizabeth Harris wrote to her son James that

> we hear great accounts from Town of Miss Davis' [sic] singing the first woman in the opera. She is a perfect mistress of the Italian manner having liv'd six years in Italy.[58]

The following September her husband James wrote to William Hamilton that

> Miss Davies (for the honour of our countrey) [sic] has greatly distinguished herself in our Opera Theatre, both as a singer and an actress.[59]

Part of Cecilia Davies's appeal was a patriotic one. The Italian dominance of Opera in London offered the uncomfortable suggestion that Italians were musically superior, so English audiences were keen to embrace and encourage any British singer who could challenge that troubling idea. Davies's Italian nickname, *Inglesina* or 'little English one', effectively defined her against Italian singers, as *not* Italian. Yet in a letter of recommendation to the Count of Valla in Milan, J. C. Bach describes Davies and her

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[58] Donald Burrows and Rosemary Dunhill, *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: The Family Papers of James Harris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 751. James Harris, philosopher and musical patron, m. (1745) Elizabeth *née* Clarke. Harris devoted much of his life to amateur music in his native Salisbury. See Rosemary Dunhill, 'Harris, James (1709–1780)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009) <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12393> [accessed 28 February 2010]. The Harrises were friends of the Burneys (*EJL*, iv. 183 n. 47).

[59] Burrows and Dunhill, *Music and Theatre*, p. 770.

sister as 'two English Catholic girls'.[60] The repeated mis-assignation of 'English' aside, Davies's supposed Catholicism goes unmentioned elsewhere, but seems plausible given her Dublin ancestry. If this was the case, it seems the public were willing to overlook these slight inconsistencies in their *Inglesina*. Furthermore, Davies's nickname was evidence of her success as an export *to* the continent, a thoroughly British product, and beating the Italians at their own game 'for the honour of our countrey [sic]'. Davies's cultural significance as a British *prima donna* seems to have far outweighed the thorny matter of her ethnic background.

Davies's initial popularity, then, was bolstered by her conformity to an image of a particularly British femininity in the face of an influx of imported foreign performers. Her performances alongside her sister's armonica reinforced a passive and sexually submissive aesthetic of female musicianship. However, this early success proved abortive in a manner that would emphasise the tensions between the conflicting demands of artistic agency and idealised female passivity that were imposed on women working in the artistic professions. Davies's debut as *Prima Donna* for the 1773-4 season at the King's Theatre was successful, but her contract, though apparently renewed for the 1774-5 season, was not honoured. In November 1774 Elizabeth Harris wrote to her son that 'Miss Davies has nothing to do [.] She says she is engag'd to the opera [:] if they will not employ her it is not her fault'.[61] Although this report suggests passivity on Davies's part, in fact she did do something: she took the managers to court. Burney mentions the conflict in her journal, recording Davies's claim that

[60] Johann Christian Bach to the Count of Valla, 20 July 1767. Letter in the Rackett collection, Dorset County Archive Office, quoted (in original Italian with translation) by Matthews in 'The Davies Sisters', 155-6.
[61] Burrows and Dunhill, *Music and Theatre*, pp. 775-6.

> She *dared* not [sing], for that her Law suit was not yet decided, & her articles with the Opera managers tied her down to never singing in any Company. (*EJL*, ii. 79)

Davies's tactic seems to have been to abide by the contract that the managers of the King's Theatre, John Brooke and Richard Yates, were so desperate to dissolve, but no mention is made by Burney of the cause of the dispute in the first place. She observes that

> The Law suit is a very singular one. If the managers lose it, they will [have] the Costs to pay, & a whole season's salary to Miss Davies, though she has never sung a Note for them, & though the singer who has succeeded her, & who must also be paid, has never been a favourite with the Public, which is always a most cruel circumstance to the managers. And if Miss Davies fails, she will have lost a whole year's singing & have the Damages to pay. Where the *Right* lays I know not, but it is not possible to be in Company with Miss Davies & not wish her success. (*EJL*, ii. 80)

The suit certainly was singular, and attracted some publicity. As Burney notes, Catterina Schindlerin, who took over from Davies as *prima donna* in 1774, was neither popular nor, according to Burney's father, accomplished. Charles Burney remarks upon her 'moderate abilities, and more feeble voice'.[62] The exact events leading up to the legal action are unclear, but Woodfield has suggested a likely scenario. Schindlerin was in fact the pupil of Rauzzini, the leading man at the Opera from 1774. Woodfield

[62] Charles Burney, *A General History of Music*, iv. 501.

suggests that, not wanting to be outshone by a talented leading lady, Rauzzini persuaded the managers to engage Schindlerin, in order to throw his powers into greater relief:

> Having pacified Rauzzini by hiring Schindlerin, [Frances] Brooke apparently found herself having to pull out of an agreement already made with Davies, whose response was to file a suit for breach of contract. The defence offered by the King's Theatre lawyers was that the singer herself had broken her contract, specifically the clause preventing her from performing elsewhere without prior consent.[63]

Woodfield's argument is strengthened by the fact that on 31 May 1775, Davies won her case in the court of common pleas, suggesting that the original breach of contract really was on the part of the managers. Elizabeth Harris wrote again to her son James that 'Miss Davies has been triumphant over Yeates [sic], and getts [sic] fifteen hundred pound and costs', to which he responded 'I am very glad Miss Davies has carried her point – Yeates [sic] is a silly fellow'.[64] While Davies was compensated for her lost wages, and ultimately re-engaged at the Opera later that year, she had 'been prevented from exploiting her notably successful first year at the opera house in London, having been obliged to withdraw from all public performance'.[65] It is worth noting that the well publicised conflict between Davies and her managers did not produce the same intense interest as would the *prima donna* behaviour of Gabrielli on her London debut later that year. Most significantly, Davies had been unable to perform for 'company' for the duration of her contract. While clauses such as that in Davies's contract, prohibiting private performances, were common, they were rarely enforced, as a

[63] Woodfield, *Opera and Drama*, p. 68.
[64] Burrows and Dunhill, *Music and Theatre*, pp. 833-4.
[65] Woodfield, *Opera and Drama*, p. 70.

principal singer's popularity was critical to the financial success of the season. This clause in itself acknowledged the function of the private musical party in establishing the career of the singer: to perform privately was in fact a professional rather than a private act, in which the performer could promote their talents. The phenomenon of the musical *soirée* complicated the relationship of public and private for performers. Woodfield outlines the influence that privileged access to 'private' performance had over a musician's success or failure:

> An almost instantaneous verdict on the part of critical opinion was possible because rehearsals were often opened to interested observers like the Burneys, and because singers were encouraged to introduce themselves at private soireés before the opening night.[66]

If rehearsals were to be scrutinized in the same way as a performance, then Davies's suggestion that the Burneys were to visit her '*at Home* [where] she supposed she might be allowed to *practice*' is in reality a thinly veiled invitation to a very exclusive recital (*EJL*, ii. 79-80). Clearly, though, Davies ultimately realised the impossibility of giving any performance that was truly private, as this 'practice' recital appears never to have taken place.

Just as Davies cannot disentangle her 'private' performances from her 'public' ones, so Burney is conscious of the constant expectation that she will 'perform' for her friends, as well as the public. The social demands upon the artist become personally relevant to Burney once the authorship of *Evelina* becomes public. In a letter of 1780 to

[66] Woodfield, *Opera and Drama*, p. 137.

Samuel Crisp, she advises him that 'you must know *I* am at this time home *incog.* and never go out', and gives her reason for retreating:

> I have now a *large body of friends* who belong to myself, & therefore, if I am known to be in Town, I must either be eternally Dressing & visiting, or appear impertinently ungrateful to all their invitations and kindnesses. (*EJL*, iv. 248)

Clearly Burney is unwilling to disappoint her patrons, and fears appearing 'impertinent'; like Davies, she chooses to appear at the service of her '*large body of friends*' or, rather, the most influential members of her audience. While Burney's careful syntax states that this audience 'belong[s] to myself', her sense of obligation betrays the fact that, conversely, she belongs to her audience. These semantics of belonging hinge on the object of speculation, and Burney's new-found celebrity leaves her vulnerable to a kind of literary 'face-hunting'. The reversal of sociable spaces, in which private visits are transformed into professional engagements, and concert venues become the province of talk rather than song, necessitates the careful delineation of professional and private identities: to be 'known to be in town', or physically present in the London social *mêlée*, risks the appropriation of that private self by a pseudo-private, but essentially public, audience.

The separation of her public (in this case professional) and private identities, and the spaces in which they can be maintained, is exemplified by Burney's anxieties about how private friendships interact with professional personas. The relative respectability of the operatic and the theatrical professions, discussed above, becomes crucial to Burney's emerging definition of artistic-professional identity when one of Charles Burney's singing pupils, Jane Barsanti, makes the move from singer to actress. Burney

is apprehensive of remaining intimate with Barsanti because of her theatrical associations, regretting that '[?she cannot] possibly visit at our house, & we can only see her by accident' (*EJL*, i. 164). Although she was ultimately to drop this 'delicacy' (*EJL*, ii. 81), her initial reserve is motivated by an acknowledgement of the sexual speculation to which Barsanti would be subject as an actress:

> I grieve at the probability there is of these dreadful propositions being frequently made to her [...] Mr. Crisp sometimes terrifies me, as he asserts that, sooner or later, she *must* fall. – but I hope *he Can* be mistaken.
>
> (*EJL*, i. 315, 323)

The singer's 'good Conduct' is not in itself sufficient to ease Burney's fears: Barsanti's career choice exposes her to 'dreadful propositions', and assumptions like Samuel Crisp's that actresses ultimately '*must* fall' only contribute to such exposure by perpetuating perceptions of sexual freedom in the theatrical profession. Barsanti's ability as an actress serves to illustrate what was so threatening about that profession, namely, her talent for imitation. Burney praises this talent in a journal entry in 1771:

> She is extremely clever & entertaining, possesses amazing powers of mimickry, & an uncommon share of humour [...] Miss Barsanti has great Theatrical talents; her Voice is entirely lost, but still her mother designs her for the stage. (*EJL*, i. 158-9)

She repeats her praise in April 1772, writing that '[mimicry] is a dangerous talent but in her profession, it will be a very shining one' (*EJL*, i. 197). Burney's observation proved

prophetic, as Barsanti's abilities would attract censure as well as praise. A correspondent signing themselves 'INDIGNATION' wrote to the *Morning Chronicle* after one of Barsanti's performances as follows:

> Respecting the Prelude, or what you please to call it, it is too low to say anything about; but I should be glad of information (if it does not proceed from ill nature) why Miss B—i, in this, as well as her first appearance on the stage, took so much pains in attempting to ridicule, or, as it is called, *take off*, Miss Y—e? If she would *take off* a piece of her tongue, it would be of much more utility, and possibly learn her to *speak* plain, and be as becoming as a pitiful subterfuge to depreciate the merit of an actress at least as valuable and improving as herself.[67]

The 'Prelude' to which the writer of this letter refers was performed at the Covent Garden Theatre on the 20th and the 22nd of September 1775, first as *A New Prelude* and subsequently as *A Peek into the Green Room*. According to the *Westminster Magazine* it was 'the different performers of the Theatre comparing notes together on their various successes, casts of parts, droll accidents, &c. &c., which they experienced during their various summer excursions'.[68] It was described by Burney as 'foolish', and she reports Barsanti's resistance to the desire of the managers 'to take off Mrs. Yates and Miss Younge', both of whom were actresses at the rival Drury Lane Theatre. She relates that 'she had suffered so much abuse & ill will from her Imitations, that she was resolved

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[67] *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser* (London, England), Wednesday, September 27, 1775; Issue 1980. Repr. in *17th and 18th-Century Burney Collection Newspapers*, <http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/> [accessed 21 February 2009].

[68] *Westminster Magazine*, iii. 459. Repr. in *The London Stage 1660-1800*, parts 1-5, 11 vols (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960-8), *Part 4: 1747-1776*, ed. by George Winchester Stone Jr., 3 vols (1962), iii. 1911.

not to do any more' yet as the above letter indicates, 'the Tragic speech notwithstanding all her desire to avoid it, was reported to be marked to *Miss Younge*' (*EJL*, ii. 161).

The sexual speculation to which an actress was subject was intensely bound up with her role as a mimic or imitator. Angela Smallwood has observed that the actress's role as a mimic, often portraying their social betters

> typified, very publicly, a much wider cultural development affecting many women in, or known to, their audiences [...] a phenomenon by which, through the expansion of leisure and consumerism (which affected women's lives especially), the middling classes consciously cultivated social activities associated with their betters, and emulated many aspects of upper-class lifestyles.[69]

Barsanti's talent for imitation has survived in biographical accounts of her. According to Highfill, 'She is said to have modelled her social behaviour on Mrs. Abington's – or on that part of Mrs. Abington's behaviour which suited her strict moral canons'.[70] If this is the case, Barsanti's social persona was then modelled on a woman whose talent for social emulation was so perfect that she herself was emulated by fashionable society.[71] The threat presented by the actress is that she will be *too* convincing, blurring class distinctions and overstepping social boundaries. In Barsanti's case, her talent truly is 'dangerous', in that it indeed renders her socially equivocal; her later marriage in

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[69] Angela J. Smallwood, 'Women and the Theatre' in Vivien Jones, ed., *Women and Literature in Britain, 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 238-262 (p. 249).
[70] Philip J. Highfill, Jr., Karlman A. Burnim and Edward Langhans, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1600-1800*, 16 vols (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973- 94), iv. 362.
[71] '[Frances Abington] was rapidly taken up by fashionable Dublin society, and her dress was widely imitated'. Alison Oddey, 'Abington, Frances (1737–1815)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; Online edn, 2009) <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/article/51> [accessed 1 May 2009].

1777 to an aristocratic Irishman, John Lyster, is an example of the potential for social mobility that the theatre offered, but his early death in 1779 and Barsanti's subsequent alienation from Lyster's family equally demonstrate the precariousness of this success.[72] However, it is not merely the ability to take on the *image* of another (in this case, ironically, of another actress who had made her name imitating aristocrats), but her talent for taking on the *voice* of another that seems to have so enraged her critic in the *Morning Chronicle*.[73] Thus the violent suggestion that she should '*take off* a part of her tongue' locates the precise site of Barsanti's power: her tongue or, specifically, her power of speech, has the potential to disrupt hierarchies even within the theatre.

Despite her concerns about Barsanti's 'dangerous talent', Burney seems to have delighted in her friend's talent for mimicry. Moreover, it was a talent which she herself possessed, often ventriloquizing acquaintances. In a 1780 letter to Samuel Crisp, Burney peppers her discourse with '*There I had you, my Lad!*' and '*There I had you again, my Lad!*' (*EJL*, iv. 216-7) in imitation of family friend Kitty Cooke.[74] Similarly, Rose Fuller's nonsensical '– Fact! – Fact, I assure you!' (*EJL*, iii. 362) resurfaces frequently in Burney's letters and becomes something of an in-joke in her family circle. Her *Journals* reproduce in vivid detail the language of those she meets, as in the following rambling anecdote from the 'General', Mr. Blakeney:

> 'Some years ago, he says, – let's see, how many? – in the year 71. – ay, 71, 72, – thereabouts, I was taken very ill, [...] – lost 4 years of the happiness of my life, – let's see, 71 – 72 – 73 – 74 – ay, 4 years, Sir! – mistook my Case, Sir! – & all that kind of thing [...] let me see, ay, 71 – 72 – &c –' (*EJL*, iii. 427)

[72] Lyster's family disapproved of his theatrical connection, and refused to allow Barsanti to appear on stage under her married name. Instead she adopted the name of 'Mrs. Lisley'. Barsanti was rapidly remarried, to Richard Daly, a Dublin actor-manager. See Highfill, *Biographical Dictionary*, iv. 359-62.
[73] It is of course possible that 'INDIGNATION' was Younge herself.
[74] See *EJL*, iv. 216 n. 51.

Mr. Blakeney's tale – and his idiosyncratic manner of telling – resurfaces throughout Burney's Brighton journal-letters to her sister Susan in November 1779. She is clearly conscious of the caricatured figure she presents to Susan: having recorded his extravagant misattribution, to Swift, of lines by Chesterfield, she asks 'Now if I had heard all this *before* I writ my Play, would you not have thought I had borrowed the hint of my Witlings from Mr. Blakeney?' (*EJL*, iii. 404). Of Rose Fuller she writes 'I think, if possible, his Language looks more absurd upon Paper even than it sounds in conversation' (*EJL*, iii. 363). Burney's authorship placed her in a precarious position in society because of just this ability to mimic, or convincingly reproduce, a variety of '*high, & low* life' (*EJL*, iii. 11). Samuel Johnson suggests that Burney 'should write *Stretham* [sic], *a Farce* [...which] should have *them all* [i.e. the Thrales' Streatham set] in it & give a touch of the Pitches and Tattersalls!' (*EJL*, iii. 111). The expectation, or fear, that the author can recreate the many voices of the social spectrum from Kitty Cooke upwards is as disturbing as Barsanti's uncanny talent for mimicry: Burney can potentially disguise her equivocal social status by ventriloquizing or performing respectability, but her equal command of lower-class voices in her works threatens to expose her social origins. Furthermore, the suggestion that she should apply her mimetic talents to her social group at Streatham collapses distinctions between her private persona and her professional, authorial one. Even within this apparently domestic space, Burney is unable to escape the performative associations of her literary talents, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

Burney's initial reluctance to maintain a friendship with Barsanti is then utterly understandable, as not only are the threatening associations of theatrical mimicry disturbing, they are also thoroughly applicable to her own talents. Yet her caution about

associating with Barsanti cannot be attributed merely to her own identification with this fellow female artistic professional. She laments that Barsanti cannot 'visit at our house'; yet the Burneys played host to numerous performance professionals, some of whom were single women (such as Agujari), and Garrick, a fellow actor, was an intimate of the household (although this double-standard could be accounted for by Garrick's maleness). As I will outline in the next chapter, the Burneys' 'musical parties' attempted to domesticate performative professionalism in a private space, eradicating the dynamic of audience and performer by maintaining strictly artistic criteria for admission. In effacing this problematic relationship, the interference of spectacle with performance can be overcome, and artistic production disembodied and de-objectified. A talented mimic such as Barsanti, whose professional output depended on her ability to *embody* and visually represent, would not be easily accommodated in such a space.

Burney's early encounters with performance professionals such as Agujari, Davies, and Barsanti were formative: through the artistic-professional culture she encountered in her father's house, she was acutely aware of the insistent conflation of artistic products with the bodies of their producers; *Evelina* reflects the troubled relationship between performance and display that inflected performance spaces and performer-audience dynamics. In publishing her novel anonymously, Burney calculated to eschew this difficult dynamic, and separate her professional output by disconnecting it from her private body. When this proved impractical, she was forced to carve out an authorial identity that could bear the burden of public speculation.

Chapter Two

Competing Conversations: Patronage, Professionalism and Cultural Production in Streatham and St. Martin's Street

The success of *Evelina* (1778), as its authorship became public, propelled Burney into fashionable society, principally through her introduction to Hester Thrale and the Streatham set. This introduction saw Burney move from the diverse musical/artistic-professional circles of her father's house to a polite, lettered society in which artistic sociability took on a different aspect. Through Thrale, Burney would also encounter the so-called 'bluestocking' circle and its fashionable hostess, Elizabeth Montagu. Burney's account of the literary society of these two conversational circles, and of her friendship with Thrale in particular, engenders an exploration of her own emerging sense of her position in relation to literary society. The meritocratic, artistic professionalism valorised in the musical Burney household comes into repeated conflict with the differing (although similarly gendered) patronage models of these two literary salons. The tensions Burney identifies, between the conversational culture of her father's household and both the Streatham and bluestocking models of conversation, thus provide the testing-ground for the establishment of her distinct professional identity.

Hester Thrale (later Piozzi) and her first husband Henry had for years been playing host to Samuel Johnson, and after Johnson's death she would become one of his many biographers.[1] The conversational circle at Streatham was centred on Johnson, attracting playwrights, artists, and men of letters. Commentators such as Betty

[1] Hester Thrale Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the Last Twenty Years of his Life* (London: Thomas Cadell, 1786).

Schellenberg and Janice Thaddeus have emphasised the influence of Johnson on Burney's developing professional persona; however, Burney's friendship with Thrale also deserves attention in this context. The class complexities of this relationship have been recognised by most of Burney's biographers. Thaddeus notes, for example, that 'though Thrale enjoyed and needed Burney's company, she was irritated by Burney's egregious need to be an equal'.[2] Betty Rizzo, too, notes these 'disquieting resonances', asking 'did Thrale, for instance, think she was acquiring Burney as Greville had acquired her father?'[3] However, the literary dimension of their relationship has been somewhat simplified, and always assumed to be supportive. Thaddeus comments on this closeness, writing that 'the two women, always with reservations, cherished their friendship and supported one another's ambitions as writers'.[4] Similarly, Margaret Doody writes that 'it can be suggested that the one lasting gift Burney gave to the woman who was once her dearest friend was the model of a writing career'.[5] However, while outwardly Burney and Thrale may have appeared supportive of each other's writing, this belies a defensive individualism on Burney's part, and an envious resentment on Thrale's. Moreover, the difficulties of this relationship forced Burney to recognise the conflict between her authorial and social personas, and consequently, to negotiate between them.

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[2] Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 2000), p. 31.

[3] Betty Rizzo, *Companions Without Vows* (Athens, GA and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), p. 89.

[4] Thaddeus, *Frances Burney*, p. 31.

[5] Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: the Life in the Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 107. However, Thrale's biographer William McCarthy argues that Thrale's literary career had begun much earlier, although it had been 'stifled' by her marriage to Henry Thrale. See William McCarthy, *Hester Thrale Piozzi: Portrait of a Literary Woman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 24-25. I owe this observation to Betty Schellenberg, *The Professionalization of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 148. Michael J. Franklin records that not only were the young Thrale's pre-marital literary endeavours 'frequently sent to the London newspapers', but that her output continued during her marriage, including a collaboration with Johnson on a translation of Boethius, and translations and poems of her own, encouraged by Johnson. See Michael J. Franklin, 'Piozzi, Hester Lynch (1741-1821)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2009) <http://o-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/article/22309> [accessed 20 May 2009].

Burney's first acquaintance with Thrale was through Charles Burney, who became an intimate of the Streatham set through his tuition of Queeney, as Thrale records:

> Dr Burney was first introduced to our Society by Mr. Seward in the year 1776 - he was to teach our eldest Daughter Musick, and attended once a week at Streatham for that purpose: but such was the fertility of his Mind, and the extent of his Knowledge, such the Goodness of his Heart and Sauvity [sic] of his Manners that we began in good earnest to sollicit [sic] his Company, and gain his Friendship.[6]

Thrale's praise of Charles Burney's mental qualifications seems to be set in contrast to his role in their household, and it is obvious that, in seeking the 'Company' of a music teacher, an employee of the family, she sees herself as somehow confounding social norms. The relationship between Thrale and Charles Burney is not, however, one of equality, and this is obvious to Burney himself. Charles Burney retains Thrale's favour through deferential flattery of a peculiar kind that positions Thrale as beneficent patroness. Thrale records in her *Thraliana* 'some Verses of Doctor Burney's on the same unworthy subject [i.e. Thrale]', entitled 'To Mrs. Thrale on presenting the Author with a Gold Pen' (*Thraliana*, i. 215-6). Charles Burney addresses 'bounteous Thrale', praises her 'Mind so pure' and 'Heart so warm' and declares that 'The Virtues all around her wait', eulogising her 'Duty' as 'Parent, Wife and Child'. Taking as his conceit the idea that the gift of the pen could 'thus Transfer/Her Learning Sense and Wit', he argues that

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[6] Hester Thrale, *Thraliana*, ed. by Katherine C. Balderston, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), i. 137. Further references to this edition will be indicated, in parenthesis, in the text.

Paupers from Grubstreet at her Gate
Would crowd both young and old;
Who day and Night would supplicate
For Thoughts - not Pens of Gold. (*Thraliana*, i. 216)

Charles Burney flatters Thrale by positioning her as sought by literary producers – 'Paupers from Grubstreet' – for her 'Thoughts' rather than her wealth and status, as symbolised by 'Pens of Gold'. While still positioning Thrale as a kind of patron, he seems to recognise her desire to be considered intellectually, as well as financially, influential.

As Charles Burney identifies in his poem, Thrale is sensitive about her liminal position within her own social group, so he is careful to flatter her desire for intellectual reputation. In so doing, though, he reinforces this liminality by separating Thrale from those 'Paupers from Grubstreet' who are engaged in the business of print culture. While 'Pens of Gold' offer an elegant means of transcribing literary output, and can be employed in panegyric of the donor, such a pen is only the medium. The value of the golden pen competes, unsuccessfully, with a different kind of literary currency, namely 'Thoughts': by figuring Thrale in the role of classical muse, as the benevolent dispenser of these 'Thoughts', Charles Burney flatters her creative ambitions without necessarily conceding authority. The elaborately dismal image of supplicant 'Paupers from Grubstreet' who 'crowd' at Thrale's 'gate' reinforces the social gulf between gentry patroness and literary labourer. Ultimately, though, Thrale has dispensed 'Pens of Gold', not 'Thoughts': the reality of her patronage is thus finally revealed to be financially valuable, but creatively redundant.

Frances Burney's complex relationship with Thrale, an uneasy combination of friendship and patronage, was established in the context of her father's explicitly contractual one. Her early impressions of Thrale were of course taken at second hand, from her father's account of professional visits as Queeney's music teacher. In *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, Burney recalls her father's first visit to 'that seat of the muses', Streatham:

> So interesting was this new engagement to the family of Dr. Burney, which had been born and bred to a veneration of Dr. Johnson; and which had imbibed the general notion that Streatham was a coterie of wits and scholars, on a par with the blue assemblages in town of Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Vesey; that they all flocked around him, on his return from his first excursion, with eager enquiry whether Dr. Johnson had appeared; and whether Mrs. Thrale merited the brilliant plaudits of her panegyrists.[7]

Burney's account of this imaginative construction of the coterie is informed by the 'veneration of Dr. Johnson', the most eminent of its members. Johnson's reputation is unquestioned: the Burney children merely wish to know whether he 'appeared', as if for Johnson, appearance and brilliance are necessarily synonymous. However, Thrale is not accorded the same 'veneration': although her reputation is 'brilliant', there is no guarantee that this reputation is 'merited'. Burney registers suspicion, not of Thrale herself, but of 'her panegyrists'; this suspicion is paralleled by that which is often expressed in her journals and letters of the 'gross & noisy applause' she meets with

[7] Frances Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, arranged from his own manuscripts, from family papers, and from personal recollections, by his daughter Madame D'Arblay*, 3 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1832), ii. 73-4.

herself as a reluctant literary celebrity, as I will discuss below.[8] In this anecdote, then, Burney not only recalls the origins of a significant relationship, but invokes one of the constant tensions of that relationship. During their short but intense period of friendship, Burney and Thrale were separately negotiating their identities as literary women in a gendered artistic culture, and were pursuing very different models of feminine literary authority. Their respective self-constructions not only differed, but also competed. Thrale's role as hostess was dependent on her ability to dispense literary patronage, which Burney was anxious to avoid. In turn, Burney's literary professionalism, which valorised the relative independence from patronage afforded by print culture, both threatened the conversation culture in which Thrale found some literary authority, and minimised the influence of the fashionable hostess.

In order to understand both the conditions Burney was negotiating, as well as the fraught nature of her relationship with Thrale, it is essential to situate both of these women in the context of female intellectualism and specifically the literary salon, or conversational circle, in the late eighteenth century. Thrale's fashionable literary society at Streatham, as Burney herself notes, above, was justly seen to rival the brilliant intellectual parties of bluestocking hostesses Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Vesey. In her analysis of emerging coffee-house culture at the beginning of the eighteenth century, E. J. Clery observes that 'men were to be remasculinized by a new model of heterosocial interaction focused on the moral influence of women'.[9] This model, which reinscribed feminine achievement as an index of (patriarchal) civic progress, persisted throughout the century as a justification for female education and female participation in intellectual culture. Clery argues that although this valorisation of the intellectual

[8] Frances Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988-), iv. 103. Further references to this edition will be indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *EJL*.
[9] E. J. Clery, *The Feminization Debate in Eighteenth-Century England: Literature Commerce and Luxury* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 21.

female 'could not fail to be recognised as an opportunity [...] the independent views of [women such as] Carter and Macaulay, fundamentally at odds with capitalist ideology, were muffled by their reception as icons of modernity'.[10] The heterosocial conversational circles at St. Martin's Street, Streatham, and Montagu House offer subtly differing models of female intellectualism, and differing models of artistic value, which were gendered to a lesser or greater degree. The carefully balanced privacy and artistic professionalism of St. Martin's Street, for example, was at odds with the fashionable and relatively public amateur ethos of bluestocking assemblies; Streatham offers a fascinating and conflicted combination of the two. Key to the dynamic of these groups was their response to the way in which artistic/intellectual production was gendered.

The figure of the female intellectual in the eighteenth century was enormously conflicted: simultaneously celebrated and threatening, a canon of women authors began to be tentatively recognised, but one of the criteria for inclusion was strict moral virtue. George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain* (1752) is a manifestation of this criterion.[11] Dedicated to Catherine Talbot and Mary Delaney, prominent members of the bluestocking circle, Ballard's project was calculated to emphasise the correlation between learning and virtue in his subjects. So-called 'scandalous' women such as Aphra Behn and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu were rejected from such narratives of feminine literary achievement because their virtue was impeachable, but there was no such moral scrutiny applied to male authors, who were judged not as men, but as artists. Thus authorship and *female* authorship were not measured by the same standard, as is demonstrated even in works, such as Ballard's, intended to celebrate female writers.

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[10] Clery, *The Feminization Debate*, p. 12.
[11] George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, Who have been Celebrated for their Writings, or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (Oxford: W. Jackson, 1752).

Richard Samuel's painting, *The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain* (1779), depicts a group of nine women prominent for their artistic or literary talents, dressed in classical robes. These women were Elizabeth Carter, Angelika Kauffman, Anna Letitia Barbauld, Elizabeth Linley, Catharine Sawbridge Macaulay, Elizabeth Montagu, Elizabeth Griffith, Hannah More and Charlotte Lennox.[12] Of the nine, seven were published authors, and the group included an artist (Kauffman), an actress (Griffith) and a singer (Linley). What is significant about this grouping is how many types of performance are included under, and reduced to, the term 'muse'. Although the portrait is intended as a celebration of artistic women, they are valued as inspiring rather than inspired. The portrayal of Kauffman in particular emphasises the valorisation of the female artist as an art-object, in preference to her art: Kauffman's canvas faces away from the viewer, indicating that her painterly attitude is of greater artistic value than the painting she produces. The inclusion of Elizabeth Linley as the representative of musical performance is also an intruiging choice: in 1773, Linley had married playwright and theatre manager Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who put an end to what had been a promising performance career. Linley thus represents the skill of the professional singer combined with the respectability of a private performer, whose talents are reserved for the domestic sphere. Suzanne Aspden notes that as well as a subject in Samuel's painting, Linley had sat for Thomas Gainsborough, and Joshua Reynolds had depicted her variously as St. Cecilia, as Charity (for the window of New College, Oxford), and as the Virgin in the nativity. She writes that 'Elizabeth's voice,

[12] Catharine Macaulay's inclusion in this 1779 portrait is incongruous as her second marriage, in 1778, had effectively excluded her from bluestocking intellectual society. Macaulay was a respected scholar and major republican historian, and thus a celebrated figure of female intellectual achievement. Her iconic status was damaged by rumours of impropriety surrounding her marriage to William Graham, who was 26 years Macaulay's junior and her social inferior, although by all accounts the marriage seems to have been a happy one. See Bridget Hill, 'Macaulay, Catharine (1731–1791)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2009) <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/article/17344> [accessed 26 Jan 2010]. Thrale's marriage to Piozzi in 1784 would be similarly censured.

enhanced by her beauty, intelligence and modesty, fostered the cult that surrounded her throughout her life'.[13] By the time Samuel came to include Linley in his portrait, her image was already associated with qualities that counteracted the problematic exposure of feminine musical performance. In depicting Linley, Samuel has chosen to represent an ideal of femininity, rather than an ideal of creativity.

Perhaps the most eminent figure in Samuel's painting is Elizabeth Montagu, whose literary reputation as the author of *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear* (1769) is rivalled by her reputation as a fashionable hostess. Montagu's inclusion, and Samuel's manner of depicting her, exemplify the often contradictory portrayals of women as 'muse'. Elizabeth Eger notes that

> The Romantic and modernist concentration on the individual act of literary creation has tended to focus on the poet's communication with the muse as an intimate and often highly sexualised relationship, obscuring the classical tradition of representing the muses as a group of independent, wilful and manipulative practitioners of their arts.[14]

As Eger emphasises, the term 'muse', as it was being used at this particular historical moment, did not simply position the women it was used to denote as 'passive enablers of art'.[15] However, while Samuel *does* choose to depict female artistic 'practitioners', the positioning of his subjects emphasises Montagu's role as just such a 'passive enabler'. Montagu is seemingly as close as we can come to an organising principle for

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[13] Suzanne Aspden, 'Linley [Sheridan], Elizabeth Ann (1754–1792)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2009) <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/article/25364>, [accessed 23 Feb 2012].
[14] Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 36.
[15] Eger, *Bluestockings*, p. 36.

the group, which, as John Brewer observes, is otherwise 'not a coherent group'. She is depicted at the centre of the larger grouping on the right-hand side of the painting, listening to Elizabeth Linley's singing.[16] Although a published author, then, Montagu's inspiring quality here is that of a tasteful consumer and connoisseur of the arts. Her central position in the right-hand group, who seem to be positioned so as to form an audience for Linley, corresponds to the position she held at her own literary parties, heading a circle of fashionable, talented or powerful guests. Harriet Guest argues that the women of the bluestocking circle, of which Montagu was a prominent member, 'present themselves as models of acceptable or traditional notions of feminine virtue', adding that Montagu's riches allow her to 'represent herself as a dispenser of hospitality, patronage and philanthropy, while less affluent women such as Carter and Chapone defend the privacy of their lives'.[17] As Eger points out, 'with the exception of Elizabeth Montagu, a powerful patron of the arts, they all made a living from their work'.[18] Released from such financial necessity, the literary role Montagu was able to fashion for herself was then one of a mediator, often, as Guest observes, between opposing political factions.[19] Montagu's cultural prominence emphasises both the importance of her role in creating an arena for debate, and the role of the hostess more generally. As Samuel's painting indicates, the hostess was a valorised figure in artistic culture, but she was also seen as artistically passive. Similarly, Thrale's critical afterlife is the perfect example of a woman writer whose artistic merit is underestimated in direct proportion to the eminence of her guests, and by that token, to her success as a hostess.

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[16] John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 78.
[17] Harriet Guest, 'Bluestocking Feminism', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 65:1 (2002), 59-80 (61).
[18] Elizabeth Eger, 'Representing Culture: "The Nine Living Muses of Great Britain" (1779)', in Eger et al, eds, *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 104-132 (p. 107).
[19] 'Her assemblies effect political ends because they remove men from their political context'. Guest, 'Bluestocking Feminism', 64.

Furthermore, the restrictions of her first marriage prompted Thrale to embrace that role as an opportunity for a type of literary performance. However the Streatham salon may have differed from Montagu's bluestockings on the point of literary professionalism, the organisation of that conversational circle still maintained the figure of the hostess, as literary patron, at its apex.

The term 'bluestocking', sometimes applied to Burney and more occasionally to Thrale, is today most strongly associated with the group of women surrounding Elizabeth Montagu, Frances Boscawen and Elizabeth Vesey, who were often referred to as 'bluestocking hostesses'. As Sylvia Myers has demonstrated, however, the prominent characteristic of 'bluestocking' sociability was intellectual conversation in mixed company. In her important study of the group, Myers describes an 'informal group of men and women interested in literature and other intellectual matters', whose success arose in part 'out of their capacity for the male and female friendships which provided the supporting structure for their efforts'.[20] While the heterosocial nature of these friendships offers some prospect of intellectual equality, this is not without its problems, however. In her poem *The Bas Bleu, or, Conversation*, Hannah More calls on 'Conversation' to 'Call forth the long-forgotten knowledge / Of school, of travel, and of college!'[21] The conversational circle she extols in this work is that of Elizabeth Vesey, a friend of Elizabeth Montagu and fellow 'bluestocking' hostess: immediately, then, conversation is designated as a feminised arena, hosted and facilitated by women, but the 'knowledge' that is exchanged has its origins in masculine institutions and pursuits: 'school', 'travel' and 'college'. Although all of these experiences were considered prerequisites for a thorough aristocratic education, and desirable in a gentry

[20] Sylvia Harcstark Myers, *The Bluestocking Circle: Women, Friendship and the Life of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 2.
[21] Hannah More, 'The Bas Bleu; or, Conversation' in *Florio: A Tale, for Fine Gentlemen and Fine Ladies: and, The Bas Bleu; or, Conversation: Two Poems* (London: T. Cadell, 1786), ll. 234-5. Further line references to this will be indicated in parenthesis, in the text, as *BB*.

one, very few women travelled on the continent (Thrale, as Mrs. Piozzi, being a notable exception); to do so as an unmarried woman (as Mary Wollstonecraft did through Scandinavia in 1795) was almost unheard of. Women were also debarred from entering the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and the 'schools' to which some young women were sent were rarely concerned with the kind of 'knowledge' to which More refers. Those members of the bluestocking circle who had a classical education of the type acquired in the public schools were often taught, or at least encouraged, by educated male relatives (Elizabeth Carter, for example, was educated by her father, a cleric). Thus, while these particular women engaged in intellectual society on terms of seeming equality, the bluestocking conversational circle appeared as a whetstone and audience for genius, rather than its source: 'ah, wherefore wise if none must hear?' (*BB*, 241).

More overcomes the problem of display with the trope of community, in which intellectual performance has an edifying effect on the audience, and the learning of one member benefits all. This is ambiguous: it could be assumed from More's argument that the mixed company, made up of college educated gentlemen and receptive ladies, allows a man to imprint his knowledge onto a passive female audience. However, this ambiguity also permits a more equal and co-operative model of conversation, and this potential interpretation is strengthened by the poem's celebration of both male and female intellectuals: 'BOSCAWEN sage, bright MONTAGU', we are told, with 'LYTTLETON's accomplished name / And witty PULTNEY shar'd the fame' (*BB*, 45, 48-9). Vesey herself is addressed as being 'of Verse the judge and friend', which deceptively casts her as a passive audience. More entreats Vesey, 'Awhile my idle strain attend', so while Vesey is cast in the receptive, 'hostess' role, More becomes the artist who is nurtured by Vesey's receptivity. Thus in a community where 'fame' is 'shar'd' between the sexes, so, presumably, is the responsibility (and credit) of

imparting wisdom, which can be both a heterosocial and a homosocial exchange. Furthermore, More is anxious to pre-empt and counter associations of female intellectualism with display and moral laxity, invoking Elizabeth Carter as an example of a pious intellectual woman: 'CARTER taught the female train / The deeply wise are never vain' (*BB*, 54-5). More's ideological separation of wisdom from vanity shields the women of the bluestocking circle from accusations that their learning is affectation. Furthermore, she directly confronts the myth of the stereotypical 'female novel reader' who, according to John Brewer, had become 'the epitome of the misguided reading public'. Brewer describes how the female reader comes to represent 'the sort of unstable, morally feckless figure that a commercial culture threatened to produce but that authors and critics wanted to avoid'. This stereotype, he argues, was 'both undesirable and necessary to the definition of a worthy reading public'.[22] Thus More's description, below, renders these stereotypes ridiculous:

> Ladies who point, nor think me partial,
> An Epigram as well as MARTIAL;
> Yet in all female worth succeed,
> As well as those who cannot read.[23] (*BB*, 182-185)

Here More's *reductio ad absurdam* exposes the false logic of such assumptions, with the ironic suggestion that illiteracy in a woman is somehow pursuant to 'female worth'. The vigour with which More anticipates these cultural conditions suggests a consciousness of exactly how provocative a work she is undertaking: in the guise of a

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[22] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, pp. 193-4.
[23] 'MARTIAL' is Marcus Valerius Martialis, a Latin poet best known for his epigrams. Here, More chooses to claim for women writers equality with the ancient poets, suggesting that debating literary equality between genders is utterly beside the point.

polite substitute for the card party, she offers a model for women's successful and equal participation in a form of intellectual sociability.

More's model is not without its problems, however. While the universalising principle of conversation suggests an exchange of ideas, More's poem demonstrates how the imagined community of the bluestocking circle threatened the intellectual autonomy of the woman writer. Her depiction of Carter is a case in point: while indisputably scholarly and talented, her authorship is deemed permissible because she serves bluestocking ideological principles, and is exemplary not for her talent but for her virtue. This emphasis on virtue is one of the key justifications for such conversational circles, as an antidote to the perceived moral laxity of both the upper and lower classes of British society, as Gary Kelly observes:

> 'Conversation', or a discourse of culture and civility in mixed company, replacing both the formality and masquerade of courtly upper-class society and the supposed roughness and coarseness of male-only society or plebeian society, was a major feature of the 'Bluestocking club'.[24]

It is this insistence, then, on admitting women to the salon not for the quality of their conversation but for their conformity to a particular gendered ideal, that reinforces the conceptual barrier between female intellectuals and the professionalised (and by implication masculinised) republic of letters. While Guest has emphasised the politically open, or rather apolitical, arena that the bluestocking hostesses offered, this was only the case for male participants. To be a female member of this intellectual

[24] Gary Kelly, 'Bluestocking Feminism', in Eger et al, eds, *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere*, pp. 163-80 (p. 165).

community, moral and ideological conformity was a requirement, as demonstrated by Montagu's response to Thrale's marriage to Gabriel Piozzi:

> I respected Mrs. Thrale, and was proud of ye honour she did to ye human & female character in fulfilling all ye domestick [sic] duties & cultivating her mind with whatever might adorn it. I wd give much to make every one think of her as mad... If she is not considered in that light she must throw a disgrace at her Sex.[25]

While Montagu acknowledges Thrale's intellectual achievements, sexual difference is the dominant factor in both her praise and her blame. While Montagu applauds Thrale for 'cultivating her mind', this plaudit is couched in terms of aesthetic femininity and 'adornment'. Moreover, her 'disgrace' is deemed to be suffered by 'her Sex' as a whole. While Thrale's second marriage was unconventional by contemporary standards, Montagu's objection was not so much to the way in which the relationship was conducted (despite gossip to the contrary, the marriage was conducted perfectly legally), but the fact that she had remarried at all. Of course this was compounded by Piozzi's nationality, Catholicism and social status, but, strictly speaking, Thrale transgressed no legal, moral or religious boundaries in the match. The 'disgrace' to which Montagu refers is a different kind of transgression, that is, that Thrale had rejected the bluestocking ideal of the intellectual woman as a desexualised paragon and instead had embraced emotional and sexual fulfilment at the expense of her 'domestick duties'. Thrale's literary reputation was significantly damaged by the public perception of her disregard for proper feminine delicacy. William McCarthy argues that 'by

[25] Elizabeth Montagu to Elizabeth Vesey, 25 July 1784. Repr. in McCarthy, *Hester Thrale Piozzi*, p. 39.

temperament [Thrale] was never wholly a "Blue", the difference being her sense of humour, her Welsh "craziness," and their relentless high seriousness'.[26] Yet the fact of her femaleness, combined with her learning and social status, led to her being, conceptually at least, included in a community that was defined by the gender opposition it in some ways appeared to efface. It was just this sort of wholesale inclusion on the basis of gender that Burney wished to avoid, so it is unsurprising that she was more comfortable at Streatham than at Montagu House.

One of the key contrasts of the bluestocking circle with the Streatham set, and with Burney's relationship with Thrale, is the promotion by bluestocking hostesses of women authors as a matter of policy. While there were female intellectuals in the Streatham network, this was not a ruling principle, and, as Betty Schellenberg has suggested, that community tended towards artistic professionals rather than amateurs. The significance of this is that the criteria for inclusion in the Streatham coterie operate on meritocratic, rather than gendered, principles. However, Thrale's perceived role as 'hostess' still threatens her participation in the community of ideas that surrounds her. Burney in particular is unwilling to concede intellectual community with Thrale, rejecting invitations from 'Queen Hester' to participate in her vision of oral culture, and preferring to separate the professional guests from the amateur hostess. The reflexivity of Burney's letters, as I will demonstrate, constitutes a deflection of Thrale's advances, and rejection of the kind of 'Community of Ideas' that Thrale conceives of engaging in with Johnson.

Burney's hyper-sensitivity to her position with regard to the Thrale household demonstrates an awareness of, and resistance to, the kind of intellectual patronage that

[26] McCarthy, *Hester Thrale Piozzi*, p. 32.

was common amongst the female intelligentsia. She records her mortification at a report in the *Morning Post* (on 1st June 1781) that

> Miss Burney [...] is now domesticated with Mrs. Thrale in the same manner that Miss More is with Mrs. Garrick, & Mrs. Carter with Mrs. Montague [sic].[27] (*EJL*, iv. 354)

Though Burney declares that it is 'most insufferably impertinent to be thus dragged into print, notwithstanding every possible effort & caution to avoid it' (*EJL*, iv. 355), it is likely that the parallel with Elizabeth Montagu and Elizabeth Carter, and the coterie culture with which they were associated, would also have frustrated her. However, she had already recognised by this point the parallel between her own living situation and Carter's, and hinted towards it in a letter to Thrale some five months earlier (in February):

> What you tell me of [a dispute between] Mrs. Montagu & Mrs. Carter gives me real concern; it is a sort of general disgrace to us, – but, as you say, it shall have nothing to do with *You & I*. (*EJL*, iv. 290)

In immediate terms, the impact on '*You & I*' refers to the fact that the two women were acquaintances of Thrale and, through her, of Burney; in this sense, Burney merely means that they will not become involved in the quarrel. However, the particular sense of intimacy invokes an emotional tie that both mirrors, and defines itself against, Montagu's and Carter's relationship. The idea that it is a 'disgrace to us' could refer to

[27] This is reprinted almost verbatim in the *Bath Chronicle* for 7 June, but the *Morning Post* for 1 June 1781 has not been found. See *EJL*, iv. 354 n. 62.

their social circle in general, but more particularly Burney seems to be referring to literary ladies as a group, and herself and Thrale as another representative pairing of that group. She is then careful to distinguish between Montagu's appeal and (by implication) Thrale's:

> Mrs. Montagu, as we have often agreed, is a Character rather to respect than love, for she has not that *don d'aimer* by which alone love can be made fond or faithful.
>
> (*EJL*, iv. 290-1)

Burney's emphasis on the sentimental nature of her attachment to her patroness, although it is defined against her response to Montagu, is strikingly similar to the distinction Elizabeth Carter makes between 'love' and 'admiration' in a letter addressed to Montagu:

> I should be quite undone, if you had considered me in the same view of *admiration*, and placed me among your vases, and your Chinese dolls; but you affirmed that you *loved* me, and I felt beyond all comparison more happy in that declaration, than if the most honourable station had been assigned me, by way of curiosity, that could have been found in the British Museum.[28]

Carter's rationalisation of her relationship with Montagu echoes Burney's romanticisation of her relationship with Thrale. As Guest observes, 'Carter wants to be on terms of sentimental affection, of a kind of equality moderated only by the obscurity

[28] Elizabeth Carter to Elizabeth Montagu, 26 October 1759. Repr. in Harriet Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism*, 1750-1810 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 119.

of the corner appropriate to her greater privacy'.[29] While it is reductive to suggest that Burney and Thrale's relationship straightforwardly mirrored Carter and Montagu's, it is intriguing that both Burney and Carter justify what is effectively a patronage relationship by denying the role their own artistic achievements have played in the establishment of that relationship. Carter's fear of objectification, like a 'vase' or 'Chinese doll', anticipates the pressure of public scrutiny Burney would later feel in her author-persona. Furthermore, this is an instance of Burney's embracing of an emotional relationship with Thrale that effaces the need for an intellectual one, which emerges as a common theme in her letters to Thrale.

The concept of the author, particularly the female author, as a curio, makes sense of Burney's desire to maintain a friendship with Thrale on a traditionally feminine, sentimental basis. This reduction of the female author to a collectible curiosity subjects her to the same 'aesthetic of the connoisseur's cabinet' that Kate Davies identifies in relation to Emma Hamilton's 'attitudes'.[30] As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, these poses were valued for the same performative stillness that Lucrezia Agujari burlesques as being demanded of her in her Pantheon performances: this statue-like stillness de-emphasises the singer's artistic agency in favour of a passive objectivity. Just as Agujari ridicules the convention that limited and devalued her artistic performance, Burney resists a designation, and subject position, that denies her agency as an artistic practitioner. Furthermore, Burney's tendency to reserve among strangers suggests an unwillingness to make her wit, her greatest intellectual commodity, available except to the select few. Outside of her family and the Streatham circle, Burney records many instances of her rebuffs to her eager audience, and her journals

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[29] Guest, *Small Change*, p. 119.
[30] Kate Davies, 'Pantomime, Connoisseurship, Consumption: Emma Hamilton and the Politics of Embodiment', *CW3 Journal*, 2 (2006) <http://www2.shu.ac.uk/corvey/CW3journal/issue%20two/davies.html> [accessed 27th May 2009].

and letters contain repeated expressions of aversion to being treated as a performer. This paradoxically leads her into a different kind of performance altogether, in which the artifice is that of suppressing her abilities. In a journal-letter to her sister, Burney is emphatic, declaring that 'Mean Time, I had almost thrown myself out of the window in my eagerness to get out of the way of this gross & noisy applause' (*EJL*, iv. 103). Burney's desire to remove her authorial body through a violent and potentially suicidal act of defenestration emphasises her frustration with the preoccupation with embodiment that accompanies literary fame. The 'applause' she is so eager to avoid emanates from another literary lady, Mrs. Dobson, at a private tea party, at which Burney admits to 'little liking the appearance of the set' (*EJL*, iv. 102).[31] She archly relates her exchange with Mrs. Dobson:

> When she had run herself out of Breath, & exhausted her store of Compliments, she began telling me of her *own affairs*, – talked, without any Introduction or leading speeches, of her Translations, & took occasion to acquaint me she had made 400 pounds of her Petrarca! (*EJL* iv. 105)

Burney's contempt for what she calls Mrs. Dobson's 'flumery' (*EJL*, iv. 106) arises in part from the way in which the latter openly connects her literary output with financial gain. As Harriet Guest has observed, the profits of publishing were often cited by eighteenth-century women authors as their motivation for writing, thus disavowing any pretensions to intrinsic artistic merit.[32] However the implication is that, in this case, Mrs. Dobson is attempting to demonstrate the intrinsic literary value of her work by

[31] I use the term 'private' here in the sense of a domestic setting, but it should be remembered that this kind of social setting is one in which the binary of private and public is highly problematic.
[32] Harriet Guest, 'A Double Lustre: Femininity and Sociable Commerce, 1730-60', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23:4 (Summer, 1990), 479-501.

citing its financial value. While this is not far removed from her own professionalised ethos, in her narration Burney deliberately counterpoints Mrs. Dobson's compliments with her self-advertisement. This emphasises the way in which Dobson attempts to invoke the mutual interest of sister authors: having flattered Burney, she expects a reciprocal benign reception for her own literary efforts.

While Burney's account of this encounter may be coloured by her obvious contempt for the speaker, she emphasises a binary of flattery and self-promotion that is one of the more unfortunate characteristics of the literary coterie. Her initial dislike of 'the appearance of the set' to which Mrs. Dobson belongs indicates an unwillingness to be drawn into the reciprocal relationships of this particular conversational circle. In her study of the bluestocking circle, Guest writes that, 'with increasing frequency and explicitness, I think, they value the work of other women because it was produced by women'.[33] Similarly, Eger argues that

> Their [i.e. female writers and critics'] intervention in literary and artistic tradition was inevitably self-conscious, involving a sense of group identity and commitment to women's education and in the words of Mary Hays, an interest in 'their advancement in the grand scale of rational and social existence'.[34]

Dobson's overtures to Burney are then characterised in the journals as an attempt to capitalise on the literary sisterhood, and it is evident that Burney by no means subscribes to the concept. Furthermore, Dobson's repeated attempts to court Thrale's attention (who records that 'She persecutes me strangely as if with violent & undesired Friendship', *Thraliana*, i. 588 n. 2) reinforce uncomfortable parallels between Thrale's

[33] Guest, 'Bluestocking Feminism', 68.
[34] Eger, 'Representing Culture', p. 125.

Streatham set and Montagu's bluestockings, and for that reason would be particularly unwelcome to Burney.

While Burney is careful to avoid inclusion in the ranks of such a literary sisterhood, her professional output is inseparable from her femininity even by her intimates. Shortly after the suppression of Burney's comedy, *The Witlings*, Thrale remarks that

> I cannot imagine why I should not write a Comedy; it seems to me as if every body could write a Comedy, here is one Miss and another Miss & all the other Misses writing Plays, I don't Care if I take one Heat [sic] at it myself some Day; but as I have not a Spark of Originality about me, I must take a French Model - it shall be *L'Homme Singulier*. (*Thraliana*, i. 386-7)

Thrale's self-deprecating claim that she has no 'Originality' strives to conceal genuine resentment: although there were many 'Misses' writing plays at this period, Burney is the one of whom Thrale is most likely thinking, due to her own recent access to the manuscripts for *The Witlings*. Her bitter complaint incorporates a sense of frustrated reciprocity: as an intellectual woman why should not she, as well as Burney, write a play? In the terms of the female literary community of the kind maintained by the bluestockings, individual achievement should advance the cause of the group; thus Burney's achievement carries with it the responsibility of encouraging and supporting Thrale's literary efforts. However, Thrale seems aware that Burney does not subscribe to such terms: she anticipates her own exclusion from a community of 'misses' whom she bitterly denigrates. Thrale's suggestion of 'taking a French Model' may well be a cutting reference to Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes*: Charles Burney and Samuel Crisp

had suggested that *The Witlings* bore a similarity to Molière's play, and cited a fear that it would compare disadvantageously as one of their reasons for suppressing the work.[35] Thrale's intimate knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the suppression of *The Witlings* demonstrates the confidence in which Burney held her; yet Thrale's wish to diminish Burney's social status, despite their close friendship, as merely 'one Miss and another Miss' reveals just how threatening she finds the latter's talent and literary achievement. She comforts herself by reinforcing her class-based social superiority: on the same page that she praises Burney as 'a Girl of prodigious Parts' she adds a note that 'the Burneys are I believe a very low Race of Mortals' (*Thraliana*, iv. 368).

Thrale's frustration in her relationship with Burney stems from a conflict of differing models of social value. Thrale's wealth and gentry parentage render her socially superior to the lower-class Burneys in a traditional sense, but conflict with the emerging meritocratic, professionalised ethos of the liberal arts that Burney is exposed to through her father's work and ultimately her own. Thrale complains of Burney's self-consequence, that 'her Conversation would be more pleasing if She thought less of herself' (*Thraliana*, i. 368), and is exasperated at her 'always preferring the mode of Life in St Martins Street to all I could do for her' (*Thraliana*, i. 443). Despite an apparently genuine affection for Burney, Thrale cannot or will not comprehend Burney's preference for professional autonomy over the patronage she can offer her:

> not an Article of Dress, not a Ticket for public Places, not a Thing in the World that She could not command from me: yet always insolent, always pining for home [...]. (*Thraliana*, i. 443)

[35] See *EJL*, iv. xii.

Thrale seems to resent Burney's influence over her, her ability to 'command' these fashionable trappings. However, her juxtaposition of 'home' with 'Dress' and 'public Places' pinpoints Burney's personal conflict of authorial and social identity. As noted in Chapter One, Burney is frustrated by the requirement to be 'eternally Dressing & visiting' that interferes with her writing time at home, and by the 'invitations & kindnesses' that confer obligations to dress and visit (*EJL*, iv. 248). Therefore such kindness is far from disinterested, but is part of an exchange, in return for which Burney's socially valuable presence is expected. Thrale is acute in juxtaposing 'the mode of Life in St Martins Street' with that at Streatham. Not only does the family home offer Burney a level of privacy that is unavailable at Streatham, but it also acts as a competing model of artistic sociability. At St. Martin's Street, as Thrale did at Streatham, the Burneys entertained a variety of artistic professionals and intellectuals. As Percy Young observes, 'the houses in Poland Street, Queen Square and St Martin's Lane, in which the family was domiciled, were rare centres of wit and learning'.[36] As I will go on to argue, Burney's response to both the Thrale and Montagu conversational circles is informed by this environment.

Like Thrale, Burney is acutely aware of the material obligation to the Thrales she and her father are both under. However, just as Thrale reserves her outburst for her *Thraliana*, Burney has to tread a careful line in her correspondence with Thrale, disguising her discomfort with the patronage dynamic of their relationship, but still expressing gratitude for Thrale's attention. She writes to Thrale that 'my Father sends his best Love, and will wait upon Miss Thrale any Morning that he can be *picked up*, for he is not worth a Carriage, – but if he may also have House Room for the Night, & a cast back the next Morning, he will much rejoice in making a visit so comfortable'

[36] Percy M. Young, 'Gossip in the Music Room', *Music and Letters*, 23:1 (Jan., 1942), 50-60 (50).

(*EJL*, iv. 234). Avoiding any mention of a lesson (the only reason for which Charles Burney would 'wait upon Miss Thrale', rather than her mother), the attention to the Thrales' convenience in transporting Charles Burney plays down the formal commercial relationship between the parties. However, in a letter to her father, Burney alludes to the hierarchy of power in Charles Burney's, and her own, relationship with the Thrales, declaring that 'I am niether [sic] *yours nor my own*, but *their's*' [sic] (*EJL*, iv. 199), implying that their claims outweigh not only her own, but her father's also. Her sense of a sort of contract with the Thrales is made even more explicit in her reference to her plans to visit home from Streatham, 'according to *articles*' (*EJL*, iv. 198). By employing the language of contract, Burney invokes the legal bondage of apprentice to master that her father was under to Thomas Arne and subsequently Fulke Greville, which normally required an apprentice to be resident in their master's family. The Thrales' demands upon Burney threatened the loss not only of her time, then, but also of her domestic privacy. This tension in the relationship was equally clear to Thrale, who comments that despite their intimacy, Burney is

> So restlessly & apparently anxious lest I should give myself Airs of Patronage, or load her with the Shackles of Dependence – I live with her always in a Degree of Pain that precludes Friendship – dare not ask her to buy me a Ribbon, dare not desire her to touch the Bell, lest She should think herself injured.
> (*Thraliana*, i. 400)

Although Burney attempts to elide the commercial elements of her father's relationship with the Thrales, the equivocal nature of her own is visibly troubling, both in her letters to her own family and, apparently, in her behaviour towards Thrale. The 'Patronage'

that Thrale finds her quick to detect and resent echoes the traditional relationship of artists (especially musicians) to the aristocracy, and in particular her father's with Greville and, to some extent, with Thrale herself.

It is obvious that Burney enjoys the avenues of intercourse that her authorship has opened for her; in addition to (and largely as a result of) her acquaintance with the Thrales, she commands the attention of artistic professionals such as Johnson, Reynolds and Sheridan, and records with delight their praise of *Evelina*:

> I do, indeed, feel the most grateful love for her [Mrs. Thrale]. – But *Dr. Johnson's* approbation! – Good God, it almost *Crazed* me with agreeable surprise! (*EJL*, iii. 61)

Burney registers her pleasure at Thrale and Johnson's praise in very different ways. To Thrale, who at this stage she knew only as her father's employer, her response is an emotional one; Johnson, however, is a literary giant, and his approval is a form of professional validation for Burney, although modesty dictates that she must express 'surprise'. In general, she seems to wish to be treated as an author only among fellow professionals, and is unnerved by the familiarity with which her readers treat her: 'I am frightened out of my wits from the terror of being attacked *as an author'*, she writes, '& therefore *shirk*, instead of *seeking*, all occasion of being drawn into notice' (*EJL*, iii. 143). Burney's terror is of course realised: once her authorship is known she is repeatedly 'attacked' by impertinent, expectant, and frustratingly amateur attention. However, although Burney craves professional approbation, she is alive to the power that the fashionable world can have over her career. The 'grateful love' she feels for

Thrale is as much in return for the exercise of such power in her favour, as it is for her praise.

Burney's letters to Thrale obliquely reveal her sense of her contractual obligation, and are often couched in the terms of financial transaction. She writes to Thrale, 'pray indulge me with my next Weeks [sic] salary [i.e. letter] before it becomes actually due' (*EJL*, iv. 213), declaring that she would 'sooner give up a Month's Allowance of Meat, than my weeks Allowance of an Epistle' (*EJL*, iv. 208). The concept of letters as 'salary' suggests that Burney's intimacy with the Thrales is both contractual and of fixed financial value. By comparing her 'weeks Allowance of an Epistle' to 'a Month's Allowance of Meat', Burney conflates Thrale's letters with sustenance, but she also invokes the financial gulf that separates her from her patroness, by suggesting that thrift or sacrifice is somehow necessary to support the luxury of Thrale's polite correspondence. In one sense, thrift or careful 'management' was indeed required: Burney writes in her journal that

> as I am now situated, with Mrs. Thrale to seize every moment I do not hide from her, it will require all the management I can possibly make use of to limit my visits to only half the week's days. (*EJL*, v. 219)

Burney's 'management' refers to her primary resource: time. That Thrale should 'seize' this time suggests that she takes it by force or theft, or at least that she does not sufficiently remunerate Burney for the loss of writing time. This marks out the conflict between Burney's sense of obligation to Thrale and her sense of her own professionalism, in which time translates into labour and therefore money. That Burney feels able to play with the concept of writing, specifically letters, as 'salary' in her

correspondence with Thrale indicates the literary-professional ethos of the Streatham set, which, as Schellenberg has argued,

> endors[ed] emergent views of the skilled author as worthy of her hire, as entitled to remuneration for intellectual labour despite the moral principle that knowledge should be publicly shared for the benefit of humankind.[37]

Access to Streatham, then, represented access to an environment where the financial value of Burney's labour was conceded, but time for that labour was encroached upon. By extension, Burney's very identity was encroached upon also. Clifford Siskin argues that in the emerging literary-professional ideology of the late eighteenth century,

> failure to work well can jeopardize an identity grounded in that work, making the threat of madness – understood as loss of identity – *real* in a new, historically specific way.[38]

Although I do not wish to suggest that her relationship with Thrale drove Burney to madness, the relationship Siskin identifies here between literary 'work' and a sense of self is crucial in Burney's construction of her authorial identity. Thus her social obligations to the Thrales would have posed a threat to Burney's literary autonomy, which in turn informed her social identity. Paradoxically, this would prompt her to defensively segregate her professional and social personas in order to maintain both.

The tensions inherent in the Burney-Thrale relationship produce some curious behaviour, which sees Burney repeatedly narrate her role as grateful recipient of

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[37] Schellenberg, *Professionalization*, p. 147.
[38] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 38.

Thrale's attention, and more significantly, her writing. A letter of February 1781 hints at the 'anxiety' with which Burney has awaited Thrale's letters:

> This moment have two sweet & most kind letters from my best loved Mrs. Thrale made amends for no little anxiety which her fancied silence had given me. (*EJL*, iv. 290)

The immediacy of 'this moment' creates for the recipient the scene of suspense and relief Burney experiences, in a dramatic demonstration of devotion. This type of enactment and narration recurs in Burney's letters to Thrale, which more often than not reiterate the contents of the letters they respond to. They are structured around Burney's reaction to Thrale's news, and her letters usually open in this way, as on the occasion of one of Thrale's frequent illnesses: 'My sweetest Tyo how cruelly have You suffered!' (*EJL*, iv. 360). On another occasion, Thrale compares herself to the biblical Queen Esther, writing to Burney that 'My Appointments are like Queen Hester's of old, Come to the Banquet & then I'll tell my story'. Burney responds by repeating Thrale's own expressions 'I am quite delighted at the sweet *hint*, – I long indeed to come to the Banquet, & hear the story' (*EJL*, iv. 331).[39] This instance is fascinating for several reasons: firstly, Thrale constructs herself as a story-teller, to which I will return; secondly, Burney's social presence (at the 'Banquet') is required in exchange for the narration. Most significantly, though, it is an instance of Thrale, however playfully, summoning Burney to her side, and Burney, however apologetically, refusing the summons. Rather than engage with (and thus contradict) Thrale's self-construction as

[39] The passage Thrale has in mind is Esther 5: 3-4 (*EJL*, iv. 331 n. 21).

the narrator and thus literary centre of Streatham, Burney merely mirrors her phrasing, repeats the reference, but refuses the invitation. Clare Brant writes that

> one of the attractions of the epistolary form in the eighteenth century was that it gave writers the opportunity to imagine themselves into different personae and personae of difference.[40]

In this case, then, the familiar letter offers Thrale the opportunity to re-imagine herself as the story-teller Queen Hester, as literary producer rather than audience member. For Burney, too, the letter offers an alternative social space in which she has the power to resist Thrale's social demands; a space in which she can imagine the relationship as emotional rather than contractual, and in which she is not subject to the 'articles' of Thrale's patronage.

The responsive structure is of course an inherent quality of the letter form, but it is nevertheless striking how frequently Burney favours this reflective structure when writing to Thrale, in comparison to her far more self-centred (in a structural sense) and anecdotal letters to her family members, in particular to her sister Susan. Her letters to Thrale seem, by contrast, to perpetually attempt to reaffirm and enact the correspondents' relationship. A St. Valentine's Day letter contains a typical protestation:

> Never was a Heart more completely gained, or more faithfully kept than that of F.B. by her beloved Mrs. Thrale.

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[40] Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 26. Brant notes that Thrale takes just such an opportunity in her letters to Queeney in the wake of marriage to Piozzi, describing the former's 'authorial machinations': 'on paper, the maternal character could be more easily assumed by the older woman' (pp. 72-73).

> Your Letters grow sweeter & sweeter, & I think my avidity for them grows stronger & stronger (*EJL*, iv. 298)

By emphasising her affection for Mrs. Thrale, Burney attempts to efface the troubling element of patronage in their relationship. Burney strives to embed these anxieties into a playful dramatisation of herself as letter-recipient, and Thrale into the literary *lion*, declaring that 'what I have to say is not of equal consequence' (*EJL*, iv. 225). Protesting at (but obeying) the instruction on one of Thrale's letters to '*Burn This*', Burney laments, 'There it goes! Sweet letter as it is, & *beyond a Play*! A flaming proof of my obedience' (*EJL*, iv. 274). Once more, Burney enacts her role as audience. By comparing the letter to a play, she offers a critical judgement that both flatters Thrale's epistolary talents and wryly hints at her own recent suppression of *The Witlings*, defining her professional output against Thrale's amateur one. This could be seen as an attempt by Burney to segregate her private, epistolary performances from her professional ones, resisting the coterie impulse of private circulation. Even when Burney offers 'news' of her own, it is often yet another mirror for Streatham:

> But where is it *Scandal* wants a school? [...] even here, falsehoods can reach, & reports be *circulated*! – for I am told 'that the chief visitor at Streatham is a Mr. *Crowtchly*, who is *a* Courting *Mrs*. Thrale, & nobody doubts but *it will be a Match*, as She is very fond of his Company.
>
> This is all the *News* I have to tell, & being a great deal more than I expected to hear, I hope you will begin to think Chesington [sic] no such *despiseable* [sic] *place*, for you see one may meet with a touch of the Times at it. (*EJL*, iv. 500-501)

This 'news' serves several functions in Burney's correspondence: firstly, it offers to centralise Streatham (and in particular Thrale herself) as a social nexus, and secondly it invokes Burney's privileged access to that circle. That this is 'a great deal more than I expected to hear' hints at Burney's amusement, not just at the partial inaccuracy of the report – she parodically interpolates Chessington discourse into her narrative, emphasising the mispronunciation of Crutchley's name and employing the localised expression '*despiseable place*' – but at meeting with a public version, mediated by rumour, of information to which she has privileged access.[41]

The phrase 'a touch of the Times' also appears in Burney's *Cecilia* (1782), in which Belfield's bookseller remarks that 'we pay very handsomely for things of any merit, especially if they deal smartly in a few touches of the times'.[42] Burney's use of the phrase in her letters to Thrale, at a time when she was in the process of writing *Cecilia*, demonstrates the way in which intercourse at Streatham provided a whetstone for her literary material, and also suggests this may have been a phrase that was in parodic circulation amongst the Streathamites. That this 'touch of the Times' is met with at Chessington, 'this still & solitary place' (*EJL*, iv. 500), where it is reduced to tabloid-style hearsay, renders ridiculous the value of such information that is refracted and miscommunicated through its retellings. However, the financial value that the bookseller in *Cecilia* attaches to such 'touches', carries the threat that an author's output and success can be manipulated or even dictated by fashionable tastes that are, by implication, unstable. In ridiculing these attitudes to authorship, Burney also marks her independence from the influence of fashion. Furthermore, by positioning Thrale as the

[41] Both Thrale and Burney at some time suspected that Crutchley was in love with either one of them, or with Thrale's eldest daughter, Hester.
[42] Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* [1782], ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 724.

central focus of fashionable speculation and aligning herself with 'solitary' Chessington, Burney avoids the awkward truth, that she herself is courted by fashionable society, 'these sickening Heartless *ton*-led people'(*EJL*, iv. 168). Maintaining an emotional, *heart*-led relationship with Thrale is essential to the validity of their friendship.

Although Schellenberg's assessment of the general ethos at Streatham is convincing, I would push further her argument that Thrale was at times 'marginalized' in Burney's account as 'too shallowly outspoken and facetious'.[43] I would suggest that in aligning herself with middle-class professionalism Burney was forced to carefully maintain the appearance of a literary patronage relationship that she was in fact defining herself *against.* It is also apparent that Thrale, although hostess to this egalitarian group, was aware of, and far from comfortable with, the diminution of her own consequence in the face of a professional (as opposed to coterie) ethos. Furthermore, although I agree that 'Burney was drawn to the professional rather than amateur model of letters', Schellenberg's suggestion that she 'identif[ied] the Streatham circle with Johnson at its literary apex with the former, and Elizabeth Montagu's bluestocking circle with the latter' in my view overlooks one of the defining tensions of Burney's Streatham years.[44] In spite of Johnson's Grub Street professionalism, Thrale's position as hostess and patroness was a crucial (if sometimes contested) factor in Streatham society and one which often came into conflict with Burney's desire for creative autonomy.

The relatively professionalised artistic sociability that Burney experienced at Streatham has often been placed in competition with that of the patronage culture of the bluestocking conversational circles. However, there is a further important

[43] Schellenberg, *Professionalization*, p. 150.
[44] Schellenberg, *Professionalization*, p. 21.

parallel to be drawn with another artistic social circle, that which surrounded Charles Burney. In the *Memoirs of Doctor Burney,* Burney describes the musical parties – or 'harmonical coteries' (*MDB*, ii. 10) – that took place at the family home in Poland Street, Queen Street and St. Martin's Street respectively:

> The company was always small, as were the apartments in which it was received; but always select, as the name, fame, and travels of the Doctor, by allowing him a choice of guests, enabled him to limit admission to real lovers of music. (*MDB*, ii. 9)

Burney emphasises the 'small'-ness of the venue and the 'company', simultaneously disclaiming the social brilliance to be found in the grand apartments of Montagu House or Streatham, and emphasising the 'limit[ed] admission' of these 'select' musical gatherings. As Richard Leppert has outlined, the private musical concert was an opportunity to exercise such selectivity: 'admission to house concerts required entrance through two sets of gates, one commercial, the other social, which at once protected and delineated a highly privatized space'.[45] While Charles Burney's musical parties certainly seem to have been exclusive, the criterion of admission his daughter describes is purely artistic: 'limited to real lovers of music'. In this sense, the commercial and social 'gates' Leppert identifies are disregarded: social or financial status are no bar to attending the Burney family concerts. As Burney records 'a request to or from the master of the house, was the sole ticket of entrance' (*MDB*, ii. 10). Burney justifies her inclusion of these 'concerts' in the *Memoirs*, arguing that 'they biographically mark his style of life, and the consideration in which he was held by the musical world'. She

[45] Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 205.

pleads that 'in the private narrative of an historian of the musical art, it may not be improper to insert some account of [these] concerts' (*MDB*, ii. 9). Burney's emphasis on the 'private' nature of the narration, and on her father's role as 'historian' rather than musician, betrays the anxiety attached to this narrative. A social space not 'protected and delineated' by status, that is social or financial criteria, is threateningly socially ambiguous. Charles Burney's 'urbanity' (*MDB*, ii. 10) is the sole organising principle with which the propriety of these parties can be guaranteed. In an urban environment in which there was, as Helen Berry has argued, 'a growing tendency to view culture as a commodity, whereby the ability to buy a ticket was the only criterion for admission', Burney is keen to mark her father's 'style of life' as distinct from the commercialisation of culture from which he makes his living.[46]

The ambiguity that attended the Burney musical parties is paralleled by Charles Burney's probable business connection to another forum for conversational culture, the coffee house. Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke note that 'a set of circumstantial evidence strongly suggests that Fanny Burney's father was proprietor of Gregg's Coffee House, York Street, Covent Garden, from about 1769 to 1784' but that 'she tried in her later years to edit out any direct mentions of the coffee house' (*EJL*, iii. 457-9). Although the guests at the musical parties in St. Martin's street were not selected on the basis of social status, there was a form of meritocratic selectivity at work that guaranteed a kind of respectability. The conversational culture of the coffee house, while often vibrantly intellectual, was also socially mixed, characterised by what Markman Ellis calls an 'uncontrolled and open quality'.[47] The only unofficial bar in place was that of gender, as Ellis notes:

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[46] Helen Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), p. 13.
[47] Markman Ellis, *The Coffee-House: A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 2004), p. 59.

> While there were no explicit rules governing behaviour, in coffee-houses, the implicit rules were still powerful. Among the most potent was that which excluded women, a rule so potent it did not even need saying. There was no need to exclude them because it was assumed that no virtuous woman who wished to be considered virtuous and proper would want to be seen in a coffee-house.[48]

As a masculinised space, then, the coffee house could also be seen as potentially uncivilized, lacking the regulating influence of women that, as Clery describes, above, was thought to be found in the mixed company of the heterosocial private drawing room. While Burney was by no means an advocate of the strict social delineations of fashionable conversational circles such as those of the bluestockings, it is entirely understandable that she may have wished to suppress the potentially vulgar associations of coffee-house culture; nor was this particular business venture strictly in line with the artistic and professional identity that she valorised as her origin. The proximal relationship between artistic-professional groupings and the public sphere of popular entertainment is problematic for Burney, and her insistence on the domesticity and privacy of the Burney circle can be seen as a response to that problem. Moyra Haslett observes that *Evelina* 'can read like a veritable catalogue' of public entertainments, including tea houses, coffee houses, pleasure gardens, museums, and taverns, many of which are suggested by Evelina's cousins the Branghtons as potential destinations. Haslett remarks that

[48] Ellis, *The Coffee-House*, p. 66.

> While many of these places are too 'low' for the delicate Evelina, the complete list (or 'catechism' as Evelina calls it at one point) indicates the considerable extent of this sphere of pleasure.[49]

Burney, and her family, must then tread a fine line between the business of entertainment (which is, after all, the business of the majority of their musical acquaintance) and the respectability requisite for the pursuit of artistic-professional careers. This knowledge of the range of fashionable entertainments paradoxically emphasises Evelina's innocence by providing a background of that which should not be known; her innate respectability, as much as her taste, is demonstrated by her proper choice between the right and wrong types of entertainment.

This tension between popular entertainment and respectability is inescapably informed by the Burneys' ambiguous social position and that of many artistic professionals. This nuanced social portrait resonated with readers of *Evelina*, in which Burney had demonstrated – as she records her cousin Richard Burney exclaiming – 'such an acquaintance with *high*, & *low* Life'. Richard Burney's declaration that 'I know not a man Breathing who is likely to be the author, – unless it is my Uncle [i.e. Charles Burney]' is tellingly close to the mark, not only because of Charles's close kinship to the real author, but also due to the 'universal & extensive knowledge of the world' that was the product of life in the Burney household and of which he was the central figure (*EJL*, iii.11). In order to convincingly narrate her heroine's 'entrance into the world', Burney had of necessity to be acquainted with that world without a loss of propriety. Burney often records with amusement her audience's astonishment that she, as a genteel female, should have such materials at her command, such as the following

[49] Moyra Haslett, *Pope to Burney, 1714-1779: Scriblerians to Bluestockings* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2003), pp. 4-5.

interrogation from a Miss Bunbury: 'But *where*, Miss Burney, *where* can, or could You pick up such Characters?' (*EJL*, iii. 201). Not all of her readers are equally impressed by Burney's representation of the social spectrum: Montagu remarks cuttingly about *Evelina* – as Thrale writes to Johnson in a letter of October 1778 – that 'her Silversmiths are Pewterers [...] & her Captains Boatswains'.[50] Montagu's put-down takes advantage of the mixture of '*high & low*' life that Richard Burney praises in the novel, from Branghtons to Orvilles, and refuses to accept Burney's portrait of the professional classes. In this case the implication is that Burney is neither of nor familiar with these classes, and only equipped to denote the lower end of this spectrum.

The meritocratic ethos of the Burneys' artistic-professional networks contains the very anxieties of status that underpin *Evelina*. Social categories are profoundly fluid in Burney's first novel, in a manner that is both threatening and potentially redemptive. Evelina's 'Entrance into the World', in a state of relative anonymity, allows Burney to examine how status can be constructed and denoted in the absence of a stable social identity. Evelina is described by Burney to her publisher Thomas Lowndes as 'a well educated, but inexperienced young woman' (*EJL*, ii. 215). She is equipped by this education to observe and interrogate fashionable behaviour; her 'inexperience', although rendering her vulnerable in some ways, allows her observations to remain relatively empirical, and free from prejudice. While Evelina is ultimately acknowledged privately by her father, Sir John Belmont, this relationship is counterpointed by a parallel with her vulgar grandmother, Madame Duval, and her equally vulgar cousins, the Branghtons. Evelina's anonymity – the name 'Anville' having been conferred by her guardian in absence of any other – offers the potential to create her own social identity, but this fluid identity also leaves her vulnerable to

[50] Hester Thrale to Samuel Johnson, 19 October 1788. Repr. in Burney, *EJL*, iii. 162 n. 10.

appropriation by those family members who *are* willing to claim her. Yet any sense of fixed social identity, particularly an aristocratic title, is shown to be increasingly misleading: Evelina, in her nameless state, is perhaps the most knowable character, because other characters are forced to read her behaviour rather than her name. However, this means of identification is not acknowledged by the fashionable world: when its representative, the fop Lovel, first meets Evelina, he complains to Orville that 'though I have made diligent enquiry – I cannot learn who she is'.[51]

Burney's satire of fashionable society in *Evelina* delights in exposing the inconsistencies of that society's self-regulation. Evelina finally attains (albeit imperfectly) the rank and title to which she is entitled by birth; yet these are not the markers of gentility. The heroine identifies this distinction from the outset in her first meeting with Orville: 'I saw the rank of Lord Orville was his least recommendation, his understanding and manners being far more distinguished'. On further acquaintance she writes that 'His manners are so elegant, so gentle, so unassuming, that they at once engage esteem and diffuse complacence'.[52] In contrast, she complains that Lord Merton, 'though lavish of compliments and fine speeches, seems to me an entire stranger to real good breeding'. The contrast between these two 'Lords' leads Evelina to exclaim 'in all ranks and stations of life, how strangely do characters and manners differ!'[53] In her representation of '*high & low* life' Burney thus establishes an alternative hierarchy in which 'manners' rather than rank denote social status. The 'urbanity' that is the organising principle of the Burney household is key to both the social and domestic order of *Evelina*, just as the failure of that principle is the key to its disorder. As Barbara Zonitch has argued, 'a "new aristocracy" of manners finds its

[51] Frances Burney, *Evelina or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* [1778], ed. by Edward A. Bloom, with introduction and notes by Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 37.
[52] Burney, *Evelina*, pp. 34, 74.
[53] Burney, *Evelina*, pp. 114-5.

most hopeful representation in *Evelina*'.[54] 'Urbanity' or politeness such as that found in the Burney household also allows Evelina to properly identify true gentility in the form of Lord Orville, and discriminate between this valorised 'new aristocracy' and the corrupt and declining old aristocracy of the predatory Sir Clement Willoughby.

The criterion for admission to Charles Burney's potentially socially ambiguous musical parties, which were 'limited to real lovers of music', draws a distinction between a specialised and informed audience and the indiscriminate, conspicuous cultural consumption of fashionable society. The musical parties held by Charles Burney usually featured highly-skilled professionals from music teachers like Burney himself and his nephew Charles Rousseau Burney, to leading opera stars such as Pacchierotti and Agujari. The type of performance being offered was as distinct from the *dilettanti* performances of young marriageable women as the 'real lovers of music' were from the fashionable audience of a private concert. Although the Burney parties were of course sociable and conversational as well as musical, they were defined by the centrality of musical taste rather than of conversation. In Burney's writing music comes to represent a form of professional artistic labour against which conversation is devalued as a mode of cultural production; furthermore, conversation and music seem to be persistently in competition with each other. Evelina's visit to the Italian Opera with her cousins, the Branghtons, articulates the incompatibility of two competing types of noise: 'I should have forgotten everything unpleasant, and felt nothing but delight, in hearing the sweet voice of Signor Millico, the first singer; but they tormented me with continual talking'.[55] The refined music of the Opera is thus disrupted by the vulgar 'talking' of the Branghtons. Burney observes in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* that 'the lovers of music, and the adepts in conversation, are rarely in true unison' (*MDB*, ii.

[54] Barbara Zonitch, *Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in the Novels of Frances Burney* (Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1997), p. 36.
[55] Burney, *Evelina*, p. 93.

102), a remark made all the more arch by its context, following as it does the account of Thrale's first disastrous meeting with her future husband, the singer Gabriel Piozzi.[56] Burney's remark is peculiarly cutting, as it calls into question the unison between the couple, suggesting (as many of Thrale's friends sincerely believed) that this second marriage was mis-matched. Essentially, though, the disjunction between these two types of 'sound' appears to categorise both as kinds of performance, but implicitly valorises music as refined where conversation is unruly and discourteous.

Burney's elevation of musical performance as artistic labour forms an essential part of her perceived inheritance. In a letter to her sister Susan, she describes the abuse with which the '*musical Tribe*' has met from a Mr. Blakeney (*EJL*, iii. 417). Recording Blakeney's complaint that 'we have nothing but Bankers, musicians and Dentists in all quarters!', she addresses her sister thus: 'Did you ever hear the like? – *Clubbing* us with *Dentists*. I am surprised he omitted to mention *Barbers* too!' (*EJL*, iii. 418). Burney clearly identifies with the 'musical tribe' that come in (along with actors, artists and, seemingly, barbers) for Blakeney's abuse. This identification is particularly evident in Burney's letters to Susan, with whom she regularly corresponded on musical matters and who would send her lengthy descriptions of performances she had missed, particularly while staying at Streatham. In one letter Burney responds to Susan's account of a private rehearsal:

> Thank you I would if I knew how, for your delightful pacquet with the account of Rinaldo. You do very well to compassionate me for missing such a Rehearsal, – I I [sic] was half *moped* in reading it, – yet your relation, my

[56] During this particular musical party, Thrale, having grown bored of Piozzi's performance, famously crept behind him to impersonate him behind his back and 'ludicrously began imitating him' (*MDB*, ii. 10). She was promptly reprimanded by Johnson.

> dearest Susy, it is the *very next best* thing to having been there [...] O that I could but have been with you!
>
> (*EJL*, iv. 59)

Through her correspondence with Susan, Burney is able to continue to engage in the intellectual and musical life of the St. Martin's Street circle, and reading her sister's letters is the 'next best thing to having been there'. Burney thus accords Susan a narrative ability like her own, willingly conceding a conversational equality and mutual respect. While the epistolary relationship between the sisters is affectionate and necessarily responsive, this intimacy is expressed as an attempt to maintain sociability through correspondence, rather than the rather sterile declarations of emotional attachment with which Burney deflects Thrale's advances. As well as supplying a detailed and musically informed account of private concerts, Susan's letters imaginatively supply Burney's participation in absence, reinforcing the latter's status as part of the 'musical tribe' and that particular artistic-professional environment. In a journal-letter to Burney of October 1779, Susan describes a visit of two musical professionals to the Burney home in the presence of the Burneys' aunt, Ann Burney, sister of Charles:

> In the Eveg. My Aunt Nanny came to tea – in hopes she acknowledged that she should *meet with no foreigner* – as I had told her we had seen Merlin Piozzi & Baretti all so very lately – However our tea things were not removed when we were allarmed [sic] by a rap at the door, and who should enter but *l'Imperatore*

del *Canto*, & his Treasurer – Pacchierotti & Bertoni – I leave you to guess who was charmed, and who looked blank.[57]

Leaving her sister to 'guess' their aunt's failure to appreciate the presence of these musicians, with whom 'foreigner' seems to be synonymous, Susan assumes Burney's response will coincide with her own, that is that, if present, she too would have been 'charmed', unlike Ann Burney who, by implication, is not equipped to appreciate this visit and thus 'looked blank'. Susan reinforces this confidential assumption of sympathy by the interpolation of Italian, the received language both of opera and of musical direction, which Burney as a member of this musical elite will easily understand. Thus Susan contrasts Burney's assumed (and her own evident) specialist musical knowledge with her aunt's xenophobia and artistic ignorance. Furthermore, Susan's invocation of sisterly sympathy is couched in terms of their mutual musical tastes: 'To *You* it will give little trouble to conceive the pleasure I felt at hearing his most Sweet Voice, and that in Sweet Music'.[58] Burney's expertise is thus two-fold: her sister is confident that she will understand the pleasure of hearing that 'Sweet Music' because Burney, like Susan, has the specialist knowledge to appreciate the artistic merits of the composition; she can also imagine the pleasure of that 'Sweet Voice' because of her privileged access to, and intimacy with, the singer in question, Pacchierotti. It is both this specialist knowledge and such social connections with musical professionals that render the Burney household such a fertile site for the development of Burney's strong sense of herself as an artistic professional.

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[57] Susan Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Philip Olleson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 73-4. Gasparo Pacchierotti (1740-1821) was a castrato singer at the King's Theatre from 1778-90; Ferdinanda Gasparo Bertoni (1725-1813) was an Italian opera composer, and was house composer of the King's Theatre from 1779-83.
[58] Susan Burney, *Journals and Letters*, p. 88.

Susan's letters also include accounts of her own encounters with Hester Thrale, through her father and sister, and demonstrate the currency of opinion within the Burney household of Thrale's lack of musical taste, or rather, her preference for 'words' over music. Susan records a visit made by the Thrales to Chessington in Burney's absence, at which she herself performed an aria. She remarks that 'I thot [sic] the *words* wd. please Mrs T.'; in light of Susan's later observation that 'to all uncultivated hearers Vocal Music has ever more effect than Instrumental', it seems that she regards Thrale as 'uncultivated' in this respect.[59] Valerie Rumbold has observed that Charles Burney, too, recognised and deliberately catered for Thrale's indifference to, or inability to appreciate, musical performance. Rumbold lists the contents of Queeney Thrale's music book, as chosen by her teacher Charles Burney, and observes:

> This is a selection which evokes the contemporary world of fashionable musical entertainments, a world in which Burney and his family took an expert professional interest, while to the less genuinely musical Thrales it presented a suitably stylish diversion.[60]

Rumbold's designation of the Thrales as 'less genuinely musical' encapsulates the idealistic division between the 'fashionable' and 'professional' dimensions of musical entertainment. In the Burney household, to be 'genuinely musical' involved not only attendance at musical performances, but also an appreciation of musical composition and performance as specialist artistic practices. The ethos of the Burney household maintained a clear distinction between those who did and did not understand those practices – between the 'professional' and the 'fashionable' – and evidence of this

[59] Susan Burney, *Journals and Letters*, pp. 66, 85.
[60] Valerie Rumbold, 'Music Aspires to Letters: Charles Burney, Queeney Thrale and the Streatham Circle', *Music and Letters*, 74:1 (February, 1993), 24-38 (25).

appears repeatedly in Susan's letters. She describes three ladies of her acquaintance as '*great Pacchierotti-ites*, & seem *otherwise* good Judges of Music, wch. does not now constantly follow as he is become prodigiously the *fashion*'.[61] That there are two distinct types of listeners, those who are 'good Judges of Music' and those who follow 'fashion', disrupts the potential of musical taste as a marker of judgement: purely because these ladies are, like the Burneys, *'Pacchierotti-ites'*, there is no guarantee that their taste stems from the same professional discernment, because admiration of Pacchierotti is now implicated in a cult of artistic celebrity that fetishises the embodied performer rather than cultural product, or performance. In her description of the performances of the evening, Susan demonstrates this fashionable elevation of the performer over the performance. She is critical of Pacchierotti's song choice as 'an ill chosen song [...] for so large a party', and remarks that 'I believe excepting My Father and Mr. Harris scarce any one wd. have been pleased wth. the music alone'. The largeness of the party, or rather its mixed nature, also implies that limited attention will be paid to the music, so Pacchierotti's choice of a complex piece that would delight the intimate musical guests of the Burney's parlour might be lost on a more general audience. However, even this unsuitability is lost on that audience, and superseded instead by arbitrary fashion: 'as to most others present they had not power to discover how much it was out of the common road, & as Pacchierotti is the *fashion* they were all in rapture'.[62] The exaggerated 'rapture' of this fashionable audience is rendered absurd by juxtaposition with their ignorance of its object.

Susan Burney's letters create a picture of a household that elevated specialist knowledge over fashionable *dilettantism*, and professional expertise over social status. Within the safe space of their intimate family correspondence, Susan could freely

[61] Susan Burney, *Journals and Letters*, pp. 139-40.
[62] Susan Burney, *Journals and Letters*, pp. 141-2. James Harris was a friend of Charles Burney and an accomplished amateur musician (see Chapter One, p. 50 n. 58).

express this, often denigrating the ignorance of amateurs or non-specialists; her journal-letters recounting musical performances, most of which are addressed to Frances Burney, assume that her sister sympathises with this ethos. Indeed, although newly immersed in fashionable society, Burney appears to retain allegiance to her professional and musical roots. The fashionable, as opposed to professional, nature of the social world to which she is introduced by Thrale is a source of frequent comment. She writes critically to Susan of the performance by a 'Miss Benson':

> Miss Benson, I find, passes for a fine Harpsichord Player, – & when Lady Shelley announced her abilities with strong commendation, she looked *as though* the praise was all too little! – but I found it all puff, – she attempted Schobert & Boccherini, – & played them much as Miss Coussmaker would have done. (*EJL*, iii. 425)

While Burney herself is sceptical of Miss Benson's abilities, her remark that she 'passes for a fine Harpsichord player' is rather a mark of the differing standards of musical performance within fashionable, largely private circles and public, professional settings. Although much of Burney's musical experience has been conducted in the privacy of a domestic environment, the participants in that ostensibly private musical circle are also subject to the rigours of public patronage and professional performance. The sharp contrast between the *dilettante* performance as polite accomplishment and the technical proficiency demanded of the professional would ultimately become one of the themes of her final novel, *The Wanderer*, which will be treated at length in Chapter Four. Burney's comparison of Miss Benson's 'abilities' with Miss Coussmaker's is not necessarily a denigration of the latter's performance, but strictly separates the standards

of musical proficiency applied to female accomplishment and those required of performance professionals. Burney's chief objections seem to be to the 'puff' of Lady Shelley's 'strong commendation', and to Miss Benson's complacency. Just as Pacchierotti's new-found accession to 'fashion' ensures a 'rapturous' reception from the 'Pacchierotti-ites' regardless of the quality of his performance, Miss Benson's reputation as a performer within her own social circle supersedes the type of informed, merit-based evaluation that is the ethos of the Burney household.

The prevalence of reputation over musical ability in this fashionable social world is evident in the dominance of words, particularly conversation, over music in this world. The potential of the signifier of reputation to dislocate from the signified sound results in empty words or 'puff'. In Burney's correspondence with Susan she is able to create a space for intellectual exchange in the absence of fashion, in which professional expertise allows meaningful verbal expression of musical experience. This is in contrast to the exclusively homosocial performance of feminine friendship that Burney carefully maintains in her correspondence with Thrale. Instead, the correspondence between the Burney sisters demonstrates a conversational space in which 'words' and 'music' are not mutually exclusive, because those words have a stable meaning uninflected by fashionable discourse, but tied to the meritocratic and therefore evaluatively determinate ethos of the Burney household's artistic-professional environment. The opportunity afforded by letters that Brant describes, above, for correspondents 'to imagine themselves into different personae and personae of difference', enables Burney to maintain a differing style of conversation with different correspondents, appropriate to the imagined social space in which those conversations would be held.[63] A comparison of these two sets of correspondence reveals the careful

[63] Brant, *Eighteenth-Century Letters and British Culture*, p. 26.

separation of the polite, conversational circle of Streatham and the less fashionable, but professionalised and specialised environment of Charles Burney's musical household.

As has already been discussed, Charles Burney's career as a music teacher placed him, and his family, in an equivocal social position that was at odds with the status he cultivated, that of literary professional and man of letters. Thrale's bitter sneer, cited above, that the Burneys are 'a very low Race of Mortals' (*Thraliana*, iv. 368) suggests that Thrale sees this family as having over-reached the natural social position of their 'race', invoking a troubling eugenics of class. Indeed, the achievements of the extended Burney family are impressive. Despite humble social origins, the family produced talented musicians (Charles Burney, Esther Burney and her cousin and later husband, Charles Rousseau Burney), writers (Charles, Frances, and Sarah Harriet Burney), artists (Edward Francisco Burney), a naval captain (James Burney) and a doctor of divinity (Charles Burney Jr.). As an artistic community, the Burney family itself could be seen to rival the Streatham coterie, and their extended network was dynamic and socially varied. In addition to encounters with family and friends, Burney records meetings with an impressive range of artists, thinkers and public figures. These included Johnson; the actor David Garrick; many leading opera singers including Millico, Pacchierotti, Agujari and Gabrielli; the Polynesian Omai, first Tahitian to visit Britain; Russian Count Prince Orlov; and the explorer James 'Abyssinian' Bruce. In a journal entry of 1772, Burney writes of one of her father's regular Sunday 'concerts', 'our Party [...] was large & *brilliant*' (*EJL*, i. 62); in March 1775, less than a year after the family moved to St. Martin's Street (where Charles Burney and his wife would remain until 1789), she writes that

> I am more & more pleased with our House; it is so centred, that we are surrounded with acquaintance; the Stranges in Castle Street, Barsanti in Queen Street, Miss Davies in Pall Mall, Mrs. Brooke in Market Lane; Dr. Hunter in Windmill Street, & in Leicester Fields the *Great* Mr. Bruce. (*EJL*, ii. 94)

The varied society in which the St. Martin's Street house is 'centred' includes – with the exception of Dr. Hunter – a typically artistic-professional grouping: Robert Strange, an engraver, and his wife were family friends of Charles Burney, who had been music teacher to their daughter; Jane Barsanti and Cecilia Davies, as discussed in Chapter One, were both singers, and Barsanti – another of Charles Burney's former pupils – would later become a successful actress; Frances Brooke was an author who, with her husband the Rev. John Brooke, part-managed the Italian Opera at The King's Theatre; Dr. William Hunter was an eminent physician who attended Queen Charlotte; and 'the *Great* Mr. Bruce', a cousin of Robert Strange, was well-known for his travels in Africa, an account of which he would eventually publish in 1790. The geographical centrality of the St. Martin's Street house that Burney celebrates mirrors its conceptual centrality as the centre of a bourgeois artistic/professional network that is peculiarly representative of London intellectual life in the late eighteenth century. This centrality and connectedness is balanced, though, by an enjoyment of the privacy and selectivity available to Burney in the society of her father's house which appears to be unavailable in other polite circles in which she moves. During a visit to 'Lynn Regis' [sic] in 1769, Burney complains of the 'perpetual Round of constrained Civilities' which, she writes, 'is the most provoking and tiresome thing in the World, but it is unavoidable in a Country Town, where every body is known'. However, she remarks that

> Restraint of this kind is much much [sic] less practiced or necessary in London than else where – excuses there are no sooner made than admitted – acquaintances as easily drop'd as courted –& Company chose or rejected at pleasure. (*EJL*, i. 83-4)

Burney's lament, in 1769, at this 'most shocking & unworthy way of spending our precious irrecoverable Time' (EJL, i. 84) prefigures her careful 'management' at Streatham, where Thrale will 'seize every moment I do not hide from her', and her resentment of the 'eternal dressing and visiting' that encroaches on her writing time once she becomes part of London literary society. In the wake of the success of Charles Burney's first musical tour – *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1771) – Burney would observe her father manage the demands of his own increasing literary celebrity long before she was obliged to manage her own:

> We hear almost Daily of new Readers & admirers, & if he had Time & inclination for it, he might Daily increase his Acquaintance among the learned & the Great. – but his Time is terribly occupied, and his inclinations lead to retirement and quiet.
>
> (*EJL*, i. 215)

The 'retirement' of family life is essential to Burney's imaginative construction of the idealised social environment of the Burney family home. She elevates her father's inclinations for privacy in the same breath that she emphasises the importance of his 'Time': preservation of 'Time' and the inclination for 'retirement' are concomitant. The loss of 'time' is not the only threat to the author's professional autonomy, however.

Burney observes that her authorial status is itself a constraint outside of the retirement of the family home:

> Thus it is, that an *Authoress* must always be supposed to be flippant, assuming & loquacious! – And, indeed, the dread of these kind of censures have been my principal motives for wishing *snugship*. (*EJL*, iii. 135)

Outside the 'snugship' of the family home, Burney is subject to an imposed fashionable 'Authoress' identity that is detached both from the inherent value of her writing and the reality of her deportment. Her resistance to performing socially, in light of the performance-professional background from which she comes, emphasises her insistence on separating her social persona from her professional output: Burney's performance is restricted strictly to the written word. Her refusal to attach a sociable artistic persona to her bodily presence echoes her resistance of the physical conflation of author and text that is ubiquitous in fashionable literary society.

Thrale's literary-social identity, by contrast, is dependent on her physical presence as a hostess figure. As such, her intellectual contribution is attached to immediate verbal performance. Thus her self-construction as 'Queen Hester', a story-teller and giver of banquets, offers a revealing picture of how she negotiated between her literary and her social persona. As a fashionable hostess, her entertainment of company did not merely consist of providing a venue and inviting intellectually compatible guests: she promoted and engaged in intellectual performance, and was noted for her wit. Wit, however, was a problematic concept, particularly with reference to women. Wit is a performative quality, associated with display (and particularly self-conscious display, as Burney's *Witlings* suggests) and with conversation rather than

literature. In 1820, Thrale (by then Mrs. Piozzi) wrote to her adopted son John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury:

> Oh never wish Wit to a Lady: – that is *indeed* Superfluous; and will draw nothing but Envy and Malice from 18 years old to 81. I will not however wish mine away.[64]

That Thrale's 'wit' is enviable implies that she is possessed of conspicuous talent, and the attendant 'malice' suggests that possession of this talent automatically invites censure. Wit, then, is something that is exercised and displayed, and suggestive of performance. McCarthy observes of Thrale's early literary talents that 'she remembered her precocity for the pleasure it gave her elders', and that her parents 'taught her to be precocious'. In consequence, he argues, 'she thus learned the ambiguous joy of performing, and performing specifically for men'.[65] Thrale's talent for entertaining company was thus early formed, and maintained in later life, as Burney writes to her sister in 1780:

> We had a very entertaining Evening, for Mrs. Montagu, Mrs. Thrale & Lord Mulgrave talked all the Talk, & talked it so well no one else had a wish beyond hearing them.
>
> (*EJL*, iv. 58)

[64] Hester Thrale Piozzi to John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury, 10 May 1820. Repr. in *The Piozzi Letters: 1817-1821*, ed. by Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, 6 vols (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1989-2002), vi. 387.
[65] McCarthy, *Hester Thrale Piozzi*, pp. 5-6.

In the habit of recording performances at her father's musical parties, Burney here records another kind of performance, 'talk', which in this instance is used in both verb and noun form, as activity and as cultural object. The 'Talk' of Montagu, Thrale and Mulgrave does not seem to invite participation from its audience, and so becomes spectacle rather than discourse. This division of 'talking' and 'hearing' demarks the relative roles of participants in these conversational communities, dividing them into performers and audience. By contrast, the egalitarian artistic-professional environment of St. Martin's Street assumes equality between all participants precisely because, professionally speaking, the majority of those participants *are* performers. Just as Burney would later distinguish between *dilettante* and professional musicians in *The Wanderer*, there is a distinction between the professional discussions of St. Martin's Street as mirrored by the musical correspondence of the Burney sisters, and the amateur 'talk' that is intended for consumption by an audience.

When 'talk' itself constitutes entertainment, it positions the talker as entertainer or performer: conversation, then, becomes an object of cultural consumption. John Brewer argues that 'with declining frequency, oratory and eloquence were also identified as "fine or elegant arts"' and that, broadly speaking, 'culture was defined in terms of the response it evoked in its audience'.[66] Although Brewer indicates that the culture of eloquence as 'art' was in decline, conversation was an instance of a creative act that could take place within the domestic and private social realms: an opportunity, in the proscribed circumstances of her first marriage, for Thrale to reach an audience without breaking rank. This emphasis on a specifically performative mode of cultural production, which is dependent upon the embodiment of the producer, is in tension with the emphasis on the print-based professionalism which, as Schellenberg has argued,

[66] Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, pp. 87-88.

characterised the Streatham circle. It is this very ethos of mass publication as opposed to private (and thus individual) patronage that offers Burney an opportunity to establish a distinction between her author-persona and her social persona. However, this distinction is complicated by Thrale's dependence on a model of female literary participation that insists upon the bodily presence of the hostess.

Thrale participates actively in the cultural production of the Streatham circle, yet is cynical in acknowledging her position. In *Thraliana*, she describes her relationship with Johnson as 'founded on the truest Principles[,] Religion, Virtue, & Community of Ideas', but then ridicules the idea: 'saucy Soul! Community of Ideas with Doctor Johnson'. In characterising her vision of intellectual community as 'Saucy', Thrale reiterates the assumption that men and women cannot be intellectual equals (or at least that, specifically, she cannot aspire to equality with the intellectual leviathan that is Johnson). Furthermore, her word choice indicates an element of presumption or of transgression, and that she has no right to intrude upon masculine intellectual territory. Even in her imagined community, Johnson is the intellectual instigator, who 'has fastened so many of his Notions so on my Mind [...] that I am not sure whether they grew there originally or no' (*Thraliana*, i. 445). Here, Thrale casts herself as a passive recipient of 'Notions', which at first appears to conform to contemporary conventions of masculine genius and feminine inferiority. However, the confusion as to the origin of her ideas, as Johnson's or her own, suggests these ideas *are* inherently equal and their source therefore indistinguishable. Thrale's 'mind' is an organ that is neither her own nor exclusively Johnson's, and she imagines it being physically augmented by Johnson's transplantations. Once again, Thrale conceives of intellectual participation in bodily terms, focusing on the organ of thought, the 'mind', as an object of masculine scrutiny and cultivation.

Thrale's particular manifestation of the hostess-role in Streatham's intellectual society informs the organisation of that society and how its members relate to each other. Burney and Thrale were both conscious of the elements of coterie-culture in their society, as demonstrated in the parodic 'Gazette' they produced for 'our Gentlemen who desert us most grievously for the sake of attending parliament' (*Thraliana*, i. 375). The conceit of the paper is dependent upon the division of the coterie into parts, separated both by physical distance and by the barrier between the privacy of Streatham and the public life of 'parliament', reinforcing a gendered distinction between the professional and the domestic. This distinction runs counter to Burney's portrait of her father's St. Martin's Street house, in which the marriage of professionalism and domesticity is crucial. Thrale records that Burney wrote the introductory paper, and that she herself was to write the song, which she transcribes in *Thraliana*, although noticeably she omits Burney's paper. The song anticipates its own reception and ridicule by its readership (i.e., Johnson, Henry Thrale, Sir Philip Clerke et al), while expressing Thrale's anxiety about her own literary abilities:

> Forbear, Sir Philip cries, my Friend,
> With pop Gun Wits shall we contend?
> We must accept their Trash, – or
> Displease the Streatham Coterie,
> Which I've objections to – *D'ye see*,
> So e'en let pass the Flasher. (*Thraliana*, i. 376)

Thrale plays on her own role as hostess and patroness of the 'Streatham Coterie', suggesting that the 'Trash' she is sending is accepted due to her influence rather than

intrinsic literary merit. The verses delineate the roles of performer and her audience by the device of transmission, of 'sending trash', reinforcing that separation and thus the structure of the Streatham conversational circle. She also ridicules the social influence of the coterie in having the 'Trash' of such 'pop Gun Wits' accepted in the first place. The title of the Gazette, 'the Flasher', is suggested by Burney. Of the many definitions of 'flash' in the OED, one definition of the noun form actually cites Burney's journals as its source: 'flash' is 'superficial brilliancy; ostentation, display'.[67] Thrale explains in typically self-satirising style that: 'we have a Hack Phrase here at Streatham of calling every thing *Flash* which we want other folks to call *Wit*', suggesting that the coterie can control and designate what is to be considered 'wit', just as the 'Hack Phrase' of Sir Philip Clerke – '*D'ye see*' – has been normalised into the discourse of Streatham and therefore infiltrates its literary vocabulary. The song plays on the idea of its own presumptuous aspiration: 'How bold the Streatham Muse has grown / To *flash* when all her *Sparks* are flown / Will nothing then abash her?' (*Thraliana*, i. 375). The role of the (typically feminine) Muse is to inspire the (typically masculine) artist, and Thrale revels in her 'bold'-ness. She appears to enjoy confounding the trope by having her Muse 'flash', yet the term itself is suggestive of display and transience, in contrast to the originary, promethean 'Sparks'. Thrale's claim to 'flash' thus becomes a self-conscious satire on the muse's talent for display, and a wry disclaimer of literary genius. Despite Thrale's extensive education and early literary output, she is conscious that her literary guests prefer to consider her still as 'Muse' rather than artist. Burney's designation of the Gazette as 'the Flasher' invokes a Streatham 'hack phrase' and thus her inclusion, with Thrale, in the intellectual life of that coterie, but also suggests her ironic distance

[67] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'flash' *n.*², 4b.

from the 'ostentation' of this address. The word 'flash' both elevates and problematises Thrale's role in the Streatham salon in the same way that her performative wit does.

After their friendship had come to an end, both Thrale and Burney are anxious to retain narrative control over the story of that friendship. Thrale in particular is intensely paranoid about Burney's representations of her:

> [Sir Lucas Pepys] told me Miss Burney spoke kindly of me, but that I count nothing on; it proves nothing indeed, except that She thinks we are coming into Mode again. That Family has certainly been *too* ungrateful, they were dabbling in Newspaper Abuse of me all the Time I was away in Italy. (*Thraliana*, ii. 686)

In her notes to *Thraliana*, Balderstone highlights the injustice of this accusation, which in itself emphasises the bitterness and insecurity Thrale still feels in relation to Burney.[68] As in previous instances of jealousy and bitterness, Thrale invokes Burney's 'family', as if to emphasise her low birth and inferiority. She dismisses their writing (if it even took place) as 'dabbling', a term that has echoes of 'Dabler', the parodied poet of fashion in Burney's suppressed play, *The Witlings*. This is ironic in view of Thrale's accusation that Burney 'thinks we are coming into Mode again', and suggests a deliberate misreading of Burney's antagonistic relationship with fashionable literary society.

Burney herself seems to welcome opportunities to re-inscribe her relationship with Thrale, positioning herself as narrator. In a series of 'themes', or French exercises in the form of letters addressed to her husband Alexander D'Arblay, Burney describes

[68] 'Actually Fanny Burney was at this time defending, to Queeney [Hester Maria Thrale], Mrs. Piozzi's right to keep [her youngest daughter] Cecilia' (*Thraliana*, ii. 686 n. 1).

her relationship with Thrale as one of several 'petites histoires' or stories.[69] Recording an enquiry from the Queen, in 1787, regarding Thrale's 'ill-fated connection' with her second husband, Piozzi, Burney is gratified by the narrative control that is offered her:

> I was glad, too, that since it must be told – it was related by one who could clear many falsehoods, and soften many truths – for dear she must always be to my *memory*, at least.[70]

Burney emphasises how 'dear' Thrale is 'to my *memory*, at least', reinforcing the emotional (as opposed to intellectual) relationship she attempted to maintain with Thrale in her letters. When Burney narrated the tale of that relationship to her husband between 1803 and 1805 in her 'themes', she would again refer to Thrale as one consigned to memory, as if deceased, writing 'mes souvenirs me feront toujours rester pour elle amie fidelle pour la servir'.[71] This impulse of memorialisation treats Thrale as one deceased, when in fact both women would live for many years more. This desire to offer a final eulogy of their friendship, to such an authority as the Queen, is not merely the impulse of affectionate nostalgia, but also a defensive strategy: Thrale's dynamic but unreliable performances are no match for the objectivity of Burney's disembodied narrative authority. The Queen's enquiry had been prompted by the impending publication of the first part of Thrale's *Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson*

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[69] 'Je suis tellement en arriere pour mes thèmes que pour parvenir à l'instant actuel il faut que j'essaye d'ècrire quelques petites histoires [I'm so in arrears with my themes that in order to catch up I must try to write a few stories]' (my translation). Frances Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, ed. by Joyce Hemlow et al, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972-84), vii. 522. The extracts from Burney's French exercise books, in which she discusses Thrale, are reproduced as an appendix to *Journals and Letters*, vii. 522-546.

[70] Frances Burney, *The Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney*, ed. by (i) Stewart Cooke and (ii) Peter Sabor, with an introduction by Elaine Bander and Stewart Cooke, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011-), ii. 259.

[71] Literally, 'my memories will make me remain for her a faithful friend to serve her' (my translation). *Journals and Letters*, vii. 522.

(1788), which the Queen seems to have read in manuscript.[72] Indeed, the suggestion that Thrale might narrate the relationship herself in her *Letters* causes Burney some concern: '[Mrs. Schwellenberg] told me next – that in the second volume I also was mentioned [...] it has given me a sickness at heart inexpressible'.[73] Once more couching her response in emotional terms, Burney's real anxiety is that her name – an extension of herself – might be publicly displayed in one of Thrale's engaging but unreliable performances.

The literary salon at Streatham thus offered Burney both opportunities and frustrations. Whilst still socially exclusive, Streatham's community of literary, artistic professionals in a fashionable setting offered a transition between the private professionalism of St. Martin's Street, and the more public, largely amateur and patronage-based model of conversation to be found in the salons of leading bluestocking hostesses such as Montagu. The emphasis on professional output and artistic labour at Streatham allowed Burney to enter such fashionable society on the merits of her professional, rather than social, status. However, Thrale's equivocal role as hostess made this an uncomfortable setting for this young female writer. The centrality of the performer/audience relationship to the operation of this circle refused to allow Burney to separate literary professionalism from literary celebrity. It is paradoxically the model of artistic professionalism at St. Martin's Street, in which performance formed *part* of that professionalism, that would offer the model for Burney's literary persona: in a conversational salon in which specialist, rather than *dilettante* cultural production is the business of all its members, there is no division

[72] Burney records in January 1788 that 'the Book belongs to the Bishop of Carlisle, who lent it to Mr. Turbulent, from whom it was again lent to the Queen, and so passed on to Mrs. Schwellenberg. It is still unpublished'. Frances Burney, *The Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, ed. by Charlotte Barrett [1842-6], repr. in 4 vols (London: Swann Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), ii. 444.
[73] Burney, *Diary and Letters*, ii. 447.

between artist and audience, and performance is reciprocal rather than isolating and individualistic.

Chapter Three

'To distinguish a lady of fashion from an artist': Engaging with the Arts in Public and Private

Burney's performative, conversational and artistic encounters, both at home in St. Martin's Street, and at the Thrales' Streatham salon, equipped her to negotiate the challenges inherent in her newfound status as a female public literary professional. These experiences would have a profound impact on the way in which Burney represented artistic culture in her novels, from the world of fashionable entertainment in *Evelina* (1778) to the performance dynamics of the pseudo-private drawing room in *The Wanderer* (1814). The problematic exchange between cultural producers and cultural consumers that informs her relationship with Thrale in particular, and with her readership in general, would prompt Burney to interrogate the dependence of social and cultural status on the visible consumption of both tangible and intangible commodities (such as books, clothing and artistic performance). Over the period of almost forty years in which she wrote her four novels, she would increasingly question whether, and how, that identity could be constructed in the absence of just such cultural signifiers. In her final novel, Burney attempts to reconcile the contradictory potential of cultural activities such as reading, writing, and musical performance, both to provide the basis of an autonomous and disembodied selfhood, and to implicate that self in a luxurious and emphatically gendered economy of production and consumption.

Burney's early exposure to the world of artistic, performative professionalism, meant that musical performance in particular would prove a potent symbol in her works. Gillen D'Arcy Wood has argued that Burney's 'attitude to music in her writing became

increasingly defensive through her career', offering this as an explanatory factor in the marked difference (according to Wood, deterioration) in style between *Evelina* and the later novels, in particular *Camilla* (1796) and *The Wanderer*.[1] In many respects Wood's analysis bears scrutiny, as the public musical arenas that are prominent in *Evelina* and *Cecilia* (1782) gradually disappear from Burney's later novels in favour of private homes and drawing rooms. However, Wood's suggestion that Burney attempted to systematically dissociate herself (and her father) from the musical culture that was their social origin seems a strange one in light of her choice of protagonist in her final novel: *The Wanderer*'s Ellis is a harpist, and where Burney's earlier heroines had possessed a keen appreciation for musical performance, Ellis is herself an accomplished musician. Rather than abandoning, in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, the performance spaces that populated *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, Burney intensifies her examination of the relationship between performers and audience by transplanting that dynamic into private circles.

The most striking contrast between Burney's post- and pre-court novels, then, is Burney's re-rendering of performance spaces into private settings, and the way in which these spaces dictate the relationship between spectator and spectacle which is, in *Evelina* in particular, relatively fluid. As outlined in Chapter Two, the nature of the private spaces Burney inhabits in her early career varies widely according to the way in which the status of participants is defined. In the specialised and meritocratic privacy of the Burney musical parties, the dynamics of cultural consumption were effectively effaced by the communality of cultural participation, whereas in the literary and conversational salons of Elizabeth Montagu and, to an extent, Hester Thrale, the formalised distinctions between producer and consumer constructed a performer/audience relationship that relied upon social status and patronage

[1] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840: Virtue and Virtuosity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 56.

relationships. Burney's journals during her time at court render the most extreme manifestation yet of these patronage relationships, in which a highly exclusive private space is transformed into an arena of constant bodily and mental scrutiny. In *Camilla* and *The Wanderer* she draws on this experience, demonstrating how the emphasis on visual culture portrayed in the earlier novels has infiltrated even private settings, in which costume, bodily movement and even mental activity (in the form of cultural consumption) are employed to construct, or impose, identity.

In *The Wanderer*, Burney returns to a protagonist who is unable to claim her identity through the most basic of signifiers, a name. Unlike Evelina, Ellis is also devoid of more complex social signifiers that could serve as authority for identity: where Evelina has a surrogate father in the form of Villars, Ellis is unable to claim her father-mentor, also a cleric, for fear of endangering his life. Similarly, while Evelina is given social countenance by her association with the respectable Mirvans, the tantalising prospect of such protection – from figures such as Elinor Joddrel and Mrs. Maple – is repeatedly revealed, in *The Wanderer*, to be both arbitrary and unstable. Crucially, while Evelina cannot claim her true identity in public, Ellis is unable to own it even in private. Burney's final novel presents a relentless assault upon individual subjectivity, and sees her heroine struggle to remain in control of her own narrative in the absence of established signifiers of authority. The spectre of lost or misappropriated identity that Burney hints at in *Evelina* is thus the defining problem of *The Wanderer*: in confronting this threat to selfhood, Burney considers how an identity can be formed in isolation from the private, genteel identity that Ellis is unable to claim for most of the novel. In so doing, she draws more heavily than ever before on the problematic relationship between bodily and intellectual identity that, in different ways, characterises her entire corpus.

In a letter of 1776 to publisher Thomas Lowndes, negotiating the sale of her first novel, Burney describes 'the plan of the first Volume' as 'the introduction of a well educated, but inexperienced young woman into public company, and a round of the most fashionable Spring diversions of London'.[2] *Evelina: or the History of A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* is a novel explicitly of and about publicity and public performance. Invoking the monologue of Jacques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, in which 'All the world's a stage', the 'Entrance' Evelina makes into that 'World' is, by implication, a dramatic one.[3] From the outset, then, the plot of Burney's novel is foreshadowed by reference to a play in which the protagonists retreat from the corruption of courtly culture into the wilderness of the Forest of Arden. In *Evelina*, as in Shakespeare's play, the distinction between civilization and wilderness is constantly in flux, as the rules of that civilization fail to protect the heroine from those who refuse to recognise them; furthermore, the opposition of spectator and performer is broken down as merely visiting a public space becomes, in itself, an act of publicity.

Through Evelina's encounters with fashionable society, Burney exposes the conspicuous consumption associated with performance spaces, in which performance by the artistic professionals is of secondary importance to the audience's own. At a performance of Congreve's *Love for Love*, the fop Lovel proclaims his indifference to the play itself, explaining that 'I have no time to read playbills; one merely comes to meet one's friends, and shew that one's alive'.[4] To Lovel, it seems, to be 'alive' is

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[2] Frances Burney, *Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-), ii. 215. Further references to this edition will be indicated, in parenthesis, as *EJL*.

[3] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II. 7. 139.

[4] Frances Burney, *Evelina; or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), ed. by Edward A. Bloom, with introduction and notes by Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 82. Further references to this edition will be indicated, in parenthesis, in the text. William Congreve's *Love for Love. A Comedy* (1695) remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, although Vivien Jones notes that by the time of *Evelina*'s publication this popularity was waning, due to 'a changing taste which increasingly found even the less sexually explicit of Restoration comedies too coarse' (*Evelina*, p. 79 n. '*Love for Love...indelicate*').

consonant with being publicly visible: existence is something conducted entirely in view of one's 'friends', and this performative existence is an expensive business. Captain Mirvan admirably fulfils the role Burney prescribes for him in her letter to Lowndes, that 'in regard to modern customs, and fashionable modes, [he] assists in marking their absurdity and extravagance' (*EJL*, ii. 215), pointing out to Lovel that 'it costs you five shillings a night, just to shew that you're alive!' (*Evelina*, 82). Mirvan's ridicule highlights a complex problem that pervades Burney's work. What is the cost of intellectual pleasure, and what is the return? To be seen to attend the theatre, to be demonstrably 'alive', has a value to Lovel equivalent to five shillings a week, illustrating the role of intellectual luxuries in the modern consumer's construction of identity. Deidre Lynch has explained Lovel's need to 'display his fashionable body [...] because if he goes out of sight he will no longer exist'.[5] In Lynch's persuasive argument, the market culture of late-eighteenth-century England offers new means of re-embodiment through the purchase of luxuries. Lovel's presence at the theatre, then, is not merely an opportunity to render his re-embodied person conspicuous, but a further display of his spending power, of his ability to afford the five-shillings-a-night admission, and of his choice of the theatre as the intellectual luxury he purchases.

As John Brewer remarks, 'in the eighteenth century culture became, to an unprecedented degree, a commodity'.[6] Thus the cultural activity of theatre attendance is objectified as a purchasable item, at the same time that the activity itself is restructured into something other than mere attention to the dramatic action; as Brewer describes, 'not only the lobby but the auditorium of the theatre was a place of social display in

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[5] Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 165.
[6] John Brewer '"The most polite age and the most vicious". Attitudes towards culture as a commodity, 1600-1800' in Ann Bermingham and John Brewer (eds.), *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 341-361 (p. 345).

which the performance of the audience was a significant part of the spectacle'.[7] The purchasing power Lovel displays, then, is expended in purchasing admission to the arena of that display. In doing this, Lovel becomes a part of the spectacle intended for spectators such as himself. This ever-descending spiral, in which spending both converts intellectual commodities and becomes itself a commodity, or luxury, in an essential sense, renders the social economy of artistic value dizzyingly self-perpetuating. This constant slippage between artistic, social and even sexual value is a key feature of *Evelina*. As Lynch puts it, 'Burney habitually depicts the scene of consumption as one in which things and individuals (especially female individuals) seem to change places'. This slippage can, by extension, be applied to the performative culture that Burney's heroine inhabits in the novel, in which performers are things, cultural artefacts (to borrow Brewer's expression) of the non-corporeal luxury of which they are purveyors, and thus are incorporated into what Lynch terms 'consumer culture's promise of re-embodiment'.[8] In this consumer culture, in which the spectator also *becomes* the performer by performing consumption, they are all the more easily converted themselves from autonomous individuals into cultural objects.

Burney's acquaintance with female artistic professionals through her father's musical networks would introduce her to the problematic contingency of commodity, exchange, and value to which cultural producers are subject. In *Evelina*, these issues of commodification are applied, by extension, to the cultural consumer. The novel is preoccupied with the conflation of spectator and spectacle, which forms a crucial link between this earlier work and Burney's final novel, *The Wanderer*. Regardless of how her subject position may later become blurred, Evelina enters into the 'world' of London society as a spectator, a member of an expectant audience whose narrative (and

[7] Brewer, 'The most polite age', p. 347.
[8] Lynch, *The Economy of Character*, pp. 165, 174.

by extension the 'self' she constructs for herself through her letters) is composed of her consumer experience of performative spaces. In a manner which prefigures Burney's own 'entrance' into the literary 'world', *Evelina* records the heroine's gradual transition from a spectator, who narrates the events around her, to a performer, who is increasingly cautious in her confidence and selective in her narrations to her absent guardian. Feminist readings of Burney's work from the mid-1980s onwards have rejected the tendency of earlier critics, as Julia Epstein describes it, 'to view Evelina as a complacent and naïve victim of circumstances conveniently contrived by her creator'. As commentators such as Epstein and Kristina Straub have noted, the way in which the narrative of *Evelina* imitates real-time epistolary delay allows for tactical omissions that in their turn influence narrative development. Epstein argues that 'letter writing in *Evelina* is a synecdochic gesture: it stands, in miniature, for the tenuous and danger-fraught communication process between authority and its charge'.[9] Simultaneously, though, as demonstrated by Burney's correspondence with Thrale, letters can be utilised to renegotiate the relationship between correspondents, and to contest narrative authority. As Straub argues, 'the process by which Evelina is read is a paradigm of how Burney herself sought to form her own image in the eyes of others'.[10] Evelina's letters demonstrate just such a negotiation as Burney engages in during her correspondence with Thrale, and her bid for narrative control increases with her growing consciousness that her own spectatorship is itself a potential spectacle.

Evelina's communication with her guardian gradually loses its breathless immediacy as the heroine is exposed to the world of the 'public' as encompassed by the performance spaces of Georgian London. In her first missive to the Rev. Mr. Villars,

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[9] Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 95.
[10] Kristina Straub, *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1987), p. 157.

Evelina writes as if by automatic script, failing in her attempts at self-censorship as she makes a 'confession' of her desire to go to London: 'I believe I am bewitched! I made a resolution when I began, that I would not be urgent; but my pen – or rather my thoughts, will not suffer me to keep it' (*Evelina*, 26). That her 'thoughts' have overcome her 'pen' suggests a lack of physical agency, or the submission of the physical, writing, body to the force of the imagination. As the narrative unfolds, Evelina regains physical, written control over her thoughts and therefore her pen. Her letters to her guardian are no longer spontaneous and immediate records of events as they unfold. Instead, they have become reflective narratives crafted for their audience, in this case, Villars: 'Good God, my dear Sir, what a wonderful tale have I again to relate!' (317). As Evelina's consciousness of her own subjectivity increases, so does her desire to give a good account of herself. Her body revolts against the physical act of writing when the mind is not composed: 'I could not write yesterday, so violent was the agitation of my mind' (370). Evelina describes a letter sent to Villars in a state of high emotion as 'hasty' (317), implying a lack of time for consideration as well as indicating the speed with which it was written. This word acknowledges that the act of writing and sending of the letter can influence extra-epistolary events, and suggests that the 'hasty' behaviour of the writer will somehow come to be regretted. Irene Tucker remarks that

> the temporal disjunctions created by the epistolary form suggest the extent to which human action (and the [autobiographical] representation of that action) depends upon the disruption of the "natural" passage of time, or further, the way in which that passage of time only gains meaning through its disruption.[11]

[11] Irene Tucker, 'Writing Home: *Evelina*, the Epistolary Novel and the Paradox of Property', *ELH*, 60:2 (Summer, 1993), 419-439 (423).

What this suggests is, firstly, that Evelina's letter-writing is an extension of her 'human action', subject to the same scrutiny as her physical behaviour; secondly, that as a form of representation, letter-writing can be manipulated, through its temporal disjunctions, to portray and revise the 'actions' of Evelina's life. Evelina's consciousness that letter-writing is just such representation appears to increase in parallel with her growing sense of her own subjectivity, as she makes the transition from observer to observed; casting her correspondent, rather than herself, as audience. Evelina's letters become a narrative of increasingly selective cultural consumption, constructing their author through her choices of, and responses to, fashionable entertainments, comparable with Lovel's signalling of his existence by attending the theatre.

While performances in *The Wanderer*, both overt and unconscious, take place largely in private spaces, the dynamics of these performances have their origins in the explicitly public spaces which *Evelina* is primarily concerned with negotiating. The London entertainments to which Burney sends Evelina range from the fashionable and socially exclusive to the common and accessible; from the Italian Opera at the King's Theatre to the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall and Marylebone. Her first experience of the London Theatre is a performance of *The Suspicious Husband* at Drury Lane, with the Burneys' family friend David Garrick in the lead role. Evelina's raptures are impulsive and unencumbered by self-consciousness: 'when he danced – O how I envied Clarinda. I almost wished to have jumped on the stage and joined them' (*Evelina*, 28). Eager to witness the performance, Evelina and Miss Mirvan persuade Mrs. Mirvan to attend the theatre even though they 'have had no time to *Londonize*' themselves, that is, to dress appropriately:

> we teized her into compliance, and so we are to sit in some obscure place, that she may not be seen. As to me, I should be alike unknown in the most conspicuous or most private part of the house. (27)

At this stage, Evelina considers only her ability to observe the performance, not the possibility of being herself observed. With her anonymity, 'unknown' as she is 'in the most conspicuous or private part of the house', comes a seeming immunity to the cycle of display and voyeurism that is inherent in the fashionable society she is on the verge of entering. As Evelina is not yet of that society, she attaches no consequences to the manner of her appearance amongst its members. However, through Mrs. Mirvan's reluctance to appear unfashionably attired, and Evelina's disregard for customs of dress, Burney satirises both Mrs. Mirvan's adherence to convention, and Evelina's ignorance of it. This ambiguous satire is typical of the 'fine distinctions' and rejection of 'monolithic moral categories' that Straub has identified in Burney's writing, and in *Evelina* in particular, writing that '*Evelina* suggests that room for this complexity could be obtained through the heroine's detachment, her separateness from a satiric vision of femininity in the realm of public "diversions"'. Straub argues that Burney 'creat[es] in her heroine a sort of innocent ambivalence toward the public diversions of London': however, part of the 'complexity' of Burney's novel is the way in which Evelina succeeds in maintaining that innocence in conjunction with her increasing participation in, and consciousness of, fashionable society.[12]

It does not take Evelina long to assimilate Mrs. Mirvan's dread of 'improper dress', as her acquaintance with the Branghtons reinforces the distinction between fashionable and unfashionable society. When, within weeks of her first attendance at

[12] Straub, *Divided Fictions*, p. 91.

the theatre, her cousins propose joining her party to the Opera, Evelina is so well versed in fashionable customs that she confesses herself 'surprised at their ignorance' of them:[13]

> their dress was such as would have rendered their scheme of accompanying our party impracticable, even if I had desired it; and this, as they did not themselves find out, I was obliged, in terms the least mortifying I could think of, to tell them. (*Evelina*, 86)

Although Burney gently ironises her heroine's newfound attention to fashionable forms throughout the novel, she does not appear to contradict the importance that Evelina learns to attach to dress. Instead, costume becomes part of the fabric of Evelina's daily existence, interfering with moral judgement and disrupting systems of value, and prefiguring Burney's increasing attention to the symbolic properties of dress in her later novels. In particular, Evelina's preoccupation, in this instance, with her costume and that of her companions, becomes a register for her own growing consciousness of their visible roles as audience members, which extends beyond dress into different types of conspicuous fashionable consumerism.

Burney demonstrates how the conspicuous nature of cultural consumerism affects Evelina's participation in cultural activities such as theatre- and opera-going. Her keen appreciation of performances by Garrick and Millico (an actor and a musician both at the height of their respective professions) marks her refined artistic sensibilities;

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[13] As noted in Chapter One (p. 41 n. 49), Evelina relates her first, inappropriately dressed, trip to the theatre in a letter dated April 2 (*Evelina*, 27). The letter in which she describes the Branghtons' ignorance is 'in continuation' of a letter dated April 16, suggesting that the events took place on this date or shortly afterwards. This leaves a space of little more than a fortnight in which Evelina has not only gained a comprehensive knowledge of appropriate (and inappropriate) dress for attending places of entertainment, but has also assimilated these customs into her own understanding of proper conduct.

however, her accounts of these two performances differ greatly. The description of Garrick's performance, quoted above, focuses on Evelina's experience of the performance, and the effect it has upon her. Attending the Opera with the Branghtons, Evelina's artistic appreciation of Millico's performance comes into conflict with her consciousness that she herself is an object of diversion, as her response to Millico's 'sweet voice' (*Evelina*, 93) as a spectator is cast by the Branghtons as a performance in itself.

> This song, which was slow and pathetic, caught all my attention, and I lean'd my head forward to avoid hearing their observations, that I might listen without interruption; but, upon turning round, when the song was over, I found that I was the object of general diversion to the whole party; for the Miss Branghtons were tittering, and the two gentlemen making signs and faces at me, implying their contempt of my affectation. (94)

It is of course ironic that while the song 'caught all my attention', the failure of Evelina's relatives to appreciate the music leaves them free to turn their attention to the other show, put on by the audience themselves. While Evelina 'would have given the world to have avoided being seen' by Sir Clement, it is her conspicuous head-dress, part of the conventional costume of a night at the Opera, that gives her away (94-5). The fashionable conformity Evelina practises in fact leads her into an unwelcome conspicuousness and renders her part of the spectacle that her cousins so enjoy:

> 'Good gracious! only see! – why, Polly, all the people in the pit are without hats, dressed like any thing!'

'Lord, so they are,' cried Miss Polly, 'well, I never saw the like! – it's worth coming to the Opera if one saw nothing else!' (93)

The Misses Branghton's response to the finery of the Opera audience echoes contemporary problems in both musical performance and public culture. While the experience of attending the Opera is ostensibly musical and therefore aural, the Misses Branghton are interested in what they 'saw', bypassing the virtuosic, artistic qualities of the performance. Furthermore, the issue of value, what is 'worth' the admission fee (and the exclusivity an admission fee suggests, conveying value) is highlighted by the Branghtons' willingness to pay to see people 'dressed like anything', thus purchasing access to the visible, physical manifestation of fashion. Through this crude but acute assessment of the role of audience display as part and parcel of the experience of popular entertainment, Burney exposes the problematic visibility of the performing arts as a medium, as a physical manifestation of intellectual pursuits. Unable to divorce their talents from their bodies, performers are 'seen' rather than 'heard'. Thus, to Polly Branghton, the sight of gaudily dressed audience members is of equivalent monetary 'worth' to the 'sight' of the singers themselves. Sound, it appears, does not enter the equation.

As in *Evelina*, Burney depicts in *Cecilia* a society in which the act of cultural consumption becomes, by extension, a performance in itself; furthermore, the preoccupation with the visibility of consumption devalues the cultural products – art, theatre, musical performance – that are the objects of that consumer gaze. Rather, the visible is valorised and the effects of artistic activity (such as the appreciation of Opera) are subsumed into a visual culture preoccupied with the physical body. While Evelina effectively constructs herself as a tasteful consumer through a written account of her

own consumption, she resists becoming a conspicuous one. By contrast, Cecilia's hosts, the Harrels, value consumption only as it *is* conspicuous. The Harrels are desperately intent upon keeping up appearances, and within the economic scheme of the novel, 'appearance' is synonymous with 'credit'. Having blackmailed Cecilia into paying his clamorous creditors, Harrel makes the further demand that she mortgage her 'appearance' by accompanying him and his wife to the Pantheon, claiming that 'your appearance at this critical time is important to our credit'. Harrel insists that 'the only way to silence report [of bankruptcy] is by putting a good face upon the matter at once'.[14] Harrel's credit, then, rests on bodily conspicuousness rather than verbal or aural authenticity: showing a 'good face' will 'silence [the] report'. Even Harrel's suicide is performed in public, at the pleasure garden at Vauxhall. The publicity of the act effectively interrupts all other pursuit of spectacle, as 'not a creature was walking, and all amusement seemed forgotten' (*Cecilia*, 414). Harrel's enforced gaiety, his 'loud and violent singing', increases in proportion to his desperation, so it is fitting that the contradictory act of his suicide should also be announced by a 'dreadful sound': 'scarcely had Mr. Harrel quitted the box and their sight, before their ears were suddenly struck with the report of a pistol' (413). While Harrel has managed to beguile the eyes with his 'appearance', he cannot deceive the ears: the performance is imperfect because only appearance has been consulted.

The fashionable society of *Cecilia* appears all but insensible to the audible, in particular the musical. At the masquerade, Burney exposes the musical ignorance of an 'Apollo', who misidentifies 'the sound of an *hautboy* [oboe]' as that of a flute (*Cecilia*, 121).[15] The wilful disregard shown by Cecilia's contemporaries for musical

[14] Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* [1782], ed. by Margaret Anne Doody and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 273. Further references to this edition will be given, in parenthesis, in the text.
[15] In Greek mythology, Apollo was patron of music.

performance is manifested at the Opera, where Cecilia is seated next to 'a party of young ladies, who were so earnestly engaged in their own discourse, that they listened not to a note of the Opera, and [...] allowed no-one in their vicinity to hear better than themselves'. The inattention these ladies display is aurally obstructive, preventing others from hearing the Opera that they are ostensibly there to listen to themselves. While it is the audible quality of conversation that renders it obstructive, however, that conversation is wholly obsessed with the visible body:

> But when [...] she began better to comprehend their discourse, wretchedly indeed did it supply to her the loss of the Opera. She heard nothing but descriptions of trimmings, and complaints of hair-dressers [...] (134)

Musical sound is thus replaced by the attendant sound of 'appearances'. This mis-assignation of artistic value is compounded when Cecilia moves seats, to be near a group of young men who seem 'fearful of speaking, lest their attention should be drawn for a moment from the stage' (134-5). However, this silence and attention last only as long as the dance, after which they break into 'whispering, but gay conversation [...] a buzzing which interrupted all pleasure from the representation' (135). The silence of these men during the dance, contrasted with their disregard for the musical 'representation' of the Opera, exposes this emphasis on physical visibility as disrupting the value of non-visual artistic production. Burney's parody of the fashionable Opera audience pursues this emphasis on bodily, rather than intellectual or musical, pleasures to its absurd conclusion: the ironic insistence of these men upon silence during the dance – 'Come, be quiet, the dance is begun' – throws into even greater relief the distortion of *all* art forms into vehicles for visual objectification. Harrel's conflation of

'credit' and 'appearance' is thus natural in a moral universe where the image is not merely representative of, but becomes, its object: to appear to have is, therefore, to have.

The fashionable obsession with the visual in *Cecilia* often manifests itself as inattention to professional performance, or more precisely, a re-designation of subject positions, in which the audience themselves become the performers. It is the audible obsession of the 'party of young ladies' with 'trimmings' and 'hair-dressers' that takes centre stage in Burney's narrative, rather than the Opera itself (although Cecilia does ultimately get to hear Pacchierotti's performance), pointedly rendering the interpolation of this discourse of visibility into the account of Cecilia's aural experience. In the act of conspicuous spectatorship, complete with its sartorial demands, these ladies have displaced the performer in the audience's attention. The conspicuous consumption of which Evelina is accused by the Branghtons on her first visit to the Opera is thus embraced by the Opera audience that Cecilia encounters: that audience attends performance spaces in search of an audience of their own.

In *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, Burney depicts a society in which participation in fashionable culture is increasingly reduced to the visible act of physical consumption: of being seen hearing, and being seen seeing. In *The Wanderer*, this dependence on visibility extends beyond the performance spaces of the earlier novels into private settings, as the literalised and anxious need to have one's very existence constantly re-affirmed through the spectatorship of others. Elinor Joddrel, whose self-proclaimed carelessness of established structures is part of her revolutionary fervour, is ironically conformist in her desperate insistence on performing her independence for an audience. In describing her courtship with Dennis Harleigh, she proclaims that 'the joy I experienced in the display of my own talents, made me doat upon his sight'. The sense

in which 'sight' is used is crucial here: rather than her fiancé's visage, it is his spectatorship, or being seen by him, that Elinor 'doat[es] upon', although she retrospectively dismisses this as 'vanity'.[16] Elinor's 'vanity' persists, though, as Dennis's brother, Albert Harleigh, observes:

> '...she studies, in common with all those with whom the love of fame is the ruling passion, Effect, public Effect, rather than what she either thinks to be right, or feels to be desirable.' (*Wanderer*, 365)

As Harleigh observes, Elinor is preoccupied with 'produc[ing] the best effect' (169) and conceives of 'the whole of my race as the mere dramatis personæ of a farce; of which I am myself [...] the principal buffoon' (153). Elinor's performances are egocentric, appropriating Ellis's narrative in order to instead tell her own story. Ellis's romance with Harleigh becomes intrinsic to Elinor's self-display, in which she counterpoints Ellis's 'happiness' with her own despair: 'Here stands the altar for the happy; – here, the tomb for the hopeless!' (580). This strange *ménage à trois* is stage-managed by Elinor, who describes her life as a kind of play, and refers to herself, in the third person, as the subject of a 'history' which Ellis must 'narrate':

> 'The second act of the comedy, tragedy, or farce, of my existence, is to be represented to-morrow. The first scene will be a conference between Ellis and Albert, in which Ellis will relate the history of Elinor.' (161)

[16] Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* [1814], ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 152. Further references to this edition will be indicated, in parenthesis, in the text.

Elinor takes advantage of Ellis's anonymity and equivocal status, by positioning her as both actor and audience in this strange performance, demanding both her participation and her attention: 'Hear me, Ellis! approach and mark me. I must have a conference with Harleigh. You must be present. A last conference!' (587). Insisting that Ellis 'mark' her, Elinor demands that the attention or 'sight' of the other protagonists is trained on her, just as Dennis Harleigh's had been. To be 'marked', or seen, by others is then essential to Elinor's self-construction.

Much like the Opera audience in *Cecilia*, Elinor utilises a performance space in which she is an audience member to stage her own performance. In her dramatic suicide attempt at Ellis's abortive public recital, she strives to re-align the positions of spectator and spectacle, and demands visual centrality: 'Turn, Harleigh, turn! and see thy willing martyr! – Behold, perfidious Ellis! behold thy victim!'(*Wanderer*, 359). Demanding that Harleigh 'turn' from Ellis to herself, she also effects the displacement of the audience's attention from the musical performance of the orchestra and, crucially, of Ellis, to this self-cast 'martyr' and 'victim', reversing the spatial relationship between stage and auditorium. Elinor's insistence that Harleigh and Ellis 'see' and 'behold' her places her at the visual centre of the alternative narrative she constructs, which runs in parallel to the narrative of Ellis's mysterious identity. The symbolic visibility through which Elinor attempts to construct a dramatic identity for herself ironically mirrors the visibility that threatens Ellis's autonomy. Elinor's performances are superfluous (and ultimately revealed as disingenuous) because her identity is fixed by wealth and status; Ellis, by contrast, is unable to avow these signifiers, and so is unable to establish herself safely as either spectator or performer.

Burney's concern with this slippage, between artistic consumer and artistic producer, is longstanding. As I have argued in Chapter One, she was troubled by the

persistent association of artistic products with the private identity of the producer, and embraced a bifurcated identity which distinguished between her professional and private selves; similarly, Burney resisted the kind of performative cultural production that Thrale engaged in precisely because it objectified the body of the producer as part of the consumable product. Her experience at court, during which physical performance (of dress, movement, waking and sleeping) is constantly dictated by her patron, would lead Burney to question, in *The Wanderer*, what happens when one's performance and one's body cannot be separated. Ellis's equivocal subject position denies her any space in which to exercise her private identity. Unable to avow that identity, Ellis is assumed by those around her to be constantly performing. This renders her both a fascinating curio and an object of suspicion, whose authenticity is perpetually in question. Through absence of that fixed identity Ellis thus has the potential to ventriloquise others, which as Burney had remarked of Jane Barsanti, is a 'dangerous talent' (*EJL*, i. 197), and one much like her own.[17] Thus Ellis is both viewed with social suspicion and marginalised as a performer whose creative abilities are at the constant command of that society, and Miss Bydell and Miss Arbe demand parallel performances of her. While Miss Bydell interrogates Ellis for a rehearsal of her history – 'Pray, first of all, young woman, what took you over to foreign parts? I should like to know that?' – Miss Arbe demands a demonstration of her musical talents: 'Don't let that young person go', she cries, 'till I have heard her play and sing' (*Wanderer*, 80, 81). Both women, here, demand a form of 'recital' from Ellis: Miss Bydell, in the earlier sense of the word, demands a narrative account; Miss Arbe demands a musical performance.[18]

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[17] For a discussion of Burney's anxieties about Barsanti's mimetic talents, and her own, see Chapter One, pp. 55-60.

[18] Of the various definitions of 'recital', I have in mind two in particular: 'an account, a narrative, a discourse'; and 'a performance of a single musical piece or esp. a selection of music (in earlier use only from one composer) by a soloist or small group'. *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'recital', *n.*, 2b; 3b.

Miss Bydell's repeated and intrusive demands for Ellis's history result in her (mis)constructing, from hearsay, a narrative which 'his young Lordship told to Mr. Ireton, from whom I had it; that is from Mrs. Maple, which is the same thing'. Although Miss Bydell relies on a refracted authority, from Lord Melbury by way of Mr. Ireton and Mrs. Maple, her account that Ellis has rejected the advances of Lord Melbury is essentially true; however, it is a clumsy and graceless display, and to Ellis 'a recital as offensive to her ear as it was afflicting to her heart' (263). Miss Bydell's social performances are emulative, attempting to reconstruct authority by retelling the narratives of her social betters. Far from accomplished, her performance appears amateurish to the more refined Ellis. Burney's emphasis on the aural effect of such a recital playfully characterises Miss Bydell's speech as an inept musical performance, and Miss Bydell herself as devoid of natural artistic ability. The impertinent, presumptuous behaviour that Burney depicts in *The Wanderer* is most commonly of just this nature: a crude performance designed to reinforce the social hierarchy, perpetuating a shallow relativism that eschews individual merit in favour of a system of one-upmanship. Burney portrays a social world in which narrative control is continually in contest to just this end: by appropriating or reinterpreting Ellis's story, other characters attempt to claim an authority that she, anonymous, is unable to.

Like Miss Bydell, Mr. Riley persistently recites Ellis's history to anyone who will listen. On the first occasion, at the blind harpist's concert, Riley's interpretation of her actions, a 'cruel, but natural, misconstruction' (*Wanderer*, 250), serves to damage her reputation in Brightelmstone. The danger of the 'hasty' unconsidered narrative posited in *Evelina* is realised in *The Wanderer*, as 'this hasty speech raised a lively curiosity in all around' (250) and serves to materially damage Ellis's claims to charitable protection. Later, Riley's determination to tell Ellis's story on her behalf

subjects her to physical danger. The agent of Ellis's husband ultimately discovers her as a result of Riley's garrulity, who appears in turn to take some pride in the accuracy of his description: 'by my account of you, he was satisfied you must be the very person that he was commissioned to find' (651). Unable to give an 'account' of herself, Ellis has no control over the way in which information about her is disseminated or interpreted. Even the well-meaning Giles Arbe compromises her by his story-telling, truthful though it may be, by 'eagerly and unbidden' summoning her creditors to be paid using Harleigh's money (333). The most conscious parade of authority, however, comes from Mrs. Ireton, who delights in exercising her power over Ellis through a recital of her anonymity, her isolation, and her equivocal status:

> '... I recollect you now, Mrs ... Mrs ... I forget your name, though, I protest. I can't recollect your name, I own. I'm quite ashamed, but I really cannot call it to mind. I must beg a little help. What is it? What is your name, Mrs ... Mrs ... Hay?—Mrs ... What?' (480)

Mrs. Ireton's demands for Ellis's name are an attempt to assert ownership and control of her 'humble companion', to remove her autonomy. Mrs. Ireton's repeated demands upon Ellis's identity, and her repeated ironic recitals of Ellis's dependency, demonstrate the performative nature of social structures of power:

> If she feared that any one of the party had failed to remark this augmentation of her household and of her power, she would retard the willing departure by some frivolous or vexatious commission (493)

Mrs. Ireton not only delights in demonstrating her power to Ellis herself, then, but is also anxious that she should be seen by others to exert that power. Thus even the private home becomes an arena in which purchasing power is paraded in order to establish social identity, which can only be effected by the 'remark' or notice of her guests. In her purchase of Ellis's time, independence of movement, and physical obedience, Mrs. Ireton creates a domestic microcosm of Lovel's conspicuous consumption of theatrical performance. By controlling Ellis's physical movements, 'retard[ing] her willing departure' and enforcing her continued presence in the public rooms of her private home, Mrs. Ireton's demands emphasise the nature of the drawing room as a performative space in which the distinction between audience and performer becomes unstable. During the visit of Lord Denmeath, Ellis's uncle, the drawing room becomes as a stage set: Ellis is concealed against her will, 'encircled [...] completely within the broad leaves of the screen' by Mr. Ireton (612), so is both absent from, and privy to, the conversation that takes place. Ellis's mere physical presence, once discovered, implicates her in an (albeit unwilling) surreptitious act as a direct result of her loss of bodily autonomy. Ellis is powerless to direct her own physical movements; constrained by her inability to escape Mrs. Ireton's drawing room, she must constantly perform. Burney takes to the extreme the patronage structures that threatened her own creative autonomy: the dynamics of performance that pervade Mrs. Ireton's drawing room demonstrate the absolute bodily submission required by patronal exchange, and those dynamics infiltrate even domestic spaces. Despite the supposed privacy of these spaces, the introduction of audience renders them instantly performative.

This reconfiguration of private spaces as arenas for performance is mirrored in the designation of performance as 'private' merely because socially exclusive. The concern for proper feminine delicacy that prevents Ellis's students engaging in 'public'

performance leads them, ironically, to perform with less concern for propriety in the pseudo-privacy of the polite drawing room. Burney emphasises this irony in a speech of Giles Arbe, who describes 'those young ladies who play and sing in public, at those private rooms, of four or five hundred people' (*Wanderer*, 300). In 'private rooms' that are paradoxically described as 'public', the 'young ladies' perform in front of 'four or five hundred people', and are recompensed with 'compliments'. These performances, to this carefully controlled (if numerous) audience, expose the 'private' performer not to candid scrutiny of their abilities, but to 'compliments' which, by implication, are part of the system of flattery and sycophancy that characterises such private performance circles. Here, again, Burney appears to valorise the shift towards 'public' patronage which, as Deborah Rohr notes, began to exert influence on 'artistic decisions and professional employment' in eighteenth-century musical England.[19] The scrutiny of publicity offers both more just judgement of artistic merit (and of its attendant value), and more rigorous demands for proper feminine conduct. There is a tension, though, between Burney's observation here and the anxieties she expresses about the financial exchange inherent in artistic professionalism, which in Ellis's case she describes as a 'dependant condition' upon 'an audience by which she could be regarded only as an artist, who, paid to give pleasure, was accountable for fulfilling that engagement' (320). That Ellis is considered 'only as an artist' in part reflects the problem of her anonymity: without knowledge of her birth, her social condition, or even her name, the other women are unsure exactly *what* she is. Yet this merely makes smoother the transition of the female artist from human and female to a dehumanised entertainment.

Burney's own experience of such a 'dependant condition' is recorded in her court journals, which consist largely of journal-letters to her sister Susan, written at the

[19] Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 53.

court of George III, where she was Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte from June 1786 to July 1791. These reveal how the nature of that engagement transformed her understanding of private spaces. The transition from the public patronage of print publication, to the private patronage of the Queen, collapsed the distance between author and audience into an uncomfortable proximity. The authority extended by Burney's patrons over her bodily movements, like that of Mrs. Ireton over Ellis, physically and visually reinforces the power dynamics of the patronage relationship, with Burney moving only when and in the manner required by court etiquette. The physical discipline required of Burney in her role at court is exemplified by her account of her progress in what she comically terms 'the true court retrograde motion':

> I have come on prodigiously, by constant practice, in the power and skill of walking backwards, without tripping up my own heels, feeling my head giddy, or treading my train out of the plaits – accidents very frequent among novices in that business [...][20]

In recounting her progress, Burney subtly emphasises the impracticality of this court custom, that leads to 'tripping up my own heels, feeling my head giddy, or treading my train out of the plaits'. Her reference to 'novices' suggests that she has been committed to a religious order or convent, and harks back to her ironic self-appellation in the subtitle to *The Witlings* as 'a sister of the order', which characterised the 'Belle Espirit club', ostensibly modelled on Elizabeth Montagu's bluestocking circle, as cloistered

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[20] Frances Burney, *The Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, ed. by Charlotte Barrett [1842-6], repr. in 4 vols (London: Swann Sonnenchein & Co; NY: Macmillan, 1893), ii. 147. Further references to this edition will be indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *DL*. In one famous instance, Napoleon referred to the General d'Arblay as 'the husband of Cecilia'. Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, Arranged from His Own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections, by his daughter Madame d'Arblay*, 3 vols (London: Edward Moxton, 1832), iii. 317-18.

and self-referential.[21] Burney's 'constant practice' ultimately renders her physically dexterous, developing her 'power and skill' for the performance required of her in the manner that, in *The Wanderer*, Ellis devotes herself to both her harp and her needle. The demand for a perfect physical performance is reiterated throughout Burney's court journals. In a letter to her father and sister Susan, recounting a visit by the King to Mrs. Delaney, she writes:

> It seemed to me we were acting a play. There is something so little like common real life, in everybody's standing, while talking, in a room full of chairs, and standing too, so aloof from each other, that I almost thought myself upon a stage, assisting in the representation of a tragedy – in which the King played his own part of the king; Mrs. Delaney that of a venerable confidante [...] and myself, a very solemn, sober, and decent mute. (*DL*, ii. 27)

The contrast between the roles of the King, who 'played his own part', and Burney's 'solemn, sober, and decent mute' is striking; although still performing, the King is at least at liberty to perform the role of himself. Burney, on the other hand, performs the role of a 'mute': her silence is in itself an exertion of performative discipline, demarking the dominion of her employers over her verbal expression. This 'solemn' role is belied, however, by the preceding passage, in which 'I diverted myself with a thousand ridiculous notions of my own situation':

> The Christmas games we had been showing Miss Dewes, it seemed as if we were still performing, as none of us thought it proper to move, though our

[21] Frances Burney, *The Witlings. A Comedy. By a Sister of the Order* in *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, ed. by Peter Sabor, 2 vols (London: William Pickering, 1995), i. 1-102.

> manner of standing reminded one of Puss in the corner [...] I could hardly help expecting to be beckoned, with a puss! puss! puss! to change places with one of my neighbours. (*DL*, ii. 27)

The disparity between the 'solemn, sober, and decent mute' Burney plays, and the 'ridiculous notions' with which she 'diverted' herself, are characteristic of the line she draws between her physical and intellectual lives by which she is able to imaginatively overcome the physical restrictions of court attendance, in her private correspondence at least. Burney's amusement at the imaginary scenario of 'Puss in the corner' seems to arise in part from the sense that 'we were still performing', yet it is this consciousness of performance that renders her so 'solemn' in 'the representation of a tragedy'. There are two types of 'performances' that are contrasted here: the playful 'Christmas game' of 'Puss in the corner' in which the principal role of 'puss' shifts between the various participants; and the unnatural 'tragedy' in which the King is artificially centralised by his subjects' performance of attention. The unavoidable patronage dynamic introduced by the King's presence converts the domestic privacy of Mrs. Delaney's house into a performative pseudo-private setting much like Mrs. Ireton's drawing room, where power relationships are enacted and reinforced.

Burney records that during her time at court, Sir Joshua Reynolds 'quite raved against my present life of confinement, and the invisibility it had occasioned' (*DL*, ii. 466). While Burney's role demands a kind of performance, then, the privacy of the court not only restricts the manner in which she appears, but also whether she appears at all. Burney's 'visibility' is at the command of her royal employers just as her time and physical body are. Perversely, though, this dominion commands Burney herself to become invisible, to efface her autonomous self by conforming to customs and

appearance imposed from above. She describes in 1787 the strange sensation she feels on one occasion, during which

> I had the office of holding the Queen's train.– I knew, for me, it was a great honour, yet it made me feel, once more, so like a mute upon the stage, that I could scarce believe myself only *performing my own real character*.[22]

Once again, Burney's role as keeper of the robes demands both performance and silence, although 'upon the stage' she is also 'mute'. The sense of verbal impotence, or 'muteness' leaves her powerless on the 'stage' – where even to be one's own character requires performance – and renders Burney's performance of her 'own real character' unconvincing. The restriction of verbal power therefore entails a threat to Burney's self-expression.

This mute performer is in stark contrast to the heteroglossic ventriloquism of Burney's early novels and journals: without an outlet for words, they will be internalised and self-cannibalised. Burney's journals and letters from this period offer a fascinating parallel to the themes of *Wanderer*, as Burney finds that her new employment requires her to relinquish her bodily autonomy. In a letter to her sister Esther, prior to her appointment, Burney describes with some violence the physical demands of court attendance, which she entitles '*Directions for coughing, sneezing, or moving, before the King and Queen*':

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[22] Frances Burney, *The Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney*, ed. by (i) Stewart Cooke and (ii) Peter Sabor, with an introduction by Elaine Bander and Stewart Cooke, 6 vol (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011-), ii 28-9 (original emphasis). Further references to this edition will be given, in parenthesis, as *CJL*.

> [...]you must not, upon any account, stir either hand or foot. If, by chance, a black pin runs into your head, you must not take it out. If the pain is very great, you must be sure to bear it without wincing; [...] If the blood should gush from your head you must let it gush [...] If, however, the agony is very great, you may, privately, bite the inside of your cheek, or of your lips, for a little relief [...] And if, with that precaution, if you even gnaw a piece out, it will not be minded, only be sure either to swallow it, or commit it to a corner of the inside of your mouth till they are gone – for you must not spit.
>
> (*DL*, ii. 54-55)

This vivid description of the self-effacement required in the royal presence is intently focused on the removal of the subject's physical autonomy. The subjugation of the courtier to their patron is portrayed as a surrender of bodily ownership which prohibits unauthorised movement, at least externally. Julia Epstein describes this passage as 'a portrait of controlled agony ending, astonishingly, in self-cannibalism', a scene of 'self-inflicted but other-imposed violence'. Epstein acutely identifies the way in which Burney 'posits and dramatizes violence as an effect – the inevitable effect – of oppression'.[23] However, the physical nature of that dramatisation is significant in its own right, as Burney articulates the consumer appropriation of the artist's body. The conflation of mental and physical subjection inherent in Burney's service at court echoes the insistent identification of the artistic professional with the art-objects they produce. Burney's 'self-cannibalism', as Epstein terms it, could be interpreted as a form of resistance through self-sabotage: by becoming the consumer rather than the consumed object, Burney can reclaim her self and her body. In the self-violence she

[23] Epstein, *The Iron Pen*, pp. 31, 33.

commits, she manifests the bodily pain she cannot express in the performative pseudo-privacy of court.

In *The Wanderer*, Burney portrays just this kind of visceral revolt against the effacement of a performer's bodily autonomy. Ellis's nameless position has deprived her of authority, and of the power to speak and act for herself; her resort to performance as a means of subsistence compounds this erasure of identity, effacing her own bodily needs and positioning her as a mere mechanism of the music she performs. As a professional producer of art, Ellis is expected to renounce all claims to nature, and even her natural, private behaviour is interpreted as performative. Her inability to perform due to illness, for example, is 'spread about the room, as an excess of impertinence': 'The words, "What ridiculous affectation!" – "What intolerable airs!" – "So she must have a cold? Bless us! how fine!" – were repeated from mouth to mouth' (*Wanderer*, 319). There is a striking echo here of the drama of Caterina Gabrielli's hotly anticipated, and much delayed, debut at the King's Theatre, which was postponed due to the singer's claims of illness (as described Chapter One). It is also reminiscent of Burney's own response to singer Lucrezia Agujari: unable to offer the singer her 'pantheon-price', the Burneys are refused a private performance on account of the Agujari's 'bad cold, & slight sore Throat!' (*EJL*, ii. 75). Burney's exclamation here suggests some scepticism, and she records that 'this singer is really a *slave* to her Voice', describing her as 'self-sufficient & imperious' (*EJL*, ii. 78, 80). Ellis's total absence of status throughout *The Wanderer* allows Burney to play with the social anxieties surrounding the female performer. Neither acknowledged gentlewoman, nor professional *prima donna*, Ellis's attempt to maintain the dignity of either is denied. As Miss Bydel relates, 'what a monstrous air [the ladies] thought it, for a person that nobody knew any thing of, to send excuses about being indisposed; just as if she were a

fine lady; or some famous singer, that might be as troublesome as she would' (*Wanderer*, 352). By refusing to recognise Ellis's genuine illness, the amateur musicians can not only imply that her illness is conscious display consistent with the supposed character of the female performer, but can also render her a separate, non-human entity, a mere performing machine to whose standards they need not aspire. Ellis becomes, by dint of her skill, a mechanism of the sound she produces, rather than a productive and creative agent. This commodifies the professional performer, in particular the female performer, and physical dexterity and artistic talent are commanded by her audience at will. While the *dilettanti* cultivate musical accomplishment as a form of display, attaining a professional level of skill suggests that those accomplishments are immodestly public. While this is exposed as an absurdity, *The Wanderer* demonstrates the very real consequences of the persistence of such an absurdity in British culture, as Ellis's natural abilities repeatedly expose her to this kind of commodification. The only rebellion available to her is unconscious, through those abilities that she has internalised by application: those abilities refuse, repeatedly, to perform for an unsympathetic or tyrannical audience.

The inadmissibility of bodily weakness by a performer echoes Burney's account of the demands of courtly behaviour: pain, illness and emotion must be suppressed in order to fulfil the physical, mechanical requirements of the role. While Ellis does continue to fulfil these mechanical requirements, Burney emphasises the distinction between arbitrary mechanical performance and tasteful, refined musicianship. In contrast to the machines of Cox's museum in *Evelina*, Ellis's performance is not merely an empty recital of somebody else's notes: her performance is emotionally informed, and thus is inconsistent under duress.[24] In particular, Ellis's resistance to public

[24] For Evelina's visit to Cox's Museum see *Evelina*, p. 77.

performance, even within the pseudo-private setting of a rehearsal, manifests itself in a detrimental effect on her playing:

> Ellis was seized with a faint panic that disordered her whole frame; terrour [sic] took from her fingers their elasticity, and robbed her mind and fancy of those powers, which, when free from alarm, gave grace and meaning to her performance. (*Wanderer*, 310)

Ellis's 'disorder' here suggests a natural revolt in her body and mind against public performance, particularly against Miss Arbe's suggestion that she should perform at a subscription concert, cementing the nature of that performance as part of a financial exchange. Ellis's musical ability, so refined that it can revolt against its own inappropriate employment, demonstrates the doctrine of employment as inherently virtuous and self-regulating. The self that has been refined by music is, through that refinement, naturally virtuous and delicate. Ellis's 'fancy' is a constituent element of her performative ability, a term that incorporates both imaginative power and pleasurable enjoyment. That Ellis's own enjoyment inflects her performance realigns that performance as an expression of artistic taste as well as of mechanical ability. The nature of that performance, and of the performer's own enjoyment of it, is transformed by the nature of the audience for whom they perform, who in turn alter the nature of the performance space. Ellis's resistance to even the semi-public performance of the rehearsal room is in sharp contrast to the willingness with which she performs within what she knows to be a family circle (even though her siblings are, at this point, unaware of the fact). Within the domestic privacy of this family setting, her true virtuosity is demonstrated in a performance that is informed by her soul.

This true, familial privacy thus entails a removal of the dynamics of consumer exchange that pervade even the pseudo-privacy of the polite drawing room. In an echo of her father's musical parties, which admitted only 'real lovers of music', Burney creates in the Granville family a picture of musical sympathy and specialisation that allows a proper appreciation of music as an art form rather than a consumable commodity.[25] Whilst she believes she performs unheard, Ellis's playing 'announced a performer whom nature had gifted with her finest feelings, to second, or rather to meet the soul-pervading refinements of skilful art' (*Wanderer*, 74). Here, Ellis's employment at the harp is an internalised one, which 'refines' and 'pervades' the 'soul'. The product of that employment is thus an intellectual/emotional development, rather than an ornamental or external achievement performed for an audience. This private music making is thus mirrored within the intimate circle of the musically proficient Granville family. Of Ellis's half-sister, Lady Aurora, we are told that her 'whole soul was music' and Burney's portrayal of this musical family, of which even the brother is accomplished (Lord Melbury is 'a tolerable proficient upon the Violoncello'), offers the perfect, valorised scene of virtuous music-making: in this 'interval of retirement' (during Lady Aurora's illness), Ellis's performance is received with 'rapturous applause' and 'melting tenderness' by her young auditors. This is in pointed contrast to the less informed appreciation of Mrs. Howel, who is merely 'sufficiently in the habit of going to concerts, to have acquired the skill of discriminating excellence from mediocrity' (116). The emotional/intellectual response of Lady Aurora and Lord Melbury is then set in opposition to what is effectively a commercial appreciation of the performance value in relation to the standards of a paying, or at least subscribing,

[25] Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, ii. 9.

audience.[26] Ellis's technical proficiency thus aligns her with professionals in the eyes of Mrs. Howel, despite the latter being 'by no means a scientific judge of music' (115). However, Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora, whose 'souls' have been improved by their own pursuit of music, are able to appreciate the art as a purer expression of self that, ironically, elides an examination of the technical proficiency that supports the performance. Indeed, Lady Aurora's musicality provides the metaphor for sympathy between the sisters, whom Burney describes as 'in unison' (117). This 'unison' between Ellis and Lady Aurora is reminiscent of the sympathetic musical correspondence between Burney and her sister Susan. Like Burney, Ellis can rely upon her sister's true appreciation of music as an artistic product; Mrs. Howel's strictly commercialised relationship with music, gleaned solely from her 'habit of going to concerts', similarly echoes the non-specialist response of fashionable opera audiences from whom the Burney sisters dissociate themselves. Although no longer part of her father's household when she composed *The Wanderer*, Burney still upholds a privatised, domestic model of musical conversation that is uninflected by the presence of a fashionable audience. In rendering Ellis both tasteful and technically proficient, Burney valorises professional specialisation, whilst upholding the familial domestic space as one in which artistic virtuosity can be practised without commodification.

While this consanguineal domesticity or 'unison' appears to offer the artist greater creative agency, the sympathetic relationship between Frances and Susan Burney, as between Ellis and Lady Aurora, is invoked in opposition to enforced pseudo-private relationships or unions that entail the conscious enactment of power relationships. It is to Susan that Burney confides her anxieties upon her entrance to court service under the direct authority of Juliana Schwellenberg. Burney conceives of

[26] For a discussion of the cultural phenomenon of 'private' subscription concerts see Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 205.

her entrance to court as a marriage, writing to her recently-married sister, 'I am now *fitting out* as you were, and all the maids and workers suppose I am going to be married' (*DL*, ii. 69). By comparing their preparations or 'fitting out', in which the bride prepares clothes for her new wifely role, Burney ascribes mock-importance to her own imagined marriage in contrast to Susan's real one. More sinister, though, is the conflation of the appearance, and dress, that Burney rightly anticipates will be required of her, and the parallel demands of dress upon an actual bride. This positions both Burney and her sister as items that have been, or will be, acquired, and require the correct accessories. This particular set of accessories denotes the marriage state, in terms of both obedience and self-effacement, and the newly sexualised body. The bride's purchase of wedding clothes, and Burney's 'fitting out' for court, are inextricable from the surrender of physical agency inherent in both the mock and the actual marriage. Once at court, reflecting on her troubled relationship with Mrs. Schwellenberg, Burney again characterises the hierarchy that oppresses her as a marriage:

> I had no way to compose my own spirit to an endurance of this, but by considering myself as *married to her*, & therefore that all rebellion could but end in disturbance, & that concession was my sole chance for peace! Oh what reluctant nuptials! – how often did I say to myself Were these chains voluntary, how could I bear them! how forgive myself that I put them on! (*CJL*, ii. 302)

Burney's comparison of her own 'marriage' to her sister's, to Molesworth Phillips, would prove tragically prophetic in light of this lament: Susan's ill-treatment by her husband would hasten her premature death, aged 44, in January 1800. Burney's

portrayal of marriage, particularly in her court days, is troubling, and would become more so in her final novel. The mercenary and forced marriage of Ellis to a French commissary in *The Wanderer* is the culmination of Burney's unease with the objectification of the marriageable woman as property and a conduit thereof: this marriage, conducted with overtly financial motives, is the ultimate expression of the female body as an object over which rights of property can be exercised, a brutal parallel with the more clandestine attempts of other characters to exert ownership over Ellis through control of her narrative, and through the reinforcement of the exchange relationship between audience and performer.

In *The Wanderer*, as in Burney's *Diary and Letters*, the wedding garb becomes a costume for the married state. Elinor's dependency on theatrical tropes extends to a dependence on costume, both as a prop and as a form of emotional shorthand; in performing her infatuation with Harleigh she conflates both love and death in her choice of white clothing, appropriate for both a bride and a corpse. After sending Ellis to Harleigh as a kind of romantic envoy, Elinor demands 'what garb do you bring me? How am I to be arrayed?' Elinor imagines the verbal response Ellis carries from Harleigh in terms of its implication for her own symbolic appearance: '"Is it a wedding garment?" replied she, gaily; "or..." abruptly changing her tone into a deep hoarse whisper, "a shroud?"' (*Wanderer*, 168). Elinor's reliance on costume emphasises the centrality of the visual, physical presence of the female performer; she is preoccupied with the effect of her performance and thus with the image she presents. In one of her several suicidal performances, Elinor constructs a dramatic but highly calculated tableau of death:

> The fugitive entered the church, and darted towards the altar; where she threw her left hand over a tablet of white stone, cut in the shape of a coffin, with the action of embracing it; yet in a position to leave evident the following inscription:
>
> 'This Stone
> Is destined by herself to be the last kind covering
> of all that remains of
> ELINOR JODDREL:
> Who, sick of Life, of Love, and of Despair,
> Dies to moulder, and be forgotten.'

Elinor's appearance as a crude literalisation of love and death combines the elements of costume with which she is preoccupied. Her 'dress, appeared to be made in the shape, and of the materials, used for our last mortal covering, a shroud' and 'a veil...fell over [her] face' (579). The tableau she creates is similarly symbolic, combining the altar (marriage) and the tombstone (death). Elinor's reliance on such symbolism ironically undercuts her claims of independence from convention. Elinor's conception of herself as a woman is thus heavily involved with dress, physical attitude and aesthetic effect.

Elinor's attempts to defy convention frequently involve some form of unsexing through the use of costume, be it in her 'grotesque attitudes and attire' (*Wanderer*, 99) as Lady Wronghead, her transvestism at Ellis's benefit concert (356), or the more sinister, sexless shroud she dons in the church at Brighthelmstone (579). While Elinor insists upon the modernity of her 'new doctrine' (*Wanderer*, 154), her preoccupation with costume is in itself antiquated, echoing the eccentricities of Charlotte Lennox's Arabella in *The Female Quixote* (1752) whose 'singularity of dress', is similarly

symptomatic of her over-exposure to 'very bad translations' of French romances.[27] Arabella's dependence on the 'language of romance' poses a significant obstacle in the marriage plot between herself and her cousin, Glanville: the closest she can approach to an expression of her love for him is that 'she did not hate him'.[28] There is a significant echo of Arabella's language of romance in Elinor's comparison of the Harleigh brothers: 'Dennis, therefore, shall know that I hate him; Albert ... Ah, Ellis! that I hate him not!' (157). Like Arabella, Elinor relies on a binary of love and hate; similarly, her dependence on clothing reinforces binaries of gender, attempting to escape the social constraints of femininity by recourse to the masculine costume of 'a strange figure, with something foreign in his appearance' (356).

Claudia Johnson has remarked upon the way in which Elinor's revolutionary impulses are belied by her physicality, that 'no sooner does she stage this revolution in gender definition by avowing an unsolicited love, than her body stages a counterrevolution of its own'. Johnson's reading suggests that the reassertion of Elinor's 'female consciousness and native shame' (*Wanderer*, 154) is offered, by Burney, as evidence of inherent sexual difference: 'Elinor's doctrines might hold that there is no distinction between man and woman, but fair or unfair, the body insists upon the difference'.[29] However, I would argue that Burney exposes the emphasis on bodily representation that perpetuates the consciousness of sexual difference. Rather than a strictly inherent or 'native' consciousness, Elinor's supposed 'shame' at bodily difference derives from the determined cultural association of female sexual agency with promiscuity. Thus Elinor's apparent disregard for cultural convention, in openly declaring her passion for Harleigh, is no more effective in confounding those

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[27] Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* [1752], ed. by Margaret Dalziel (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 7-8.
[28] Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, p. 53.
[29] Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sensibility in the 1790s. Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 183.

conventions than her repeated transvestisms are in effacing sexual difference; rather, her attempts at confounding or reversing those conventions not only serve to perpetuate oppositional sexual stereotypes, but also underscore the inutility of such oppositions. Like Lennox's Arabella, Elinor's revolutionary fervour is portrayed as a kind of romance in itself that vilifies, just as Arabella valorises, an outmoded sexual paradigm. By adhering herself to an overwhelmingly visual schema of self-representation, Elinor merely perpetuates a problematic and pernicious sexual stereotype in which the visible body is the sole site of feminine identity.

In *Evelina*, Burney establishes the power of dress to denote social status and, by extension, identity, as part of a visual economy of luxurious expenditure. While Evelina's rapid assimilation of fashionable convention is gently burlesqued, it also forms an essential part of her social education. After *Evelina*, dress increasingly takes the subversive form of 'dressing-up', becoming synonymous with 'costume'. In the interval between publishing *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, Burney complained of the eternal 'Dressing & visiting' that her newfound literary celebrity entailed (*EJL*, iv. 248); in *Cecilia*, Cecilia's simplicity of dress both on her first evening with the Harrels, and at the masquerade, offers a critique of the social conventions of sartorial display that Burney found so intrusive.[30] Writing of *Cecilia* (with Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* [1791]), Terry Castle argues that the masquerade, in which participants are masked and in 'fancy dress', offers a 'classically feminine space'; she claims that 'what one might call the sexuality of the masquerade is the crux of meaning for these writers'.[31] However, while Castle suggests that the masquerade in *Cecilia* offers the opportunity to subvert sexual paradigms, that subversion is also dependent on invoking

[30] For the incongruities between costume and character both in the Harrels's drawing room and at their masquerade ball, see *Cecilia*, pp. 22-3, 106.
[31] Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilisation: The Carnivalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 253.

those paradigms: the role of costume in perpetuating a visual economy of identity becomes increasingly significant in Burney's novels. Although the masquerade offers the potential for reinvention, the Harrels' guests are preoccupied with the visual alone, and fail to embrace the intellectual qualities of their chosen character. While Burney's concern with costume persists in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, her time spent at court prior to their composition appears to have intensified the association of costume with social constraint and as threatening to autonomous identity. Burney exposes the way in which costume has become the synecdoche for sexual and social roles, and how it is used to fix and delimit those roles.

In the opening chapters of *Camilla*, Sir Hugh Tyrold allows control of his dress to be passed into the hands of children, and Camilla in particular, who 'metamorphose(s) him into a female, accoutring him with her fine new cap, while she enveloped her own small head in his wig'. Combined with the 'whiskers of cork' she gives him, this renders Sir Hugh both masculine and feminine, and neither: he is stripped of the authority he so readily bestows upon his niece, yet he is not fit to nurse even Eugenia's doll, let alone the children in his charge.[32] In *Camilla*, dress is a source of confusion, misconstruction and strife. Lionel's characteristic mischief-making is physically manifested, in Mrs. Arlbery's attic room, by an episode of deliberate subversion of costume:

> Lionel, after attiring himself in the maid's gown, cap, and apron, had suddenly deposited upon Miss Dennel's head the Ensign's cocked hat, replacing it with the coachman's best wig upon the toupee of Macdersey; whose resentment was

[32] Frances Burney, *Camilla, or, A Picture of Youth* [1796], ed. by Edward A. Bloom and Lillian Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 18. All further references to this edition will be indicated, in parenthesis, in the text.

so violent at this liberty, that it was still some minutes before he could give it articulation. (*Camilla*, 264)

Macdersey's rage, and subsequent loss of speech, is augmented by the disruption of social and gender roles effected by Lionel's mixing of costumes. By removing the ensign's cocked hat, the emblem of masculinity and military authority, Lionel leaves him unable to express himself verbally. Camilla can only diffuse Macdersey's anger by 'rendering the affair merely burlesque', proclaiming 'there, Lionel, you have played the part of *Lady Wrong Head* long enough' (265). In recontextualising Lionel's mischief as a performative act, she is able to contain the hierarchical disruption that has provoked Macdersey within a fictional context. No such palliation is available later, however, when Macdersey is enraged by the sight of a group of monkeys in military uniform, performing exercises: 'seeing a feather in a monkey's cap, of the same colour, by chance, as in his own' he is 'fired with hasty indignation' and threatens the keeper of the menagerie (430).

The catalyst to Macdersey's 'indignation' then is not merely the sight of monkeys dressed as soldiers, but the sight of one of his own symbols of self-expression, the feather in his cap, being misappropriated and devalued. Similarly, his anger at Lionel's cap-switching is as much in response to the bestowal of his cocked cap upon a teenage girl, as at being dressed up as a coachman. In Macdersey, Burney offers the perfect suitor for Indiana, in that he embodies a misguided obsession with the signifier, rather than the signified. Indiana is described as a 'beautiful automaton' and a 'beautiful doll' (*Camilla*, 191, 221), yet to Macdersey she is 'divine' and a 'fair angel' (250). He conflates her exterior appearance with her internal worth: 'her outside is the completest diamond I ever saw! and if her inside is the same, which I dare say it is, by

her smiles and delicate dimples, she must be a paragon upon earth!' (250). Like *The Wanderer*'s Elinor, Macdersey relies upon binaries:

> Give me love or hate! a friend that will go to jail for me, or an enemy that will run me through the body! Riches to chuck guineas about like halfpence, or poverty to beg in a ditch! Liberty as wild as the four winds, or an oar to work in a galley! (251-2)

Reliant as he is on such oppositions, it is logical that Macdersey should be attracted to Indiana's uncomplicated femininity. Similarly, his angry response to the disruption of gender roles, of social status, and of the natural subordination of beasts to men manifests just this insistence upon the limiting properties of visual representation. The fear of subversion and of transvestism he represents is highly topical: sexual and social indistinction was threateningly associated with revolutionary doctrines and so-called 'jacobinism', not least because the French Revolution was seen to have erased these categories.[33] Ironically, it is these distinctions that Elinor attempts to efface, and yet reinforces, through her persistent employment of the binary of masculine and feminine.

In addition to the deployment of these binaries, Burney also demonstrates the way in which costume is used to denote fine social distinctions. While in *Evelina*, appropriate costume or 'Londonizing' is required in order to conform to cultural conventions, in *The Wanderer* dress is part of the visual economy through which power relationships are enacted, and in particular the relative social status of amateur and professional musicians. By agreeing (reluctantly) to be the principal performer at a subscription concert in order to raise money for subsistence, Ellis is exposed to the

[33] The Jacobin Club was the most famous political club of the French Revolution. In the 1790s, the term 'jacobin' was applied in a more general sense to suggest radical or revolutionary ideology.

sexual speculation that, as discussed in Chapter One, objectifies and commodifies the body of the performer as a purchasable and luxurious item. In preparation for this concert, Miss Sycamore observes with 'contemptuous haughtiness' that 'as our uniform is fixed to be white, with violet-ornaments, it was my thought to beg Miss Arbe would order something of this showy sort for Miss Ellis; to distinguish us *Dilettanti* from the artists' (*Wanderer*, 314). The reason for this distinction of 'uniform' is to delineate the 'artists' as 'showy' and the '*Dilettanti*' as virginal in their 'white'; however, Burney exposes this amateur musicianship, or dilettantism, as inherently, and deliberately, showy in itself, and thus explodes the simplistic symbolism of costume. This is exemplified by one of Ellis's pupils, Miss Brinville, who values her performance only for the visual impression it makes:

> To sit at the harp so as to justify the assertion of the Baronet [Sir Lyle Sycamore], became her principal study; and the glass before which she tried her attitudes and motions, told her such flattering tales, that she soon began to think the harp the sweetest instrument in the world, and that to practise it was the most delicious of occupations. (236)

'To practise' and 'to sit at the harp' are one and the same for Miss Brinville's purposes. Her 'attitudes' and 'motions', of which this 'practice' is composed, constitute a performance of sorts, but not of the musical variety. Rather, these 'attitudes' are reminiscent of the popular and exhibitionist poses of Emma Hamilton, discussed in Chapter One. Lady Barbara Frankland similarly attempts to learn these 'attitudes':

> Her whole mind was directed to imitating Miss Ellis in her manner of holding the harp; in the air of her head as she turned from it to look at the musical notes; in her way of curving, straightening, or elegantly spreading her fingers upon the strings; and in the general bend of her person, upon which depended the graceful effect of the whole. (229-30)

Lady Barbara, although one of the few characters to value Ellis for her inherent merits, is, like Miss Brinville, more interested in perfecting a visual 'effect' than a musical one. Thus Burney demonstrates the pervasiveness of the 'ornamental' rather than technical accomplishment amongst genteel females. The technical discipline and musical talent required in playing the harp, which Ellis in her capacity as a professional must perfect, are of secondary importance: Miss Brinville dismisses Ellis's teaching as merely 'point[ing] out one note, or one finger, instead of another' (322). Crucially, the correct placing of a finger, or playing the correct note, is dismissed by the ladies because its effect is aural rather than visual. Musical ability thus becomes, in fashionable terms, a visual quality, of which sound is a meaningless byproduct. As a musical performer, particularly within the intimate domesticity of her family group, Ellis is an artistic producer; yet as a music teacher, she merely contributes to the fashionable trappings of genteel, marriageable femininity. Her pupils treat musical performance as a visual accessory to accompany their white gowns and 'violet ornaments'.

Costume is not merely a device with which Burney exposes cultural investment in clothing as symbolic; it also offers a link between the fashionable society in which most of Burney's heroines move, and the material reality of female labour and its role in a fashionable economy. Camilla's debts, although chiefly incurred through her attempts to help Lionel, are greatly augmented by her milliner's bill. *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*

offer different but complementary perspectives on the millinery business, in which the milliner is both accessory to, and the victim of, conspicuous consumption. Most disturbing in *Camilla* is the role of Mrs. Mittin as a milliner's pander, who exchanges the custom of her genteel 'friends' for a hefty discount at Mrs. Tillden's: 'I get all my friends, by hook or by crook, to go to her shop', she declares (*Camilla*, 448). Mrs. Mittin's manner of insinuating herself into the houses of the gentry, and parading their apparent patronage, depends upon her acquisition of their names, as she tells Camilla: 'for now that other young lady has told me your name, and I writ it down upon paper, that I might not forget it again [...] one looks as if one knew nobody, when, one forgets people's names' (447). The act of transcribing Camilla's name allows a form of impersonation, as Mrs. Mittin carries out purchases on her behalf. The written name becomes an object in Mrs. Mittin's possession, depriving Camilla of agency in self-representation. Camilla's name is exchanged as currency, and that name ultimately involves her entire household in debts contracted almost without her realisation.

In *The Wanderer*, however, Ellis's attempts to earn subsistence through millinery expose the disruption of value entailed by a system of patronage in which names are allowed to be substituted for money. While Camilla's purchases and debts seem to be self-perpetuating, insofar as she personally does not commission them, Ellis's work is persistently devalued by the fashionable women who engage her. The difficulty she encounters in exacting payment for her embroidery parallels her experience as a 'music-maker' (*Wanderer*, 263); in both cases she is a producer of luxuries, employing a genteel accomplishment as a mercenary employment, with the appellation 'music-maker' echoing the title of mantua-maker. As with her musical pupils, Ellis's customers operate on the kind of patronage system that Mrs. Mittin exploits in *Cecilia*, assuming that Ellis's nameless status renders the association with

their own name a valuable acquisition: '[they] seemed to estimate her time and her toil as nothing, because she was brought forward by recommendation; and to pay debts of common justice, with the parade of generosity' (404). Burney critiques this system of exchange, which is open to abuse by both producers and consumers. In Ellis's case, as in Burney's own role under court patronage, this arrangement devalues her most crucial professional resource: time. The parallel abuse of Ellis's time as both milliner and music-maker underscores the conflation of these two types of manual labour as forms of cultural production, in which the product is a fashionable accessory. The unregulated exchange of socially influential 'name' for tangible physical labour demonstrates the disruption by the patronal system of the evaluative economy of skilled professional production.

Through her emphasis on these links between costume, naming and identity, Burney manifests the vulnerability of that identity through its external signifiers, both bodily and verbal. The annexing of the female body as a luxurious commodity is applicable not only to physical (i.e. musical) but also to mental performance, as demonstrated by audiences' persistent conflation of Burney with her novels. In a journal entry in 1782, shortly after the publication of *Cecilia*, Burney writes, 'I hate mightily this method of naming me from my heroines' (*EJL*, v. 133). While the artist becomes somehow disembodied, at the same time that body becomes paradoxically representative of their artistic product. Burney reports, after an uncomfortable meeting with Hester Thrale's starstruck milliner, that the woman's 'eyes almost looked ready to eat me' (*EJL*, v. 136). The threat of being 'eaten' by her audience strikingly outlines Burney's fear of being converted into a commodity and consumed. Even during her relative retirement from publicity while at court, the fame of Burney's novels leads to similar demands upon her person. This is exemplified by a request from Burney's

acquaintance Madame la Fîte on behalf of her friend, Madame de la Roche: 'she begged *anything, a bit of paper I had twisted, a morsel of an old Gown, the impression of a seal from a Letter,– Two pins out of my Dress,–* in short, any thing' (*CJL*, ii. 312). Madame la Fîte's plea for 'any thing' highlights the desire for physical contact with Burney's body, even by proxy, as the tangible manifestation of the intellectual/cultural product of her labour. A 'morsel of an old gown' is begged by virtue of Burney having touched it; the 'impression of a seal' similarly suggests physical contact or pressure exerted by that body. Thus that 'anything' becomes a proof of Burney's own physicality, as it is made up of 'things', and by extension, her own 'thing'-ness, made up of constituent itemised parts. Once more, the threat of physical consumption is present, as Madame la Fîte begs a 'morsel', as if Burney's dress will offer some kind of sustenance. The 'pins out of my dress' are a tangible proof not only of the reality of Burney's existence, but of her mortality: they are evidence that Burney is subject to the same mechanics of dressing as Madame de la Roche, her admirer, thus bringing the women into imaginative proximity through the common physical process of their toilette.

This process of dressing, however, seems entirely at odds with the productive mental labour of writing:

> My toilette – that eternal business – never ending, and never profiting! I think to leave the second syllable out, for the future; the *ette* is superfluous, the first is all-sufficient. (*CJL*, ii. 165-6)

Burney's verbal pun plays upon the French ending 'ette', the feminine diminutive (whereas the French translation of toil, 'labeur', is a masculine verb). The juxtaposition of the 'never ending', or infinite, toil with this diminutive is the crux of Burney's irony.

The little-ness of the task, alongside its enormousness as 'all-sufficient', emphasises the excruciating triviality that devours Burney's time and energy. For Burney, complying with court requirements for presentation of her physical self, the 'thing'-ness that Madame de la Roche is so keen to touch, becomes 'toil' or unproductive, non-developmental labour. Much like the 'Dressing & visiting' (*EJL*, iv. 248) she complained of in 1780, the work of self-presentation at court is 'eternal': the demarcation of time for the more 'profit[able]' labour of writing is thus impossible, as the patronage system of court employment does not imagine time or labour in a professional, and thus delimited, context. Just as Ellis is deprived of time for the profitable labour of millinery by attendance on her fashionable patrons, Burney is caught up in an unequal exchange where there is no fixed system of remuneration for her time. The lionisation of Burney as an author precipitated her court appointment: this initial transition from private figure to public professional, and the maintenance of appearance this required, had effectively deprived Burney of her valuable professional time. However, it is the private, patronal nature of her appointment at court that most threatens her access to that writing time by excluding her public/professional identity, in which that writing time is of fixed and recognised value. In this case, a pernicious preoccupation with the external, or visible, body of the author threatens the autonomy of the internal self. Clothing, or costume, provides a coherent symbol of the problems facing cultural producers as well as cultural consumers. Ellis, as a producer of luxury goods for fashionable consumption, is thus dependent on a fashionable economy of value in which nebulous 'influence' is offered in unequal exchange for labour. As a cultural producer herself, Burney becomes conflated both with her own cultural product, her writing, and with that which she purchases: her clothing.

The common thread that gradually emerges across Burney's fiction is the problem of maintaining an autonomous identity in the face of the bodily commodification of women in fashionable artistic society. I have demonstrated, above, Burney's concern with the objectification of the artistic and the female body, through designation of costume, control of physical movement, and the obsession with the visual manifestation of aural culture. This objectification renders the self a purchasable item, but also plays a key role in how that self can be constructed. Lynch has observed of *Camilla* that the real danger is not in public places but 'the misrepresentation and self-estrangement that result when one must represent oneself in the public arena and accommodate other people's accountings'.[34] While Evelina seeks a legal confirmation of her name and therefore her social identity, Burney's later heroines are gradually faced with more and more complex assaults upon their private identity, culminating in the dual nominal and social anonymity of Ellis in *The Wanderer*. Ellis is unable to disclose her real name and status, so must forge an alternative identity through a series of activities, establishing her worth through productivity in the absence of provenance. In this last section, then, I will examine how non-tangible cultural activities, as opposed to those denoted by physical appearance or bodily action, are embraced by Burney as a route to autonomous self-hood, yet are still tied to the problematic economy of cultural consumption. In particular I will examine intellectual labour and specialised cultural production, as valorised both in the professional-artistic environment of Charles Burney's musical salon, and by Burney's construction of a professional authorial persona that was separate from her physical, feminine body.

In his valuable study of eighteenth-century literary professionalism, *The Work of Writing*, Clifford Siskin has argued that by the end of the period in question (1700-

[34] Lynch, *The Economy of Character*, p. 175.

1830) 'the concept of work had to be rewritten from that which a true gentleman does not have to do, to the primary activity forming adult identity'.[35] Siskin himself points out that this 'myth of vocation' arose along distinctly gendered lines: 'modern disciplinarity [...] has functioned from its inception to articulate and enact these differences [of gender]'.[36] Positing writing itself as developmental, in that it is a formative part of professional identity, Siskin identifies the association of 'professionalism' with masculinity, along with the accompanying elevation of the literary as a developmental pursuit. However, Ellis is unable to forge an identity solely through her professional activities precisely because the elements of that professionalism that validate masculine identity – technical proficiency, specialist knowledge and the appropriate remuneration of professional time – threaten to undermine her proper femininity by contributing to the commodification of the female body.

Stuart Sherman has argued that Burney's later novels, in their cyclical and sometimes repetitive structure, are an attempt to 'correspond precisely to that structure of worry that Burney documents in her diaries as arising out of the gendered arrangements by which social obligations, impinging on women's time, forestall their writing'.[37] The 'structure of worry' to which Sherman refers is also, however, a structure of persistence and resilience, in which Burney's heroines, and Ellis in particular, insist upon repeatedly performing their professional activities in the face of perpetual opposition, the 'female difficulties' of *The Wanderer*'s subtitle. This persistence ultimately pays off, as Ellis resists the various attempts to commodify her as a performer, a cultural object, a conduit of patrilineal wealth, and a sexualised body, and

[35] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 107.
[36] Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, p. 55.
[37] Stuart Sherman, *Telling Time: Clocks, Diaries, and the English Diurnal Form, 1660-1785* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 265.

thus eludes the attempts of others to fix her identity. However, the way in which women's time is used, or abused, is a central concern in *The Wanderer* – and an overriding one in Burney's court journals – which corresponds to trends in the discourse of women's education. Richard De Ritter has observed that for women, the *idea* of labour (in terms of work ethic), rather than labour itself, was valorized: paid 'work', even in the newly professionalized society of late eighteenth-century England, was not a fitting activity for a gentlewoman. De Ritter argues that intellectual pursuits – specifically, reading – offer a type of virtuous industriousness without the contamination of paid labour: 'the 'employment' of reading offers a means of realising this [inherent] value [of labour] and, in the process, comes to inhabit a liminal space, situated between leisure and productive labour'.[38] In *The Wanderer*, these two 'spaces', of 'leisure' and 'labour' – and by extension, private and public – come into conflict, exposing just such a problematic liminality, in both Ellis's particular situation, and that of musical performers more generally. As discussed in Chapter Two, Nancy Armstrong has identified the twin drive to both occupy women's time and to deny labour as an evaluative category, recognising the 'danger of leisure' while still 'renouncing the idea of female labor'. As a form of entertainment which also requires considerable 'labor' to perfect, musical performance offers the perfect example of a time-passing female accomplishment that brought those drives into conflict.[39]

In her novels, Burney demonstrates the persistent prejudices against female artistic proficiency, which contradicts the supposedly non-developmental nature of musical accomplishment; in *Camilla*, these prejudices are voiced by the governess, Miss Margland, who

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[38] Richard De Ritter, *Imaginative Economies: The Woman Reader and Society, 1789-1820* (Doctoral Thesis, University of Leeds, 2008), p. 66.
[39] Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 99.

> ran over all the qualifications really necessary for a young lady to attain, which consisted simply of an enumeration of all she had herself attempted; a little music, a little drawing, and a little dancing; which should all, she added, be but slightly pursued, to distinguish a lady of fashion from an artist. (*Camilla*, 46)

It is essential to Miss Margland's theory that her student should not surpass 'all she herself had attempted', that she should not exceed the bounds of ornamental education, of 'a little'. The repeated 'little'-ness of these accomplishments echoes the littleness of 'toil' that Burney complains of at court, which, rather than safely occupying her time, impinges upon it. Furthermore, the accomplished woman is in danger of rendering herself uncommon, and of overstepping genteel limits. Types of performance, Burney suggests, are therefore used as social markers. For the *dilettanti*, music is a non-essential luxury, thus perfection is irrelevant. Technical proficiency, on the other hand, suggests diligence and, by extension, work: that is, proficiency is a requirement of the professional, paid musician, and is considered purchasable. While Burney ironises the shallowness of amateur music-making that is prescribed by Miss Margland, she is open about the dangers of professional performance. The pursuit of accomplishments, according to Miss Margland, is undertaken with one purpose in mind: 'to distinguish a lady of fashion from an artist'. Thus musical ability, like the 'little drawing' and 'little dancing' that should be 'but slightly pursued' by a lady, is externally symbolic, rather than internally edifying. Ellis's musical abilities in *The Wanderer* demonstrate both a professional disciplinarity and a means of virtuous self-regulation or 'soul-pervading refinements' (*Wanderer*, 74). In this sense, the time spent in pursuit of musical accomplishment could overcome its earlier designations of 'non-developmental', as it is

a form of intellectual labour (in the terms of De Ritter's argument) and therefore inherently valuable.[40] However, the technical proficiency Ellis attains places her beyond the pseudo-privacy of the drawing room and aligns her with a standard of performance that becomes itself a marker of exceptionality and thus of publicity.

Throughout *The Wanderer*, Ellis finds herself dependent on forms of private patronage that eschew the free-market value of the goods, services, or instruction she provides, substituting the indeterminate recompense of 'influence' for monetary payment. Burney pointedly states of Miss Arbe: 'to pay for the instructions of Ellis by patronage, was no sooner decided than effected' (*Wanderer*, 227). Lady Arramede, while practising 'miserable parsimony' in private, takes full advantage of this system of 'patronage', in which that nebulous commodity, 'influence', is deemed a sufficient substitute for a fair wage. Burney is keen to emphasise the irony of Lady Arramede's demonstration of 'patronage', when in fact she is driven entirely by a keen sense of the market value of Ellis's services, and a desire to avoid paying that value:

> The low terms, therefore, upon which Ellis taught, though the real inducement for her being employed, urged the most arrogant reception of the young instructress, in the apprehension that she might, else, suspect the motive to her admission. (233)

The desire for 'low terms' is concealed behind an 'arrogant reception' that masks conscious exploitation. Burney's portrayal of patronage in *The Wanderer* is as a system of resistance to fair remuneration for skilled labour, both intellectual and manual. Ellis repeatedly encounters this kind of polite exploitation, not only as a music teacher but

[40] For a discussion of the perceived 'non-developmental' nature of musical accomplishment see Leppert, *Music and Image*, p. 29, and Chapter One, pp. 18-19.

also, as discussed above, in her work as a milliner and as companion to Mrs. Ireton. Burney describes the 'hereditary habits, and imitative customs' that motivate another of Ellis's employers, Lady Kendover: habits 'of patronizing those who had already been elevated by patronage; and of lifting higher, by peculiar favour, those who were already mounting by the favour of others'. 'To go further', Burney remarks with irony, demands 'a character that had learnt to act for himself' (229). Patronage, as here described, is an impediment to progress, to the natural development of taste, and to meritocratic society.

Burney's complaints here echo her father's attitude towards the supporters of 'ancient music', at the scholarly head of whom was his rival Sir John Hawkins: Wood recounts how Charles Burney 'in his private papers [...] gave vent to his contempt for the ancients' "bigotry for Handel"'.[41] This indictment of social emulation as an impediment to proper cultural engagement, both by performers and consumers, likewise echoes her sister Susan's account of the 'Pacchierotti-ites' whose musical taste is dictated by fashionable faction rather than informed judgement or artistic expertise.[42] Ellis is technically proficient and a capable artistic producer, but just as her creative abilities are most evident in the true domestic privacy of her family, the reception of her performance is also dictated by the nature of the performance space in which it takes place. The 'drawing-room' in which Ellis rehearses for a subscription concert, although ostensibly private, is actually a space of fashionable sociability, in which musical appreciation is paraded along with the performers' ornaments. The *dilettanti* performers are in fact fashionable consumers, whose purchase of the intellectual luxury of music

[41] Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture*, p. 66. For more on the ideological differences of Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins, see William Weber, *The Rise of the Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), especially pp. 198-22, 'The ideology of ancient music'.
[42] Susan Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. by Philip Olleson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 139-40.

lessons is motivated by an impetus of display. This becomes evident not only in the manner of their own performances, but in their responses to the performances of others. Artistic merit is neglected in favour of reinforcing existing patterns of social influence, and the aural dimension of performance is largely ignored.

I have already suggested that Burney attempted to distance herself from private circulation as a publication model, from a dislike of the binary of flattery and self-promotion inherent in this system of literary patronage. In *The Wanderer*, Burney's position is more openly condemnatory of the patronage system than she had been in her early journals, and is also more open in acknowledging that system's influence on literary culture, which by the time of publication was arguably waning in favour of a professionalized artistic society. As Margaret Anne Doody points out, the novel's 'long period of gestation meant that it became the more "historical"'.[43] Although not published until 1814, *The Wanderer* appears to be set around the period 1793-4, prior to the execution of Robespierre.[44] This historical distance would have also allowed Burney some removal from her own role as recipient of courtly favour. More tellingly, although Burney had published her previous novel, *Camilla*, by subscription, she accepted a publication deal with Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown for the publication of *The Wanderer*.[45] This suggests that she was more willing at this stage to trust to the free market, or public patronage, for the success of her work, than to subscription amongst her numerous influential friends. Perhaps through her absence in France, the number of those friends had declined. George Justice suggests that Burney 'was gambling' on large sales, and therefore her own popularity as an authoress; a

[43] Margaret Anne Doody, 'Introduction' to *The Wanderer*, p. xiii.
[44] Maximilien Robespierre, a key figure in the French Revolution, perhaps the most influential member of the Committee for Public Safety and a driving force during the 'Reign of Terror', was executed on 28 July 1794.
[45] See George Justice, 'Burney and the literary marketplace' in Peter Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 147-162 (p. 159).

gamble which did not pay off, partially thanks to the rancour of hostile reviewers.[46] Burney's anxiety to achieve the greatest possible remuneration for her intellectual work was then the motivating factor for this tactic, suggesting that by 1814 she did not trust the patronal system of private subscription as an accurate measure of the value of that work. Janice Thaddeus argues that

> Although with *Camilla* she had found a formula for publication that had worked brilliantly, she could not use that formula again [...] Because she soon intended to join d'Arblay in France, she could not publish by subscription [and] she had recently had a brush with death, and could die at any time.[47]

Thaddeus argues that Burney's decision not to publish by subscription was due to the uncertainty she faced, in the wake of her mastectomy and in the face of domestic and political upheaval. The prospect of her absence from the country, or her absence through death, rendered subscription impractical, not merely because she would be unable to collect payment, but because she would be removed from the influential and fashionable society whose patronage was necessary for the success of such a venture. However, Burney's ambivalence towards fashionable patronage as disrupting the inherent value of her artistic product becomes clear in *The Wanderer*, through her representation of a society that only values cultural production insofar as the consumption of its products can contribute to the construction of a fashionable identity.

Burney strikingly portrays, in *The Wanderer*, the manner in which fashionable influence disrupts that artistic value, by juxtaposing true musical ability with fashionable dilettantism. Ellis's performance at the dress rehearsal, although lacking

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[46] Justice, 'Burney and the literary marketplace', p. 159.
[47] Janice Thaddeus, *Frances Burney, A Literary Life* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 2000), p. 148.

the creative refinement of her private familial performance, is proficient and exact, in contrast to her student's approximate approach. While Miss Brinville's performance, as described above, is merely an invitation to audience response, calculated 'to justify the assertion of the Baronet' (*Wanderer*, 236), Ellis's performances prioritise musicality: they are 'executed [...] with precision and brilliancy', yet are 'heard in silence' (315). Ellis is 'unprotected, unsustained, unknown' (315), and the patronage she receives from Miss Arbe, who refers to Ellis as 'my *Protegée*' (309), is both unstable and abused. Although Ellis's performance is 'heard in silence', Burney remarks that 'had a single voice been raised in her favour, nearly every voice would have joined in chorus' (316). Burney here exposes the role of influence and musical patronage necessary to a musician's popular success, as described in her correspondence with Susan, and offers a contrast between the 'silence' that meets Ellis's performance, and the 'exclamations of praise' that follow the performances of the amateurs, in whom 'readiness of compliance [was] taken [...] for facility of execution' (315). The mutual congratulations of these ladies are wholly unregulated by concerns of artistic merit. Burney draws the following comparison between 'the public' and 'private circles':

> The public at large is generally just, because too enormous to be individually canvassed; but private circles are almost universally biassed [sic] by partial or prejudiced influence. (*Wanderer*, 319)

Such a comment on 'private circles' suggests also 'private circulation', and an unavoidable comparison with the kind of private literary circulation practised by coteries such as the bluestockings, discussed in Chapter Two. However, the irony of those 'private' circles is that they represent a specific type of privacy that is merely a

more exclusive version of publicity, for which the criteria for access is fashionable status, which is in turn upheld without question.

Throughout her novels Burney manifests a persistent concern with the way in which cultural commodities – such as clothing or music – are consumed without reference to their inherent artistic value, but instead as a symbolic participation in fashionable intellectual culture. The emphasis on this symbolic, rather than inherent, value, results in an absurd dependence on physical visibility regardless of the manual or intellectual labour that has produced those objects. Burney's own role as cultural producer, namely of literary texts, is thus diminished and objectified by a culture in which artistic production is only evaluated in crudely visual terms. Burney offers a portrait of a culture in which intellectual pleasures abound, but are neglected in favour of the material by all but the worthy. Mr. Briggs, Cecilia's financial guardian, differs from the profligate Harrels in his neglect of appearances, but materialism is still at the root of his behaviour. Cecilia's attempt to occupy her time with intellectual pursuits, by the purchase of books, is dismissed by him 'with the utmost contempt':

> 'Books?' he cried, 'what do you want with books? do no good; all lost time; words get no cash [...] what,' cried he, in a rage, 'make it [i.e. Cecilia's fortune] over to a scrubby bookseller! give it all up for an old pot-hook? no, no, won't suffer it; sha'n't be, sha'n't be, I say!' (*Cecilia*, 181)

Briggs's obsession with the material extends to the materialisation of letters into pot-hooks, a common term for childish attempts at forming letters – this is the only way in which Briggs can give any meaning to letters, by identifying them as tangible objects. Amusingly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that 'pot-hooks' were also 'an

instrument of punishment', adding a sinister dimension to Briggs's distrust of words.[48] Briggs's objectification of books as a material commodity, rather than as having intellectual content, is evident from his concept of who is making money from these items: with no thought of authors or artists, he resents giving money to 'a scrubby bookseller' who, as the trader who supplies such items, he considers to be their source.

According to Briggs, words are devoid of value, they 'get no cash'; to some extent, his statement proves prophetic. Harrel's frequent promises of repayment are, of course, empty words; the words of the members of fashionable society Cecilia encounters, such as Miss Larolles and Captain Aresby, when not contradictory, are simply meaningless. Just as the costumes of the masquerade bear no relation to character, the corruption of words into jargon has rendered words themselves emptily symbolic, and they become a mask for shallowness and inconsistency. The assimilation of language, and particularly literature, into the fashionable culture of 'appearance' of late eighteenth-century London parallels the way in which theatrical and musical performances are conceived of as 'mere show', in terms of the fashionable displays of the audience. It is significant that Briggs can only interpret words as visual symbols and purchasable items. Inured to the conspicuous consumption of his society, Briggs expects that Cecilia, like her contemporaries, purchases books as adornments, purchasable consumer-goods which contribute to her image as a consumer of intellectual pleasures.

Briggs's interpretation bypasses the artistic/intellectual value of reading, as a developmental pursuit in itself, and reduces its materials to a static and purely ornamental status. In this sense, his assertion that books 'get no cash' is ironic, as he is simultaneously invoking the essence of the intellectual commodity, and that which

[48] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'pot-hook' (n.).

makes them valuable: that is, their visibly symbolic nature as a signifier of culture. As an employee of the court, Burney has no access whatsoever to a privatised space in which she can undertake intellectual pursuits unobserved, so any cultural activity she undertakes is necessary conspicuous. In a journal entry of 1786 (relatively early in her court career), Burney records the Queen's eagerness to examine the former's limited personal library. As in other aspects of her behaviour, the books Burney keeps at court are limited and strictly proper, and her reserve in this matter is prescient. The Queen, Burney writes, hopes to find through these objects the material expression of her servant's cultural make-up:

> I believe she was a little disappointed; for I could see, by her manner of turning them over, she had expected to discover my own choice and taste in the collection I possessed. (*CJL*, i. 296)

As an author, Burney's 'choice' and 'taste' of course would inform her intellectual output (i.e. her writing), and the books in her possession could be seen as a form of access to the mind that chose them. Burney must exercise as much caution in the selection and display of her reading material as she does in her dress, as the 'promise of re-embodiment' that, according to Lynch, consumer culture offers, is also a danger. The acquisition of material goods that represent intellectual and cultural choices might allow others to read and appropriate one's body through those same goods, in a kind of re-embodiment by proxy. The desire of Burney's admirers to examine her library, touch her dress, and devour her words poses a threat of cannibalism by cultural consumption. The constant spectre of the commodified and consumable female body is

then a pertinent one to the female artistic professional, who is a producer of the very cultural artefacts that come to represent her.

Burney herself is not immune to the physical appeal of the book as an object, as she confesses to George III, when asked why she chose to publish *Evelina*: 'I thought – sir – it would look very well in print' (*DL*, ii. 28). This wry disclaimer, which removes Burney from implications of artistic or intellectual ambition by focusing on material and aesthetic concerns, suggests that the printed word holds, in itself, some form of visual superiority over handwritten manuscript. The 'look' of a text, this suggests, is the visible representation of publication, the ultimate professional literary achievement. The printing of her texts of course comes at a price, of releasing those words into the public domain and exposing them to the potential of piracy. In the *Diary and Letters*, Burney recounts the illegal printing of an edition of *Cecilia* and the pursuant lawsuit; the association of the original 'old pot-hooks' of Burney's manuscript with this act of piracy led to a dispute over the bestowal of her 'name and sanction [which] were just what I most wished to keep to myself' (*CJL*, i. 284). Somehow publication has conflated Burney herself, or at least the visual/verbal symbol of her name, with the printed text of *Cecilia*. This re-embodiment of Burney as Author through the 'look' of her work in 'print' is disturbingly beyond her control.

By extension, Burney's private writing becomes a valuable commodity which she must guard in order to retain control. When a 'Mrs. Lemman', encouraged by her depiction of the benevolent Cecilia, petitions Burney for charitable assistance, the latter immediately regrets returning even a polite negative: 'vexed was I, however, to have written at all to a person who then was in the Act of committing to the Press probably whatever she could gather' (*CJL*, i. 286). Once again Burney's name, or rather her words in association with it, are the real object of profiteering. The conflation of the

author with her heroine, Cecilia, is apt; if, as Burney suspects, 'Mrs. Lemman' is, like the rogue publisher who pirates *Cecilia*, attempting to obtain her 'name and sanction', this echoes Harrels's scheme in that novel of abusing the name, or symbolic representation of Cecilia's person (in Burney's case her words) to obtain cash or at least 'credit'. The person of the author, just like the person of the heiress, becomes exploitable through the imaginative association of her signature with their body. As in *Camilla*, the possession of another's name, particularly in written form, becomes a kind of proxy authority. The verbal, visual representation of Burney's name becomes conflated with her identity and thus her authority, in much the same way that her written works and reading material are seen as keys to that identity. The written name is thus reduced to the same level as a 'morsel of gown' as requested by Madame la Fîte: it is a physical artefact of the author that gains credence by its erstwhile proximity to the body.

Burney's court journals are meticulous in their rendering of the twin visual and cultural scrutiny to which she is subject. The dissonance between Burney's intelligent, autonomous self and the character she must present is frequently articulated through the metaphor of performance, but this is a performance that extends to every aspect of Burney's existence: it is no accident that the Queen cannot discover Burney's 'choice and taste' from amongst her library, as Burney has deliberately left her 'choice and taste' elsewhere – perhaps at her father's house in St. Martin's Street – where she can remain 'incog', that is, unknown and private. While Burney's account underscores her persistent dissociation of her public (courtly) and private (intellectual) selves, in which she maintains a kind of independence, the court journals mark a pivotal moment in her fictional project. The patronage which at Streatham had required merely careful management, at Windsor requires a self-effacement – as Epstein has termed it, self-cannibalism – in order to resist bodily appropriation; the physical objectification of the

public female artist Burney witnessed amongst her father's professional circle now infiltrates even the most private and exclusive of spaces.[49] Ultimately, even the privacy of the inner self becomes visually exposed through the external signifiers of cultural activity. Despite this increasing assault on identity even in private spaces, Burney's valorisation of professional activity as identity-forming is, in its very separation of the professional from the private self, socially egalitarian. It is this specialised activity that allows *The Wanderer*'s Ellis to resist attempts to appropriate her identity, effectively shielding her from the physical objectification often associated with female artistic professionalism. Furthermore, Burney exposes the pseudo-privacy of the drawing room as an arena of fashionable influence and social display: gesturing more strongly than in any previous work towards the musical community of her father's household. Through the 'unison' of the Granville family, Burney defines true privacy as familial domesticity, in which artistic specialisation and proper feminine identity can be maintained in tandem, rather than in opposition.

[49] Epstein, *The Iron Pen*, p. 31.

Chapter Four

Authoring the 'Author of my Being': Textual Production, Literary Authority and Patriarchal Culture

In 1832, Frances Burney finally published her three-volume *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, which she had begun after her father's death in 1814.[1] As I have argued, Burney had spent her career establishing carefully separated professional and domestic identities: in her final published work, she would collapse this separation by using her professionally specialised abilities in combination with her own intimate, domestic experience. Burney's claim to authority for *Memoirs* was that she was the subject's daughter, and was part of that true familial privacy that she had valorised in her journals, her letters and particularly her final novel; yet this promised access to that privatised environment of the Burney household is disingenuous. Burney utilises, and foregrounds, her professionalism to present a narrative that is in many ways detached from the private reality of family life, instead recounting her father's public (and thus publicly-available) persona. Furthermore, the character of 'Frances Burney' as constructed in the narrative is largely defined through the public and emphatically professional activity of literary production. Over the course of her literary career, Burney had come to embrace a professional persona whereby the cultural product of her labours is both worthy of remuneration and separable from the physical, labouring body of the producer. *Memoirs* thus represents a confident statement of both her literary authority, and her successful protective separation of that authority from the private, domestic self. Often

[1] Frances Burney (d'Arblay), *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, Arranged from His Own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections, by his daughter Madame d'Arblay*, 3 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1832). Further references to this edition will be indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *MDB*.

hagiographic, arguably self-serving and, in places, demonstrably inaccurate, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* is in many ways a highly accomplished narrative, the chief success of which is the fiction of truth that Burney maintains alongside her very real claims to professional virtuosity as the producer of such fiction.[2]

Ten years earlier, Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins, the daughter of Charles Burney's professional rival Sir John Hawkins, had begun publication of a three-volume memoir on a similar plan, but very different in execution. *Anecdotes, Memoirs and Biographical Sketches,* published in 1822, and *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions*, in 1824, are effectively memoirs of Sir John, although he is not named in either title; they are largely concerned with his household, his career, and his acquaintances.[3] Annie Raine Ellis, in the preface to her edition of *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, notes the parallel between the lives and careers of these two women, as novelists and daughters of musical historians. Perhaps unfairly – or perhaps not – Ellis observes 'how much better it was to have been born a Burney than a daughter of Sir John Hawkins'.[4] Janice Thaddeus, too, remarks upon this 'matrix of similarity', commenting that 'an analysis of their markedly similar adventures refines our understanding of the nuances of Burney's experience'.[5] Certainly, despite apparent similarities in their careers and experiences, paternal authority is manifested very differently in the works of the two women. In turn, their approaches to that authority

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[2] As Philip Olleson has observed, some of Burney's accounts in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* are contradicted by letters written at the time of action by Susan Burney. For example, Susan records a visit by Hester Thrale to Chessington in October 1780 at which Henry Thrale was not present, but in her account in *Memoirs* Burney includes him as one of the party. See Susan Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Susan Burney: Music and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century England*, ed.by Philip Olleson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 185 n. 2.

[3] Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches and Memoirs* (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1822); *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions,* 2 vols (London: Longman, 1824). Further references to these editions will be indicated in the text, in parenthesis, as *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs* respectively.

[4] Frances Burney, *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778*, ed. by Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols (London: Bell, 1913), i. lxix-lxx.

[5] Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke and New York: Macmillan, 2000), p. 25.

tell us much about the way in which Burney and Hawkins differently imagine their own authorial identities both as the daughters of literary men, and as female creative practitioners in a gendered artistic culture.

Memoirs of Doctor Burney would be Burney's final work. Whilst the framing device for the work is the life of Charles Burney, *Memoirs* also offers an opportunity for Burney to narrate the story of her own authorship. Furthermore, her choice of biographical form for this last publication speaks to late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century concerns with literary biography: in representing her father as a man of letters, Burney is engaging with the essential problem of how to constitute a public-professional identity that is in keeping with the privacy and domesticity that she valorised as an essential part of that professionalism. The contrast in how Burney and Hawkins treat biography as literary form, particularly in their respective approaches to textual production, reflects the persistently fraught nature of maintaining feminine identity alongside a creative professional autonomy: claiming professional agency also entailed a form of rebellion that was not consistent with the virtuous, domestic femininity that both women maintained in their own manner. In different ways, both Hawkins and Burney make claims for a type of creative agency: where Hawkins attempts to carve a specific, domestic literary niche – through biography – that eschews professional and therefore public status, Burney's vision of professionalism sets her apart from the sociable literary pursuits of her father. While Hawkins embraces biography as an appropriate, feminised form, Burney employs this form not to reinforce her proper femininity but rather to re-inscribe her non-gendered professional competence.

The rivalry of Charles Burney and John Hawkins is well-documented by musical historians. In January 1776, Charles Burney published the first volume of his *History of*

Music; the following November, John Hawkins published his five-volume *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*. The relative merits of these works need not be expounded here, but of the two, Charles Burney's four-volume production seems to have been more popular amongst contemporaries, and more robust in posterity. However, Percy Scholes, John Hawkins's biographer, argues that 'frankly, one big factor in opposition to Hawkins seems to have been personal partisanship for Burney [...] no doubt [Charles Burney's] general popularity in musical circles and in society prompted many to take his side against his rival'.[6] Indeed, Roger Lonsdale, in his 1965 biography of Burney, suggests that he sabotaged the critical reception of John Hawkins's work.[7] Certainly, Burney is derogatory about the 'Hatton-Garden Knight' in his private correspondence, even satirising him in a long mock-epic poem, *The Trial of Midas the Second*, which he appears to have given to Hester Thrale.[8]

While both men were, by 1776, respected members of London literary and musical society, they had reached that position by very different routes. As discussed earlier, Charles Burney was a professional musician and music teacher, who had been apprentice to Thomas Arne. The artisanal status of secular musicianship, coupled with Charles Burney's decidedly lower class origins, renders his ultimate ascent to social eminence impressive.[9] John Hawkins, on the other hand, was a *dilettante* musician: Richard Leppert has described the way in which musicianship in eighteenth-century genteel culture had 'degenerated at best to that of a polite and essentially optional

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[6] Percy A. Scholes, *The Life and Activities of Sir John Hawkins, Musician, Magistrate, and Friend of Johnson* (London; New York: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 137.
[7] Roger Lonsdale, *Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), pp.189-225.
[8] Charles Burney, letter to Thomas Twining, 28 April 1773. Repr. in *The Letters of Dr. Charles Burney*, ed. by Alvaro Ribeiro, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991-), i. 124. The manuscript of *The Trial of Midas the Second*, reproduced in *Music and Letters*, 14:4 (Oct 1933), is part of a collection of manuscript material left to Sir John Salusbury Piozzi Salusbury by Hester Thrale, held in the John Rylands University Library, Manchester.
[9] For a comprehensive treatment of the relative social status of professional musicians at this time, see Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

accomplishment'.[10] Thus the social status of the *dilettante* was superior to that of the professional musician through their very *refusal* of professionalism, a refusal that Hawkins's daughter would ultimately echo. Although listed in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as a 'music scholar', John Hawkins had no formal musical training, and did not perform in a professional capacity. He began his professional life as a solicitor but, thanks to a legacy from his brother-in-law, was able to abandon his practice and establish himself as a leisured gentleman.[11] James Boswell's assertion that John Hawkins's father was a carpenter seems to be accurate, but his daughter refutes this, and goes to great lengths, in her *Anecdotes*, to vindicate their lineage; in fact, much of this particular volume seems concerned with countering criticisms of her father (*Anecdotes*, 118). Whatever the case, like Charles Burney, John Hawkins had risen above his social origins, although unlike Burney this rise seems to have been aided by money (acquired through a prudent marriage) rather than talent and labour. He spent his time between literary and musical pursuits and, from 1761, his role as magistrate for Middlesex. He was knighted in 1772. After the death of Samuel Johnson, for whom he was an executor, John Hawkins produced an 'official' biography of Johnson that preceded Boswell's.

Musically, John Hawkins was conservative where Charles Burney was progressive. The two men were bitterly opposed in the dispute between the adherents of ancient and modern composition. This conservatism was not limited to musical matters, and seems to have been imbibed by John Hawkins's daughter, Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins. In 1793, she responded to Helen Maria Williams's radical *Letters from France* with *Letters on the Female Mind*, expressing what Vivien Jones has described

[10] Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 16.
[11] Peter Storer, brother of Sir John's wife Sidney. John Wagstaff, 'Hawkins, Sir John (1719–1789)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, 2006) <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/view/article/12674> [accessed 4 Feb 2011].

as a 'deeply conformist view' of the role of women.[12] Like Frances Burney, Hawkins published several novels, but she retained anonymity until after her father's death, and in contrast to Burney, never disclosed her authorship to him. Her literary tastes were proscribed by John Hawkins, insofar as he 'laid his affectionate injunction on me never openly or clandestinely to read what he did not approve' (*Memoirs*, i. 240). Hawkins describes the beginning of her literary career with typical self-effacement: 'being in want of money for a whim of girlish patronage, and having no *honest* means of raising it, I wrote a downright novel' (*Memoirs*, i. 156).[13] Thus Hawkins dismisses her writing as a 'girlish' enterprise, whimsical, and by implication dishonest:

> I was ashamed of my employment; and though my father sometimes urged me to write, and wished me to have a literary correspondence, I preferred my obscurity, though it forced me to exertions of industry, which nothing but the *con amore* of application could have enabled me to make, when I had no time but what I could purloin, and was writing six hours in the day for my father, and reading aloud to my mother nearly as long. (*Memoirs*, i. 157)

Writing, for Hawkins, is then predominantly a mechanical labour in which she is employed by her father. Yet this labour is informed by a degree of insistence that moves beyond the mechanical. This is particularly evident in Hawkins's description of having written a '*downright* novel' (my emphasis): this is an uncompromising claim to

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[12] Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind, its Powers and Pursuits. Addressed to Miss H. M. Williams, with particular reference to Her Letters From France*, 2 vols (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1793); Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 246.

[13] This first novel was probably *Constance*, recently identified by Jan Fergus as the first in a series of anonymous works by Hawkins, until recently attributed to Eliza Kirkham Mathews. See Jan Fergus, 'Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins's Anonymous Novels Identified', *Notes and Queries*, 54:2 (June 2007), 152-156.

a kind of literary status, and the product of Hawkins's labour here is an absolute identification with a specific literary genre, and one intended for public consumption. While it is possible to interpret Hawkins's use of 'novel' in a pejorative sense, as a feminized and somehow lesser genre, she still lays claim to an accomplished, 'downright', execution: her insistence precludes any question of mere attempt or even of failure, but confidently asserts her aptitude.

Hawkins's disclaiming of ambition, by citing financial need and 'patronage' as her motivation for novel-writing is a common trope amongst eighteenth-century women writers which, as Harriet Guest has observed, 'devalues or erases the significance of the legible contents of the book'.[14] Just as Burney had insisted upon an anonymised and disembodied professional persona that was separable from her private identity, Hawkins separates her production of a saleable commodity from the non-creative, but appropriately feminine, literary labour she undertakes for her father. The payment Hawkins receives for her novel paradoxically validates the 'downright', accomplished nature of a work that merits financial reward; it is interesting to note that it is her secret literary labour, not sanctioned by her father, that is worthy of this remuneration.

Even the mechanical labour of copying, while seemingly non-productive, is potentially developmental. Like Burney, Hawkins imagines her domestic life as a space in which creative participation can take place without exposure to the very dynamics of production and consumption that she takes advantage of in her novel-writing in order to raise money. The '*con amore*' she describes, even in reference to the seemingly unproductive work of copying, suggests an urge that is unequivocally emotional rather than mechanical. Just as *The Wanderer*'s Ellis has arrived at her musical virtuosity through practice – that is by refinement of her specialised technical abilities through

[14] Harriet Guest, 'A Double Lustre: Femininity and Sociable Commerce, 1730-60', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23:4 (Summer, 1990), 479-501 (480).

repetition – Hawkins's work as an amanuensis affords her an opportunity to hone her technical specialism in preparation for her 'secret' creative labours. In this way, she confers a creative (as opposed to repetitive) value upon the dexterity and persistence of 'application', and the skill that is developed by repetition.

In her *Letters on the Female Mind*, Hawkins appears to make distinctions between kinds of intellectual labour and their relative fitness for female participation. She argues that women are 'not designed for the exertion of intense thought', yet she also claims 'a habit of industry that makes a vacant hour a tedious one'.[15] Thus the 'exertions of industry' she undertakes to procure time for writing are in defiance of the natural propensities she attempts to demonstrate to Williams. Steven Blakemore identifies in the *Letters* 'a division of labor in which labor per se debilitates the female character', and the 'nervous disease' of which Hawkins complains would appear to be testament to this.[16] However, such exertions seem to correspond to 'an ethic of individual labour' that Richard De Ritter has identified in the work of women writers in this period, and of Mary Hays in particular. De Ritter identifies a 'narrative development in which women's diverse, sometimes unorthodox reading practices undergo a disciplinary process' which in turn 'contributes to the development of the self' through an internalisation of what is read.[17] Using the terms of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which the mind is a *tabula rasa* to be imprinted with experience, De Ritter describes the manner in which reading is imagined as an active, rather than passive, experience, arguing that for both Hays and Hannah More,

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[15] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, i. 7, 4.
[16] Steven Blakemore, 'Revolution and the French Disease: Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins's Letters to Helen Maria Williams', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 36:3 (Summer, 1996), 673-691 (679); Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, i. 36.
[17] Richard De Ritter, *Imaginative Economies: The Woman Reader and Society, 1789-1820* (Doctoral Thesis: University of Leeds, 2008), p. 60.

'the acquisition of knowledge must be accompanied by individual exertion'.[18] Hawkins's 'habit of industry' speaks to this 'disciplinary process', and her 'application' forms part of her claim to authority in both *Memoirs* and *Letters*. Occupied in both reading and writing for her parents for twelve hours of every day, Hawkins's literary labours 'contribute to a development of the self' that refines her mental abilities in preparation for her own, clandestine creative practices. The 'industry' of which she speaks implies a creative process in which materials are refined, reshaped, and reconstituted, much like the *tabula rasa* of the Lockean mind. Although Hawkins's occupation of every 'vacant hour' responds to contemporary fears about the use of women's leisure time identified by Nancy Armstrong, the illicit nature of her personal writing time indicates the pursuit of self-fulfilment: although careful to first discharge her filial duties, in those 'purloined' hours Hawkins crosses the boundary from dutiful obedience into self-expression.[19]

Despite her arguments for the 'unfitness' of women for intellectual 'exertion', Hawkins's own discipline and 'industry', and her seeming exceptionalness are striking. She admits that 'polemics are not the *most* unfit study a woman can give into', with the proviso that 'she is thoroughly versed in the dead languages [...] a strong inclination might acquire all these, but where is the woman that has that inclination?'[20] Given Hawkins's own mastery of the 'dead languages' and her 'habit of industry', perhaps we have an answer. It is Hawkins's exceptionalness in this respect that suggests a distinct literary, and thus creative, identity. The '*con amore* of application' Hawkins describes in the *Memoirs* is suggestive of the kind of identity-forming activity that Clifford Siskin has described as defining the new (and increasingly gendered) professionalism of the

[18] De Ritter, *Imaginative Economies*, p. 55.
[19] See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 99.
[20] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, i. 20.

later eighteenth century.[21] However, Hawkins claims to eschew the identity-forming, and thus professionalising, potential of her labour, refusing the opportunity to identify herself with her work and remaining in 'obscurity': that is, unidentified. That 'obscurity' allows Hawkins to annexe some of her time through sheer 'industry', but this time is 'purloined' and illicit. Furthermore, the 'downright novel' Hawkins claims to have written may not be quite the 'literary correspondence' John Hawkins envisages for his daughter, and somehow is not 'honest'.

'Honesty', or accuracy, is a prevailing theme in Hawkins's *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs*. She opens with an avowal of their truth at the same time that she disclaims authority. In the preface to *Anecdotes*, Hawkins offers a list of 'sources' from which 'the amusement I presume to offer is supplied' (*Anecdotes*, 9). This list includes, as well as her father, Johnson, Goldsmith, Reynolds, and Bentham, to name but a few. Indeed, the list of those whom she 'must not omit' runs to four pages. Emphasising the nature of her material as constructed from other sources, Hawkins disclaims her own agency as writer. She reduces her authorial status to that of a mere scribe, in accordance with her role as her father's amanuensis, a role in which she takes peculiar pride: 'I think it an honour' she writes, 'to have been employed even in writing notes of appointments for meetings' (*Anecdotes*, 102). The role of amanuensis was one that Burney had also fulfilled for her father during the composition of his *History of Music*, a fact that goes unmentioned in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*. While Burney's claim to authority has its basis in her domestic proximity to her subject, it is similarly based in the subjection of her father's literary authority to her own. Conversely, Hawkins reinforces her daughterly role by re-inscribing a paternalist literary hierarchy which, as I will demonstrate, reinforces contemporary constructions of the paternalist state.

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[21] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 107.

In publishing her *Anecdotes*, Hawkins attempts to reproduce the honest industry she associates with her role as her father's scribe: she attempts, if imperfectly, to 'rescue from oblivion various trifles', namely, essays and pamphlets by her father, and various works and insertions by her younger brother, Henry. The first volume of *Memoirs* includes a reproduction of John Hawkins's address on 'The Gaol of Newgate', and his 'Account of the Academy of Antient [sic] Music' (*Memoirs*, i. 318-51). In the second, Hawkins closes with the insertion of Henry's 1813 essay 'Reform of Parliament the Ruin of Parliament' which, at ninety pages, makes up almost a quarter of the text (*Memoirs*, ii. 325-415). While most of the text is recollection, Hawkins is explicit that her 'heterogeneous compilation' is an 'endeavour to preserve small things from oblivion' (*Anecdotes*, 5; *Memoirs*, i. 1). She invokes, as her literary standard, her 'father's extensive knowledge of facts, his retentive memory, and his scrupulous regard for veracity' (*Anecdotes*, 8). She frequently refers the reader to other sources of authority for her narrative: in her dedication of *Anecdotes* to Richard Clarke, she explains that she is 'rescuing part of the stores of your retentive memory from waste, since I find it impossible to prevail on you to commit them to writing' (*Anecdotes*, v). In a similar dedication of volume two of *Memoirs*, she claims to be 'much indebted' to the 'memory and conversation' of Samuel Tolfrey:

> Did I know of any fable of an honest Jay who returned with thanks the Peacock's plumage, I would refer to this fiction to justify my obtruding on you this volume. (*Memoirs,* ii. preface)

Hawkins' anxiety to disclaim her 'plumage', to attribute these anecdotes to other, legitimate (usually masculine) authorities – and in particular to 'the very voluminous

adjunct' of her father's memory – renders her a patrilinear conduit, through which John Hawkins's own memorial stores can be made public (*Anecdotes*, 8).

Hawkins's self-subordination to this role is tied to an inherent refusal of authority and, to an extent, responsibility. *Letters on the Female Mind*, published in 1793, is described by Steven Blakemore as 'the first extended antirevolutionary critique of the sexual ideology conservatives believed was contaminating Europe'.[22] The *Letters* consist primarily of a harangue on the unfitness of women to engage in politics, but also contain carefully nuanced ideas about professionalism and its relationship to the paternalist state. Hawkins compares Williams's perspective on the revolution in France to that of other 'ignorant advisers':

> A painter who should be guided by his colourman, an architect who consulted his labourer, and an author who made the compositor his judge, would stand little chance for success with a superior class; but the loss to the world would be inconsiderable, compared with the mischief we may expect, if the audience of a lecturing gossip are to be our legislators.[23]

It is notable that Hawkins's rhetoric here relies upon examples of artistic professionals – painter, architect, author – as an allegory for the larger, political implications of 'amateur' legislation, tellingly characterised here as feminised 'gossip'. Hawkins simultaneously elevates and denigrates this professionalism: while the 'painter' is clearly superior in taste to 'his colourman', his work is 'inconsiderable' in comparison to that of 'legislators'. While it can appear that Hawkins is overlooking the potential political impact of the arts, in fact she posits them as a rhetorical and thus political

[22] Blakemore, 'Revolution and the French Disease', 677.
[23] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 96.

microcosm, thematically mirroring the ideology of the paternalist state as represented in the domestic sphere.

In so doing, Hawkins echoes Edmund Burke's rhetoric in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, to which, amongst other things, Williams was herself responding in her *Letters from France*. Burke presents the consequences to such microcosms of 'this unprincipled facility of changing the State as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions':

> Barbarism with regard to science and literature, unskilfulness [sic] with regard to arts and manufactures, would undoubtedly succeed to the want of a steady education and settled principle; and thus, the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length dispersed to all the winds of heaven.[24]

For Burke, continuity of knowledge depends upon continuity through inheritance and, by implication, primogeniture. The evils he anticipates from the disruption of this system are 'barbarism' and 'unskilfulness', each of which suggests an antithetical quality that has been lost. In the case of 'arts and manufactures', unskilfulness is surely the result of a loss of 'skill' or artesanal expertise; in the case of science and literature, what is lost seems to be civilisation or indeed culture (as opposed to 'barbarism'). Burke makes a distinction, then, between the cultural capital of 'science and literature', and the skill of 'arts and manufactures', clearly separating those categories and distinguishing between literary and artistic production. In so doing, he lays emphasis on the manual nature of 'arts' by coupling them with 'manufactures', albeit allowing a

[24] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the proceedings in certain societies in London relative to that event. In a letter intended to have been sent to a gentleman in Paris. By the Right Honourable Edmund Burke.* (London: J. Dodsley, 1790), pp. 142-3.

distinction between these two types of production. The distinction Burke creates resonates with Burney's key anxiety about the nature of literary producers: for Burke, literature is separate from, and arguably elevated above, arts that require tangible physical work and dexterity, such as painting, sculpture, and music, and he unproblematically divorces the labouring body from the literary text. While Burney's separation of her authorial and private personas does attempt just this, she actually valorises the process of literary production as a privatised creative act over which she retains autonomy. Nor does Burke recognise the laborious physical work of writing, for which Burney and Hawkins claim fair remuneration through publication. In his elevation of literature as a non-laborious, almost effortless activity he firmly attaches to it a pre-professional, leisured status that reinforces his association of literature with social and cultural privilege.

While Burke argues that paternalist authority is essential in the transmission of cultural and technical knowledge, his argument functions on a grand genealogical scale, imagining the passing of culture and skill from generation to generation as if separate yet parallel strands. However, this does not encompass the subtle and anxious contesting of cultural authority taking place *within* each generation. Burke uses manual work and artisanal labour as emblems for the antithesis of cultural – i.e. literary, scientific, and by extension political – work, and these remain insistently hierarchised:

> The levellers [...] load the edifice of society, by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground. The associations of taylors [sic] and carpenters of which the republic (of Paris, for instance) is composed,

cannot be equal to the situation, into which, by the worst of usurpations, an usurpation on the prerogatives of nature, you attempt to force them.[25]

Here Burke invokes skilled craftsmen – 'taylors' and 'carpenters' – as emblems of the lower, naturally more solid orders of society. His assertion that 'the republic' (which he equates with Paris) is composed of these craftsmen as a mass, while perhaps reflective of Parisian society, broadly dismisses such activities as being of a single undifferentiated class. In imagining society as an 'edifice', Burke applies metaphors of engineering and by extension of scientific rationality, 'the prerogatives of nature' (the physical laws expounded by Newton, for example), which the 'levellers' who call for *égalité* seek to controvert. Burke's assertion that the 'solidity of the structure' requires such artisanal labourers to be 'on the ground' suggests a further 'solidity' associated with the labourers themselves: they are the producers of solid and tangible items, and an attempt to elevate such production 'into the air' is an 'usurpation'.

Burke's separation of cerebral 'science and literature' from manual 'arts and manufactures' does not allow for the contests that take place *within* these categories, as well as between them. However, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the association of 'art' and 'manufacture' was bound up in a privileging of British creativity as a defence against foreign imported 'luxuries' and thus of national creative autonomy. The Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (later the Royal Society of Arts), established in 1754, offered premiums to manufacturers of British goods that could compete with imports of foreign goods such as Chinese pottery. Maxine Berg has described the society's project as 'part of a broader movement to

[25] Burke, *Reflections*, p. 72. Burke's emphasis on the hierarchical displacement of artisanal craftsmen – 'taylors' and 'carpenters' – is fitting in light of the problems faced by the National Assembly in their longwinded attempts to abolish the Parisian guilds (ironically, relics of the paternalistic monarchical power that Burke saw them as unfit to wield), which dragged out from August 1789 until early 1791.

create in Britain an "economy of quality" in response to Asian and French luxury', and details some particular instances in which premiums were granted. Berg emphasises the society's 'aim to combine design and the fine arts together with the mechanical and commercial arts', and what is evident from the examples she offers is the manner in which the 'pure' intellectual pursuit of science is inherent in the processes and innovations in British manufacture (for example, chemical processes used in the production of varnish).[26] The earlier Anti-Gallican Association (founded in 1745 by the founder of the Society for the Arts, William Shipley) had offered more explicit cultural resistance to French 'modes' and by implication a preservation of British-ness.[27]

The particular skill of British manufacturers is in the combination of scientific accuracy with artistic creativity, that is, 'imitation'. Berg outlines the way in which the eighteenth-century use of 'imitation', rather than implying slavish copying, is informed by the classical concept of *mimesis* in which this imitation becomes essential to representation. The forms of imitation actively encouraged by the Society for the Arts encompassed in that term a sense of creativity in that a British product would be a refinement upon the original. In this manner, manufacture mirrored high art and specifically painting, in which imitation was seen as key to the theory of aesthetics by artists such as Hogarth and, later, Reynolds. Furthermore, the valorisation of 'imitation' in aesthetic theory gave greater creative credence to performance professionals, like Jane Barsanti, whose powers of mimicry were thus a valid form of artistic representation. Burney's own mimetic ability proved an artistic success in her successful rendering of 'high and low life' in *Evelina*.[28] In his Eleventh Discourse,

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[26] Maxine Berg, 'From Imitation to Invention: Creating Commodities in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 55:1 (Feb., 2002), 1-30 (17-18). For clarity, I will refer to the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce as the 'Society for the Arts' hereafter.
[27] Berg, 'From Imitation to Invention', 17.
[28] Burney, *EJL*, iii. 11.

Reynolds would argue that imitation was required to grasp the 'ruling characteristick [sic]' of a subject, and emphasised what Berg has termed the 'diligent study and continual industry' required of students of painting.[29] Anxieties about the implications of mechanical reproduction for creativity increasingly came to haunt the literary profession as print culture expanded; as I will discuss in the coda that follows, Burney's 'poet of fashion' Dabler, in *The Witlings*, is effectively a compositor who, in spite of his engagement in a manuscript-based circulation model, embodies the non-creative textual production from which Burney wished to dissociate her own professional persona. However, in the terms laid out by Reynolds, compositor and composer were, aesthetically, performing very similar functions. Nevertheless, the myth of the mechanical, un-creative role of the amanuensis is an especially useful one for the female biographer, such as Hawkins, who wishes to avoid accusations of artistic pretension.

Hawkins, while echoing Burke's privileging of cultural rather than manual production, blurs the lines between the categories Burke has established in a manner that reflects the complex relationship of creativity and (supposedly non-productive) application. She portrays a more complex, although still acute, stratification within the artistic professions in which authority is defined and acknowledged by 'a superior class'. Thus there is potential for some measure of respectability for the artistic professionals she names. However, there is a distinct anxiety that journeymen – colourmen, labourers, compositors – may attempt to disrupt this hierarchy in much the same way that the people of France have disrupted the natural, paternal order of government. Hawkins herself is then firm in maintaining her role within the paternalist artistic hierarchy: she is a dutiful daughter, and a faithful compositor. Yet her method of imitation, or of preservation, is as selective as that prescribed by Reynolds; in this

[29] Joshua Reynolds, *The Works of Joshua Reynolds, Knt. Late President of the Royal Academy*, 2 vols (London: T. Cadell, J. and W. Davis, 1797), i. 225; Berg, 'From Imitation to Invention', 13.

manner, Hawkins manages to maintain a proper feminine role in her subordination to the father-author, while still exercising creative power over her literary product.

The artistic professions Hawkins cites are strictly hierarchised, but there is also a distinction drawn between the authority of the informed and uninformed audience:

> Were an artist to exhibit a picture or a statue for the opinion of connoisseurs, he would listen candidly to their censures; but were a man who knows nothing of his art, to interpose his captious criticisms, he would be despised, as obtruding his judgment where he had no justification.[30]

This contrast, between the 'connoisseur' and the 'man who knows nothing', is made within the category of the audience: while the 'artist' is a professional, the 'conoisseur', though not possessed of the professional skill of the 'artist', is qualified to 'censure' his work. Hawkins's criteria for the 'informed' audience thus parallels, and is distinct from, Burney's model of socially egalitarian artistic professionalism. While Hawkins , suggests that artistic expertise or taste is available outside of artistic professions, in the form of the 'conoisseur', this conoisseurship is born of exactly the dynamic of production and consumption that Burney sees as disrupting artistic value. Furthermore, while Hawkins appears to cite specialist knowledge as necessary for proper appreciation of art or literature, she denies the possibility that this knowledge is available to the lower orders of those professions, such as colourmen and compositors. Thus the connoisseurship she posits is socially exclusive and parallels the hierarchical structure of the paternalist state in which true knowledge is imposed downwards. The 'captious [...] judgement' of the non-specialist is illustrated again by the example of the

[30] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 94.

'carpenter [who tells] a shoe-maker he knew nothing of his business, because he did not put the parts of a shoe together as he joined those of a box'.[31] Notably, there seems to be a distinction here between artisanal and artistic professions: while the efforts of the artist are subject to evaluation by polite, tasteful society, there is no equivalent informed audience for the work of the cobbler, an artisan. Therefore a further distinction can be made in the nature of the work undertaken by these producers: while both create an artefact, only the artist is tasked with conveying aesthetic impressions to an audience. Furthermore, while specific (if limited) technical knowledge is necessary to appreciate the work of the cobbler, the work of the artist can be appreciated in the absence of this knowledge, with taste. Thus the two are stratified in terms of the engagement of high culture with their work.

Where, then, does the professional musician fit into this hierarchy of professional/artisanal, art and labour? As evidenced by the Burney sisters' correspondence, the very publicity of professional musical performance subjected musicians to unregulated audiences whose specialist musical expertise could not be guaranteed. In *The Wanderer*, Ellis's most accomplished performances take place in a domestic, familial space amongst fellow musicians, where she can escape the commodifying relationship of performer and audience. Although engaged in a form of cultural production, the musical performer's work is expressly physical and immediate, yet also ephemeral and dependent on the presence of that audience. Hawkins invokes this dependence through the spectre of the un-informed audience in the form of a 'child', unable to appreciate the nature of the performance, in the way that the lower orders are unable to understand the hierarchies of governance:

[31] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 94-5.

> Were a child to interrupt a harpsichord player, when his reputation depended on his performance, by insisting that the keys had all equal rights, and therefore that he should proceed in regular gradation through the octaves, we might laugh at the pert folly, but the performer would scarcely join us.[32]

The image of the performer here is somehow at a remove from the other artistic professionals mentioned in *Letters on the Female Mind.* Their artistic process, that is their 'performance', takes place in a public arena, subject to interruption by the audience just as the audiences in *Evelina* and *Cecilia* interrupt or disregard the performances at the opera and theatre. Furthermore, it is repetitive and physical 'performance' itself, rather than skill or taste, which defines the 'reputation' of the musician; 'reputation' itself is thus the thing performed. Unlike the sculptor, the author or the architect, the process of music production is part of that final performance, so product and process become one. This kind of artistic production cannot be undertaken anonymously as its exhibition is dependent upon the bodily presence of the musician, thus the performer themself becomes part of the cultural artefact. Hawkins's allusion to the 'equal rights' of the keys burlesques and belittles Williams's amateur interference in politics, which in parallel to musicianship, is a profession that requires constant physical and thus visible performance, and is beholden to an often uninformed audience for its reputation. The inability of the performer to join in the 'laugh' of his audience at the child's interruption denotes the real precariousness of that performed reputation. As Burney portrays in *The Wanderer*, and as revealed by Susan Burney's letters, that reputation takes on a life that is separate even from the performance, and is ultimately determined by audience. Thus musical ignorance, in the form of a lack of

[32] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 5.

specialisation, can interfere with the artistic value of a cultural product through the market forces of fashion.

The image of childish innocence – or, rather, ignorance – Hawkins evokes is continuous with the 'colourman', 'labourer', 'compositor' and 'lecturing gossip', all of whom usurp the proper authority of high culture: artist, architect, author and politician. So too is the 'man who knows nothing of art', who displays 'judgement without justification'. The specialisation required of the artisanal labourer cannot compete with the connoisseurship of the tasteful gentleman. The lack of 'justification', in this case, aesthetic taste, is a matter of ignorance – one that is determined, it seems, by both class and gender – which Hawkins ultimately uses as a parable for Williams's participation in politics. However, her insistence on gender as determining fitness of judgement or 'justification' is contradicted by her own claim to authority. Hawkins consistently posits her own account as a corrective to Williams's errant femininity, and casts herself in the role of educator rather than politician. In so doing, Hawkins claims to decline discussion of politics itself, and to demonstrate its unfitness as a subject for female consideration. In order to do this, however, she still has to substantiate her claim to authority. She describes the 'particular circumstances of education' in which she was 'early taught to distinguish between appearance and reality', yet she later argues that women 'are not formed for those deep investigations that tend to the bringing into light reluctant truth'.[33] Thus Hawkins sets herself apart from her audience, as peculiarly qualified to distinguish truth on their behalf.

While making no explicit claim to originary or creative abilities, Hawkins seems to be laying claim to peculiar powers of rationality and perspicacity. Indeed, she records in her *Memoirs* that 'my father took great pains to render *all* his children so far

[33] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, i. 3, 7.

independent of the opinion of the world in the exercise of their intellects, as to remain unmolested by censure' (*Memoirs*, i. 238, my emphasis). The only daughter in a family with two sons, it is notable that the pains Hawkins's father has taken with her are the same as with her brothers. Blakemore observes that 'her education was comparable but probably superior to that of an eighteenth-century gentleman' and that she was accomplished in ancient and modern languages; her classical scholarship is evident from the frequent use of Latin in *Letters on the Female Mind*.[34] Although Hawkins emphasises the role of women as educators, she expresses concern that modern female education itself was 'in mercenary hands', rather than safely under the guidance of traditional, patrilinear authority: 'we must suppose fathers, husbands, brothers, to have been the first instructors of our sex'.[35] This, combined with her own account that her education was superintended by her father, implies that Hawkins herself has been 'properly' educated, that is, by her 'first instructor', her father, whereas the faulty fashionable education offered to the majority of women, such as Williams herself, leaves them susceptible to corruption. As Blakemore puts it, 'true knowledge, formerly inculcated by loving patriarchs, was being replaced by licentious misinformation'.[36] For Hawkins, then, 'truth' is inseparably bound to paternal authority, and the ability to distinguish and represent truth (under the influence of that authority) is a defining element in the establishment of her authorial identity. Thus, her appeal to 'those who admit it unfair to form an opinion, on one side only of a question being presented to them' is a false position: not only does Hawkins explicitly refuse to respond to Williams's particular political arguments, but her claimed ability to distinguish 'truth' is dependent on that refusal, through unquestioning deferral to the 'first instructor', which precludes the two-sided debate she suggests.

[34] Blakemore, 'Revolution and the French Disease', 677.
[35] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, i. 83.
[36] Blakemore, 'Revolution and the French Disease', 682.

This paternally-sanctioned ability, as I have already argued, also supports Hawkins's claims to authority in her *Memoirs* and *Anecdotes.* In particular, she raises objections to 'Mr. Boswell's erroneous biography' (*Anecdotes*, 118) of her father in his *Life of Johnson*, and later to Boswell's representation of Johnson himself. Hawkins's statement that 'I do not profess to write the life of my father' (*Anecdotes*, 136) is as much a rebuke to Boswell and his style of biography as it is a (misleading) comment on content. She denounces 'the greedy craving for portrait and anecdote that is, I may say, the literary vice of the present age', in particular in relation to an apparently unrepresentative 'engraving' of her father: 'when this of Sir John Hawkins is known to be in the library of Eton College, and the original in the music school at Oxford, no question can be asked, or doubt suggested' (*Anecdotes,* 198-9). Here Hawkins appears to dispute the authority conferred on a likeness, visual or written, by association with the ultimate symbols of a gentleman's education, Eton and Oxford. While this might appear to contradict Hawkins's conservative outlook, it in fact demonstrates her privileging of patriarchal 'truth' (and that inherited by the daughter) over all other symbols of authority, even the educational institutions in which those patriarchs are educated. This is expressed most clearly in Hawkins's denouncement of 'erroneous' biography:

> I would on no account presume to give any opinion connected with public affairs; but I am sure it cannot be fair in any writer to represent, either in fiction or in history, or in that species of writing which is neither the one nor the other, – the most misleading of all species! – to represent, I say, the character of a person, whether monarch of a kingdom or of a family, so different from reality, as to render questionable the motives of those under him. (*Anecdotes*, 153-4)

Here Hawkins reinforces the microcosm/macrocosm of state and family by reinforcing this transmission of truth: 'those under him', be they subjects or children, are alone qualified to 'represent' that patriarch, that 'first instructor' she reveres in the *Letters*, having imbibed from him the ability to discern truth. The writer who does not conform to this hierarchical structure of truth, and by extension authority, is therefore not qualified to make such a representation. Thus Hawkins's own authorial identity, so strongly identified with truth, is also ideologically dependent on her re-enforcement of her father's literary authority, insofar as literary authority is equated with veracity.

Hawkins's *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs* are littered with criticism of irresponsible, or more specifically, inaccurate memorialists. Of Hester Thrale Piozzi she writes that 'when reduced to fact, it was often observable, certainly to the credit of her invention but at the expense of her correctness, that the worth of a tale, or the wit of a repartee, was furnished by herself' (*Memoirs*, i. 65 n.). Hawkins's lexis is curious here, as she suggests that despite incorrectness Thrale's anecdotes have 'worth'; although 'credit' is balanced out by the 'expense' of inaccuracy, 'wit', 'repartee' and 'invention' are conceded to have value of some kind. However, this value appears to be a public one, concerned with entertainment and 'wit' rather than the economy of truth that Hawkins espouses. While Hawkins can admire Thrale's imaginative power she cannot condone it and, like Burney, cannot concede narrative authority to Thrale's audience-dependent form of cultural production. In her *Letters*, Hawkins had characterised the difference between 'ancient and modern biography' as 'a disparity of minuteness', arguing that 'in comparatively modern history [...] a hero [...] has a better chance of being heard in his own defence'. Hawkins calls for a rebalancing of the public and private characters of such heroes:

> It is not on the page of local history, it is not on the records of war, that any hero's private character appears in a point of view that can enable us to judge what he was as a man: he must be followed into his retirements: he must lay aside his helmet and his breast-plate, before we can decide what share his head and heart have borne in the atchievements [sic] of the day.[37]

Hawkins's emphasis on the relationship of the 'private' realm (as opposed to the public and, perhaps, by extension sociable realm), that of 'retirement', with true character privileges the inherent truth and thus authority (by Hawkins's logic) of the domestic sphere, with the patriarch at its head. In this sense Hawkins's vision of 'truth' (and by implication narrative authority) is highly compatible with Burney's vision of a domestic space in which true artistic value is possible. By contrast the publicity of 'wit' and 'repartee' may hold some appeal but is inherently inaccurate. By this logic, it would appear that while 'every species of information is afforded to us' this gives only a 'chance', rather than a certainty, of a fair hearing, depending on which information is selected: the public or the private. Yet the basis of her criticism of Boswell's biography of Johnson is his trespass upon this privacy:

> I err grossly in judgement if I am wrong in thinking, that, in the hand of his unreserved biographer, Johnson is much lowered. His early deviations are detailed almost to grossness, his waywardness, his solicitude to please his palate, and all his faults are as much in the foreground and sunshine, as his highest

[37] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 34-5.

> virtues [...] but were this excess of exposure to be the general plan of life-writing, much of the benefit of example would be lost. (*Memoirs*, i. 231)

While Hawkins argues that Boswell's unreservedness is also unrepresentative, and has reduced Johnson to 'a lower level of estimation than that by nature allotted him' (*Memoirs*, i. 232), she also concedes that his 'is a book that must always please; it is entertaining to a degree that makes my father's appear stiff, cold and turgid' (*Memoirs*, i. 230). Once more, Boswell's powers of entertainment are simultaneously acknowledged and devalued: while his production may 'please' an audience, that value is inherently unreliable as it is defined by non-specialist consumers and votaries of literary celebrity.

Why, though, is the minuteness that Boswell practises in his *Life of Johnson* inimical to the model of virtuous, exemplary biography suggested in Hawkins's *Letters*? Surely this minuteness represents the private, domestic Johnson, and thus by Hawkins's estimation the 'true' Johnson? Ultimately, it seems, the difference is a matter of responsibility. Although in fact Boswell suppressed certain sensitive details about Johnson's private life (as Adam Sisman relates, some of these suppressions were negotiated between Boswell and John Hawkins), his approach to biography as a literary form differs vastly from that of Hawkins; in fact, Boswell's *Life* had met with criticism from publication for its revelatory nature, so in this sense Hawkins's reservations, by the 1820s, are nothing new.[38] It is Hawkins's views on biography as a form in itself that are of interest: in her *Memoirs* and *Anecdotes* she puts into practice the theory of

[38] Sisman writes that Boswell and Hawkins 'had come to an agreement "upon a delicate question" [...] Part of that agreement seems to have been to confine any mention of Johnson's suspected sexual irregularities to the period when he was living apart from his wife and associating with Savage'. Adam Sisman, *Boswell's Presumptuous Task: Writing the Life of Dr Johnson* (London and New York: Harper Perennial, 2006), p. 243. Sisman also suggests that they may have agreed to suppress 'delicate' matter from Johnson's diaries.

biography she expresses in her much earlier *Letters on the Female Mind*; in her own essay into life-writing, peculiarly informed by her role as literary *daughter*, Hawkins demonstrates the significance of the 'female mind' in the transmission of biographical 'truth', in the form of private, domestic experience. While Boswell may have had access to enormously detailed information about Johnson, both first and second hand, the relationship between the two men precluded the kinds of 'truth' available to Hawkins in her anecdotes of her father, which was measured by propriety and domestic order. Boswell's relationship with Johnson, by contrast, was a relationship of two men-of-letters, and in that sense, a public one, as emphasised by Boswell's capturing of Johnson in action at social occasions and in conversation with other public figures.

The nature of biography as a literary form in the late eighteenth century was necessarily informed by the figure of Samuel Johnson for several reasons. Johnson was a biographer in his own right (of Richard Savage in 1744, and in 1779-81 of Pope, Milton, Dryden amongst others in his *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*), and had formally expressed his views on biography in an essay in the *Rambler* in October 1750.[39] Johnson and his biographer would become the synecdoche for literary biography itself: in the 1810 version of his 'Essay Upon Epitaphs', printed in Coleridge's *The Friend*, Wordsworth quotes (and dismisses) Johnson's assertion that 'an Epitaph [...] implies no particular character of writing'; in his 1816 'Letter to a friend of Robert Burns', Wordsworth refers to the 'Boswellian plan' of biography, constituted of 'gross and trivial recollections'.[40] Although he would contest both

[39] Samuel Johnson, *An Account of the Life of Mr. Richard Savage, Son of the Earl Rivers* (London: J. Roberts, 1744), published anonymously; *The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, with critical evaluations on their works*, 4 vols (London: Bathurst et al, 1779-81); *The Rambler*, No. 60, Saturday, October 13, 1750. Repr. in Johnson, *The Rambler*, 6 vols (London: J. Payne and J. Bouquet, 1752), ii. 207-215.

[40] William Wordsworth, 'Epitaphs', *The Friend*, No. 25, Thursday, February 22nd, 1810, repr. in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Volume 4: The Friend*, ed. by Barara Rooke, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), ii. 334-346 (345). Wordsworth apparently did not intend to publish the essay at the time, but it was included at the last minute when Coleridge had

Johnson's and Boswell's approaches, Wordsworth's references to the two men are typical of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century discussions of the form, and demonstrate their centrality to that form. Thus Hawkins's criticism of Boswell is both typical and striking: to critique such a heavyweight of biographical form, within a biographical text, makes the bold creative claim that Hawkins's own form could bear an examination that (arguably) the most significant biographical work of the period could not. By invoking Boswell, Hawkins engages in a defiant act of literary self-examination.

When Johnson died in 1784, there were several potential candidates for the role of biographer, and some of those would beat Boswell to it, including Thrale, who would also publish a collection of their correspondence. As noted in Chapter Two, Thrale's publication of those letters, as well as her biography of Johnson, caused Burney some anxiety that she might also be included. Although she was concerned about how Thrale might represent her, she also disapproved of the project itself: 'These letters have not been more improperly published in the whole, than they are injudiciously displayed in their several parts'.[41] The Burneys had been intimate with Johnson and would certainly have felt some interest in the publication of his life. In fact, Adam Sisman writes that 'others rumoured to be contemplating lives of Johnson included his friend Dr Charles Burney' (such a rumour would no doubt have piqued Burney's rival John Hawkins, who was planning his own 'official' biography of Johnson).[42] The scramble for Johnson's literary remains, and the bickering of his biographers (particularly Boswell and Piozzi)

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failed to produce material for the forthcoming issue of the periodical. Wordsworth published a revised version as a note to *The Excursion* (1814) and continued to revise and expand the essay over the years; 'A letter to a friend of Robert Burns: occasioned by an intended republication of The Account of the Life of Burns, by Dr. Currie; and of the selection made by him from his letters' (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), repr. in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), iii. 111-138.

[41] Burney, *Diary and Letters*, ii. 444.

[42] Sisman, *Presumptuous Task*, p. 157.

were burlesqued in contemporary satirical poems. In *Poetical Epistle from the Ghost of Dr. Johnson* (1786), the anonymous author remarks in their extensive notes that 'it is some comfort to reflect, that though the world has lost *one* great Author by the death of Dr. Johnson, it has at least got *three* new ones of *superior ability* by the same event'.[43] In *Bozzy and Piozzi: or, the British Biographers* (1788), John Hawkins is portrayed sitting in judgement on the dispute between Boswell and Piozzi, which is condemned as vampiric: ''Tis by the Rambler's death alone you *live*'. The biographers are dismissed as '*Mere flies*, that buzz'd around his setting ray, / And bore a *splendour*, on their wings, away', as if feeding on Johnson's decaying flesh.[44] This cannibalistic image of the literary biographer constructing an authorial identity from the reconstituted identity of their subject resonates with the kind of commodity culture of which Burney is so critical, in which consumers attempt to reconstitute an identity through a patchwork of cultural objects; as I will discuss in the coda that follows, this is precisely the parasitic manner of cultural engagement that Burney burlesques in *The Witlings*. Furthermore, the reliance of Boswell and Thrale on Johnson to provide materials for their own literary production parallels Hawkins's adopted pose as compositor rather than composer.

While these poems satirise the literary ambitions of the protagonists, they also offer a critique of 'the greedy craving for portrait and anecdote' that Hawkins would lament in 1822 'as the literary vice of the present age' (*Anecdotes*, 198); furthermore, the subtitle of *Bozzy and Piozzi* – 'the British Biographers' – is indicative of the scrutiny that the 'biographers' themselves were subject to as producers of literary material. The

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[43] Anonymous, *A Poetical Epistle from the Ghost of Dr. Johnson, to his four friends: The Rev. Mr. Strahan; James Boswell, Esq.; Mrs. Piozzi; J. Courtenay, Esq., M.P. from the original copy in the possession of the editor. With notes critical, biographical, historical, and explanatory* (London: Harrison and Co., 1786), p.49.

[44] John Wolcot, *Bozzy and Piozzi: or, the British Biographers. A Town Eclogue. By Peter Pindar, Esquire*, 10th edn (London: G. Kearsley, 1788), pp. 55, 7.

designation of 'British' biographers suggests how completely Johnson's literary afterlife was implicated in concepts of national identity, and the power of biography to reinforce or undermine that identity. As the composer of the first English-language dictionary, Johnson was a pivotal figure in the literary life of the nation; his *Lives of the Poets* was significant both in establishing biography as a form in itself, and as part of that national literary culture. Johnson's biographers were then charged with the responsibility of representing a significant figure in British cultural life, a responsibility which they are not deemed by contemporary satirists to have adequately fulfilled. This sense of biography as both a civic and cultural responsibility is one that Hawkins herself upholds. Furthermore, in treating biography as part of a canon of national literature, she valorises the role of this form that was particularly suited to the feminine transmission of paternalistic 'truth': by comparing ancient and modern biography in her *Letters*, she applies the eighteenth-century preoccupation with the relative merits of classical and modern literature to a form that was arguably the province of the skilful compositor, rather than the creative, cerebral genius. Hawkins is thus claiming, in 1793, that biography has attained a status in English literary culture that legitimised discussion of that literary form in terms of tradition (something that Johnson had done in 1750). If, as by Hawkins's estimation, the ideal modern biography was one which exemplified domestic virtues, this new status offered women writers a unique and significant position in that literary culture.

While Hawkins's criticisms of Boswell in her *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs* echo those of Wordsworth in his 'Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns', her vision of private, domestic 'truth' would have been anathema to Wordsworth. Bewailing 'the coarse intrusions into the recesses, the gross breaches upon the sanctities, of domestic life', Wordsworth tries to define a distinction between a man's public and private character,

arguing that 'the maintenance of private dignity, is one of the most efficacious guardians of public freedom'. In particular, Wordsworth insists upon the sanctity of the domestic in the case of authors: he argues, 'our business is with their books'.[45] This anxiety to separate the private self from the public work echoes Burney's resistance to the identification of 'book' and 'self' that she first encounters during her rise to literary celebrity.[46] Julian North has argued convincingly that 'Wordsworth figures the biographer as a violator of home and hearth', although Ian Hamilton suggests this insistence partially stems from Wordsworth's own anxiety not to have details of his private life made public.[47] As Hamilton observes, 'the Romantics mistrusted the desanctifying tendencies of Boswellism and yet, in their private conduct, they supplied the opposition with all manner of alluring docu-dramas'.[48] This 'invasion' of the domestic sphere is similarly characterised by Samuel Taylor Coleridge as 'gossip': in his 1810 essay 'A Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography' he denounces 'garulous [sic] biography' and 'the habit of gossiping in general', and particularly its encroachment into biographical works:

> A crime it is [...] thus to introduce the spirit of vulgar scandal, and personal inquietude into the Closet and the Library, environing with evil passions the very Sanctuaries, to which we should flee for refuge from them! [...] And both the Authors and Admirers of such Publications, in what respect are they less Truants and Deserters from their own Hearts, and from their appointed Task of

[45] Wordsworth, 'Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns', 122.
[46] Burney, *EJL*, iii. 221. See Chapter One, pp. 15-6.
[47] Julian North, 'Self-Possession and Gender in Romantic Literary Biography' in Arthur Bradley and Alan Rowes, eds, *Romantic Biography* (Hampshire and Vermont: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 109-138 (p. 112); Hamilton argues that Wordsworth was concerned about the parallels betweens Burns's misdemeanours and his own – namely, his fathering of an illegitimate daughter with Annette Vallon – which heightened his insistence on the separation of a poet's private life from his literary reputation. See Ian Hamilton, *Keepers of the Flame: Literary Estates and the Rise of Biography* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), pp. 104-5.
[48] Hamilton, *Keepers of the Flame*, p. 141.

understanding and amending them, than the most garrulous female Chronicler, of the goings-on of yesterday in the Families of her Neighbours and Townsfolk?[49]

Coleridge is explicit in his designation of a certain type of biographical 'gossip' as feminine and thus, implicitly, degraded. The figure of the 'garrulous female Chronicler' immediately diminishes the status of the female biographer. Coleridge implies that her subject matter, 'the Families of her Neighbours and Townsfolk', is inherently inferior, and denies the possibility of a woman keeping company with any worthy biographical subjects. Coleridge's imagining of the domestic realm is limited by his exclusion of such subjects, and the irony of this in relation to the Burneys' artistic household, to which admission was both socially and sexually egalitarian, is striking. Furthermore, the creation of this meritocratic cultural space was made possible by precisely the domestic, de-commodified privacy that Wordsworth and Coleridge deemed sacred. By Coleridge's reckoning, the 'female Chronicler' is intrinsically domestic, and the domestic is not a fit subject for biography: 'genuine Biography' should 'withstand the cravings of worthless curiosity, as distinguished from the thirst after useful knowledge'.[50] The essential difference, then, between Hawkins's approach and that of Wordsworth and Coleridge, is in the designation of what is 'useful'.

In establishing the (admittedly somewhat idealised) domestic sphere as the locus of 'truth' in her *Letters*, Hawkins is concerned with both utility and responsibility. When she comes to publish her *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs* she claims a position of curatorship that suggests the fulfilment of moral obligation in preserving her father's 'memorial stores'. However, the association of 'domestic' and the 'female' with

[49] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'A Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography', *The Friend*, No. 21, Thursday, January 25, 1810. Repr. in *Collected Works, Volume 4: The Friend*, ii. 285-297 (286-7).
[50] Coleridge, 'A Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography', 286.

'gossip' has proved remarkably strong, as the afterlife of Hawkins's memoirs has proven. Francis Henry Skrine's 1926 *Gossip About Doctor Johnson and Others* is the closest thing available to a modern edition of Hawkins *Anecdotes* and *Memoirs*, and Skrine's verdict, in his introduction, is damning. He notes that 'the author had few if any qualifications for the supremely difficult art of biography' (although he fails to illuminate what those qualifications might be) and describes 'the labour involved in winnowing their wheat from chaff'.[51] He writes of 'a residue of facts', which, after his own skilful 'excision of an intolerable amount of "padding" [...] reveal the social life of the eighteenth century and increase our knowledge of many great men who illustrated that wonderful era'.[52] A comparison between Skrine's edition and Hawkins's original publications reveals Skrine's criteria for inclusion: the richest discussion of literary form and women's writing, in the form of Hawkins's discussion of her own authorship (both of novels and memoirs), is part of the 'padding' that is excised. Skrine values any scrap concerning public figures, namely 'great men' in 'social life', and dismisses the intellectual life of the author. The selectivity he exercises is in fact the very kind criticised by Coleridge, who writes that 'insignificant stories can derive no real respectability from the eminence of the Person who happens to be the subject of them, but rather an additional deformity of disproportion'.[53] While the title of Skrine's work clearly conceives of Hawkins herself as a 'gossip' simply because she is what Coleridge dismissively terms a 'female Chronicler', his emphasis on 'great men' is illustrative of a culture of literary celebrity that appears to sanctify an otherwise 'garrulous' curiosity. Conversely, Hawkins's proposed elevation (in her *Letters on the Female Mind*) of the private, as opposed to 'social', life of great men is an attempt to render those lives

[51] Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Gossip about Dr Johnson and others; Being chapters from the memoirs of Miss Laetitia Matilda Hawkins* ed. by Francis Henry Skrine (London: Eveleigh, Nash & Grayson Ltd., 1926), pp. xxi-xxii.
[52] Hawkins, *Gossip about Dr Johnson*, p. v.
[53] Coleridge, 'A Prefatory Observation on Modern Biography', 286.

useful, exemplary and universal. When Hawkins, some years later, came to write in the genre she had theorised in 1793, she would insist on just such a motive, of 'placing good actions in a luminous point of view [...] if I can excite anyone to imitate what is praiseworthy, I shall indeed be overpaid for my labour' (*Anecdotes*, vii). Later in the same volume, she writes that 'I wish to attach myself to nothing but what is useful' (*Anecdotes*, 151). For Hawkins, then, biographical writing serves the same practical purpose that would be used to justify the writing (and reading) of certain novels, namely, of improvement. Even as a compositor, Hawkins is participating in a discourse that contributes to the internally edifying developmental practices of her readers.

In so doing, Hawkins is responding to ideas of the inherent, non-commodified intellectual and cultural value of her textual product with which Burney was so concerned. Textual objects could be abused both to construct a symbolic cultural identity and, as Burney records the Queen's attempt in her court journals, to appropriate the cultural identity of another; however, the intellectual content that is so often parodically overlooked by Burney's audiences is also that which gives the material text its true value. Furthermore, Hawkins's emphasis on the particular use-value of biography is in keeping with the sentiments of contemporary women writers, such as Hester Chapone and Jane West. In her *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773), Chapone recommends 'history' as 'the principal study I would recommend [...] to supply the defect of that experience, which is usually attained too late to be of much service to us'.[54] Although it is 'history' rather than biography that Chapone explicitly recommends, she characterises the history of the world as 'little else than a shocking account of the wickedness and folly of the ambitious!' and writes that 'it is proper you should know mankind as they are – You must be acquainted with the heroes of the

[54] Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, addressed to a young lady*, 2 vols (London: H. Hughes, 1773), ii. 125.

earth'.[55] For Chapone, then, 'history' is a record of human character in the same manner described by Hawkins, although perhaps the usefulness of such accounts is more of the nature of the cautionary tale than the exemplar. Writing in 1806, Jane West applies this approach specifically to the issue of biography in her *Letters to a Young Lady*, arguing that 'the life of a bad man may be rendered as instructive as the adventures of a hero'.[56] West is dismissive, though, of mere 'literary eaves-droppers' (ii. 431), and 'writers of memoirs and detailers of bon mots' (ii. 430) (such as, for example, Hester Thrale Piozzi), demonstrating the shift in the culture of literary biography since the time of Chapone's earlier *Letters*. Biography for West should still be firmly rooted in 'facts' rather than 'bundles of anecdotes': 'Readers who confine their knowledge of past times to these faint sketches', she writes, 'may become *good gossips*, but can never be *historians*' (ii. 431). Like Hawkins, West is concerned with 'truth': 'the historians [sic] should be too much devoted to the service of truth, to step out of his road for any embellishment foreign to his great design' (ii. 430-1). Biographers, or 'historians', thus regurgitate 'the digested details of facts' rather than romanticised anecdotes; yet the 'digested details of facts' conform to a particular 'design', suggesting craftsmanship and aesthetic unity.

It is just such a 'design' that, according to Cynthia Richards, Mary Hays lays claim to in her six-volume *Female Biography* (1803).[57] Richards argues that 'if the first half of Hays's career is characterized by thinly disguised and ardent autobiography, then this second half is characterized by rather generic biographies', and sees this as a

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[55] Chapone, *Letters*, ii. 200-201.
[56] Jane West, *Letters to a Young Lady; in which the duties and character of women are considered, chiefly with a reference to prevailing opinions*, 3 vols (1806; repr. London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811), ii. 436. Reproduced in Janet Todd, ed., *Female Education in the Enlightenment*, 6 vols (London: Pickering, 1996), vols iv-vi.
[57] Mary Hays, *Female Biography, or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women of All Ages and Countries*, 6 vols (London: Richard Phillips, 1803).

distinctive move to make 'the female story [...] definitively not her own'.[58] Richards interprets Hays's deliberate, selective silence as a form of narrative comment in itself, in particular her failure to condemn the sexual appetite of figures such as Catherine the Great. Richards points to Hays's preface for evidence of this strategy, in which she writes 'that to abridge with judgement, is of literary labours one of the most difficult'.[59] In contrast to Hawkins, and Burney, Hays chooses biographical subjects with whom she is not personally acquainted, and whose lives are already well documented. Her choice of exclusively female subjects is a statement in itself. For the first time in her literary career, Richards argues, Hays writes *Female Biography* 'exclusively for women'.[60] She does this not merely in terms of subject, though, but in terms of her manner of arranging material, which she claims is undertaken with a female audience in mind: 'my book is intended for women, and not for scholars'.[61]

While Richards has emphasised Hays's employment of biographical selectivity in a general way, Jeanne Wood has argued convincingly that Hays's specific choice of form – that of the 'alphabetically arranged' biographical dictionary – has radical implications for the scope and extent of women's education. Wood argues that

> arrangement by alphabetical order does not discriminate between the conventionally proper and the controversial. Instead, alphabetical order grants equal status to all of Hays's biographical subjects. In this way, Hays creates the

[58] Cynthia D. Richards, 'Revising History, "Dumbing Down" and Imposing Silence: The *Female Biography* of Mary Hays', *Eighteenth-Century Women: Their Lives, Work and Cultures*, 3 (2003), 265-294 (270).
[59] Hays, *Female Biography*, i. vii, repr. in Richards, 'Revising History', 275.
[60] Richards, 'Revising History', 275.
[61] Hays, *Female Biography*, i. vii, repr. in Richards, 'Revising History, 271.

opportunity to explore a range of women's lives under the aegis of biography's cultural sanction.[62]

The 'cultural sanction' Wood refers to is linked to the concept of 'usefulness' emphasised by Hawkins, Chapone, and West, as well as Hays herself who promises 'instructive narrations' in her work.[63] Wood has outlined the way in which biography, by the time Hays published *Female Biography* in 1803, 'was central to the unofficial curriculum for middle-class women's education outlined by innumerable cultural commentators'.[64] Of course, Wood also notes, Hays's decision to move from fiction to biography was also financially motivated, and is indicative of the growing public appetite for such works.

In her *Letters on the Female Mind*, written early in the genre's formation, Hawkins had established the principles of utility and instruction as essential to biography; by the time she published *Memoirs* and *Anecdotes*, she was writing in what was becoming an established genre of 'lives', complete with particular formal expectations. Both *Memoirs* and *Anecdotes* contain biographical sketches of public figures, drawn from private acquaintance, but there is a lack of formal arrangement that separates Hawkins's work from the strict alphabetisation of the biographical dictionary. Furthermore, she rejects the ideological latitude that such arrangement allows, and in this she elevates her own moral choices as organising principle. In relating only 'good actions', Hawkins renders her work inherently instructive and 'useful', tailoring it specifically as an educational tool for a female audience (not to mention maintaining her own respectability as authoress).

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[62] Jeanne Wood, '"Alphabetically Arranged": Mary Hays's *Female Biography* and the Biographical Dictionary', *Genre*, 31:2 (1998), 117-142 (128).
[63] Hays, *Female Biography*, i. vii, repr. in Wood, 'Alphabetically Arranged', 124.
[64] Wood, 'Alphabetically Arranged', 124.

Hawkins's insistence on 'usefulness' and responsibility contrasts sharply with the irresponsibility of the 'lecturing gossip', denounced in her letters, namely, Williams herself.[65] Hawkins invokes the association of female literature with gossip in order to discredit Williams's polemic, but in this case the 'gossip' is national, rather than domestic. By stepping out of her proper sphere, Hawkins argues, Williams has sacrificed any claim to authority beyond that of Coleridge's dismissive 'female chronicler'. In contrast to Coleridge's formulation, though, Hawkins's identification of 'gossip' is not linked with the discourse of a particular sphere – Williams is of course dealing with public, rather than domestic affairs – but with a lack of expertise in that sphere. Hawkins's own position is thus by contrast one of authority, because she insists upon the restriction of her writing to her area of expertise. As I will outline below, part of Burney's claim to authority lies in her ability to 'range' beyond the limits of what paternal authority proscribes. By contrast, Hawkins's strict delimitation of her area of expertise appears modest, yet this narrowness also suggests the kind of specialisation that is key to Burney's vision of creative professionalism.

In many ways, Hawkins's biographical project conforms to that idealised by Wordsworth and Coleridge, but her criteria for usefulness, and for what constitutes a 'great man', are private where theirs are public. North suggests that Coleridge 'perceives the [biographical] genre on the same level as a feminine threat to masculine self-possession' and identifies 'a more widespread anxiety in Romantic culture'.[66] North's reading is incisive, in the sense that biography as a literary form, rather than simply invading the domestic as Wordsworth perceives it, has the potential to re-site public reputation and 'greatness' in the domestic and its virtues. In turn, this offers enormous scope for female 'greatness' in what is perceived as a feminised sphere. This

[65] Hawkins, *Letters on the Female Mind*, ii. 96.
[66] North, 'Self-Possession and Gender in Romantic Literary Biography', p. 112.

would be completely inimical to gendered ideas of genius steeped, as Jane Spencer notes, in Aristotelian reproductive theory in which 'the male was the agent of generation, the female its receptacle'. As Spencer observes, 'Aristotelian theory remained symbolically powerful long after its biological accuracy was exploded'.[67] Furthermore, the idea of independent literary genius is confounded by the very nature of the domestic state as one of inter-dependence and community. Both Burney and Hawkins eschew this emphasis on literary 'greatness' in differing ways. Burney's vision of the domestic is inherently ungendered, deploying the very communality that is inimical to romantic individualism to circumvent the cult of literary celebrity. In attempting to render her literature 'useful', Hawkins acknowledges a position of moral responsibility for the welfare of her reader: literature then becomes part of the communal, moral life of the nation, rather than an expression of an individual genius. In this way, Hawkins can both reconcile her femininity with her authorship, and carve an important role for women in the literature of the nation, by insisting upon the centrality in that literature of the domestic and moral virtues of which women were expected to be the exemplars. Hawkins's adaptation of her vision of authorship to a specifically conformist vision of domesticity and femininity, while a subtle strategy for literary autonomy, is thus limited by a concession to gendered artistic culture that Burney simply rejects.

While Hawkins can in many ways be seen as a far more conservative author than Burney, her centralisation of women writers, at least in terms of biography, is one respect in which she makes a bold claim for women's literature from which Burney appears to shy away. Although the fact of Burney's literary professionalism is in itself evidence of a belief in a place for women in literature, Burney was, as many critics have

[67] Jane Spencer, *Literary Relations: Kinship and the Canon, 1660-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 10.

suggested, determined to succeed within a male-dominated field, rather than in a specifically female canon. Thaddeus records that in her address to the reviewers, on the anonymous publication of *Evelina*, Burney 'quotes from Pope and Buckingham, putting herself even more squarely in the company of men, to add a moustache to her mask'.[68] Similarly, Betty Schellenberg remarks that Burney 'aligned herself with the largely masculine Streatham circle of literary professionals' (although, as discussed in Chapter Two, this circle was of course presided over by the fraught female patronage of Hester Thrale).[69] Spencer has argued that 'biological kinship between writers played a significant part in their lives as a context for their writing, and affected the ways they connected themselves to literary tradition'.[70] Surely, then, being the daughter of Charles Burney – a literary success in his own right – offered Burney a ready-made pedigree. However, as Spencer goes on to observe, 'Charles Burney the author-father had a rival: the paternal line of earlier writers who offered Burney a tradition to join'.[71] The most prominent candidate of these author-fathers has been generally agreed to be Samuel Johnson who, Schellenberg argues, offered Burney a model of literary professionalism as an alternative to the dependence and patronage that characterised her father's career, and that of many of her female contemporaries. Unlike Hawkins, Burney actively created a public identity for herself – arguably, she was forced to do so, as she was less successful than Hawkins in concealing her authorship – and thus her attitude to her self-presentation as a writer is markedly different. Although, as Spencer argues, Burney looked for alternative 'literary fathers', the fact of Charles Burney's literary and social success unavoidably informed that self-presentation; furthermore, it

[68] Thaddeus, *Frances Burney*, p. 40.
[69] Betty Schellenberg, *The Professionalisation of Women Writers in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 161.
[70] Spencer, *Literary Relations*, p. 6.
[71] Spencer, *Literary Relations*, p. 49.

informed Burney's presentation of her biological father as a key to her own literary development.

Burney's struggles with her father's authority, particularly regarding the performance (or rather suppression) of her comedies – *The Witlings*, and later *Love and Fashion* – have been well documented. As Gillian Skinner observes, 'the chief blame for the suppression of *The Witlings* has generally been laid at the door of Burney's father', a view that Skinner goes on to complicate.[72] As Skinner points out, although Burney's letter to her father on the withdrawal of *Love and Fashion* in 1800 figures her as bowing completely to his authority, another letter from that period, to her sister Esther, expresses relief that the play will not go ahead: 'the idea of bringing out a Comedy at this period [...] was always dreadful to me'.[73] The death of Burney's favourite sister, Susan Phillips, in January of 1800 had been an enormous blow to the whole family, and Burney clearly felt that the production of a comedy at this time was something she was not equal to. Why, then, did she put on such a display of resistance to her father's authority, when they both apparently desired the withdrawal of the play?

An examination of the much-cited letter Burney wrote to her father dated 11 February 1800, regarding the withdrawal of *Love and Fashion*, is revealing. Significantly, unlike all other letters since her marriage, she signs this 'F. B.' rather than 'F. d'A.'. The decision to align herself here with her consanguineal, rather than conjugal, identity suggests that it is the nature of that particular identity – as a member of a family of artistic professionals – that is under negotiation. Invoking her 'Burney'-ness, she emphasises the relationship of her literary identity to that of her father.

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[72] Gillian Skinner, '"My Muse Loves a Little Variety": Writing Drama and the Creative Life of Frances Burney', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34:2 (June, 2011), 197-208 (199).
[73] Frances Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by Joyce Hemlow et al, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972-84), iv. 397.

Somewhat paradoxically, she appeals to him to accept the separate nature of that identity on the basis of their biological relationship:

> rather say to yourself with an internal smile, 'After all – tis but *like Father like Child* – for to what walk do I confine myself? She took my example in writing – She takes it in ranging – Why then, after all should I lock her up in one paddock, well as she has fed there, if she says she finds nothing more to nibble – while *I* find all the Earth unequal to my ambition, & mount the skies to content it? Come one then, poor Fan – the World has acknowledged you my offspring – & I will *disencourage* you no more'.[74]

Here Burney appeals to her father through the use of a shared family language ('disencourage' being a term borrowed from a family friend)[75] emphasising their similarities – 'She took my example in writing' – as the basis for their differences: 'She takes it in ranging'. The image of the paddock is reminiscent of Burney's earlier, public mis/identification with her literary forefathers (including Johnson) in her preface to *Evelina*:

> I yet presume not to attempt pursuing the same ground which they have tracked; whence, though they have cleared the weeds, they have also culled the flowers, and though they have rendered the path plain, they have left it barren.[76]

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[74] Burney, *Journals and Letters*, iv. 395.
[75] See Burney, *Journals and Letters*, iv. 395 n. 3.
[76] Frances Burney, *Evelina* [1778], ed. by Edward A. Bloom, with an introduction and notes by Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 10.

The rhetoric of the 'barren' field in which there is nothing left to 'nibble' is familiar, suggesting that Burney is a pioneer, abandoning exhausted subjects (in *Evelina*) and exhausted genres (in her letter of 1800 to her father) for pastures new. In this way, Burney is moving on from the limits prescribed for her by her father, just as she has moved on from the fields 'culled' by Johnson, Rousseau, Richardson, Fielding and Smollett; just as Burney aligned herself with, while distinguishing herself from, her literary fathers, she is claiming the same dual inheritance/independence from Charles Burney. The older Burney has progressed significantly from her earlier self in her confident authorial identity. While the fields she traversed in *Evelina* had been harvested by the heavyweight male authors of eighteenth-century literature, the field in which Charles Burney would attempt to confine her, that of novels, has already been 'nibbled' by another literary heavyweight: this paddock has been harvested by Frances Burney. It is her own imagination that has exhausted the field, but rather than being superseded by the next generation (just as she superseded those before her), the protean Burney is equal to the task herself. It is this typically Burneyan quality of adaptability, one she openly claims to inherit from her biological father, which has allowed her to out-evolve the Richardsons, Fieldings and Smolletts from whose literary lineage she has emerged.

Burney was acutely aware of her inheritance, that 'the world has acknowledged you my daughter'; the diminutive 'poor Fan' expresses the manner in which Burney – albeit in this instance playfully – constantly recurs to her father's apparent diminished reckoning of her ability (as I will discuss, she never forgot her father's neglect of her early education). To an extent the legend of this early neglect helps reinforce Burney's frequent claims that she wrote from compulsion, from a natural and unstudied propensity. This is demonstrated in an early conversation with Johnson, recorded in her

journals: 'Sir, quoth I, courageously, I am always *afraid* of being caught Reading, lest I should pass for being *studious*, or *affected*, & therefore, instead of making a *Display* of Books, I always try to *hide* them'. However, when '*piqued* to it', the young Burney can display her literary credentials – in this case a copy of Johnson's *Life of Waller* that she has been hiding under her gloves – 'with a flourishing Air'.[77] While Burney claims, with some reservations, an inheritance from her father, she refuses to be limited by that inheritance, or by him, as her 'paddock' metaphor demonstrates. However, in her memorialisation of Charles Burney, Burney performs just such an act of enclosure, or rather, of separation. While Burney praises the works that brought her father acclaim within polite circles, she skirts the substance of his career, the teaching of music, and emphasises instead Charles Burney's social achievements and polite, lettered works.

This conforms to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's, rather than Hawkins's, ideology of biography, in that it raises a polite and, significantly, public memorial to the father which acts simultaneously to obfuscate his private self and the reality of his professional life. In so doing, Burney establishes a lettered inheritance for herself, but one that is distinct from her own literary achievements, demonstrating that she has evolved from the sociable, or public, literature of her father and succeeded to a form that was becoming increasingly allied with the new domestic aesthetic of fiction. At the same time, her construction of a 'life' for her father so informed by his public persona demonstrates Burney's ability to transcend the gendering of biography that Hawkins seems to posit, without sacrificing her own self-construction of private domesticity. Her filial relationship to Charles Burney allows her to render his public character, as a man of letters, but her claim to authority is private and domestic. This represents Burney's own response to the shifting aesthetic of the sociable and the private, retaining

[77] Frances Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-), iii. 172.

elements of Hawkins's domestic 'truth' while still able to render her father's public character. Thus Burney negotiates Hawkins's distinction between the 'truth' of domestic life and the unreliable wit of sociable memorialists such as Hester Thrale Piozzi.

Like many of her contemporaries, Hawkins justifies her urge to publish her earlier, imaginative works as financially, rather than artistically motivated. She cites 'application' rather than the imagination requisite to novel-writing. Burney, on the other hand, offers very different motivation for her publication of *Evelina*, as she records telling King George III: 'I thought – sir – it would look very well in print'.[78] As suggested in Chapter Three, the advantage of 'print' over manuscript is that it is the visible manifestation of a published text, that is, a professionally produced cultural object whose merit is assessed by free-market, rather than patronal, forces. Burney's desire to produce a visually satisfying object, an aesthetically unified 'story', also appears as the dominating force in her memorialisation of her father. Like Hawkins, Burney assumes the role of compositor: her father's memoirs are 'arranged from his own manuscripts, from family papers, and from personal recollections' (*MDB*, i. frontispiece). However, as scholars have been quick to point out, these 'manuscripts' and 'family papers' are extensively excised and suppressed. Gillen D'Arcy Wood accuses Burney of 'outright editorial suppression' and describes her *Memoirs* as an 'idealized, heavily censored account', although as Alvaro Ribeiro notes, Charles Burney had begun this process himself, with his daughter's help, which Burney describes in *Memoirs*.[79] Wood asserts that Burney 'began her writing career as her father's dutiful

[78] Frances Burney, *The Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, ed. by Charlotte Barrett [1842-6], repr. in 4 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co; NY: Macmillan, 1893), ii. 28.
[79] Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 60, 80; Ribeiro, 'Introduction' in Charles Burney, *Letters*, i. xxii-xxix (xxiv-xxv); Burney, *MDB*, iii. 224.

amanuensis, and ended it the most tyrannical of his editors'.[80] While Wood identifies an important shift here, this tale of editorial revenge is only one dimension of this complex relationship. Like Hawkins, Burney appears motivated in part by an impulse to enshrine and protect her father's reputation as 'man of letters', in continuing the editorial process they had begun together. However, whereas for Hawkins this entails a position of deference and disavowal of literary authority, Burney inscribes a tale of literary evolution: in elevating Charles Burney as a sociable, conversational, and learned man she distinguishes herself from him as a professional, and as an 'author'.

It appears from the *Memoirs* that Charles Burney had written detailed (if not continuous) journals, but these are only occasionally and tantalisingly reproduced in his daughter's text, and are far outnumbered by excerpts from her own journals and letters. The highest incidence of insertions from Charles Burney's own papers occurs in the period during which Burney was separated from her father and living in Napoleonic Paris, but even these are inserted somewhat apologetically. She writes that 'no further narrative, of which the detail can be personal or reciprocal with the Editor, can now be given of Dr. Burney', suggesting that 'narrative', sanctioned by the authority of 'the Editor' is preferable to the 'fragments of memoirs' she is reduced to relying upon (*MDB*, iii. 321). This distinctly counters the ideology professed in her introduction, in which the arrangement of those 'memoirs' is privileged. The ten years from her departure for France in 1802 until her return in 1812 are dealt with briefly, in the space of sixty-seven pages (*MDB*, iii. 328-395), and the fragments of memoirs are outnumbered by letters to Burney herself from her father. She records that in 1807 'the Doctor recurred to his long dormant scheme of writing his own memoirs' (*MDB*, iii. 382), suggesting that the ensuing five years before her return will be given in detail by

[80] Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture*, p. 85.

her father. However, this section – a mere twelve pages – contains less than three full pages from these 'memoirs', and a letter of roughly the same length to his absent daughter. Burney cites 'a nerveless laxity of expression, a monotonous prolixity of detail' (*MDB*, iii. 383) as her reasons for suppressing the material:

> And hence, consequently, or rather unavoidably, have arisen in their present state those abridged, or recollected, not copied Memoirs; which, though on one hand largely curtailed from their massy original, are occasionally lengthened on the other, from confidential communications; joined to a whole life's recollections of the history, opinions, disposition, and character of Dr. Burney.
>
> (*MDB*, iii. 384)

Burney's claim, to be better able to convey 'the history, opinions, disposition and character of Dr. Burney' than Charles Burney himself, is based on the assertion that his style had declined in old age, and bears no comparison with the works of his prime: 'it never would have seen the public light, had it been revised by its composer in his healthier days of chastening criticism' (*MDB*, iii. 383). Thus as literary executor, Burney's authority lies in her ability to distinguish between the true (or publishable) Charles Burney, and the frail and ageing father in need of protection and privacy. However, this suppression actually continues a trend established at the outset of the *Memoirs*, in which Burney repeatedly declines inclusion of her father's writing in favour of her own. In the first volume, for example, Burney justifies her omission of the bulk of Charles Burney's youthful anecdotes of Shrewsbury:

> These accounts, when committed to paper, produced without the versatility of countenance, and the vivacious gestures that animated the colloquial disclosure, so lose their charm, as to appear vapid, languid, and tedious.
>
> (*MDB*, i. 4)

While Burney contrasts this with her father's later eminence as 'not only one of the best informed, but one of the most polished members of society' (*MDB*, i.4-5), there is a telling emphasis on Charles Burney's conversational, rather than literary talents. Similarly, Burney is sparing in reproducing Charles Burney's poetry. Fancying himself (as Ribeiro puts it) as 'a bit of a poet', Charles Burney had produced innumerable poetical effusions over the years.[81] Burney concedes occasionally in including these, but is quick to disavow their artistic merit. She writes that 'the following affectionate rhymes [...] must not, in these fastidious days, be called verses [...] They are inserted only biographically' (*MDB*, i. 90). In another instance the reader 'is entreated to remember that they were not designed for the press' (*MDB*, i. 147). While she occasionally inserts what she calls 'his doggerel chronology' (*MDB*, i. 289), this is not a production for public consumption, unlike the professional texts Burney herself produces. Burney is careful to maintain a distinction between her father's private 'affectionate rhymes' and that which is 'designed for the press': Charles Burney's poetry is not robust enough to stand up to the 'fastidious' public, as they are the product of 'affection', an expression of self rather than an artistic creation in their own right. In this sense, Burney's suppression of much of this poetry can be seen as an attempt to maintain the privacy of her father's 'affectionate' writing as distinct from his published,

[81] Ribeiro, 'Introduction', xxvii.

specialist works. Overwhelmingly, though, she privileges her literary-professional judgement over her father's.

In rare instances in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, Burney does refer to her father's musical activities, but it is usually in his role as a public literary figure, rather than as a musical performer, that he is represented. It would be impossible, for example, to write a memoir of Charles Burney without reference to his *History of Music*, but this is represented as a literary rather than a musical achievement: Burney writes that 'the literary world seemed filled with its praise' (*MDB*, ii. 213). In fact Charles Burney's musical career is often reinterpreted in this way in the *Memoirs*. For instance, Burney records a royal audience in which her father presented copies of his account of the 1784 Commemoration of Handel to King George III and Queen Charlotte, including engravings by his nephew Edward Francisco Burney.[82] Burney's strange account of this meeting recreates the discussion between her father and the King of the merits, or otherwise, of some of the performance, in which, despite his expertise, Charles Burney's sole contribution appears to be having 'laughingly agreed' with the King's opinions, before turning the conversation to a discussion of Shakespeare (*MDB*, iii. 18-9). What is most striking is the final part of this anecdote, in which the conversation turns to Burney herself:

[82] The Handel Festival or 'Commemoration' took place in Westminster Abbey in 1784 under the direction of John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich and the Concert of Antient Music (with which Sir John Hawkins had erstwhile been involved, and whose 'Account of the Academy of Antient Music' his daughter appends to her *Memoirs*, i. 336-350). It was held to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Handel's death in 1759. George III was an ardent supporter of the performance of 'antient' music as opposed to the new, Italianate style that Charles Burney championed, so for Charles Burney to produce an account of the festival to present to the King was politically savvy, if not necessarily consistent with his own musical ideology.

their Majesties both re-opened their books to look at the engravings; when the King, remarking to several of them the signature of E. F. Burney, said: 'All your family are geniuses, Dr. Burney. Your daughter—'

'O! your daughter,' cried the Queen, lifting up one of her hands, 'is a very extraordinary genius, indeed!'

'And is it true,' said the King, eagerly, 'that you never saw Evelina before it was printed?'

'Nor even till long after it was published; [sic]' answered the Doctor. This excited a curiosity for the details that led, from question to question, to almost all the history that has here been narrated; and which seemed so much to amuse their Majesties, that they never changed the theme during the rest of a long audience. (*MDB*, iii. 19-20)

It should be remembered in reading this passage that Burney's source for this anecdote would have been Charles Burney himself, as it took place in a private audience with the King and Queen. In this context, it is striking that an anecdote about a musical and literary achievement by Charles Burney descends into a self-reflexive anecdote-within-an-anecdote centralising Burney herself. There is no need for Burney to relate the detail of this as the questions of the Royal couple lead 'to almost the history that has here been narrated', that is, the history of the publication of *Evelina*, indicating that the real narrative at work is that of her own literary career. This incident closes with Charles Burney's 'parental pleasure' and he returns home 'a flattered father' (*MDB*, iii. 20), thus recasting his satisfaction rather in terms of his daughter's achievements than his own. Furthermore, to her claims for creative inheritance she adds the authority of the King, with his remark that 'all your family are geniuses', thus reinforcing both the genealogy

of creativity and the idea of the Burneys as a family of 'rangers': Edward Fransisco Burney was a talented artist, offering evidence of yet another area in which the family had produced a 'genius' (although, noticeably, Burney never invokes her sister Esther's prodigal musical talents in this way).

The account of this meeting precedes a brief, but significant, reference to an important moment in Charles Burney's musical career:

> Speedily after this interview, Dr. Burney had the great professional satisfaction and honour to announce officially to the Society of Musicians [...] that their Majesties had consented to become Patron and Patroness of the institution. (*MDB*, iii. 20-21)

Burney records her father's royal audience as taking place in 1785, while the Society of Musicians was not granted a Royal Charter until 26th August 1790, although the King had supported it through his patronage of the Handel concerts.[83] By closely associating these two events, which seem to have taken place five years apart (rather than 'speedily after'), Burney lays emphasis on the association between the patronage Charles Burney receives and the King and Queen's estimate of her own merits, or more strictly, of the professional artistic achievements of the Burney family more generally. Burney records that Charles Burney, as Chairman of the Committee of Assistants to the Society of Musicians, had made speeches to the Society 'both before and after the petition', which she describes as 'neat, appropriate and unostentatious; but, from that same abstemious propriety, they offer nothing new or striking for publication' (*MDB*, iii. 21). Yet again,

[83] A brief history of the Royal Society of Musicians, which is still active, is available on their website, as is the full text of the 1790 charter, in which Charles Burney is named as a petitioner to the King amongst members of the formerly-named Society of Musicians (along with fellow Doctors in Music Benjamin Cook, Samuel Arnold and Edmund Ayrton): <http://www.royalsocietyofmusicians.co.uk/royal-charter.html> [accessed 19 August 2011].

Burney declines publishing her father's words, and in this instance those words relate directly to his musical career and involvement in the musical professions. A single page is devoted to the granting of the charter, which marked a significant development in the respectability of the musical profession, and emphasised Charles Burney's eminence in that profession.[84] By choosing to couple this incident with a much longer account of the family's, and her own, literary eminence, Burney appears to suggest (perhaps reasonably) that Charles Burney's influence stems from his lettered, rather than musical, achievements. While his association with musical society inevitably enters the narrative, it is relegated to a secondary role in his career and public persona in the *Memoirs*, and his contribution to the Royal Society (as it was known from 1790) is almost obscured, and recast in terms of Burney's lettered genealogy.

While Burney's account of the Handel Commemoration closes by reverting to the narrative of the publication of *Evelina*, it is insistently cast in terms of inheritance and a creative genealogy. In her account of the *History of Music*, Burney seizes another opportunity to claim a literary forefather whilst also claiming independence from him. Charles Burney's literary labours have secluded him from the world: with the second volume of his work complete, 'he resumed his wonted place at the opera, at concerts and in circles of musical excellence', which Burney is quick to point out are socially sanctioned because 'presided over by the royal and accomplished legislator of taste, fashion, and elegance, the Prince of Wales' (*MDB*, ii. 215). While this offers a concession to the musical world of which her father was a key member, Burney makes no mention of a return to teaching duties or performance. His activities here appear

[84] Rohr debates the material impact the granting of a royal charter had in this respect, noting that although a royal charter usually cemented the professional status of an organisation, 'the RSM had none of the powers normally granted by the royal charter such as control over examinations and licensing, or the authority to take legal action against unqualified practitioners' and that 'the Society remained committed to charity, and this, with its unfortunate implications for the economic prospects of musical careers, did little to further the professional status of musicians'. Rohr, *Careers of British Musicians*, pp. 10-11.

purely social, and the extent of his musical exertions seems to be to 'compare notes' with the Prince of Wales 'upon what was performing' (*MDB*, ii. 215). Thus Charles Burney is cast as an observer and commentator rather than participant (which he undoubtedly would sometimes have been) in those performances that unavoidably infiltrate the *Memoirs*. Significantly, though, the writing of the *History of Music* appears to take Charles Burney away from his usual, sociable and musical sphere.

By contrast, literature is Burney's constant medium: 'not, however, to his daughter did the Doctor recommend any similar remission of penmanship'. Unlike her father's work, intended for publicity and dedicated, by permission, to royalty, *Evelina* has 'not skilfully, but involuntarily [...]glided into public life' (*MDB*, ii. 215). Rather than a disavowal of literary skill, Burney here rejects any charges of 'skilfully' promoting her work: while her father's literary skills are an inherent part of his public profile, Burney figures her own as private, domestic, and only made public by default or accident. As with her account of the Handel Commemoration, Burney once again closes this account of her father's literary achievement with a return to her own writing. This equivocal encouragement from her father – in which even his sanction takes the form of absence of recommendation – has to be bolstered by the persuasions of others, as Burney records:

> being now sanctioned by the *éclat* of encouragement from Dr. Johnson and from Mr. Burke, gave a zest to his paternal pleasure and hopes, that made it impossible, nay, that even led him to think it would be unfatherly, to listen to her affrighted wishes of retreat. (*MDB*, ii. 215-6)

Burney's narration of her father's role in the composition of *Cecilia* is strange, in particular given that Burney's first literary project after *Evelina* was *The Witlings*, which, as discussed above, her father (and Samuel Crisp) played a role in suppressing. She is unwilling to accord him credit for actively encouraging her, even though Charles Burney was evidently keen that she should limit herself to novels and, as Jane Spencer notes, 'she was delighted to be working on a project of which they both [i.e. her father and Crisp] approved'.[85] Writing much later, Burney reinterprets this approval in terms of the encouragement Charles Burney received, on her behalf, from her own literary heroes, Johnson and Burke. However, the 'near-panic' and Charles Burney's 'hurry' observed by Spencer in contemporary journal entries is reproduced in the *Memoirs*, and some of that panic displaced onto Charles Burney himself: 'he was urged so tumultuously by others, that it was hardly possible for him to be passive' (*MDB*, ii. 216).[86] While Burney's expression here could be considered convoluted – the kind of 'Johnsonese' that critics would take for a decline in style – in fact she stylistically reflects the stasis and irresolution of her father's negative encouragement: only when passivity becomes 'impossible' does Charles Burney act.

The 'casting vote' of Samuel Crisp consolidated the pressure from the two 'daddies', whose patriarchal will Burney terms 'resistless'. It is fitting, then, that she should turn to her next fictional subject:

> The wishes of two such personages were, of course, resistless; and a new mental speculation, which already, though secretly, had taken a rambling possession of her ideas, upon the evils annexed to that species of family pride which, from generation to generation, seeks, by mortal wills, to arrest the changeful range of

[85] Jane Spencer, '*Evelina* and *Cecilia*', in Peter Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 23-37 (p. 24).
[86] Spencer, '*Evelina* and *Cecilia*', pp. 24-5.

> succession enacted by the immutable laws of death, became the basis of a composition which she denominated Memoirs of an Heiress. (*MDB*, ii. 216)

Burney here rapidly proceeds from the 'resistless' wishes of the two patriarchs, Charles Burney and Crisp, to the 'family pride' that propels the plot of *Cecilia* by means of 'mortal wills'. In this manner Burney thematically links the problematic inheritance of her heroine, Cecilia Beverley, to her own literary heritage. The attempts of Cecilia's uncle, and of Delvile Senior, to 'arrest the changeful range of succession' echoes Burney's anguished plea to her father, after the withdrawal from production of *Love and Fashion*, to allow her 'ranging' as part of her inheritance. Burney's emphasis, in the *Memoirs*, on the destructive power of the dynasty that attempts merely to perpetuate itself inflexibly is aptly reflected in the summary she gives here of *Cecilia*. However, while Burney records, in hindsight, a patriarchal attempt to control and limit her literary inheritance, the *Memoirs* themselves are testament to her resistance of this. In this eight-page section of the *Memoirs* headed 'History of Music' (*MDB*, ii. 211-218), the final three-and-a-half pages deal with the composition of *Cecilia*, and conclude: 'the Doctor kept her stationary in St. Martin's-street, till she had written the word Finis, which ushered her "Heiress" into the world' (*MDB*, ii. 218). Once more, an account that begins with Charles Burney's literary career has ended in an account of his daughter's, suggesting both that Burney herself is the ultimate expression of the Burney 'Genius', and that her father's work can be read, retrospectively, as part of the story of her own.

Burney treads a difficult line between filial admiration and evolution, both invoking and rejecting the influence of her father on her upbringing:

> Merely and literally self-educated, her sole emulation for improvement, and sole spur for exertion, were her unbounded veneration for the character, and affection for the person, of her father; who nevertheless, had not, at the time, a moment to spare for giving her any personal lessons; or even for directing her pursuits. (*MDB*, i. 198)

While she claims that her father is a 'spur for exertion' and figure of 'emulation', she simultaneously distances him from her 'education'. There is a sense of frustration at her educational neglect – as 'the only one of Mr. Burney's family who was never placed in any seminary, and never was put under any governess or instructor whatsoever' (*MDB*, i. 197-8) – yet this is coupled with proud intellectual independence. Without denying her father's literary achievements, Burney is keen to maintain their distinction from her own. Unlike Hawkins, she is relatively comfortable with her literary professionalism, and in particular, her status as a novelist. While Burney memorialises her father's elevation to literary and social eminence, frequently referring to him as a 'man of letters', she maintains in both style and content her role as storyteller. In her descriptions of the young Charles Burney, for example, she develops a fictional inner life, in which 'the ardour of young Burney for improvement was such as to absorb his whole being' (*MDB*, i. 10). The first meeting of her parents is imaginative and heavily romanticised: they 'emitted, spontaneously, and at first sight, from heart to heart, sparks so bright and pure that they might be called electric' (*MDB*, i.68).

Throughout her text, Burney attempts to maintain an omniscient narrative perspective, relating the events of her own life in the third person. In so doing, she frames a teleological narrative that culminates in her own authorship of her father's epitaph. Nowhere is this attempt so striking, and arguably jarring, as in Burney's

repeated self-appelation of 'this Memorialist'. Burney variously refers to herself as 'the second daughter of Doctor Burney', 'the Editor', and 'the scribler [sic]', but her use of 'Memorialist' occurs most frequently in relating distressing incidents. For example, on the second marriage of Hester Thrale to Gabriel Piozzi, Burney refers to herself as 'Memorialist' five times in five pages (*MDB*, ii. 249-253). As a result, these accounts read clumsily in places, as in the following example where 'the Memorialist' is awkwardly employed in two consecutive sentences:

> Too near, however, were the observations of the Memorialist for so easy a solution. The change in her friend was equally dark and melancholy: yet not personal to the Memorialist was any alteration. (*MDB*, ii. 244)

There is a manifest conflict here between Burney's attempt to narrate the complexities of her close, personal relationship and the third-person narrative she employs. The incidence is similarly high when she comes to write of her appointment at court (*MDB*, iii. 75-85). Upon finally leaving Windsor, Burney refers to the 'Memorialist' three times in one page (*MDB*, iii. 118).

It is notable that the two periods that give her most narrative difficulty, identified here as her breach with Hester Thrale and her departure from Court, are also the two scenarios that most problematically involve Burney in patronage relationships. The type of authority manifested by her female patrons – Thrale and Queen Charlotte – is somehow different from the paternal authority she appears to have out-evolved: even by the publication of *Memoirs* she has not managed to satisfactorily incorporate these relationships into her own narrative of professional development. Yet, while her rather involved attempts to distance herself from the narrative arguably break down at these

points, Burney's insistence on her role as 'Memorialist' emphasises that she is the survivor of *Memoirs*: she has lived to tell the tale. In this, she has achieved the project laid out in the frontispiece of *Memoirs*, taken from her dedication to *Evelina*:

> O could my feeble powers the virtues trace,
> By filial love each fear should be suppress'd;
> The blush of incapacity I'd chace,
> And stand – Recorder of Thy worth! – confess'd. (*MDB*, i. frontispiece)

She succeeds in suppressing her 'fear', and the figure who 'stands confess'd' by the close of this work is undoubtedly Burney herself. 'Recorder of [her father's] worth', she closes with the Epitaph she has written for his tomb. Thus she encloses and contains, through the unified narrative of which she is explicitly 'author', the historicised and obsolete 'man of letters' from whom she has evolved.

The respective careers of Burney and Hawkins in some ways parallel those of their fathers. Hawkins's insistent pose as amanuensis for John Hawkins throws into even greater relief the creative, professional authorship that Burney assumes. Both writers make a claim to a privatised domestic identity, yet while Hawkins invokes this privacy as her authority for writing, Burney attempts (not always successfully) to separate the authorial persona of 'memorialist' from the self that participates in the narrative of her family's life. Hawkins exploits a politically conservative ideal of paternalist domesticity in order to establish a specifically feminine literary authority, but in so doing defers to her father's literary authority as concomitant with his domestic one. While Burney elevates the domestic as the organising principle for the site of true

cultural production, the authority of the father is contestable precisely because this privacy also constitutes a retreat from traditional power relationships. The producer/consumer exchange that Burney saw as inimical to inherent artistic value could be eschewed in the communality of the Burney family home, in which artistic freedom was possible because audience was excluded. Furthermore, it is those dynamics of exchange that render a cultural product continuous with the body of the producer: the absence of those dynamics thus frees Burney from the gendered subject position of 'female' and of 'daughter'. In an environment in which textual production is unfettered by conflation with the authorial body, then, literary authority is wholly meritocratic.

Although Burney valorised this privacy, her novels demonstrate her increasing concern, after her court service, with the invasion of such domestic spaces by the dynamics of cultural consumption. In memorialising her father, then, Burney employs her narrative authority not only to contest her father's influence, but also to shield and separate the true domestic privacy of the Burney household from invasion and appropriation by her readers. Just as she separates her own public and private personas, she utilises her (by now well-established) authorial identity to create a parallel, public version of her father's life – and thus her own domestic history – which she can detach from her real domestic retreat. The manner of Burney's task is a complex one, requiring the authentic rendering of a private life as an artistic product in the form of a published (and therefore public) text. While readers of her novels had tended to conflate Burney with her heroines, in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* she was actually required to write herself in as a central character, without sacrificing the separation between her private and professional self. Like Hawkins's act of memorialisation, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* sees Burney bid for control over the reputation of her father,

her family and ultimately herself. However, where Hawkins attempts to defend and maintain the past without the intrusion of her own interpretation, Burney imposes a narrative unity that paradoxically limits the potential for interpretation, claiming this privilege for herself alone. In re-framing and historicising her father's life, Burney insists upon her own literary authority; she simultaneously invokes the obsolete paternal authority from which her own evolved, and emphasises her achievement in supplanting it.

While Charles Burney's artistic professionalism was essential to the formation of his daughter's, Burney is careful to define the difference between her father's sociable-literary persona and her own creative, but strictly private, professionalism. Unlike her father, whose cultural production – particularly as a musician – was dependent on sociability, fashionable culture and the presence of audience, Burney eschews the celebrity culture of authorship, and the accompanying continuity of the social author-persona with the textual objects they produce. As I will discuss in the coda that follows, Burney's persistent concern with those cultures of authorship is crucial to understanding the difficulty she found in incorporating the role of 'dramatist' into her professional persona. In my reading of two of her comedies, never produced in her lifetime, I will expose Burney's identification of the stage as a medium with the potential to explode this continuity of author and text. Yet *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* demonstrates precisely the autonomy that Burney would have risked in writing for the stage: in publishing the narrative of her literary career under the guise of a memoir of her father, Burney produces a strictly controlled official version of that career in her preferred medium of print.

Coda

'A Taste for Reading': Cultural Producers and Cultural Consumers in *The Witlings* and *The Woman-Hater*

With her publication of *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (1832), Burney presents a discrete public identity for both her father, as a sociable man of letters, and herself, as the 'author of *Evelina*'. This professional, authorial identity is constructed, effectively, through the history of Burney's publication and artistic specialisation, and the tale of her life contained within the memoir of her father is really the tale of her literary achievements. Omitted from Burney's narrative of professional success, though, is the tale of another, hidden career: one marked by frustration, uncertainty and material failure. The successful publication of *Evelina* (1778) was rapidly followed by calls for Burney to write a play, from family, friends and fellow literary professionals alike, and she answered this call enthusiastically by composing *The Witlings* (1778-80), a savagely funny parody of fashionable literary society which she was ultimately persuaded to suppress by the joint efforts of the 'two daddies': her father, and family friend Samuel 'Daddy' Crisp.[1] This pattern of composition and suppression would be repeated throughout Burney's dramatic career, and the extent to which this suppression was voluntary on Burney's part or enforced by her father is subject to critical debate. As noted in Chapter Four, Gillian Skinner has complicated the hitherto accepted view that the withdrawal from performance of a later comedy, *Love and Fashion* (1798-99), was primarily due to Charles Burney's influence. Skinner suggests that Charles Burney's

[1] As the majority of Burney's plays remained unperformed during her lifetime, the dates given here are for composition, following those indicated in *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, ed. by Peter Sabor, 2 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1995).

disapproval of a production about which his daughter already had reservations herself was in fact a highly convenient excuse.[2] Burney wrote a total of eight plays (although *Elberta* [1791-1814] was never completed): four comedies and four tragedies. Only one of these, the tragedy *Edwy and Elgiva* (1788-95), was staged during her lifetime, although she made abortive attempts to have several of them produced, namely, *The Witlings*, *Hubert De Vere* (1790-91) and *Love and Fashion.* Burney's confident claim to literary professionalism as a novelist is thus complicated by her seeming ambivalence towards allowing her dramatic corpus into the public arena.

The distinct separation between private and professional personas that Burney constructs through her career is dependent on a publication model that renders the private body of the author separate from their public text. The act of writing ceases prior to publication; thus it is a private process of which only the product is available to the public. As I have already argued, Burney privileged a model of cultural production that could take place in private, non-performative spaces because this allowed the artistic practitioner to avoid the dynamics of audience and performer that threatened to commodify the body of that artist. As I argue in Chapter 4, the fact of Burney's claim to drama as part of her generic 'range', in a letter to her father, is in itself significant; however, the privatised version of artistic professionalism with which Burney lays claim to that range, as I will discuss below, was inimical to the practical demands of successful theatrical production, in which the physical presence of the playwright in the performance space is a requisite.[3] Burney's insistence on the disembodiment of the text is confounded by these demands: consequently, although her writing of plays was

[2] See Gillian Skinner, '"My Muse Loves a Little Variety": Writing Drama and the Creative Life of Frances Burney', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34:2 (June, 2011), 197-208, and Chapter Four, p. 224.

[3] France Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, ed. by Joyce Hemlow et al, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972-84), iv. 395.

prolific, she stopped short of embracing the public and performative nature of this form. Hitherto, I have concentrated on Burney's representation, in her private writings and her novels, of the relationships between spectator and spectacle, between cultural producer and cultural consumer, and of her attempt, as Deidre Lynch acutely terms it, to form 'a notion of self as different from the body and separate from culture'.[4] The physical and explicitly *performed* nature of plays disrupts this production/consumption paradigm in ways that merit a more extensive treatment than can be undertaken here; however, what I will, briefly, suggest is how Burney's plays themselves explore this paradigm. Furthermore, I will examine Burney's deployment of the visual possibilities of the stage to underscore the very culture of conspicuous consumption in which the theatre itself is implicated.

Burney's dramatic works have undergone something of a recuperation in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, but there is much work still to be done on this relatively neglected corpus. Barbara Darby's book-length study, *Frances Burney, Dramatist*, goes some way towards redressing this neglect, as does the recent explosion in critical essays dealing with Burney's plays. Joyce Hemlow was one of the first critics to identify Burney as 'playwright', although her appraisal of the plays was mixed. While she particularly praised the later comedies – she describes *A Busy Day* (1800-02) as 'realistic and satiric' – she is dismissive of the tragedies, which she saw as characterised by 'mawkishness'.[5] This privileging of the comedies over the tragedies has persisted – as Peter Sabor observes, 'Burney's blank-verse tragedies are remote from modern taste'[6] – but some more recent critics have drawn a distinction, rather than

[4] Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 184.
[5] Joyce Hemlow, 'Fanny Burney: Playwright', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 19 (1950), 170-189 (189, 176).
[6] Sabor, 'General Introduction', *Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, i. xi-xli (xxx).

an evaluative comparison, between these two sets of plays. While Betty Rizzo remarks that Burney is 'a very fine writer of comedy', she sees the tragedies as 'another matter', emphasising their value as biographical material:

> as important pointers to Burney's unconscious, [the tragedies] have provided psychological material for Doody, Thaddeus, and Darby, among others, and it is important to have them out there so that we can read them too.[7]

According to Rizzo, then, the significance of the tragedies is as texts to be read, rather than seen in performance. In her 2003 review essay of Burney criticism, Rizzo identifies a corresponding trend amongst critics to treat Burney's tragedies less as dramas intended for the commercial stage, and more as an expression of the writer's inner life. Janice Thaddeus, for example, emphasises the chronology of composition, noting that 'by the time Burney left the Queen's service, she had written four tragedies into various stages of completion'.[8] Thaddeus argues for an intimate link between the nature of these plays and Burney's own circumstances – that 'she wrote her personal condition into these plays' – and of *Edwy and Elgiva* that 'her tragedy saved her from the combination of boredom and hysteria the king's illness induced'.[9] Certainly, the dual strands of political intrigue and personal tragedy that characterise Burney's tragedies could be seen to reflect the anxieties of the king's illness and the ensuing regency crisis. As a member of the royal household, Burney was witness to both the domestic and political consequences of these events, compounding her own suffering with that of the royal family. Thaddeus emphasises Burney's insistent critique, in her

[7] Betty Rizzo, 'Yes Miss Burney', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 22:1 (Spring, 2003), 193-201 (199-200).
[8] Janice Farrar Thaddeus, *Frances Burney: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 103.
[9] Thaddeus, *Frances Burney*, p. 102.

tragedies, of the treatment of women: 'there are political and religious dimensions in these four tragedies, but chiefly Burney has depicted women who suffer, as she herself was suffering in unrequited love and loneliness, torn between duty and family'.[10]

Thaddeus's assessment invites us to read Burney's tragedies primarily as a register of female experience, and specifically of Burney's experience. The theatrical performance of these plays, by this estimate, seems a secondary function. Darby, however, has read Burney's tragedies as more deliberately theatrical than these 'psychological' designations permit. While Darby also argues that in her plays (both comic and tragic) Burney 'tends to concentrate on domestic experience, and the concerns of individual female figures, rather than couples or the affairs of a larger community', she also points out that 'Burney writes tragedies that are comparable to others written by her female contemporaries'.[11] It should be noted that Darby does not necessarily seek here to distinguish Burney's works from male-authored tragedies; rather, she emphasises Burney's typicality within the context of ostensibly successful female playwrights. Darby does draw some qualitative distinctions between the two sets of plays, conceding that 'the language in the comedies is one of the plays' real strengths, and in the tragedies is one of the drawbacks of Burney's style', but she identifies common threads: for example, that of 'punishment', 'though its enactment varies according to the generic conventions in relation to the plays'.[12] Burney's representation of the ritualised punishment of women is expressed socially in the comedies – for example by exclusion or impoliteness – and physically in the tragedies. In fact, Darby argues, Burney makes extensive use of the performative, visual medium

[10] Thaddeus, *Frances Burney*, p. 105.
[11] Barbara Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), pp. 168, 176.
[12] Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist*, pp. 193, 201.

of the theatre in her tragedies, which 'expose and question the limited control women have over their physical occupation of space in a male-dominated world'.[13]

While critics have disagreed about the relative theatricality of Burney's tragedies, her comedies are written absolutely with performance, and particularly social performance, in mind. Lynch describes Burney's first play, *The Witlings*, as her 'staging of the literati staging themselves', in which she exposes the performativity of literary society.[14] While Burney's later comedies satirise society in general, rather than 'the literati' in particular, this performativity, and the problem of social (mis)representation, remain key, just as they do in her novels. Both *The Woman-Hater* (1800-02) and *A Busy Day* revolve around mistaken identity: in *The Woman-Hater* the substitution of Joyce, the Nurse's daughter, for Sophia Wilmot, leads to further errors, allowing Sophia's father to mistakenly believe that his wife has borne a second, illegitimate, child. In *A Busy Day,* the confusion of identity between Mr. Cleveland and his younger brother Frank also causes misunderstandings.[15] Through this recurrent motif, Burney continues her preoccupation with the problem of maintaining individual identity within a polite social world.

In the artistic-professional society that centred on the Burney family, Burney had identified the problematic relationship between the body of the female artistic practitioner and their cultural product. Her consequent adoption of a print-professional identity that allowed her to separate her private body from her public text was not straightforwardly available to her as a dramatist: the theatre as a medium offered a

[13] Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist*, p. 108.
[14] Deidre Shauna Lynch, 'Counter publics: shopping and women's sociability', in Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, eds, *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 211-236 (p. 215).
[15] Frances Burney, *The Woman-Hater* and *A Busy Day or An Arrival from India*, in *Complete Plays*, i. 191-286; 287-397.

particular challenge to her delicately maintained balance of proper female conduct and literary authority. As Sabor notes:

> to become a successful playwright then as now involved attending rehearsals and becoming part of the theatre world: for the exceptionally diffident Burney and for many other women dramatists, such close contact with the playhouses was impracticable.[16]

Ellen Donkin reinforces this view that women playwrights 'risked public exposure in a way that was distinct from that of writers in other genres', not least because of the need for the author's physical presence backstage, a space which, Donkin observes, 'was still gendered'.[17] Donkin charts the particular circumstances of the production of *Edwy and Elgiva* in 1795, and emphasises Burney's absence from rehearsals as a key problem. Burney's first opportunity to see the play performed was therefore on the disastrous opening night, after which it was 'withdrawn for alterations' which, as Peter Sabor notes, offered a genuine possibility of revising and thus reviving the play at a later date. Burney herself remarked that 'I have constantly considered myself in the *PUBLICLY ACCEPTED* situation of having at my own option to let the Piece die, or attempt its resuscitation'.[18] However, although Burney (with help from Alexander D'Arblay) continued to revise *Edwy and Elgiva* for years to come, this 'resuscitation' never seems to have taken place; nor did an alternative suggestion of printing the play by subscription ever materialise.[19]

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[16] Sabor, 'General Introduction', xxiv.
[17] Ellen Donkin, *Getting into the Act: Women Playwrights in London 1776-1829* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 138, 136.
[18] Burney, *Journals and Letters*, iii. 107.
[19] Sabor, 'General Introduction', xv-xvii.

Burney's ongoing writing and revision of plays throughout her life, and her repeated attempts to have these plays staged, are indicative of her determination to incorporate the role of 'playwright' into her authorial persona. Although these plays were not performed (the single performance of *Edwy and Elgiva* excepted), the labour of composition could be seen as the kind of identity-forming activity posited by Clifford Siskin as part of the culture of professionalism that was emerging in the late eighteenth century.[20] In this sense, Burney's status as playwright is informed as much by the act of writing as by the ultimate performance (or non-performance) of her works. As Donkin has argued, though, the genesis of a play lay as much in the practical elements of rehearsal and revision as in the initial act of writing, and in this sense Burney takes on an incomplete or limited authorial persona. Crucially, she adopts only the intellectual (i.e. non-physical) aspects of the playwright's role.

A comprehensive textual analysis of all of Burney's plays would be impracticable here. Instead, I have chosen to focus on two of her comedies, *The Witlings* and *The Woman-Hater*. In this thesis I have been concerned with the dynamics of cultural production and cultural consumption that Burney identifies as defining her contemporary society: in selecting two of her comedies, then, I have chosen to focus on works that are set in that society (as opposed to the 'historical' setting of her tragedies). In particular, the two plays I have chosen parallel the development that emerges from my reading of Burney's novels, in which the visual culture that pervades society permeates and disrupts models of value with increasing intensity after Burney's service at court. *The Woman-Hater* develops some characters – most significantly, Lady Smatter – who had featured in *The Witlings* some twenty years earlier. Both plays deal explicitly with the social role of literature, and particularly with the relationship of

[20] Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain, 1700-1830* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 107.

women to literature. In this sense, as well as in the recurrence of characters, *The Woman-Hater* develops and progresses from *The Witlings* more than any of Burney's other comedies.

Between the publication of *Evelina* and the composition of *The Witlings*, Burney had already experienced the assault on her private identity that accompanied her increasing fame as a novelist. In 1778 she wrote to Samuel Crisp that 'I would a thousand times rather forfeit my character as a *Writer* than risk ridicule or censure as a *Female*', yet this separation becomes a practical impossibility once her anonymity is lost.[21] It is thus appropriate that one of her earliest targets for dramatic satire is the ephemeral Lady Smatter, who embodies the reduction of literature from identity-forming pursuit to a fashionable and strictly ornamental accomplishment. Lady Smatter claims to have 'laboured so long at the fine arts, and studied so deeply the intricacies of Literature' (*Witlings*, III. 125-6); however, she is described by Censor (the play's critic-figure) as having 'just *tasted the Pierian Spring*, she has acquired that *little knowledge*, so dangerous to shallow understandings, which serves no other purpose than to stimulate a display of Ignorance' (I. 201-203). Censor is (accurately) invoking Pope here, as Lady Smatter so often claims to do: on the one hand, Censor's literary knowledge serves as a foil to Lady Smatter's shallow and inaccurate appropriations; on the other, Censor, like Lady Smatter, attaches arbitrary importance to such knowledge, despite his more expert displays. These differing estimates of Lady Smatter's achievement depend upon the contrast between 'depth' and 'shallowness'. The 'display of Ignorance' Censor derides is intended as a display of the 'Literature' in whose 'intricacies' Lady Smatter has

[21] Frances Burney, *Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. by (i and ii) Lars Troide, (iii and v) Lars Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, and (iv) Betty Rizzo, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-), iii. 212.

'studied so deeply'. The risk to Burney's character 'as a Female' is that of being mistaken for a 'witling' like Lady Smatter, who in attempting to display her knowledge conforms instead to a fashionable economy of literary self-adornment. Yet Burney's satire is Janus-faced, indicting as it does the masculine literary establishment, in the form of Censor, which interprets as 'display' in a woman the same literary activity that is 'learning' in a man. In separating her 'character as a *Writer*' from her 'female'-ness Burney is not only defending her feminine identity from the accusation of display, but her professional, authorial persona from the inevitable charge of feminine 'shallowness'.

This relationship between study and display, or in Censor's terms, 'depth' and 'shallowness', addresses some of the crucial tensions of Burney's formative years as a literary professional. Immersed first in the performative public of musical London, and later the performative privacy of the Thrales' Streatham salon, Burney must constantly negotiate what constitutes proper cultural participation, and what conspicuous consumption. Burney composed *The Witlings* during her years of intimacy at Streatham, and the 'Belle Esprits' (the titular 'witlings'), although often compared by critics to Elizabeth Montagu's Bluestockings, could have just as easily inhabited Hester Thrale's drawing room. Whereas conversation at Streatham appears to constitute a kind of cultural production in itself, however, Burney's representation of the creative life of the 'Belle Esprits' is damning. Lady Smatter performs a strictly symbolic interaction with the cultural commodities she consumes, rather than engaging with their intellectual content. Instead, she merely regurgitates (albeit inaccurately) the works of authors between whom she has trouble distinguishing: 'well, I won't be possitive [sic] as to Swift, – perhaps it was Pope. 'Tis impracticable for anyone who reads so much as I do to be always exact as to an Author' (*Witlings*, III. 79-81). Yet she declares that 'I am

never at rest till I have discovered the authors of every thing that comes out [...] for how, as a certain author Says, can Time be better employed than in cultivating intellectual accomplishments?' (II. 6-7, 14-5). Within these few lines, Burney exposes the contradictions of Lady Smatter's intellectual creed: while 'discover[ing] authors' is deemed an 'intellectual accomplishment', Lady Smatter is unable to recall the name of the 'certain author' who recommends the pursuit of such 'accomplishments'. Thus her inability to 'be always exact' undermines her self-fashioned intellectual identity which depends, paradoxically, on the identities of others.

The literary club of the 'Belle Esprits' replicates the division of professional and amateur literature that distinguished the print-based meritocracy of the Streatham circle from the manuscript-circulation culture of the Bluestockings. Burney pushes this division further in *The Witlings*, identifying professionalism, or 'Authors', with artistic creativity, and amateur circulation with the consumption and, more disturbingly, dismemberment of the author's creative product. Lady Smatter's self-construction takes on a particular form that, while effectively composed of knowledge of 'Authors', marks a separation between these 'Authors' (such as Dabler) and 'Critics' (such as Smatter):

> The principal persons of our party are Authors and Critics; the Authors always bring us something new of their own, and the Critics regale us with the manuscript notes upon something old. (II. 35-7)

Through Lady Smatter's attempts to anatomise her conversational 'party', Burney identifies the potential of the private-circulation model of literary engagement to disrupt and even ossify the creative process. While it is the role of the 'Author' to offer something 'new', this is undermined by its very 'new'-ness, and placed in opposition to

the 'manuscript notes upon something old' that 'Critics', such as Lady Smatter herself, produce. Smatter's speech implicitly privileges the role of the critic as the producer of 'manuscript notes', and invokes 'something old' as the basis of the critic's work. This 'something old' is telling – in addition to Shakespeare, Pope and Swift are frequently invoked by the 'Belle Esprits', with comic interchangeability – as the two groups, 'authors' and 'critics', thus fail to overlap. The 'authors' present new works, but these never make it into circulation, as the 'critics' constantly recirculate the works of canonical poets, calling into question the amount of actual conversation, in terms of intellectual exchange, that takes place in Lady Smatter's drawing room.

The obsession of the 'Critics' only with the 'old' prevents them engaging in intellectual exchange with living artistic practitioners. As opposed to the oral cultural production that takes place within the predominantly print-professional grouping of the Streatham salon, this conversational circle becomes an arena in which the critics can display symbolic acquaintance with (if not understanding of) dead 'authors', but fail to appreciate their real, social 'acquaintance' with living ones.[22] Literature gives way to criticism as an end in itself, which process is understood by Lady Smatter as 'studying for faults and objections' (II. 42), and in doing so misses what Cecilia terms the 'beauties' (II. 48) of that literature. Lady Smatter embodies a physical threat to these texts, as she describes her impulse to 'fling all my Books behind the fire', and refers to her criticism of Pope and Shakespeare as 'cut[ting] them up' (II. 42-3, 49). The potential of 'critics' to mutilate texts is macabre: while Burney exposes this so-called criticism as destructive, it also represents a corrupted attempt at creativity. Just as Lady Smatter acknowledges that 'I had from Nature quite an aversion to reading' (II. 119-20), her relationship with texts is unnatural. The impulse to 'cut up' and dismember texts

[22] It should be remembered, though, that the 'authors', such as 'Dabler', who form part of the 'Belle Esprit' club are themselves of limited creative ability.

constitutes Lady Smatter's claim to literary authority, as she attempts to construct an intellectual identity by arbitrarily, and usually imperfectly, *re-membering* those appropriated textual limbs. The act of recall also constitutes a putting-together of parts: therefore Lady Smatter's repeated mis-remembering of 'authors' renders them monstrous and deformed.

Lady Smatter's relationship with texts is essentially materialist and acquisitive; it is part of the 'promise of reembodiment' that Lynch identifies as an essential part of the new consumerism, and linked to 'psychological fiction's promise of self-recovery'. The consumption of texts in *The Witlings* is thus paralleled by the setting of the milliner's shop, a trade Burney would revisit with increasing significance in her later novels. Burney exposes the direct correlation here between shopping and acquisitive study, as Mrs. Sapient declares 'I think there are as many pretty things in old Shakespeare as in anybody' (*Witlings*, IV. 100-101). The designation of literature as a collection of 'pretty things' serves two functions: firstly, Shakespeare's works are conceptually transformed from interpretable text into a treasure trove of pre-formed and assimilable 'pretty things' with which the reader can ornament themselves; secondly, 'old Shakespeare', as Mrs. Sapient familiarly terms him, is constructed out of those same 'pretty things' in a physical reconstitution of identity of the type that Lynch argues is promised by consumer culture, and of the type which many characters in the play attempt themselves. Acquaintance with the textual (i.e. physical) embodiment of Shakespeare becomes conflated with acquaintance with the actual body of the author. Mrs. Sapient's familiar designation of 'old Shakespeare' emphasises the threatening slippage between textual and social identity that accompanies eighteenth-century literary authority, and by which Burney is particularly troubled. In her journals and letters, Burney expresses the difficulty of maintaining separation between a feminine

social identity and an arguably ungendered literary identity; here, by subjecting even Shakespeare to this social (rather than textual) familiarity, Burney demonstrates the pervasiveness of this threat as limited neither to female, nor to living, authors. This ironic invocation of Shakespeare could also be read as a thinly-veiled reference to Montagu, who was author of *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear* [sic] (1769): such allusions were exactly what Charles Burney and Samuel Crisp feared would destroy Burney's standing amongst Montagu's circle.

Lady Smatter's violent relationship with texts has its origins in her early aversion to literature: she remarks that she 'remember[s] the Time when the very Sight of a Book was disgustful to me!' (*Witlings*, II. 120-1). In later life, then, she resists nature in order to construct an artificial self out of scraps of 'cut up' literature. The pursuit of 'faults and objections' deconstructs the body of the text into its constituent parts, rather than attempting an appreciation of these texts as a whole. Once more Burney exposes the misguided emphasis, amongst the 'Belle Esprit' party, on material textual objects rather than their imaginative content. She also satirises the attempt to unnaturally construct a literary identity out of the mechanical reconstitution of material parts. Thus 'cutting up' these texts – breaking them down into separable physical parts – replaces any understanding of the creative process of combination.

Burney revives the character of Lady Smatter in *The Woman-Hater*; furthermore, she counterpoints Lady Smatter with Joyce, in whom the former's inborn 'aversion to reading' is comically realised (*Witlings*, II. 120). Joyce is a changeling: initially introduced as 'Miss Wilmot', Lady Smatter's niece (and sharing her maiden name), she is in fact the daughter of her 'nurse' and a shoemaker. Although it is later revealed that Joyce is not really related to Lady Smatter, she is nevertheless a caricature of Lady Smatter's literary performance, pretending to read only whilst her father is

watching. Joyce uses books as props, as in her first appearance in *The Woman-Hater*. The stage direction for Act II dictates that 'WILMOT *is discovered reading, and* MISS WILMOT *with a Book in her hand*' (*TWH*, II. 1. 1). It is obvious from this direction that while Wilmot is reading, Joyce is merely adopting the physical pose; when Wilmot returns later in the scene, Joyce rushes to rearrange the materials of study: '*They scamper about, and pick up all the Books, and* MISS WILMOT *seizes one of them, and seats herself demurely, as at the beginning of the scene*' (II. 4. 143). The book Joyce holds at the opening of the act is then part of her 'demure' pose, and serves to construct a false projection of her inner self. Joyce makes a display of literary knowledge in the most basic sense possible, by using proximity to books as the visual symbol of that knowledge which she does not possess; Wilmot's willingness to accept the symbol of knowledge for the real thing exposes a failure in his education of his daughter that is symptomatic of a culture in which female education is primarily ornamental rather than developmental.

Joyce's disregard for the intellectual content of books, and her strictly physical interaction with them, literalises Lady Smatter's material, consumerist relationship with texts into a visceral bodily appetite. Lady Smatter assumes that Joyce will have a 'taste for reading' and offers to 'look you out [...] one of my Classics' (*TWH*, III. 10. 6-7); Joyce's 'taste', however, is sensual rather than intellectual. Curious 'to peep at these Classics my Aunt is so fond of' Joyce discovers with disappointment they are 'nothing but Books!' (IV. 3. 1-3), and instead applies the term to a box containing 'delicious sweetmeats, and smelling bottles, and creams, and pomatums' (IV. 4. 2-3). Joyce mimics and re-deploys Lady Smatter's fetishisation of texts, declaring 'O my Classics! my Classics!' (IV. 3. 4) while Burney's stage directions have her eating bonbons, and '*taking out little bottles, vials, and Boxes*'; she entreats Prim, Lady Smatter's maid,

'Here, eat! – smell! –' (IV. 5. 4). Joyce's emphasis on sensory stimulus establishes a relationship between intellectual and bodily consumption, and her delight in the bottled scents – 'Jessamine – Rose – Lavandar [sic] – ' (IV. 3. 6) evokes imperialist consumer culture of luxuries, akin to those that abound on Belinda's dressing table in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*.[23]

It is this same spectre of consumption that haunts Burney's depiction of literary society in her journals. In 1782, shortly after the publication of *Cecilia*, she describes a meeting with a Mrs. Cockran, who had 'begged to have a sight' of Burney, and 'whose eyes looked almost ready to eat me'.[24] The conflation of eating and looking here denotes a form of consumption that depends on the kind of shallow, social acquaintance with authors professed by the 'Critics' of *The Witlings*: seeing is substituted for understanding, so the visible body of the 'Author' (or more usually their proxy, the 'Book') is substituted for imaginative content. This literal eating of authors is more boldly enacted in *The Woman-Hater*, as Joyce designates an author to each of the bonbons she eats:

> O, I won't touch the Books. I'll take a bon bon [sic] a piece for every one of them. So here's for Thompson – and here's for Chapone – and here's for Waller – and here's for Pope – and here's for Swift – and here's – O what a big one! – for Shakespeare – (*TWH,* IV. 5. 7-10)

[23] 'This Casket *India*'s glowing Gems unlocks, /And all *Arabia* breathes from yonder Box'. Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712). Repr. in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, Volume 2: The Rape of the Lock and other Poems*, ed. by Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 79-212 (p. 156, i. 133-4).

[24] Frances Burney, *The Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, ed. by Charlotte Barrett [1842-6], repr. in 4 vols (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893), i. 445.

This spectacle of literary consumption is made possible by the medium of the stage: it is funny, violent, and highly visual and physical. While the joke relies partially upon Joyce's ignorance or rejection of those authors, it is also a *reductio ad absurdam* of the behaviour of the Belle Esprits in *The Witlings*. Just as Mrs. Sapient remarks that there are 'pretty things in old Shakespeare', Joyce redesignates Lady Smatter's 'Classics' as a box of pretty things, trinkets and sweets. In *The Woman-Hater*, then, Burney renders visual the earlier, verbal irony of *The Witlings*.

As I argue in Chapter Three, the heroines of Burney's later novels are increasingly subject to threats of physical as well as imaginative appropriation. Similarly, while in *The Witlings* Burney articulates the threat to the creative autonomy of the professional artist posed by a purely symbolic engagement with literature, in *The Woman-Hater* this threat is physically realised as the violent destruction of textual objects. Whereas in *The Witlings,* Lady Smatter metaphorically 'cuts up' authors, and speaks of her wish to 'fling all [her] Books behind the Fire' (*Witlings*, II. 42-3, 49), *The Woman-Hater*'s Joyce acts out these fantasies of textual violence. Relieved from the oppressive presence of Wilmot, Joyce abandons her pretence of study and revels in physical activity: Burney's stage direction has her '*throwing about the Books, and dancing round them*' (*TWH*, II. 4. 37). When asked what she would do with Sir Roderick's fortune, Joyce declares 'I'll make a large, huge, gigantic bonfire of all Aunt Smatter's Books and Authors for joy!' (V. 4. 99-100). Joyce's destructive urges echo not only those of the younger self recalled by Lady Smatter, but also those of Sir Roderick: it is reported that 'he [Sir Roderick] declares he wishes all the Books in the Kingdom collected into a national bonfire' (I. 3. 97-8).

The recurring threat of the 'bonfire' of books is reminiscent of an oft-cited incident recorded in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* in which Burney, referring to herself in

the third person, describes the deliberate destruction of her early works on her fifteenth birthday:

> she made over to the bonfire, in a paved play-court, her whole stock of prose goods and chattels; with the sincere intention to extinguish forever in their ashes her scribbling propensity.[25]

Burney's own motivation for this 'bonfire' is starkly different to those of her characters, Joyce, Sir Roderick and even Lady Smatter. Burney writes of the 'projected heroism of the sacrifice', that is, the renunciation of her 'scribbling propensity', in terms of the failure of that sacrifice. Despite her 'grand feat', and the destruction of *The History of Caroline Evelyn* ('the last of the little works that was immolated'), Burney would go on to write *Evelina*: 'irresistably and almost unconsciously, the whole of *A Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, was pent up in the inventor's memory, ere a paragraph was committed to paper'.[26] While Burney creates a 'bonfire' in an attempt to suppress what she characterises as her natural propensity, Joyce, Sir Roderick and the younger Lady Smatter are driven to biblioclasm in order to free themselves from literature as a cultural symbol. In particular, Joyce's repeated cries of 'Liberty!' (*TWH*, IV. 7. 29) place these acts of cultural vandalism firmly in the context of the events of the French Revolution, particularly in light of Joyce's delight at discovering her working-class origins. As Barbara Darby observes, 'Joyce conjures up both the ideals and upheaval of the French Revolution', taking possession of what Darby terms the 'dressing room Bastille' in the

[25] Frances Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, Arranged from His Own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections, by his daughter Madame d'Arblay*, 3 vols (London: Edward Moxon, 1832), ii. 125.
[26] Burney, *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, ii. 126.

absence of Lady Smatter.[27] Sir Roderick's plan for a 'national bonfire' is especially resonant in the context of contemporary events in France, where acts of biblioclasm had increased in frequency, in particular during the 'Terror' of 1793-4. Rebecca Knuth describes how 'during the course of the revolution (1789-1799), angry crowds destroyed private and religious libraries, vast quantities of historical documents, and the monuments of the Ancien Regime'.[28] The destruction of books and libraries, which as Knuth notes were, in pre-revolutionary France, 'generally the property of the monarchy, a small group of aristocrats, and the religious establishment', demonstrated the way in which texts as objects came to symbolise the elite, even while their imaginative content was arguably driving the reaction against that elite. Burney is thus not only exorcising her own vexed early literary identity, she is also engaging with a larger anxiety about the role of literature and its symbolic value as a constituent part of a national culture. In *The Woman-Hater*, then, Burney realises the destructive consequences of an assault on literature that in *The Witlings* had been merely conceptual.

As Burney's literary reputation grew, her journals and letters record the resultant desire of her readers to *see* and even touch her physical authorial body. Burney's publication of *Evelina*, and her consequent sudden literary celebrity, were an early lesson in how the 'book' and the 'self' become conflated. As recorded in her journal, Samuel Johnson demands of Burney, 'do you think your Readers will not ask questions, & inform themselves whether you are short or Tall, young or old?' (*EJL*, iii. 221). The relationship of the purchasable book to the authorial body was a problem Burney was already highly conscious of, as she had witnessed the physical commodification of the

[27] Darby, *Frances Burney, Dramatist*, p. 158.
[28] Rebecca Knuth, *Burning Books and Leveling Libraries: Extremist Violence and Cultural Destruction* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2006), p. 19.

artistic professionals she encountered in her father's musical household; in particular, she would observe the difficulty with which female performers resisted physical and sexual commodification. The purchasable nature of intellectual commodities such as music, theatre, art and literature, implicated the female performer in an exchange of physical (or mental) exertion for money that held uncomfortable parallels with prostitution or, at best, the transfer of property inherent in the marriage contract. In *The Woman-Hater*, Burney demonstrates the parallels between the commodification of literature (and by extension literary authority), and constructions of women as physical property. Young Waverley, upon deciding to court Lady Smatter (a widow) for her fortune, 'hit[s] upon a short-cut to her heart' (*TWH*, III. 3. 44):

> I'll write in verse! Lord Smatter won her from Sir Roderick by one couplet; and I will win her from Books and Authors – of which she knows nothing but scraps and the names, – by another. (*TWH*, III. 3. 45-9)

Waverley articulates both Lady Smatter's shortcomings and the stereotyping to which she is subject: while he criticises her limited knowledge of the literature she claims acquaintance with, he too attempts to employ 'one couplet' as a 'short-cut', suggesting the misleading potential of literary display. He claims that she knows only 'scraps and names' of 'Books and Authors', both emphasising the shallowness of Lady Smatter's literary acquisitions, and suggesting that the 'name' of an 'Author' and a 'scrap' of a 'Book' perform equivalent representative functions. The body of the text and the body of the author are yet again elided, and knowledge of disembodied 'scraps' or constituent parts of a text are seen as serving the same purpose as knowledge of an entire text;

similarly, knowledge of the 'name' of an 'Author' comes to represent acquaintance with the person of the author themselves, essential to the status of the literary hostess to which Lady Smatter aspires.

Within this excerpt, though, there is a parallel to be drawn between the abuse of literature and commodification of the author-figure, and Waverley's acquisitive attitude to Lady Smatter herself. She is figured by him as a prize to be 'won', as synecdoche for her own fortune. She exists here only as an object of the masculine gaze, as being transferred between suitors: as the unmarried Miss Wilmot, Lord Smatter and Sir Roderick had vied for ownership of her. Now widowed, Lady Smatter is theoretically independent, but Waverley constructs a rival suitor from 'Books and Authors'. In this sense the 'Books and Authors' become, for once, predatory rather than predated, vying with Waverley for Lady Smatter's fortune. In *The Woman-Hater*, then, Burney calls for a move beyond symbolic 'accomplishment' towards active reading, both of books and of people. The cultural insistence on literature as a symbol both allows women's identities to be misread and is equally implicated in limiting their ability to read the identities of those around them. Therefore the pernicious effect of this obsession with cultural commodity has consequences for consumers, as well as for producers.

Far from privileging literary producers in opposition to fashionable consumers, then, Burney is careful to distinguish between creative and non-creative forms of textual production, in a lesson in consumer discernment. The character of Dabler is an image of the literary charlatan, producing composite texts in a mechanical and non-creative manner. In *The Witlings*, Dabler's room in Mrs. Voluble's house is a stereotypical literary gentleman's study, in which he carefully guards his 'Papers': 'let care be taken that no human Being enters it [i.e. the room] in my absence, and don't let one of my Papers be touched or moved upon any account' (*Witlings*, III. 352-4). Dabler's 'Papers'

seem to be the source of his poetry, rather than its receptacles. Dabler is reluctant to undertake the production of an *extempore*, which he attempts to justify through a false modesty that ironically details his true shortcomings: 'the amazing difficulty, – the genius requisite, – the masterly freedom' (IV. 342). However, he then detaches himself from the company to *prepare* his unprepared effusion. In Burney's stage directions, Dabler 'privately looks at a paper, which he accidentally drops instead of putting in his pocket' (IV. 355). This dropping of the 'paper' proves fatal to Dabler, exposing his *extempore* (and by extension his creative agency) as a sham. Although this 'paper' should be the embodiment of Dabler's genius, the physical proof of his agency, we know from the composition scene in Act III that Dabler has in fact merely combined appropriate rhymes selected from Edward Bysshe's popular *Art of Poetry* (III. 269) in an act of automated mechanical reproduction. The visual space of the stage thus allows Burney to play out explicitly, through the visible, physical presence of material texts, the (mis)appropriation of intellectual content to symbolic physical object.

Like the musical machines of Cox's museum in *Evelina*, Dabler goes through the necessary poetic forms but lacks the 'genius requisite', namely, the creative agency needed to render the performance truly artistic.[29] Mrs. Voluble describes Dabler's performance of 'studying':

> I listened at his Door once, while he was at it, – for he talks so loud when he's by himself, that we can hear him quite downstairs: but I could make nothing out, only a heap of Words all in a Chime, as one may say, – mean, lean, Dean, wean – Lord, I can't remember half of them! (I. 60-63)

[29] Frances Burney, *Evelina* [1778], ed. Edward A. Bloom, with an introduction and notes by Vivien Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 77.

For Dabler, 'study' is an audible, physical process, and his poetic character is recognised by Mrs. Voluble through the sounds he makes. Rather than creating coherent ideas, Dabler produces a 'heap of Words', whose poetic quality is recognised only by their musical 'Chime' (i.e., they rhyme). Dabler merely combines words, or noises (the audible, non-textual expression of those words), in an attempt to replicate poetic discourse; however, in a reversal of the disruptions of aural value Burney portrays in her novels, the musical 'chime' indicates the disconnection of his words from their verbal meaning. Even this musical 'chime' becomes meaningless in a 'heap' of random noise: there is no sense that Dabler employs the selectivity or technical specialisation that distinguishes professional artistic production from *dilettantism.* Without creative agency or technical proficiency, Dabler is unable to produce anything of artistic merit, and instead mechanically performs a poetic character that he does not truly possess, in the same way that Ellis's pupils sit at the harp to perfect their attitudes.

By revealing, on stage, the mechanical workings of Dabler's composition, Burney simultaneously reveals anxieties about the nature of authorship: as a mere compositor Dabler gives true genius a bad name. Dabler is thus an image of the bad reputation Burney herself fears, that of a compositor masquerading as an author: even in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, in which Burney claims to have arranged her work from '[Charles Burney's] own manuscripts', she clings to narrative authority, unwilling to limit herself to the role of scribe that she had occupied as her father's amanuensis.[30] Dabler's masquerade is acknowledged as such by Mrs. Voluble, who claims that he is not a '*real* Poet' but a 'Poet of Fashion' (I. 56, 58); his poetic aspirations are denoted by his appearance rather than his work: 'that Gentleman who *Dresses* so smart a Poet' (I. 51, my emphasis). The 'heap of words' spouted by Dabler denotes the appropriation of

[30] Burney, *Memoirs,* i. frontispiece.

literature by consumer culture in more ways than one. As well as offering an ornamental 'dress' or opportunity to self-fashion, the physical heaping of these words prefigures the 'old pot-hook[s]' denigrated by Mr. Briggs in *Cecilia*: by Briggs's reckoning, the letters of the alphabet are reduced into tangible, and crucially saleable, items without a meaning beyond their arbitrary physical shape.[31] These 'pot-hooks' make a further appearance in *Memoirs of Doctor Burney*, in which Burney had described her earliest attempts at writing:

> these scrambling pot-hooks had begun their operation of converting into Elegies, Odes, Plays, Songs, Stories, Farces, —nay, Tragedies and Epic Poems, every scrap of white paper that could be seized upon without question or notice.[32]

Burney's retrospective description of her creative process is typically and disingenuously self-effacing. She employs a lexicon of manufacture to describe the conversion of the tools and raw materials of literature – 'scrambling pot-hooks' and 'scrap[s] of white paper' – into a list of literary products that is generically diverse to the point of excess, the 'prose goods and chattels' that she would burn on her fifteenth birthday.[33] Burney's image of Dabler as constructing his poetry from raw materials, 'a heap of words all in a chime', can be read as an ironic vision of her own authorial insecurities: Dabler embodies the mechanised face of literary production, the combination of raw materials to produce something that is never greater than the sum of its parts.

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[31] Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or, Memoirs of an Heiress* [1782], ed. by Peter Sabor and Margaret Ann Doody (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 181.
[32] Burney, *Memoirs*, ii. 124.
[33] Burney, *Memoirs*, ii. 125.

In the character of Dabler, Burney presents a model of literary production that consists of repetitive, non-developmental labour; simultaneously, it is made clear that Dabler is 'not a real poet'. What this character suggests, though, is the ease with which literary authority can be imitated through an arbitrary performance of the mechanisms of literary labour. Siskin argues that

> as writing became increasingly implicated, during that century, in (disciplinary) acts of knowing, and those acts were, in turn, valorized under the rubric of mental labour, the work of writing was idealized as a cipherlike medium for the power of the mind.[34]

The physical act of writing, therefore, holds the potential to act as just such a medium; paradoxically, though, writing is still possible in the absence of that 'power of the mind' for which it is a 'cipher'. Burney's novels certainly valorise the kind of productive mental labour Siskin describes, yet she is increasingly ambivalent about the use – or more specifically abuse – of the 'cipherlike' nature of the product of that mental labour. Dabler is able, however unconvincingly, to produce a simulacrum of creative mental labour through non-creative physical labour, literally going through the motions. Although this mimicry is exposed as absurd, it is made possible by a visual economy of fashionable culture in which signifier and signified are collapsed.

Burney's sustained interrogation of mental labour in *The Wanderer* speaks to precisely the kind of 'identity-forming' professional activity that Siskin describes, and provides a means of self-definition that is potentially immune to the pernicious economy of production and consumption that governs the polite social world Ellis must navigate.

[34] Siskin, *The Work of Writing*, p. 24.

However, mental labour in *The Wanderer* often takes the explicitly gendered form of *accomplishment*. Ellis's musical skill is essentially a polite accomplishment, yet the bodily discipline required to attain that level of skill belies the eighteenth-century ideal of domestic musicianship that Richard Leppert has identified as that of an essentially leisured pursuit.[35] Once Ellis embarks on a professional music career, her skill, and by extension the application required, is perversely denigrated by the *dilettante* performers as a *lack* of skill, as merely 'point[ing] out one note, or one finger, instead of another'.[36] Yet Ellis's musical ability, while most evident in a private, domestic setting, requires both physical and mental labour of the type valorised by the emerging discourse of professional specialisation.

In *The Witlings*, Burney is particularly concerned with the imaginative work of the literary reader, as well as the writer, prefiguring her increasing concern with the manner in which such invisible labour can be used to construct both private and public identity. Lady Smatter tells Cecilia of the 'laborious work' involved in criticism (*Witlings*, II. 40), and bewails 'the private hardships and secret labours of a Belle Esprit' (II. 64-5), figuring the critical process as both physical and monotonous. Lady Smatter's claim that these 'labours' are 'secret' is unconvincing, given that they are inextricably bound up with intellectual display. By designating her 'labours' as 'secret', Lady Smatter privileges her literary pursuits as an exclusively leisured activity disconnected from non-aristocratic work, and thus a register of her social status. This is in contrast to Dabler who, in his attempt to mimic the physical processes of literary professionalism, makes a display of the labour of 'study' itself, rather than its result.

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[35] See Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 16.
[36] Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814), ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 322.

Like Dabler, though, Lady Smatter's strictly mechanical adoption of the symbolic processes of literary labour exposes her failure to properly participate in the cultural production that labour implies. Her attempt to construct a critical authority for herself through seeming knowledge of, or 'acquaintance' with, 'Authors' is ironically counterproductive. Just as the *dilettante* are dismissive of Ellis's ability to 'point out one note, or one finger, instead of another', Lady Smatter seems careless of naming the correct author, as long as she can attribute her quotations to somebody. In one sense this is a denigration of those 'Authors' as interchangeable, so long as they serve her purpose as a 'Critic'. However, her inability to distinguish between 'Authors' (and texts) or, by implication, to evaluate them, exposes her lack of agency. In response to one of her many misattributed quotations, Censor sarcastically responds that 'Nay, madam, it little matters which, since both, you know, were authors' (IV. 615-6). Censor's sarcasm encapsulates the problematic dynamics of literary consumption, in which an 'author' is a symbol of the commodity they produce, themselves becoming a physical object with a fixed, exchangeable cultural value. In this system of values, Lady Smatter herself becomes a cipher, regurgitating texts learned by rote, and her literary 'accomplishments' do not result in intellectual development. The resolution of the plot of *The Witlings* hinges on Censor blackmailing Lady Smatter with a lampoon on her literary reputation, in which this shallow 'accomplishment' is exposed: 'At Fifty, 'twas by all agreed /A common School Girl she'd excel' (V.705-6). The rote learning of the 'common School Girl' had figured in Burney's early journals as the image of disembodied performance and lack of agency, in Lucrezia Agujari's self-parody: '*comme une petite Ecoliere!*'[37] The education of genteel women thus becomes

[37] Burney, *EJL*, ii. 155.

shorthand for shallowness and non-developmental pursuit: while Smatter herself is being exposed, so too are the standards to which she conforms.

While Burney exposes Lady Smatter's arbitrary self-construction through 'Books' and 'Authors', she has her conspicuously neglect or dismiss an essential form of literary production. In both *The Witlings* and *The Woman-Hater*, complications in the plot arise from letters being miscarried, left unread, or their contents simply ignored. In *The Witlings*, it transpires that Cecilia has left a letter with Lady Smatter before leaving her house, but Lady Smatter fails to acknowledge this (either to Beaufort, or to Cecilia by responding), declaring that 'whether she writ or not is nothing to the purpose' (*Witlings*, III. 31-2). She is similarly dismissive of Codger's letter from his sister in Yorkshire, declining his offer to acquaint her with 'many curious little pieces of History that have happened in her neighbourhood' (II. 86-7). While her reluctance to hear Codger's rambling account is understandable, it also denotes the devaluing of a private (arguably domestic and, by implication, feminine) literary form; a form in which Burney herself was prolific.

In *The Woman-Hater*, the failure or neglect of epistolary correspondence has serious consequences. Eleonora reveals that after leaving her husband, Wilmot, seventeen years prior to the action of the play, she had written letters to Wilmot, her brother, and her sister-in-law – Lady Smatter – in hope of reconciliation (*TWH*, III. 2. 55, 63-4). While the letter to Wilmot is left with Nurse, who (to conceal her own deceit) never delivers it, both Sir Roderick and Lady Smatter send back Eleonora's letters unanswered. When Eleonora visits her sister-in-law, Lady Smatter does not recognise her, and assumes that she is 'some votary to the Muses, with a new dedication' (II. 7. 24-5). During their interview, Lady Smatter repeatedly interrupts Eleonora's tale with references to Dryden (II. 8. 11), Parnel (II. 8. 42), Pope (II. 8. 50),

Locke and Newton (II. 8. 54) and Bacon (II. 7. 60). Astonished by Eleonora's story, Lady Smatter begins to lose her critical poise and refers merely to 'the Poets' (II. 8. 67), although this effect is not long-lasting; in a similar explanation with Wilmot, Lady Smatter interrupts with misattributions of quotations to Waller, Swift, Shenstone, Gay, Hammond, Churchill, Armstrong and Wycherley, and after his exit names Pope, Beaumont and Fletcher in one breath (III. 8. 15-79).

Lady Smatter's obsession with authors and quotations engenders a corresponding neglect of other types of discourse. Her privileging of 'literary' conversation renders actual conversation impossible, and her display of her literary acquisitions has a blocking effect through her interruptions and neglect of her real-life acquaintances. In particular her neglect of letters from both Cecilia and Eleonora suggests a breakdown of female homosocial relationships. The physical trappings of 'literature' are ubiquitous on Burney's stage, and she uses the visual possibilities of the theatre to underscore this dangerous fetishisation of texts (and 'authors') as consumable objects in a way that was simply not possible in other genres. Burney is precise in the way her characters interact with different kinds of textual object: while 'papers', 'miniscrips' and 'Books' are all symbols of culture or cultural production and are openly fetishised, letters are conspicuously neglected, miscarried, or ignored. In *The Woman-Hater* this has serious consequences, prolonging the estrangement of Wilmot and Eleonora. The dangerous fetishisation of particular textual objects thus has implications beyond the parallel fetishisation and potential dismemberment of the authorial body. The symbolic obsession with visual cultural artefacts leads to the neglect of any discourse that is outside of the consumer-producer paradigm.

It is in epistolary discourse, though, that Burney finds a medium for creativity uninflected by the commodifying binary of producer and consumer that haunts her

professional corpus. In its reciprocal structure, in which both correspondents are equally producers and consumers, the letter has the potential to disarm the abuses of literature. As Burney's correspondence with her sister Susan demonstrates, this form offers an opportunity to create an imaginary conversational space that mimics the egalitarian domestic privacy reminiscent of the Burney family's musical household. Burney's increasing concern, particularly after her court service, with the infiltration of the dynamics of consumption into polite drawing rooms, is manifested in Lady Smatter's failure to either read or respond to letters which, burlesqued in *The Witlings*, is disastrous in *The Woman-Hater*. Those pervasive dynamics, in which even the polite drawing room becomes a space governed by specular relations, reinforce the division of publicly-recognised cultural activities and private discourse that valorises 'miniscrips' over letters because those 'miniscrips' are symbolic of cultural activity. While Burney emphatically upholds the skilled, specialised nature of her professional creative production and the correspondent value of her professional literary product, she persists in her vision of a professional self that can be disconnected from that creative product.

As demonstrated throughout her professional and her private writings, Burney comes to intensely value those spaces in which cultural activity can take place uninflected by the exchange between producer and consumer. In her newfound literary celebrity, Burney would encounter the persistent objectification of her private self as continuous with her physical textual wares. However, the private, artistic sociability offered by Charles Burney's musical household would provide a model of creative domesticity to which Burney would increasingly gesture. After Burney's service at court, the threat of consumption by her fashionable audience shifts from an imaginative to a disturbingly physical one. As a result, the model of private artistic-professionalism

imbibed in her father's house in St. Martin's Street became an essential resource in Burney's maintenance of creative autonomy.

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