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vii
Agoraphobia and Interiority in Frances Burney's Fiction

In the liveliest London streets, the shops press one against the other, shops which flaunt behind their hollow eyes of glass all the riches of the world, Indian cashmeres, American revolvers, Chinese porcelains, French corsets, Russian furs and tropical spices; but all these things promising the pleasures of the world bear those deadly whitelabels on their fronts on which are engraved Arabic numerals with laconic characters—£, s, d (pound sterling, shilling, penny). This is the image of commodities as they appear in circulation.

—Karl Marx, Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie

During tea, a conversation was commenced upon the times, fashions, and public places.... It began by Sir Clement's enquiring of Miss Mirvan and of me if the Pantheon had answered our expectations. We both readily agreed that it had greatly exceeded them.

"Ay, to be sure," said the Captain, "whatever's the fashion, they must like of course;—or else I'd be bound for it they'd own, that there never was such a dull place as this here invented."

"And has, then, this building," said Lord Orville, "no merit that may serve to lessen your censure? Will not you rey, Sir, speak something in its favour?"

"Eye," cried the Lord, "I don't know his name, "and is there any eye, "eye," cried the Captain, "you may talk what you will of your eyes here, and you talk what you will of your eyes there, but we all know they both squint in one way.... I should be glad to know what you can see in e'er a face among them that's worth half a guinea for the sight."

—Frances Burney, Evelina

When Frances Burney dispatches her heroine into London's Pantheon, a prime tourist attraction of the 1770s and 1780s, and when she positions Evelina against the backdrop formed by the building's statues of gods and goddesses, she places her heroine in a position to confront the contradictions of a culture of consumption and a culture of commodification. The Pantheon, a monument to classical antiquity, is a site of both inspiration and interrogation. Frances Burney, a keen observer of the social and cultural mores of her time, uses thePantheon as a site to explore the tension between the hypervisibility of commodities and the abstract comparability of things through the medium of money, and, by extension, their subsumption as objects of desire. This tension is further compounded by the codes of politeness regulating the ballroom, a site where the attributes of motion and stillness that normally distinguish individuals from things are divided along gendered lines. The polite young ladies are expected to display their fashionable bodies at the theater (rather than watch the play, or do anything), because if they go out of sight they will no longer exist: "The cost of five shillings an night, just to shew that you're alive." (80)

"Theatres convert us, converting a subject into a spectacle." When Frances Burney's Fiction opened on the stage, it became a conversation that redefined the exchange of spectatorship and spectacle. In the meantime, as Evelina reports, the polite young gentlemen "pass and re-pass, looking as if they thought we were quite at their disposal.... They speak, laugh, cry, look, and a thousand other things."

"And what a fine opportunity of being a spectator and of making an impression of oneself, I think, that we have at the ballrooms, and the opera! We possess no other advantages."

—Frances Burney, Evelina
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The relationship that links the marketing of beautiful exterior to fiction that privileges invisible "wonders of the Heart" (7).

Camilla suggests that the reduction to ve (that Burney's portrait of consumer culture critiques) is not the cancelation of psychology complexity but the fortunescanincludeanagoraphobia, also within the Oxford English Dictionary it is a quote from her thanes to rate the earliest use of the noun. Feminist tenets who have "habilitated Burney’s aesthetic reputation over the last decade have had to deal with the possibilities that the heroines of Evelina, who describe the spectacle of consumption. Here I want to do a similar tour of the consumer theory market, to foreground the consumer theory market, when we consider women's fortunes in contemporary consumer society. Often, in contemporary critiques of consumerism, the self is conceptualized as a presocial, prediscursive entity located well outside the market place. Conversely, individuals who seek opportunities for self-production within the market are portrayed as commodities, in which the individual is reduced to their bodies, and characters are reduced to economic indicators. They portray the self as a reflective, autonomous being that is independent of the market forces that structure and commodify it. As I shall argue in the next two sections, Camilla’s position is an exception of women’s position.

The marketing of beauty is a process of consumer society, in which the self is reduced to a commodity. The logic of advertising is to make the self appear as a commodity, in which the individual is reduced to their bodies, and characters are reduced to economic indicators. They portray the self as a reflective, autonomous being that is independent of the market forces that structure and commodify it. As I shall argue in the next two sections, Camilla’s position is an exception of women’s position.

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the visible female body and at the next foregrounds a female self whose body is suspended, "who, by repeatedly making herself over, is (in the Wordsworthian terms of the period) "ever more about to be."

The scene of stilled life Burney stages and restages—where the heroine's subjectivity shares the limelight with the objects of her consumption—has had an influential afterlife in the aesthetic discourses of feminism. It informs the discourses' ways of speaking for an authentic selfhood. Think of Jane Eyre's uneasiness as she faces the trunks filled with the finery she will wear as Mrs. Rochester, "a person whom yet I knew not." Or think of how Jane's earlier reluctance to visit silkware houses and jewelers with Rochester and her discomfiture with those sessions of costume-fitting serve to certify her alienation from any socially scripted identity ("Twill not be your English fileline," she says). By virtue of its reinscription in Jane Eyre, the scene of reification in the Burney novel has provided feminist criticism with the imagery by which it recognizes itself. Studies such as The Madwoman in the Attic identify the mission of feminist fictions and criticism with the release of "thereal[female] self" from the "immobilized" state to which a patriarchal system of society and of representation condemns it. Such characterizations of what feminist writing and reading does with the real self—rescue it from "objectification"—resemble Burney's description of the project of Camilla, which was, the novelist wrote, to "put sketches of Character & morals into action."

In my last two sections, where my discussion of Burney's self-conscious treatment of "animation" in Camilla will suggest the equivocations that can be built into such a project, I want to comment on the fantasies of self-possession that underpin this definition of feminism's aesthetic mission—making "objectification" the recurring reference point of feminist assessment of characterization may invite an overvaluation of private subjectivity. It may numb our sense of the claims of the social. In my conclusion, keeping just this possibility in mind, I shall turn to Burney's presentation of the market in her last novel, Virtuoso, or, Female Difficulties (1814). I shall read it for something different: for another story about what it means to enter "the world" and for another use of character.

Burney's Showrooms

When things happen in Camilla to any one of the many characters who enters into the world and embarks on her romantic career, the narratability is nearly always a function either of an increase or decrease in the woman's monetary worth or of an increase of her face in the world. When Burney's heroine is affected by the marriage market maxim that a woman's face is her fortune, she responds to the changes on the marriage-market stage of the plot of Camilla with a recognition that the woman's face is not a property that she can own. The decision to dispose of the Tyrold fortune leaves Camilla's cousin, Indiana—an orphan and the baronet's ward—without prospects, but, appraising the ten-year-old ex-heiress's "already exquisite beauty" (19), Sir Hugh reassures himself that when Indiana comes of age she is sure to be looked on favorably by the eligible Edgar Mandelbert, the heir apparent to the estate that borderson Sir Hugh's. Sir Hugh dislikes distinctions and likes happiness to be distributed in a fair and square way: his confidence in Indiana's attractions leads him to think that she and Camilla will end up equally fortunate. His attempts at calibrating individual and collective goods are nullified, however, by mishaps that befall the family during the summer of the novel. The consequences both of this accident and of the earlier misrouting of the family excursion fall entirely to eight-year-old Eugenia Tyrold's share. "Born with a beauty which surpassed that of her lovelier sisters" (50), she is left crippled by her fall from the seesaw and disfigured beyond recognition. Another round of redistribution ensues. As compensation to Eugenia for her loss of looks, Sir Hugh arranges for his fortune to fall to her rather than Camilla—"a guinea for every pit in that poor face" (30). Camilla gains in countenance here—Edgar Mandelbert observes the regaining of the girl's beauty that is the result of an appreciation of her nobility with the grace of her sufferings (32).
and this gain occurs precisely because it is Camilla’s turn to be diminish...
games is compounded by the prevailing codes of female modesty, which

burns—Caroline Flowers' Philadelphia vignette, in which she has no creed. There, she learns to map the family

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tracted the pox and (since Eugenia has no history before her accident, and since really no explaining her body's fate) it makes that a sign of someone's bad luck in the primary plot. Edgar, who recoils from inching, is perfect for Camilla's cajoatoria in her treatment for what Camilla seems and what she believes the heroine-watching-prerogative.

And Camilla's near-undoing in money matters from the contortions she has to go through and the panic she is forced into, in order to make Edgar recognize her as the same person as she perceives herself to be, and to make her worthy of his love even though she is always uncertain as to whether she is worthy of his love forever. Modesty prohibits Camilla from simply asking Edgar why he loves her, so she has to lie and make a display of her indifference (290-91; my emphasis).

It is then, that the "exhibition rooms" Hannah More describes become her destination. Camilla accepts the fashionable Mrs. Arlbery's invitation to pass part of the season with her at Tunbridge Wells. These are the circumstances under which Camilla embarks on what in revises A* and here, earlier, more straightforward eighteenth-century narratives that traced the gentleman's progress. It is Camilla's compliance with Edgar's agenda (or not Camilla's own desire—what takes her into market place—her itinerary does retrace the territory of the possessive individual of the mercenary society)

For Edgar appearances are consistency significant, though in an inflexible way. Either they document how the fashionable world has altered Camilla or they reveal her latent likeness to worldly women. Sometimes Edgar invokes a principle of guilt by association, concluding this Camilla to be different from the woman he had formerly loved because she must be like her new acquaintance. "Untoward contrariety of circumstance" (679) also contribute to the paradox according to which Camilla "seems unworthy" because—and whenever she tries to act discretionarily. "When she visit the Tunbridge assembly rooms, for instance, Camilla promises Edgar the first dance of the evening, and the promise soon proves an embarrassment; Mrs. Arlbery wishes to leave the assembly early, and, so as to be able to keep with whom she desires, arranges for a recent acquaintance to chaperone her in Mrs. Arlbery's stead. This show of intimacy with one of the leaders of Tunbridge supplies Edgar, who is ignorant of how Camilla "had been circumstanced" (446), with new reasons for mistrust. Observing how this woman's notice "raises [her] higher and higher in the eyes of the bystanders," how "Camilla, thus distinguished, becomes now recognized as a woman of somewhat extraordinary beauty or character," Edgar concludes that something must be different from the woman he had formerly loved because she must be like her new acquaintance. "The program of moral surveillance Edgar undertakes so that Camilla will no longer be accountable merely implements in another form the fashionable world's demand that the individual display who she is.

in order to make Edgar recognize her as the same person, "inceasing her to make a score" (in manner and countenance clearly decorous). How can this be reconciled with some one whose to come to a lady to look like a cost, or until that for the world's purposes doles, she is simply a product of the social and political economy. Since that is really no explaining what doles (are) making their account and ecstatic, and yet there is really no explaining what doles (are) making their account and ecstatic.
Spectacle in *Camilla* thus suspends story, though not exactly in the manner that exercised the historians who cast Burney as the local colorist of the Georgian leisure class. As I have indicated, moments of arrested motion, when heroines become still-life pictures of themselves, are frequent in Burney’s novels: Burney regularly arranges for Camilla and her sister heroines to be “petrified” (719) by trauma and for their images to be magnified in the lenses of their interlocutors’ jorjettes and “near-sighted glasses” (86). Even as he strenuously opposes Camilla’s entry into the public spaces of the gaze, Edgar is complicit with this exposure. His complicity suggests that within Camilla’s story a lot is riding on the interference of spectacle with story; and there is a sense in which the novel operates so as to convert these moments of awful physical conspicuousness into the achievements of a psychologized identity. These moments are equally significant for the work that psychological fiction does in culture. This interference of spectacle with story aligns the novel reader’s demand for psychological verisimilitude with the desires that have made a complex, ineffable selfhood a primary asset for consumer capitalism. That is the social significance of the novel reader’s personal involvement in the problems Camilla has with image management and the problems, to which I now turn, she has when she goes shopping. Our willingness to grant Camilla an inner self different from what appears is not defined against, but constituted on, Camilla’s exposure—as shopper and as commodity—in the marketplace.

**Camilla’s Shopping**

Feminist scholars have often commented on a duplicity in the way the fashion and beauty industries address the female shopper: she is interpellated as both an agent and an object of commercial exchange, both invited to look at the clothing and the cosmetics on display and reminded of the requirement that she be eye-catching in turn.14 Burney’s most extensive account of Camilla’s shopping exemplifies this tautological relation between women and the commodities they buy. Indeed, the shopping trip that Camilla takes when she arrives in Southampton with Mrs. Arlbery confirms feminisms’ most agoraphobic reckonings of the costs of women’s participation in the market. As Camilla and her companion for the day, a certain Mrs. Mittin, stroll together down the High Street of Southampton, a trio of shopkeepers involved in the beauty industry—a perfumer, a linen draper, and a haberdasher—begin to shadow the two women and to speculate aloud on their sanity and morality. Becoming uncomfortable but not yet realizing that she is the object of the men’s pursuit and their wagers, Camilla, like many romantic protagonists, seeks consolation in nature. She finds refuge in a bathing house on the beach. As an especially commodified version of nature, the Southampton seashore is, however, crowded with other tourists, and Camilla’s efforts to sightsee from this vantage point finally coincide with her metamorphosis into a framed image that performs its own sort of consumer address. While Camilla sits at the window, “all eyes” are drawn “to the bathing room; and new bets [are] soon . . . circulated” (611).

Recounted in this way, the story of this excursion into the market not only portrays shopkeepers as sexual harassers; it also seems to imply that the merchant operates in this guise inside as well as outside his shop. To put it bluntly, the story depicts the harm shopping does to women shoppers. (The sexual menace gets compounded as Burney’s narrative continues: their interest piqued by the shopkeepers’ speculations, two predatory aristocrats force their way into the bathing house on the quay. It takes the intervention of another male outsider, and belatedly Edgar’s intervention too, for Camilla to escape their insults.) In that the episode correlates a woman’s consumption of beautiful images with her visualization and victimization, it readily evokes some familiar arguments that link women’s situation as spectacle to the social repression of female subjectivity and agency. It seems, too, to ratify the arguments that cast women’s desire for fashionable beauty as a symptom of a false consciousness operating to the sole benefit of a patriarchal economy. (And it should be noted that Camilla, at this point in the novel, has already learned something about the monetary costs of reproducing her self in the image that fashion mandates: before departing for Southampton, Camilla racked up a large debt with the milliners and shoemakers of Tunbridge Wells.) However, attention to the history of the built spaces and learned practices that have mediated women’s relations with the world of goods brings to light other less familiar ways of reading this story of shopping.

That Southampton’s High Street is not just a thoroughfare but itself an attraction for visitors is, for a start, testimony to the romantic-period transformations that moved the accent in retailing onto lavish display techniques. Rosalind Williams’s description of the Victorian department store—as a site of visual allure, where “consumers [were] an audience to be entertained by commodities, . . . and where arousal of free-floating desire [was] as important as the immediate purchase of particular items”—is equally applicable to the spas and seaside resorts of late Georgian England. There the proprietors of permanent shops had begun, early in the century, to assume functions in the
economy formerly filled by traveling peddlers and by the stallholders of the old fairs: in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, a time of increased domestic tourism, boulevards had been broadened, gas lighting had been introduced (1792), and the shops had acquired plate-glass show windows (1786). When city streets across England became in this manner showcases for commodities and, as prototypes for today's pedestrian malls, sites for holiday-makers' leisurely spectatorship and strolling, women of the propertied classes acquired new opportunities and arenas for public mobility. In regard to the Regency woman, therefore, we might well be seeing a forerunner to the ambiguously empowered figure that historians have associated with the Victorian department store: this is, in Anne Friedberg's words, "the female flaneur, who... was not possible until she was free to roam the city on her own. And this was equated with the privilege of shopping on her own." That last sentence suggests, as Camilla's misadventures do too, that this new itinerancy came with a price. It is, nonetheless, worthwhile postponing the agoraphobic analysis, backtracking, and noting, in light of the history of Georgian retail spaces, precisely why the Southampton shopkeepers made Camilla the object of their speculations in the first place. Camilla suffers not so much because she enters the market but because she and Mrs. Mittin have engaged in behavior in the vanguard of consumer practice. They have engaged in conduct that, in slightly altered circumstances, would express what recent cultural criticism identifies as a new consumersubjectivity. At Mrs. Mittin's instigation, the two women have successively stepped into each store on the High Street, inquired at the counter about the town's tourist attractions, and then, rather than acting on the recommendations, moved on to the next establishment. Adapted to Mrs. Mittin's desire to "take a near view of the various commodities exposed to sale," this bizarre mode of sightseeing scandalizes the burguers of Southampton. They construe the "women's conduct as a pretext for 'routing over [rummaging through] every body's best goods, yet not laying out a penny'" (611). The perfumer, the linen-draper, and the haberdasher assume they are dealing with shoplifters or escaped lunatics: their wagers pivot on which of these explanations of the women is true. But the real story is how thoroughly Mrs. Mittin has, in response to the encouragement by the aestheticizing of the High Street, muddled sightseeing and marketing.

Apparendy, the retail principle of the entrelibre, which would have legitimated Mrs. Mittin's pastime, is not yet entrenched among Southampton shopkeepers. In that they were "just looking," as we would now put it, Camilla and Mrs. Mittin have jumped the gun on one stage of the consumer revolution. They have anticipated the era of obligation-free browsing. Camilla's and Mrs. Mittin's timing may be bad. Yet to supply a counterweight to the agoraphobic narrative that we have constructed out of their adventures, it might be important to note that the novel in which Camilla and Mrs. Mittin appear still offers sample evidence of the pervasiveness in Burney's culture of that itinerancy, physical and mental, which is at stake in "just looking" and which was crucial to the eighteenth-century takeoff in rates of luxury consumption. Such evidence is to be found precisely in Burney's representation of her protagonist's inner life.

The emergence in Georgian England of new retail spaces like the gas-lit, showy high streets of the watering places or the arcades of the capital (opened in 1818 and 1819) did more than facilitate the mobility of the formerly housebound lady. Anne Friedberg speculates about the psychic consequences of the consumer's new itinerancy. She proposes that when the "itinerant looking" betted by the new spaces converged with the way of looking that was called up by the new protocinematic entertainments such as the panorama (patented in 1787) and the diorama (1823), a new subjectivity came into being. Those lime-by-lime-remembered, space and time experiences, the gridiron of the street and the eye of the stroller -- these were the interstices of the new, consumer subjectivity. As a woman whose cultural capital had been increased by a "near view of the commodities exposed to sale," Camilla, the object of her shopkeepers' speculations in the first place, has found herself in the center of this consumer subjectivity. Her New Year's resolution to cut down on her shoppingück is an attempt to find her way back to a time before the "aestheticizing of the High Street" muddled sightseeing and marketing.

That is, it seems that the cultural changes we see in the early nineteenth century are not simply the result of new modes of consumption, but are also the result of new modes of subjectivity. The female flaneur, as Burney describes her, is a new kind of subject -- one who can "look about," as the perfumer says, and who can "just look," as Mrs. Mittin says, without being held to a particular mode of embodiment, without being constrained by the "gridiron of the street" and the "eye of the stroller." This new kind of subjectivity is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, as Burney describes her, is a new kind of subject -- one who can "look about," as the perfumer says, and who can "just look," as Mrs. Mittin says, without being held to a particular mode of embodiment, without being constrained by the "gridiron of the street" and the "eye of the stroller." This new kind of subjectivity is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burney's words, is a kind of "virtual subject," a kind of "virtual subjectivity," a kind of "virtual subjectivity" that is not bound by any one particular mode of embodiment, but shifts fluidly among subject positions. The female flaneur, in Burne
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Even if it had been the object of Camilla's desire, this lottery prize would still be as such an odd personal effect since, in the interval between the purchase of the tickets and the draw that selects the winner, it has, potentially, been anyone's and everyone's locket. Even though she has aimed to give the cost of the lottery ticket to the poor, in this episode Camilla still appears to gain more than her fellows from participation in sociable exchange, and likewise, in a second raffle, for earrings (474-77), she again makes the best bargain. First, acting as the proxy for her friend, Mrs. Berlinton, she throws the dice and loses; then, acting for herself, she throws and wins: once again, it is just when Camilla conforms to the consumer desire of everyone else that she acquires property—and also appears singularly lucky, singularly acquisitive, and so alarmingly conspicuous. In a sense, then, Camilla's possessions are scarcely hers. And at the point when she first arrives in Southampton, it is, the narrator indicates, the demands of decency—and not those of vanity nor even of fashion—that keep Camilla buying. "[A]fter a very short time, the little wardrobe exhibited a worse quality than that of not keeping pace with the last devices of the ton; it lost not merely its newness, but its delicacy" (689). Camilla rarely takes her own desire into the market; she takes other people's.

But, finally, no one gets what she wants in the market. Our agoraphobia—and our agoraphilia—have to do with the fact that property acquired there is never personal enough. Indeed the momentum of the consumer economy is a function of those moments when someone stands in front of a dressing-room mirror, contemplates the layout in a fashion magazine, and says, "It's not me." It is a product, that is, of precisely that resistance to a determinate representation of the self, and that insistence that there is more to the self than meets the eye, that underpins the psychological novelist's expression of irreducibly personal truths. Considering the scene that finishes off Camilla's sojourn in Southampton can illuminate the convergences between these models of selfhood and help to clarify how a consumer culture is a psychologically culture. In this scene, Camilla returns to her lodgings after a ball that she has attended in vain on the chance that Edgar might be there and that she might at last convince him that he has misunderstood her (721). Depositing her ornaments on the toilette table, she sees in the mirror the virtual image of the ball gown that has plunged her into her most desperate condition of indebtedness yet, a ball gown whose menace to her self-possession is underlined by the fact that it is the "uniform" required by the host of the ball. Duplicates of this dress have just been worn by almost all the female characters in the narrative.

In a peculiar manner, meaning in this scene migrates between the self and the body. The signs by which we recognize the fictional character with an inner life—this scene of private introspection is a textbook instance of what Bakhtin called "psychological time"—are here joined to what Kristina Straub has dubbed "a bit of eighteenth-century fashion copy," since we are given through Camilla's eyes an exhaustive inventory of her purchases:

"Her robe was everywhere edged with the finest Valenciennes lace; her lilac shoes, sash, and gloves, were richly spangled with silver, and finished with a silver fringe; her ear-rings and necklace were of lilac and gold beads; her fan and shoe roses were brilliant with lilac foil, and her bouquet of artificial lilac flowers, and her plumes of lilac feathers, were here and there tip with the most tiny transparent white beads, to give them the effect of being glittering with the dew" (721). Yoking this description to a passage of free indirect discourse, the narrator continues by quoting the heroine's "reflections." Encountering in this spectacle "glaring" evidence of the extravagance she shares with the most worldly of women, Camilla identifies with Edgar's reproachful way of seeing—of glaring at—her (721). She half-accepts his reproaches as identifying hidden aspects of her self and half-thinks of herself as being in addition to appearing "erroneous" and "unequal," without integrity or steadiness.

Of course, as a uniform, this ball gown literalizes the logic of guilt by association—the theory that Camilla must be like the women who have initiated her into fashionable consumption—that Edgar has mobilized ever since Camilla's entrance into the world.

In one respect, then, this is a moment where the self is misrecognized, alienated, lost. In a manner something like that at stake in the most pessimistic accounts of the objectification that befalls women in the market, Camilla's clothed body seems to have the last word on Camilla's identity here. But it is Camilla herself who orchestrates this moment, in which she becomes a representation, an image, to herself. So, in another respect, the moment when the heroine sees herself as she is seen, when the view from inside and the view from outside are juxtaposed, also establishes the self-difference—the distance over which "self negotiates with self for self"—that we think of as the hallmark of psychological complexity.

Camilla does not simply look in the mirror, behold the ball gown, and say, "That's me," but most indictments of the socially indoctrinated con-
Agoraphobia and Interiority in Frances Burney's Fiction

Burney seems to sum up the conditions of representation in her readers' wish that the meaning of appearances—of Camilla's glass, looks at her clothes, and sees a disguise. And in a similar manner, Burney's inscription of interiority operates by reminding us of the compulsory nature of a clothed and asocialized identity. In this respect, Burney's presentation of the familiar image of an unhappy woman before her looking glass tells us something about the cooperative relation that links psychological fiction's 'paltry duty' and as a necessary aspect of femininity. In her journal, Burney describes, in comparable terms, the notion of the real self that Burney's narrator, Camilla, 'wishes for' and which is not only to reproduce the misogyny that Edgar voices when he supposes that 'a woman who for a moment is not in her head, her heart, and her soul is not a woman'.

In this account, shopping doesn't so much substitute a fashionable female form of consumption with a material world of goods. For something that might be me—where it loses itself. This dumping-ground, where things are separated from their impersonal attributes, on which one can try on and discard identities, and when, according to Friedberg, marketing 'means simply buying items in the market, stocktaking, 'stocking up.' Shopping, on the other hand, is more leisurely, more directly determined by desire. The shop window is the market of consumption, the exchange of consumable objects. To shop is to choose a consumption-driven control over the choice of consumption-driven controls.
Chapter Four

...Put in Action

Mark Seltzer’s writing about still life painting alerts us to another means by which Burney endows her characterization with depth effects and alerts us to the complexity of the desires traversing Burney’s account of the pretty finishing touches on Camilla’s ball gown. What attracts us in the still life, Seltzer suggests, “is the reminder of the difference between what has the ability to move and what doesn’t . . . the attraction to the still life, like the attraction to the still life of commodities, instances the perpetual recovery of the more-than-appearance that allows one to set oneself in motion: the reaffirmation of agency itself.”26 The affirmation of the difference between motion and still life, between persons and their things, Seltzer states, projects the subjectivity of the subject.

In prompting novel readers to acknowledge this difference, in insistently making Camilla’s “animation” the measure of her worth, Burney replaces one of her period’s ways of sorting out femininities with another. Camilla downplays the dualistic rhetoric of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature of conduct, which, as Nancy Armstrong has taught us, pitted the aristocratic lady, with her ornamented, flashy body, against an “ardently undazzling” domestic woman and pitted this domestic woman’s deeply felt attachment to private life against the other woman’s participation in public spectacle. In a pinch, the roles in this system of character might be assigned to Camilla’s cousin Indiana and Camilla. There is no disputing that Indiana could be pigeonholed as a member of what moralists decry as “the large class of superficial women.” Indiana is “from the first glance . . . brilliant and alluring” (61); in perfect keeping with the animadversions that Hannah More makes about women overaccustomed to exhibition, she deserts her fiancé and runs away to a Gretna Green marriage. Tellingly, when Indiana’s admirers blazon her beautiful eyes, mouth, and nose, and especially when, almost as an afterthought, they commend her “inside” as altogether worthy of her “outside,” they seem hard-pressed to counter the reading in which the brilliance of her bodily surface would actually betoken an underlying emptiness. They too seem half-convinced by the axiomatics of domestic heroinehood, in which, in Armstrong’s terms, “outward and visible signs of value” count only as manifestations of “emotional lack.”27 Thus the complimentary speeches Sir Hugh makes about Indiana soon turn defensive: “Indiana, my dear, you really look prettier than I could even have guessed; and yet I always knew there was no fault to be found with the outside; nor indeed with the inside neither . . . so I don’t mean anything by that; only, by use, one is apt to put the outside first” (59). Lieutenant McDersey, the Irish officer whom Indiana ultimately marries, also protests too much: “[Her] outside is the completest diamond I ever saw! and if her inside is the same, which I dare say it is . . .” (250).

But whereas the scheme for sorting out bad women from good that informs passages such as these splits body from soul, Camilla’s fate seems rather to exemplify the ways that consumer culture reorganized body and soul together. It is not so easy to pigeonhole Camilla as playing domestic woman to Indiana’s aristocratic lady, as representing the soulfulness that is the counterpart to Indiana’s egregious carnality. Because of the way Edgar’s doubts send her into the “exhibition-rooms,” Camilla’s story is primarily one of her finding herself inside a body. Coinciding historically with the conduct book writers’ efforts to strip power away from sumptuary display, the consumer revolution’s address to moneyed Englishwomen presupposed the value of a bodily style founded on visibility and publicity.28 Burney’s account of the travails her heroine undergoes to appear herself could be read as an allegory of the costs of the difficult collaboration between the conduct book and the fashion magazine. Camilla’s problems with credit testify in multiple ways to how women pay once the “natural good looks” ascribed to those who are heroine material become something to be acquired in the marketplace. In order to sport a “natural look,” to be socially recognizable as herself, even the most domestic woman may find herself queuing up at the cosmetics counter.

For Burney, making Camilla recognizable as a heroine involves displacing the conduct book framework for differentiating good women from bad and adapting in its stead the terms in which late-eighteenth-century aesthetic discussion privileged variety over uniformity, motion over stillness, and narratives over pictures. This enterprise involves pitting Camilla’s motion and liveliness against other women’s lack of “animation.” If anyone in Burney’s novel is essential to be recognized as only true, natural...
Chapter Four

could match the description of the domestic woman who is all soul, it would be Eugenia. As women of interiority should be, she is associated with the enclosed space of her “book-closet” and private practices such as reading and writing. To be valued solely for her subjectivity is the only mode in which Eugenia, with her scarred face and misshapen person, can be valued; ultimately Melmond learns to regard and love her with “mental eyes” (794). If Eugenia’s story amplifies the way that appearances misrepresent inner feeling in the main plot of the novel, it is also true that Burney projects through this character as a social ideal of integrity, a potential transcendence of the world of appearances. And yet, though they are cast as the text’s deep and shallow women respectively, Eugenia and Indiana occupy the same devalued position vis-à-vis Camilla. Eugenia is associated with immutability, endowed with a selfhood that transcends change in ways that liken it to the “epitaphs and inscriptions” and dead languages she loves to read (127). Indiana is endowed with picture-perfect looks (84) – a significant association with the pictorial in a novel that echoes text such as Lessing’s Laocoon or Burke’s Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful while it decries the fact that a picture “appear[s] to us today as it will appear against tomorrow and tomorrow” and that a picture “tell[s] you only the present moment” (307, 538). Thanks to this campaign against stilled life, Indiana is also associated with the monotony and insipidity of what is pictured.

The standard extolled in told, embodies “variety,” whose character is “elastic” (a neologism in the eighteenth century) and whose spirits are “volatile” (52). While Eugenia is devoted to the written word, the mercurial Camilla fails dismally as a letter writer, never managing once in the novel to set a feeling down in writing. While to those who witness her debut in the ballroom Indiana is “from the first glance...brilliant and alluring” and has only to be seen to be known, “to the observant eye” Camilla is “captivating upon examination” (61).

Neither Indiana nor Eugenia, that is, can attain [thenarrator’s description of Camilla, who, we are told, is narrated, not pictured, also invites onlookers to look twice. (Tellingly, social success is hers not on the occasion of her first ball but at the breakfast held the morning after.) As I suggest in chapter 3, when onlookers protract the act of perception in this way, they put their sensibilities to the proof. They certify their distinction— the discernment that individuates and dissociates them from, in this case, the “general voice” (84) that proclaims Indiana as the belle of the ballroom. The fact, conversely, that initially enthusiastic onlookers grow “sated with gazing” at Indiana (715)— that Indiana’s image doesn’t elicit a second look—reminds us of why eighteenth-century aesthetics grew dissatisfied with beauty, why, as the revival of the category of the sublime instances, the consensus developed that the beautiful object did not adequately further the tasteful man’s quest for distinction in and through his relations with cultural goods. For Burney’s friend Edmund Burke, the bad “thing” about beauty is that it doesn’t require “any work” from the observer. To experience sublimity, by contrast, is to exercise the faculties, an imperative for participants in the romantic project of taste. As Tom Furniss has observed, Burke’s Enquiry develops a new trope of middle-class identity in defining the sublime as an escape through “strenuous action” from the stasis of beauty— the stasis of the picture that will look the same tomorrow. The protocol in a novel that casts as its fictional characters a new troping politics in which the beautiful is made to do work— to actively engage with texts and picture— is evolved here in a way that mirrors the arrangement of class identities as projected in the value scheme Burney deploys while she compares Camilla, Indiana, and Eugenia and while she refashions the heroine’s person to make room for a new idealizing of the subject in action. I am concentrating on Camilla’s “animation” for that reason: when she insists on situating her animated heroine in a world of stilled lives, Burney tells us something about the social meanings that are produced by fiction’s production of psychological selves.
in the Lady's Magazine simultaneously solicit and thwart the shopper's efforts to produce a perfect unity between what she looks like and who she believes she is. In pointing up the discrepancies between the self and its embodiment—and between the body one has and the body one might acquire—the market also increases the scope or the jurisdiction of subjectivity, because it gives the self more to do with the self. Within Camilla, this key postulate of both a psychological and a consumer culture—that self-identity is not a given, but a project—also regulates how Edgar views Camilla. It therefore has the consequences I delineated earlier when I noted how his hesitations send Camilla to the "world" in the first place. Burney portrays Edgar as someone who gives too much credit to the appearances that testify against Camilla (he is too prone to think that because she can appear as Indian, she must be like Indiana). But it's worth acknowledging the mixed feelings that motivate Edgar. The infuriating policies of prudence he pursues in courtship also amount to an admission that Camilla's body and mind, and what she appears to mean and want to mean, might well be at odds. For he adopts the policies out of worry that possession of Camilla's "hand" will not guarantee "possession of her heart" (163). Edgar further collaborates with the novel's rewriting of character as a course of action, a phenomenon in time, when he scrutinizes Camilla for signs of the coquetry that may be "incipient" in her character (291). The model of personhood at stake in this conviction that the investor in the marriage market needs to do more than worry about the real character of his elected spouse, that he should also consider what that character might become, complements the model that sustains the new retail culture, in which a woman must never stop shopping for the look that would really be her. Within the marriage market model, correspondingly, there is no end to the work that a woman must do to make good on (what Burney's male characters call) the "pledge" of her "countenance". In casting both knowing and having a character as occasions for work, Camilla attests to how, in Clifford Siskin's words, labor was transformed in romantic culture from "that which a true gentleman does not do to the primary activity for forming adult identity." The fact that Burney thought of Camilla, as she says in a letter, not as a mere "novel" but as "sketches of character morals, put in action" registers both the centrality of "animation" to her project and the middle-class rewriting of identity and activity to which Siskin refers. I have been aiming here to revise in my turn a familiar proposition about the roundness or round characters—I wrote that truism of a psychological culture which maintains that real characters have stories. We value characters whose lives are written, who tell us what they do, who are animate, not inanimate, because the ways in which Burney's project of "animation" within the marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion" resonates with the situation in which Camilla is set. Burney is interested in the commercial economy of fashion, and her projects of "animation" in different registers—within the marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion" and within the marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion"—are one and the same. The difference between the body one has and the body one might acquire is produced by the conversion of the body into a commodity, a process of "animation" that Camilla is subjected to. The marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion" produces a sense of the self that is not only "real" but also "authentic," "composed of the truth of the self," and "united with a power of development." The marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion" thus produces a sense of the self that is not only "real" but also "authentic," "composed of the truth of the self," and "united with a power of development." The marriage market model of the "commercial economy of fashion" thus produces a sense of the self that is not only "real" but also "authentic," "composed of the truth of the self," and "united with a power of development."
access to new stories about interiority and individualism, I want to move now to the anxieties about social control that it registers. When Burney thinks about bodies in motion she sometimes thinks too about what it means for the self to be subject to the imperatives of the outside world.

To show this, I turn here to another figure who served as a foil to productive man—the automaton. The underside of the effort to understand the self as work and work as self-expressive was a fascination with the labor of the machine and machinelike. Since Burney attended the shows where mechanical wonders such as the singing birds of *Evelina* were displayed, since her father commissioned one of the first player pianos, and since the papers she left behind her at her death included a celebrated sketch of a female steam engine (fig. 6), she was well placed to report on this fascination.33 Seeming to work by themselves, but not working for their selves, automatons emblematized the ambiguities built into that new insistence on conjoining identity and activity. So did the so-called mechanical orders, increasingly represented as automatons. Like his descriptions of preternaturally active “hands” and their operations, Adam Smith’s discussions of the alienating effects of the division of labor—of work that consisted in nothing but the repetition of a single simple gesture—anticipated the Victorian factory inspectors’ tales of selves “mutilated” by their bodies’ occupation.34 Such automatized bodies transmitted a compelling spectacle of activity severed from agency. They displayed the vulnerability of the self-made individual—how the work of self-making could be work outside the self’s control. And, conversely, the spectacle of their *impersonal* labor provided a ritual reaffirmation of the beholder’s *personhood*, enabling that vulnerability to be both monitored and disavowed.

This may be why, in its definition of *character*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* stages a confrontation of person and machine and cites John Stuart Mill’s declaration that “One whose desires and impulses are not his own, has no character, no more than a steam-engine has a character.” Members of a middle class who wished both to define themselves through work and to distinguish themselves from a working class found a coping mechanism in the automaton. At the same time the automaton called attention to the very tensions over self-dominion and agency it was meant to relieve.35

Automatons permit a kind of equivocating, then. Entering this cultural colloquy on persons and machines, peopling her fictions with characters who appear as automatons, enables Burney to open up possibilities foreclosed by the value scheme that otherwise governs her characterization. Burney is interested in animated, bouncy heroines with a spring in their step, but she

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Fig. 6. Ink drawing of a mechanical woman by a member of the Burney family. Courtesy of the Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.
Chapter Four

is also interested in bodies whose compulsive motions make them look subjected to remote control. In her depictions of fashionable consumption, especially, she is interested in bodies that disrupt basic definitions of selfhood and agency in that their locomotion looks to be compelled from the outside, not by persons' will, but by commodities. A stroll past the shop windows in Tunbridge Wells, the narrator informs us, "afforded some amusement to Camilla," but, tellingly, when the narrator turns to the effects that the wares in the windows have on Camilla's companion, Miss Dennel, the narrator up the ante. She describes something resembling a hysterical seizure, depicting the power that things have to keep the girl's "mouth open, and her head jerking from object to object, so incessantly, that she saw nothing distinctly" (394). It doesn't come as a surprise to readers accustomed to this passage's way of sorting out characters that Indiana, insipid and pretty as a picture, is similarly described as a "beautiful machine" and an "automaton" (191). But at moments Burney makes not only Camilla's foil but Camilla too look machinelike, not just to the outside world (Edgar) or to herself, but also to us.

This crossover between rhetorical registers that have been set up as opposites feels like so much fiddling, and of course the sheer length of passage's way of sorting out characters that Indiana, insipid and pretty as a picture, is similarly described as a "beautiful machine" and an "automaton" (191). But at moments Burney makes not only Camilla's foil but Camilla too

Burney's Machines

It is a given of Camilla and the ways of reading that Burney teaches that it is "animation" that endows Camilla with more selfhood, more personality, than any other character in the novel. In Burney's rewriting of character as a narrative process, animation is what separates her heroine from Indiana and Eugenia, neither of whom is really a character who moves or who develops. But animation is also part of what is equivocal about the automaton. Automatons are animated things. Representations of automatized movement unsettle the polities between narratives and pictures, animation and objectification, that underwrite Burney's elaboration of interiority and her agoraphobic take on the marketplace. In the context her automatons create, to make "animation" the measure of personhood is to link Camilla's liveliness and the machine's lifeliness, not distinguish them.

The strangest episode in Camilla, a set piece in the novel's meditations on the relation of body and identity, exemplifies this elision while it recounts an "experiment" (310) in setting pictures in motion. In this chapter, titled "Strictures on Beauty," Mr. Tyrold schools Camilla and Eugenia in how little value the deep-feeling individual should place on physical charms: the lesson is designed to reason the two women out of their grief over society's incapacity to see the real Eugenia, to look any further than her disfigured body. Instruction begins during a family walk, when their father has Camilla and Eugenia take a look at the beautiful girl who stands in a window of the house they are approaching. Training his own gaze on the "perfect face" of the fair unknown, Tyrold muses aloud on the difference that distinguishes the contemplation of a picture from the contemplation of a countenance. "'We look at a fine picture . . . with an internal security that such as it appears to us today, it will appear again tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,' " he maintains, making the remarks on the stubborn fixity of pictures that others in the novel repeat; but, he continues, in our examination of a fine face "'there is always . . . some little mixture of pain; the consciousness how short a time we can view it perfect, how quickly its brilliancy of bloom will be blown, and how ultimately it will be nothing.'" (307). The plot of animation that organizes this aesthetic argument effects what it describes. In Tyrold's discourse, the fine picture becomes a fine face. It comes alive (but only to perish), and, likewise, the girl on cue moves out of the window and the house, leaving the frame in which she has been pictured. After she reappears in the front garden of the house, this transition from still life to movement is repeated several times, each transition more "abrupt," "hasty," and shocking than the one before. When she starts into motion for the fourth time, it is to "begin turning round with a velocity that no machine could have exceeded" (309). Her language, a formulaic stammer, seems similarly unnatural: "[S]he perceived them, and, coming eagerly forward, dropt several low courtesies, saying, at every fresh bend—'Good day!—Good day!—Good day!'" As his daughters cower behind him, Mr. Tyrold asks the girl...
chapter four

The resemblance between the signs of psychological plenitude and the signs of absence of mind. Yet here and there, in some of thearguable cases we have encountered, the resemblance becomes more evident.

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The resemblance Camilla bears here to the beautiful imbecile who overshadows it, we refuse. The resemblance Camilla bear...
the discursive conditions of their meaning and acquiring lives of their own. Automatized motion highlights the difficulty of saying where literary character ends and the contriving author begins. For even the most animated characters neither express nor create themselves, but are instead constructed from the outside in, controlled and created by narrative exigency and authorial designs.

This is why Mr. Tyrold’s experiment reminds us of what Burney does in setting her sketches of character in motion. The resemblances that make multiple figures in Camilla appear as mechanical women highlight the “coercive logic of the [conventions] . . . through which literary character is rendered.” At the same time, they depict the formal predicament of textually determined characters as a version of the plight that befalls women in the marketplace, the place where, at Burney’s most agoraphobic moments, identities seem most socially determined, where the dues individuals pay to the social seem most costly. And this is why, as the idiot’s repetitive courtesies or Miss Dennel’s frenzied window-shopping indicates, the antics of Burney’s automatons also seem to amplify the performances mandated by the social script. More so than other doings, these antics—shopping, minding one’s manners—can’t be “personified,” can’t be brought back into the purview of the individual person. The difficulty of conceiving of the literary character as both “real” and legible, and the difficulty of conceiving of the individual as both an autonomous agent and a participant in social exchange, are each rehearsed when the novel confounds the animation of people with the animation of machines.

Because they look and move in ways that are, equivocally, both the same as and different from the ways persons look and move, automatons serve at once to explain and express away the individual’s irrevocably social condition, the incursions that the outside world and the others in it make on the inner sphere of selfhood. This statement is, in addition, a fair description of the explanatory and consolatory powers that, increasingly after the turn of the nineteenth century, will seem to characterize the tradition of “the” novel. I have been exploring Burney’s interest in what can be impersonal and machine-like about the literary character in order to discover the limits of those powers. In this chapter’s concluding remarks on the imagining of the self and the market in The Wanderer, or, Female Difficulties, I want to finish up that exploration by thinking about how in her last novel Burney juggles an interest in subjectivity with a new interest in society. In The Wanderer Burney moves back and forth between rendering the inside story in which a heroine is most her self and rendering the impersonal, societal perspective from which that story looks to be subsumed by the mechanical operations of the system. At moments the novel seems as interested in “the world” as in the heroine who “enters into it.” It seems as interested in the samenesses that make the world, the social order, hold together as in the differences that make the heroine her self.

Within Camilla, animation serves as the marker of Camilla’s subjecthood: it is the trait that makes her more three-dimensional than other characters. At the same time animation embodies subjugation to others—it makes the beautiful imbecile the dummy that speaks someone else’s script. Animation, as we have seen, unsettles the boundaries between self-expression and self-objectification. The interplay between personal and impersonal perspectives in The Wanderer has similar effects. It effaces the difference between what belongs to the self and what falls under the purview of the social. Burney marks the labors that the Wanderer undertakes as the means by which this heroine fulfills her guardian’s (and, presumably, her author’s) injunction as to what “the motto of [her] story” should be: “[T]hose, only, are fitted for the vicissitudes of human fortune, who, whether female or male, learn to suffice to themselves” (220). At the same time, however, that she chronicles the Wanderer’s efforts to earn a wage and support herself (as a music-mistress, a seamstress, a milliner), Burney stresses her membership in a faceless workforce that is being slotted into and retired out of the labor market in conformity with the booms and slumps of the business cycle. The vagaries of supply and demand—the surplus of female labor (290), the end of “the season” at the watering places (410)—animate and paralyse, compelling and terminating the performance of labor regardless of the individual laborer’s will or need. “The market” (like “the workforce,” an abstract entity that overruns direct apprehension) makes people start into motion. Then it converts these working bodies into still lives.

Positioning its heroine at the point of connection between Camilla’s mechanical women and the mechanical orders, The Wanderer makes the work that sustains the self look like what Mr. Tyrold seems to do to the beautiful imbecile, or what authors seem to do to characters. Burney’s last novel thus registers a certain self-consciousness about the social exchanges and the communicative mechanisms that underwrite the value and intelligibility of the “work” of literature: the work, that is, of animating characters and demonstrating that the self may be redeemed from social constraints and appear as it “really” is.
Chapter Four

Remote Control and Social Exchanges: The Wanderer

The Wanderer recounts the “female difficulties” encountered by a refugee who escapes incognito from Robespierre’s Reign of Terror and who arrives in England penniless and obliged to conceal her name, descent, and even nationality in order to protect those she has left behind in France. This elusive personage, whose name is withheld not only from other characters but also, for multiple volumes, from the reader, has been cast as Exhibit A in many discussions of how the social order as Burney renders it reduces woman to a nobody. (The Wanderer shares this condition of nonentity with Evelina, who at one point, despairing over her lack of a patronym, describes herself as a “cypher, ... to nobody belonging” [340].) However, these discussions of a character without an identity, one with whom, perversely, the reader nonetheless “identifies,” discount what is alluring as well as tragic about figuring the self in negative terms. In one respect, the heroine’s wanderings across England trace the same romantic route as the peregrinations of an outcast Childo Harold or Melmoth. Demonstrating that she belongs nowhere, they certify that she has no social self, only an inner identity that transcends social determination. In the state of anonymity, the self is left without the protection provided by the definitions, classifications, and evaluations that attach persons to social meaning and yet, for this reason, is also invulnerable to other people’s readings. This is the source of the nameless character’s seductions for a psychological culture.

The protagonist’s wanderings cover familiar ground in another way. Even while striving to keep a low profile, she must, like Camilla before her, negotiate the tricky codes of female self-display. At moments when this heroine is simply trying to be, she too can look as if she is trying to be looked at, as if she is pandering to the public eye and struggling “for occasion to exhibit simply trying to be, she too can look as if she is trying to be looked at, self-preservation are repeatedly thwarted when those she must depend on state, her body betrays her. For the last third of the novel, her projects of (663), the discrepancy between her ladylike looks and her evident neediness aates the tricky codes of female self-display. At moments when this heroine is (630). In some episodes, her face is her fortune, and her beauty secures her credit as the genteewoman she will ultimately prove to be. In other episodes, her body betrays her. For the last third of the novel, her projects of self-preservation are repeatedly thwarted when those she must depend on read a notice in the newspapers that offers a reward in exchange for information about her whereabouts and that describes her face and figure. Even when the people whom she encounters have not read this “advertisement” (663), the discrepancy between her ladylike looks and her evident neediness exposes her to the notice she is trying to elude. As in Camilla, the notice she gets is the kind directed towards objects for sale.9 When the Wanderer finds employment in a milliner’s establishment, the proprietor exposes her and the other pretty assistants to public view along with the ribbons and caps, attracting custom by misleading her clients about what it is the shop has for sale (429). Still, an indication of how The Wanderer diverges from the novels preceding it is that here Burney eventually subjects her protagonist to “exposure with a vengeance”: when this heroine’s flight from her persecutors takes her along the routes that the rural poor also travel, “she meets this population as one of them, on foot, meanly attired, physically exhausted, sometimes hungry and thirsty, and almost without resources herself.”

In articulating the relations between some women’s shopping and others’ work, in telling the commodity’s story from the vantage point both of the shop and the workplace, this novel trumps Camilla as a testimonial to the market’s powers to efface the self. Yet at the same time, The Wanderer, like Burney’s preceding novels, fuels the fantasy of an inner self that might operate independent of relations of social exchange. The Wanderer couples an instrumentalizing account of the self in which the individual person is a means to a social end with an emphasis on what in the person is most impervious to social contingency.

Its heroine’s associations with circulating goods and with money are signs of how the narrative sets her up as a catalyst for a sense of the social. What holds the book’s numerous characters together and makes them a society is that each is this stranger’s creditor: each lends her money, and she is what other people have in lieu of a social contract to lend to the nation and so to themselves. Her narrative function is to be a perambulating personification of the national debt. In this novel Burney seems interested in issues that concerned the political economy of her era. Her preoccupation here with the mechanisms of social integration (“public opinion”; “the general circulation of money” [218, 305]) also dictates the functions that the Wanderer assumes when the aristocratic household in which she finds refuge amuses itself with private theatricals. The Wanderer is the amanuensis who copies out the lines for the individual players and the prompter who knows all the parts without (at least initially) having one herself. Her mediation converts the acting that individuals have rehearsed in private into something approaching an ensemble performance. Her credentials for this “social work” are made evident by the way that the description of how she sounds as a prompter recalls most descriptions of third-person narrative. Like Burney’s
These relays between the social and the personal also shape the sequence contemplation” (676). To think, however, about the multiple occasions on which the Wanderer, acting as go-between, confidante, or looker-on, has no “personal” interest in what transpires (164, 191) is also to see Burney locate subjectivity precisely where it seems to have least room to maneuver. Burney’s interest in impersonality, that is, also registers her interest in making personality the stake of narrative. That the heroine so often denies her personal stake in the narrative’s events revalidates and repowers the category of the personal: it makes this character’s personal affairs more personal, more uniquely differentiated, and harder to read than others. For all her work in staging the social, this heroine—her family, class, and nationality mystified—has no social context. This is what is indicated in the last paragraph of the novel, when, enumerating the proofs of her heroine’s independence, Burney invokes a treasured middle-class myth of self-sufficiency and value prior to exchange and characterizes the Wanderer’s story as that of “a female Robinson Crusoe” (873).

These relays between the social and the personal also shape the sequence of episodes near the end of The Wanderer in which Burney abandons the overcrowded public rooms that are the settings for the novel of manners and moves the narrative from the town to the rural scene. At this point, Burney’s recourse to a romantic language of sublime vision supplies additional corroboration of the richness of her heroine’s interior life. Accounts of the psychic transformations that transpire when the individual is left alone with majestic nature, when he finds a refuge from the pressures of other people, and when this seclusion calls forth his deep self, were the romantic era’s privileged vehicle for rendering what was individual about the individual. There is something odd, however, about the way Burney uses the discourse of the sublime to rewrite character, and I want to conclude this chapter by thinking about what it is in this sequence in book 8, besides prospects evacuated of the traces of other people, that occasions the Wanderer’s moments of “soul-expanding contemplation” (676).

Those moments are for the most part occasioned—much as one supposes they would be for an antisocial Crusoe—by scenery whose majesty is best represented in negative terms: “Here, far removed from ‘the busy hum of man’ . . . [there was] not even a beaten path within view; not a sheep walk, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage to be discerned . . . to announce the vicinity of mortal habitation” (675). One moment in this sequence of views of the landscape of the New Forest works differently. Burney uses the sequence as a whole to lead up to the denouement of her plot, the point at which this heroine’s individuality finally receives the social backup offered by the conjugal tie and a legacy of landed property. It is significant, then, that at the moment inaugurating this final phase of her narrative of self-recovery the Wanderer accedes to a God’s-eye view, not (as would be customary) of the natural scene and her place within it, but rather of the economic processes in which her individual story has been absorbed. This is what she sees: “Carts, wagons, and diligences, were wheeling through the town; marketwomen were arriving with butter, eggs, and poultry; workmen and manufacturers were trudging to their daily occupations; all was alive and in motion; and commerce, with its hundred hands, was everywhere opening and spreading its sources of wealth, through its active sisters, ingenuity and industry” (666–67). The heroine’s flight from her persecutors gets absorbed into the traffic patterns produced as workers and commodities move around the economic system.

The agoraphobia Burney is so good at inciting might invite us to read this as a moment when the market subsumes or even consumes the individual. This reading, however, would have to ignore how it is at this moment, after volumes of harassment, and even as crowds seem to gather and disperse, that the Wanderer is left alone and at peace. She finds her place in the state of circulation. For a brief respite she has “nothing more to apprehend” (666). When they catch sight of “the deep care in her countenance,” this society of marketwomen, workmen, and manufacturers see “but an air of business” (667). She looks like one of them.

And, of course, from the pointedly impersonal perspective adopted in this passage, the Wanderer is one of them. Burney here aligns her heroine’s point of view with the “extensive views” that Samuel Johnson ascribed to the men [sic] who wrote good books on “trade.” In this rewriting of the sublime, such “extensive views” rescript the expansive vistas contemplated by the protagonist whose “summons to self-consciousness” happens when he is stationed on a wilderness promontory. What can be said about the self-consciousness that is recovered in contemplating not nature but commerce? The sociological language that enables one to speak about what marketwomen or manufacturers are doing in general—about the operations of “society” at large—
dislocates individual experience. Though in this instance the Wanderer is on the run from her enemies, she has brought her labor to the market before, and overall it is of little significance if one person on the road to the market does not mean to go there, just as it is of little significance that no individual is particularly conscious of her contribution to the system's total organization. This passage thus underlines what is uncanny about our involvement in vast, impersonal structures such as "society," "the economy," "the workforce," or "commerce with her hundred hands." It underlines how that involvement is as much an illustration of the haplessness of the individual in society—her entrapment in a role of mechanical imitation—as it is of her agency. In ways that parallel the effect of Camilla's accounts of beautiful machines, the view of the market economy that the Wanderer attains makes visible the gap between what we think we do and what we really do.

Like Burney, the practitioners of political economy also used the image of the machine, and of the individual's instrumentality within the "workshop" of society, to capture those discontinuities. In his Essay on the History of Civil Society, for instance, Adam Ferguson wrote of individuals as "tools . . . ignorant of the system in which they are themselves combined." He remarked on how government functionaries "are made, like the parts of an engine, to concur to a purpose, without any concert of their own; and equally blind with the trader to any general combination, they unite with him, in furnishing to the state its resources, its conduct, and its force." Getting ready to wind up her story about how an individual becomes her self, Burney rewrote the sublime in a way that joins the romantic story of animation—the Wanderer's contemplation of the prospect of commerce coincides with her "refreshment" by a revivifying breeze that comes straight out of the romantic lyric (667)—to a disquisition on social motion. The moments when the Wanderer's geographical mobility grants her an expanded vision include a moment when she sees herself as a moving cog in political economy's social machine.

The discourse of political economy used the image of the machine for an additional purpose—to expound a theory of social cohesion. To occupy the panoramic vantage point from which the entire machine could be seen to be moving, from which "the parts of the engine" could be seen to "concur to a purpose," was to apprehend a vast and diffused society as a whole and apprehend apparently divided labors as a unity. The philosophical histories penned by figures such as Hume, Smith, and Ferguson—whose disquisitions on public credit and public opinion Burney echoes throughout The Wanderer—claimed such a perspective. In its vindications of the market economy, political economy recounted the history of economic expansion, industrialization, and increasing occupational specialization as a story of social cohesion, of the coming together of individuals in communities. The moral which that history exemplified was that when "each of us produces only one thing, or has only one service to offer, we are obliged to depend on each other for every other service and product that we need." In this scheme, the mere existence of market society could be pointed to as edifying, socializing testimony to how, as Adam Smith put it, the individual "stands at all times in need of the co-operation and assistance of great multitudes."

As I have suggested throughout this chapter, Burney's ways of representing women wronged by the market's reckonings continue to guide twentieth-century literary critics, both when we tell stories, very different from Smith's, about the market as a place of social exchange, and when we tell stories about literary character. We value the characters who, as we say, have taken on lives of their own, even though our faith in their singularity and autonomy is difficult to reconcile with our knowledge that a character exists to be read, that the legibility of the literary character makes it a social experience. At the same time, the plot of animation on which we draw to discuss character in these terms indexes our wish to make our novel reading the occasion for our own romantic escapes from the social.

Burney's accounts of victims of fashion and of prejudice are also the origin of this plot of animation. Her novels, with those of the "Burney school" generally, prepared the ground for the novel reader's persisting preoccupation with recovering inside, untold stories. They anchor a tradition that has valued psychological fiction for its enshrinement of a real self misrepresented by its appearances in the social realm and objectified by society's commercial arrangements. In a psychological culture, this privatized notion of the self is the telos of novel writing and reading. Conversely, the subject who is utterly explained by her social context—a character who can yet be rescued from her automaton-like state if the feminist critic, speaking for her and "giving [her] life with another look," affirms her independence—provides the starting point for most assessments of women's fiction's critical relation to consumer capitalism. Accordingly, it is not surprising that, in these assessments, discussion of social determination crowds out discussion of social participation, of the collaborative relations that link "great multitudes." What thinking of characterization as animation leaves unresolved is the question of "how social transformation can take place in a communal or collective sense."
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Sublime poses two challenges: to think about how the subject is already socialized, rather than external to the world she enters, and to think about how the market is, for better or worse, a social site. In one way, this novel's shifts between the absolutely personal and the absolutely impersonal are a bravura demonstration of the lengths to which readers will go to "identify" with a faceless nobody. At the same time, those shifts between any one and everyone suggest that the reading of literary characters can involve more than recovering the occluded depth of selfhood. "Character" can be a device for pursuing lines of analysis that extend from oneself on to others.55

In 1786 the German novelist Sophie von La Roche kept a travel diary recording her journey to and around London. Her itinerary was determined in part by her crush on her sister's novelist Frances Burney and her determination to put a face on the genius behind Evelina and Cecilia.

A female Boswell, engaged in a literary pilgrimage, Sophie von La Roche was a missionary for the author function, the institution that has made sense of texts by privileging the meanings of the literary work that seem to pertain of the character beyond the characters' own words. A reader, she was interested in a hierarchy of positions, Sophie von La Roche in 1786 and the German novelist Sophie von La Roche kept a travel diary recording her journey to and around London. Her itinerary was determined in part by her crush on her sister's novelist Frances Burney and her determination to put a face on the genius behind Evelina and Cecilia.

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3. See, for example, Burney, Cecilia, 34: "The moment Cecilia appeared, she became the object of [Sir Robert Flover's] attention, though [not] ... with the look of admiration due to her beauty, ... but with the scrutinizing observation of a man on the point of making a bargain, who views with fault-seeking eyes the property he means to cheapen."

4. Margaret Anne Doody, Frances Burney: The Life in the Works (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 256. Perhaps because her career coincided with the book market boom that began following the resolution of Donaldson v. Becket in 1774, and because she was the first well-known novelist to exploit the possibilities of "popular" authorship, Burney's corpus was often read as a mere transcription of marketplace messages—a reading like that elicited by the bodies of the fashion victims who are portrayed in the pessimistic accounts of consumer culture.


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10. See, for example, Miranda J. Burgess's discussion of Burney's late novels in "Courting Ruin: The Economic Romances of Frances Burney" (Nove 28, no. 2 [1993], 131–53), which insightfully illuminates the complicity between eighteenth-century defenses of credit in the commercial economy and the promotion of sensibility in conduct writers' guides to courtship but says very little about the historicity of the notions of intrinsic worth and fixed propriety that Burney summons to counter this alliance. The phrase "desire-based relativism" is Burgess's: see 135.


12. The seesaw in itself is a traditional emblem of mutability, and one that is often exploited in jokes about the physical and moral fragility of female pleasure-seekers. So much is suggested by the air of abandon and the disheveled state of the falling woman who is pictured in The Play of See-Saw, one in the series of paintings that Francis Hayman executed in 1740–41 for the supperboxes at Vauxhall Gardens and a painting that Burney most certainly knew.

13. Doody, Frances Burney, 236.

14. See, for example, Rachel Bowlby, Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola (New York: Methuen, 1985), 32.


18. Friedberg, Window Shopping, 15–38. The panorama was a 360-degree, cylindrical painting of a broad vista (usually a cityscape) that was lit from above and viewed from within a darkened room—one reached, at least in the case of Leicester Square panorama (1791), by means of a mechanism that was the forerunner of the elevator. The diorama supplemented the panoramic scene with moving lights that recreated the effects that the passage of time—sunrise to sunset, for instance—had on a scene. For more on "building-machines ... designed to transport—rather than to confine—the spectator-subject" (Window Shopping, 20), see Richard D. Altick, The Shows of London (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), chaps. 9–16, and William H. Galperin, The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

19. The locket's physical characteristics underscore this oddity, since it has a blank
space "left for a braid of hair, or a cypher" (92), a space that indicates that it could be personalized but as yet has not been.


22. But even the Lady's Magazine does not assume that its readers are content when they contemplate the "fluctuations in fashions." The Lady's Magazine promotes style—and promotes its illustrations, as well as the "elegant patterns for the Tambour [and] Embroidery" that it supplies—not by urging readers to embrace "innovation[s] in the female draca" but, as the "Address to the Fair Sex" that opens the magazine's inaugural number suggests, by portraying those innovations as facts of social experience that must be tolerated. The lady will make the best of them: "[W]e shall endeavour to render [the news of fashion] the more worthy of female attention, by an assiduity which shall admit of no abatement, and by an eagerness of intelligence which shall preclude anticipation" (advertisement to vol. 1 [1770]).

23. Friedberg, Window Shopping, 57.


25. I am assisted here by Gillian Brown's discussion of individualism and female bodies in "Anorexia, Humanism, Feminism."

26. Seltzer, Bodies and Machines, 143.


28. Englishwomen's willingness to self-identify as potential wearers of clothes and users of cosmetics contributed to the boom in the English fashion trades that began in the 1790s. On this boom, also spurred by the wartime embargo on products from the Continent, see, inter alia, Adurgham, Shops and Shopping, 1800–1814 (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964); for the growth in the perfumers' trade in the eighteenth century, see Faces (booklet published to accompany a special exhibition at the Museum of London, 1986).


32. On the ways in which the Industrial Revolution involved not only the transformation of ways of working but also a reconstituted understanding of women, see Deborah Valenze, The First Industrial Woman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

33. On the Burneys, shows of mechanical wonders, and Charles's player piano, see Alick, Shows of London, 69. Commentary on the drawing of the mechanical woman, which has been ascribed to various members of the Burney circle, has construed it as evidence for Burney's biography, as, specifically, an image of the author's condition following her mastectomy in 1812. Rejecting this biographical focus, I choose instead to read the drawing as an image of a female machine as well as of a female body, and to highlight rather than obscure its relation to the material conditions in which women worked in the age of manufactures.

34. For Adam Smith's representations of the human hand, severed from the human body, see An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 16; for his discussion of the mental mutilation of the worker, "whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations, of which the effects too are, perhaps, always the same," see 429 and 435. For useful discussions of automatons' relation to the steam engines and to nascent processes of industrialization, see, Jean-Claude Beane, "The Classic Age of Automata: An Impressionistic Survey from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century," in Fragments for a History of the Human Body, pt. 1, ed. Michel Feher (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 430–80, and Seltzer, Bodies and Machines.


36. Burney's interest may well derive from her knowledge of the controversy over "animal magnetism" that occurred in the 1780s. In that decade, Mesmer's séances graphically demonstrated how thoroughly individuals could, in William Godwin's words, be subjected to "their senses" and how thoroughly they could give themselves up to "mechanical imitation." For a history of this controversy, and for the suggestion that the mesmerist's victims would have been linked by the public to the automatons of popular entertainments, see Simon Schaffer, "Self Evidence," in Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion Across the Disciplines, ed. James Chandler et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 80; Schaffer quotes William Godwin's translation of Franklin and Lavoisier's joint investigation into animal magnetism (1785). On female automatons specifically see "The Wooden Daughter of Descartes," a story in Lady's Magazine 26 (1795), 7.

37. Johnson, Equivoque Beings, 152.

38. I borrow here from Anne McClintock's description of how two founding texts of feminist literary criticism, Gilbert and Gubar's The Madwoman in the Attic and Nina Auerbach's Woman and the Demon, employ the emancipatory task of the woman writer: Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest (New York: Routledge, 1995), 96.


40. I draw on Amanda Anderson's analysis of how the figure of the painted lady—the fallen woman who has "lost her character"—highlights the tensions between plot and character that are constitutive of the novel: "Prostitution's Artful Guise," esp. 104.

41. The market, it is worth recollecting, invites women to convert the social anxieties of looking as one ought, the anxieties of being in a body, into achievements of identity. But the agoraphobic in Burney also casts the market as a site of menace, so that while finding her self through shopper's methods, a heroine may also "lose her character."
42. Here I draw on Brown’s “Anorexia, Humanism, and Feminism,” esp. 214 n. 46.
43. When Burney chronicles the story of the bills that Camilla racks up with the milliners and drapers of Southampton, fashion epitomizes the social contingencies that override individual desires or powers. Just when she’s trying to practice economy, Camilla finds that “all she wore, by the quick changes of fashion, seemed already out of date” (689). Burney’s next novel also portrays fashion in these terms, but the Wanderer, by contrast to Camilla, inhabits the kind of world that Deborah Valenze depicts when she describes the effects the winds of fashion had on women engaged in the cottage industry of straw plaiting: “The size of the bonnet was important,” a historian of the craft pointed out, “for an increase of only two inches in the size of the ridiculously small bonnets worn in the middle of the [eighteenth] century would have required twice as much plait.” Straw plaiters simply fell victim to all of these variables, and available work and wage rates fluctuated mercilessly, ranging anywhere from 6s. or 10s. to only 2s. 6d. a week” (Valenze, First Industrial Women, 119–20, citing Dony, History of the Straw Hat Industry).
44. I owe this insight to Gillian Brown’s discussion of authorship in Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 146.
45. It is no accident that the Wanderer finds herself “advertised” in a newspaper. Transported across the Channel and into the novel by a smuggler, she is from the start of her narrative associated with commodities such as French lace and face powder, contraband goods that female shoppers in particular might hanker after (e.g., 406, 720).
47. In the seventh chapter of the novel, the protagonist tries to collect letters that the post office has been holding for L.S. This is the closest she gets in the first third of the narrative to owning a name, adopting one that is applied more properly to the pounds and shillings of English currency and that allies her with the money-centered narratives I discussed in chapter 2. Doody’s introduction to The Wanderer offers a number of provocative suggestions about the resonances of this name.
48. Here I take issue with Miranda Burgess, who in “Courting Ruin” seems to argue that Burney is unremittingly antagonistic toward figures such as Hume and Burke. But see, for instance, the passage (319) in which the narrator accounts for why the Wanderer’s merit as a musician is undervalued by her audience: “The public at large is generally just, because too enormous to be individually canvassed; but private circles are almost universally biased by partial or prejudiced influence.” I don’t think that this vindication of the heroine’s worth and this critique of the world’s faulty powers of discrimination undermine a critique of the Whigs’ belief in a self-regulating, impersonal market; instead, the point of the passage is that the economy in which the Wanderer must operate is imperfect because it’s insufficiently impersonal.
49. To understand the effects here of Burney’s adoption of a pointedly impersonal perspective, we might draw on a distinction that Catherine Gallagher lays out in her discussion of Evelina and note that the crucial fact about the Wanderer at this point is not, as it was previously, her namelessness. Instead, it’s the fact that she’s nobody—for this figure in the landscape could be anybody or everybody. Namelessness draws attention to the self that’s operating incognito: asserting the existence of a secret, it grants to the self the substance and distinctness of a “somebody.” By contrast, to consider the Wanderer’s condition in this scene is to move from “the altogether private to the altogether public.” See Gallagher, Nobody’s Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1760–1820 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 214.
50. Johnson’s remarks on the “extensive views” of the practitioner of political economy are quoted in Kathryn Sutherland’s introduction to Smith, Wealth of Nations, x. The description of the individual’s moment of sublime vision as a “summons to self-consciousness” is that of Geoffrey Hartman, whose discussion of Wordsworth’s locodiscursive poetry is cited in Frances Ferguson, Solidarity and the Sublime: Romanticism and the Aesthetics of Individualism (New York: Routledge, 1992), 125. Ferguson discusses how the fascination with sublime vision was a fascination with technologies of individuality: “Against the... fear of a diminution of consciousness produced by the very act of communication, the sublime establishes nature as the instrument for the production of individuality itself” (130). The natural scene in question is, customarily, ones whose magnitude brings the viewer face to face with “the limitations of individual perception” and at the same time recuperates that limitation by providing an occasion where human reason proves itself able “to think past those very perceptions” (138). It is because intellectual phantasms like “commerce” also force the mind to confront what is supersensible that Burney can so easily move between the extensive views of political economy and the expansive prospects of aesthetic theory. Chapter Five

2. LaRoche, Sophie in London, 123 (Sept. 11); Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), xii.