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The Haberdasher's Plot: The Romance of Small Trade in Frances Burney's Fiction

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*ABSTRACT: This article investigates the modest retail spaces of haberdasheries as places of economic self-sufficiency and emotional support for women shopkeepers in Frances Burney's Cecilia (1782) and The Wanderer (1814). Eighteenth-century haberdashery was a flexible trade that required less capital and skill than other wearing apparel professions; female haberdashers evaded the sexual stereotypes that plagued milliners and dressmakers. In these novels, haberdasheries constitute feminized spaces that turn attention toward women's economic production as opposed to the dangers they faced as consumers and in sexualized trades—being conflated with goods for sale, mistaken for sex workers and thieves, stalked, and placed at risk of accruing social and monetary debts. Burney's "haberdasher's plot" interrupts the gendered economy of debt made visible across her novels, creating narrative and commercial alternatives to the marriage plot. Together Cecilia and The Wanderer demonstrate the financial and individual rewards of modest retail spaces, even if the romance of small trade provides only temporary shelter from the inescapable risks of the marketplace.*

It is no easy task for young, unmarried women to navigate consumer culture, London shops, or the marriage market in Frances Burney's fiction. Her scenes of urban consumerism evoke the ways in which metropolitan fashion culture presented social and corporeal risks to women. Shops are spaces in which Burney's heroines are stalked, sexualized, mistaken for sex workers and thieves, and even experience temporary madness. In many ways, shopping offered consumer autonomy to women, as well as opportunities to display aesthetic choice and cultural taste in the warehouses and showrooms that proliferated in London, Brighton, Bristol, and Bath.

While she was not the first to coin the term “shopping,” Burney was an early adopter of its usage to mean the practice of visiting shops to either buy or merely view goods.<sup>1</sup> Shopping, as Maxine Berg has argued, was both a practical activity and an imaginative escape: “It was an experience of private fantasy and imagined desire.”<sup>2</sup> Yet the pleasures of shopping threatened to sexualize those who either shopped too frequently, with too much enthusiasm, or found themselves lodging above shops.<sup>3</sup> The risks of the shop were most dangerous to those women who worked their floors and whose bodies were often conflated with the goods for sale.<sup>4</sup> For elite women, the shop functioned as a vexed space that made available instances of consumer agency and sociability, while trafficking in the perceived associations between commerce and promiscuity, shopping and circulation. Such cultural tensions are made visible in fiction in the experiences of Eliza Haywood’s Betsy Thoughtless, Tobias Smollett’s Winifred Jenkins, and Samuel Richardson’s Clarissa Harlowe, among others.<sup>5</sup> Despite its many allures, shopping was plagued with risks for women, a fact made palpable in all four of Burney’s novels.

Critics have drawn attention to women’s representations as both agents and objects of consumption within the eighteenth century, uncovering the significance of what it meant to shop for china, attend auctions, and collect things.<sup>6</sup> Such attention to consumption overlooks, I argue, women’s roles in economic production and has made us less attentive to scenes of women’s commercial autonomy within the growing marketplace for domestic and imported goods. This essay seeks to reorient attention toward textual examples of women’s productive work as laborers, providing a contrasting picture to their storied roles as consumers. I argue that haberdasheries, run by and supported by women, palliate some of the significant challenges faced by women characters across Burney’s fiction.<sup>7</sup> The haberdasher’s shop stands at a distance from Burney’s indictment of fashion culture elsewhere in her novels, in which both devotees of

fashion and their milliners and mantua-makers are satirized and treated with suspicion.<sup>8</sup> Despite the considerable risks of commerce, both her second and fourth novels, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782) and *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814), carve out commercial settings for women that resist the links between shopping and sexuality. I look here at how some of Burney's female characters establish their own haberdashery shops and fund those of other women.<sup>9</sup> Burney's haberdasheries evoke the utopian country retreats depicted by Sarah Scott where women support other women.<sup>10</sup> Burney, however, defends the rights of women to participate in urban scenes of commerce and to perform as productive tradeswomen. In the feminine haberdasher's shop, women find a respite from the competing and contradictory commercial demands placed on their minds and bodies.

My essay shows how the very modesty of these trade operations constitutes a tantalizing economic and narrative alternative to the excessive feminine suffering exacted by masculine commodity culture. Haberdashery—in contrast with the millinery and dress-making trades—was neither feminized nor sexualized as a profession in the late eighteenth century (even though the trades sold some of the same stock and provided some similar services).<sup>11</sup> These shops, whose history I review in the first section of this essay, reframe some of the consumer experiences addressed elsewhere in Burney's fiction by shifting attention away from the role of women as consumers who accrue social obligations and monetary debts and toward their skills as tradeswomen. A shift in focus from shopping to selling allows us to recognize the social and economic implications of Burney's haberdashers, a trade that focused on small goods and netted moderate profits. Burney's haberdasheries fit easily into Harriet Guest's defense of the cultural and narrative value of “small changes”—small shifts in perception and practice that accumulate over time to engender important debates about the status of women.<sup>12</sup> Guest has argued that even

small changes constitute significant commentaries on the political and public roles of women in the eighteenth century, reorganizing the relations between private life and political culture. As I detail in the second section, *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer* make a special case for the modest haberdasher, who specializes in small things such as thread, ribbons, gloves, hats, and fans, positioning haberdashery as a trade that affirms the value of feminine community and also its ability to support grieving mothers.

In my third and final section, I show how Burney's "haberdasher's plot" interrupts the gendered economy of debt as well as the *telos* of the female *Bildungsroman*. The haberdasher's plot offers a trade-based and progressive alternative to the more familiar retreat to the country or companionate marriage presented as happy conclusions by Burney and many of her contemporaries. Rather than constituting an obstacle to marital closure, the haberdasher's plot raises unsettling questions about the companionate ideal promoted by so much of the era's fiction. As Ann Bermingham underscores, the eighteenth-century marriage marketplace was "a *real* market—that is, an economic space for the exchange of goods and services, regulated by specific rules of decorum, brokered by institutions and protected by laws governing property."<sup>13</sup> Ruth Perry concurs that "wherever property was at stake, marriage was fast becoming a highly commercial game to be played for financial advantage."<sup>14</sup> Moreover Bermingham detects an economic reciprocity between the marriage and fashion marketplaces, not only in their shared seasons but also in their coupling of women with commodities: "For how a woman consumed, that is to say how she identified with other commodities, would determine how, in turn, she was consumed" (p. 98). In the haberdasher's shop, Burney trains our eyes on the role of women as producers and sellers of other goods (as opposed to themselves). It is a story that Burney would have known well as the daughter of a third-generation fan seller herself. As Amy Erickson has

recently discovered, Burney's mother, Esther Sleepe, ran a prosperous fan shop in London prior to and into the early years of her marriage to Charles Burney.<sup>15</sup> It was a trade she had learnt from her mother, Frances Wood Sleepe (who had likely followed in her father's footsteps and worked into old age); all three of Frances's daughters established successful fan shops in fashionable and exclusive Cheapside.<sup>16</sup> Burney's close female relatives thrived as tradeswomen who manufactured and sold accessories and hired other women. In *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*, the haberdasher's shop constitutes a feminized space that emphasizes the personal and economic rewards of trade for women. Burney's romance of small trade provokes narrative ruptures in the marriage plots that drive these novels. In so doing, the shop figures as an alternative aesthetic closure to both companionate unions and rural retreat, even if these ideal shops provide only temporary shelter from the inescapable risks of the marketplace and its institutions.

### *Small Trade*

In their propriety and scale, Burney's model businesses stand at a distance from the era's proprietors of luxury goods. They are neither the dazzling establishments that Evelina visits in Burney's *Evelina, or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778) nor those Camilla enters in *Camilla, or, A Picture of Youth* (1796), nor even ones the heiress Cecilia favors with her custom. Rather these haberdashers peddle small wares, balancing fashion with practicality by supplying goods that might be taken home by consumers and put to immediate use (in comparison with the waiting periods demanded by the dressmaker's products). In the period, accessories constituted the most changeable components of women's wardrobes; the pace of change for accessories outstripped trends in textile design. As Kimberly Chrisman Campbell has noted: "one's fashion sense was demonstrated not by the cut of one's clothes, which

remained fairly static, but by the choice of trimmings and accessories.”<sup>17</sup> The haberdasher’s wares allowed women to adopt new styles and adapt their accessories at home. Burney’s descriptions correspond with trade literature that emphasized the low financial and social barriers to setting up as a haberdasher. Haberdashery required less expensive stock and fewer professional skills than other clothing trades available to women (such as dressmaker, embroiderer, or milliner).

Haberdashery constituted a flexible and inclusive area of shopkeeping for both proprietors and apprentices with low barriers to entry. This reputation paralleled perceptions of the plasticity of its products, which were repeatedly noted as being small in size but mighty in numbers. For instance, Richard Rolt’s definition for “haberdasher” in his *New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, Compiled from the Information of the Most Eminent Merchants and from the Works of the Best Writers on Commercial Subjects in all Languages* (1756) draws attention to the small scale of the haberdasher’s products: “The name of a trader in various small wares or goods; as silk, thread, tape, ribbands, needles, pins, and other articles; particularly buckram, wadding, hair-cloths, buttons, mohair, and binding, for taylors.”<sup>18</sup> These items support the creation of larger things, whether holding together seams with thread, pins, and needles, or providing support with wadding and buckram. They serve as necessary items, not always visible in the finished product. The haberdasher likewise functions primarily as provider of small wares to the tailor in R. Campbell’s *The London Tradesman, Being a Compendious View of all the Trades, Professions, Arts, Both Liberal and Mechanic* (1747): “This Shop-keeper furnishes him with Buckram, Wadding, Plying, Hair-cloths, Buttons, Mohair, Silk, Thread, Stay-tape, Binding, and every Article relating to Trimming, except Gold and Silver Lace, which the Taylor has of the Laceman.”<sup>19</sup> Apart from the mohair, silk, and ribbons, these products are hardly the stuff of

eighteenth-century fashion legend or luxury. Instead the haberdasher provides the tackle that structures and supports the period's dress, the necessary materials to strengthen and raise more exciting, dazzling, and expensive surfaces. Such support formed the backbone of the clothing trades, which as Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui have shown, was "the predominant shopkeeping trade" in the eighteenth century; their data documents the increasing numbers of haberdasher shops within the eighteenth-century retail market.<sup>20</sup> Descriptions of haberdashery wares suggest that the tradesperson could stock a varied collection of items within a moderate shop floor (in contrast, for instance, to the large and heavy bolts of fabric required by mercers and drapers). It was a responsive trade that catered to consumer desires to follow the pace of shifting fashions.

The smallness of the haberdasher's wares, however, limited the business's profit margins. Campbell provides a mixed picture of the profession, positioning it as a relatively low-cost pathway into trade largely because it required less manual skill and expertise than did tailoring and dressmaking. For Campbell, haberdashery is a business quickly learned and mastered:

Knowledge consists in the Prices and Properties of the above Articles; and it requires no Conjuration to be fully Master of the whole Mistery of his Trade. He buys from the Wholesale Dealers in the several Articles mentioned and reaps a moderate Profit; but the Taylor makes the Customer pay at least Fifty *per Cent.* though he does not allow the Haberdasher, who is obliged to trust, near so large a Profit; however, between them the Wearer gives an unconscionable Price. (p. 199)

Campbell underscores how the trade's attractions—namely its accessibility—are dampened by its narrow profit margins, which are "moderate" in comparison with the tailor's inflated prices for his retail customers. Elsewhere he reports that the tailor's "Profit is very Considerable" (p.



193). Campbell notes that the cost of setting up as a master haberdasher runs from £100 upwards to £2000 with apprenticeships running from £10 to £50 (p. 333). By contrast, he estimates that London mercers required stock upwards of £10,000; the mercer's velvets, silks, and brocades—his “innumerable Train of expensive Trifles”—outstrip in expense and luxury the haberdasher's cheaper, moveable goods (pp. 198, 197).

Period trade cards hew to Campbell's emphasis on the small size of the haberdasher's stock, with “small” functioning both descriptively and as a repeated refrain in the promotional text for their business cards. Joseph Clare's card for his shop in Fleet Street near Bride Lane advertises him as a “Haberdasher of Small Wares.”<sup>21</sup> Dozens of London haberdashers claimed this category of “small wares,” including Jonathan Clarke in Southampton Street, Philip Hall in Grace Church Street, Thomas Morgan and Robert Matthews both in Fleet Street, as well as Thomas Cogan, William Gower, and Thomas Parsons all clustered on Cornhill.<sup>22</sup> Some cards echo contemporary trade manuals by including detailed catalogs of ribbons, threads, lacings, bindings, and hooks and eyes for sale to the public.<sup>23</sup> As in the trade manuals, these cards tally items that are often minute in size to start and then cut down to smaller segments. The names attached to the trade cards indicate that the business was dominated by men—Campbell certainly imagines the trade as a masculine one—but haberdashery was not entirely closed to women. A few London shops were owned by women. These include Hannah Hatwell's at the corner of Newgate Street and Butcher Hall Lane, whose card advertises her wholesale and retail stock of haberdasher and millinery items and mirrors the graphic and textual conventions of other haberdashery cards (see fig. 1).<sup>24</sup>

Written in response perhaps to the trade literature's underselling of the complexities of the business, the anonymous (and cheap at two shillings) *Haberdasher's Guide, or, A Complete*

*Key to All the Intricacies of the Haberdashery Business* (1826) defends its intricacies: “Perhaps no trade is more complicated than Haberdashery, owing to the great variety of articles of which it is composed,—their different Qualities, Quantities, Lengths, Makes, &c.”<sup>25</sup> The guide’s title page claims that the work is “Printed for the author,” who throughout insists on the valuable role of the haberdasher’s expertise across the clothing trades: “Instances are repeatedly occurring of persons complaining that they are at a loss to know how to conduct a business apparently so trifling, and yet so indispensable; finding themselves under the necessity of adding Haberdashery to their Stock, or sacrificing a part of their connexion” (pp. 3-4). The guide goes on to explain that some shopkeepers (especially mercers and drapers) place underqualified (in its view) haberdashers on their floors. Eighteenth-century trade cards provide supporting evidence of shopkeepers such as tailors, glovers, milliners, and hosiers who folded haberdashery wares into their stock and advertise such services to customers.<sup>26</sup> *The Haberdasher’s Guide* aims to provide invaluable definitions and stock lists both to independent haberdashers and to mercers and drapers eager to provide these services, defending it as a separate profession that requires specialized knowledge and skills. For the anonymous author, the trade is far from “trifling,” but rather an “indispensable” aid to its customers and other milliner and tailoring professionals. This staunch defense suggests that haberdashery’s reputation was somewhat mixed; it was viewed as an essential business that nonetheless peddled in fripperies. Overall, this slippery reputation, combined with the relative ease of establishing new shops, made it an ideal business for Burney’s fictional women shopkeepers. Burney’s female haberdashers find themselves on the margins of a society in which the flexibility of this type of trade offers shelter from the more dominant and insidious institutions of the marketplace.

### *The Rewards of Feminine Haberdashery*

Scholarship on gender and commerce in *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer* has mined the problem of debt for both Cecilia Beverley and Juliet Granville, respectively. Over the course of the novel, Cecilia loses most of the inheritance with which she began, including her family estate, her uncle's estate of £3,000 per annum, and her father's cash funds of £10,000.<sup>27</sup> Miranda J. Burgess, D. Grant Campbell, Catherine Gallagher, Catherine Keohane, Cynthia Klekar, and James Thompson, among other critics, have all discussed *Cecilia*'s exposure of the intertwined relations between gender and debt.<sup>28</sup> In sharp contrast to Cecilia, Juliet experiences severe financial struggles until the novel's end when marriage and familial acceptance propel her towards economic stability. Against this backdrop of personal finances that wax and wane—but mostly wane—the novels demonstrate the heroines' negative experiences of the marketplace. In so doing, they expose what Gallagher has identified as the broader emphasis on “dispossession” within discourses of authorship and the marketplace generated by women writers during the period.<sup>29</sup>

These narratives of debt and dispossession, however, are set against other scenes of productive feminine trade. This section examines Cecilia's financial support of a haberdashery shop and Juliet's work as an independent embroiderer and haberdasher. Such scenes of feminine business differ from the shopping experiences of Evelina in London and Camilla in Southampton. In *Camilla*, Burney's third novel, Camilla Tyrold racks up significant debt; she is, according to Deidre Shauna Lynch, “a heroine who is so identified with the marketplace, so intent on reproducing herself in the image fashion mandates, that she literally shops until she drops.”<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace finds evidence of female characters from *Camilla*, such as the bargain-hunting, window-shopping Mrs. Mitten, who manage to evade the cultural

constraints applied to women shoppers: “because she looks without paying, she disrupts a male attempt at economic control.”<sup>31</sup> Mrs. Mitten’s unconventional approach to commercial exchange, as Kowaleski-Wallace elucidates, ultimately compromises the virtuous Camilla’s reputation, who, under her influence, accrues debts with a jeweler, milliner, and haberdasher, while another haberdasher suspects her of shoplifting. Similar to Camilla, Cecilia and Juliet lack proper market expertise; they are naïve consumers, who struggle to navigate monetary exchanges and the social rituals attached to shopping in the eighteenth century. Such critical emphasis on debt may be balanced, however, by recuperating instances of feminine partnerships in these novels, such as those that develop between women workers and the elite women who support their shops. *Camilla*’s haberdashers are never identified as female, but in *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*, feminine haberdasheries create social and economic bonds between women.

In a notable subplot from *Cecilia*, the heroine meets a poor but hardworking woman, Mrs. Hill. Cecilia’s interactions with her begin with a debt, although not one of Cecilia’s own making.<sup>32</sup> As their relationship develops, the women model a clear picture of the shared rewards of feminine investment. When Cecilia becomes acquainted with the Hill family, she notes their grim finances. Mr. Hill has been unable to work for several months, following an injury he sustained at the villa of Cecilia’s guardians (the Harrels never pay Mr. Hill for his carpentry services, and he eventually dies from his fall). Mrs. Hill confides to Cecilia that “all the work I can do by myself is not enough to maintain” her family of five daughters.<sup>33</sup> Cecilia longs to help Mrs. Hill “to undertake some better method of procuring a livelihood,” but it is the now-widowed Mrs. Hill who proposes a plan for her future: to become a partner in her female cousin’s “small haberdasher’s shop” (p. 200). While the premium of £60 exceeds her means, Cecilia promises Mrs. Hill that “if the situation will make you happy, I will give it you myself”

(p. 200). The plan prompts not only feelings of gratitude from Mrs. Hill, who “wept her thanks” but also allows Cecilia to exercise a philanthropic agency far more satisfying than her experiences of fashionable society (p. 200). Her business arrangements on behalf of the Hill family offer an escape from the decadent Harrels while highlighting her own negotiating skills:

The arrangement of this business now became her favourite occupation. She went herself to the shop, which was a very small one in Fetter-lane, and spoke with Mrs. Roberts, the cousin; who agreed to take the eldest girl, now sixteen years of age, by way of helper; but said she had room for no other: however, upon Cecilia’s offering to raise the premium, she consented that the two little children should also live in the house, where they might be under the care of their mother and sister. (p. 201)

Cecilia’s investment in the Hill family emphasizes her efforts to keep mother and daughters together where possible and throughout stresses the importance of feminine self-sufficiency and community, themes that circle back to Cecilia herself, who receives immense satisfaction from this “favourite occupation.”<sup>34</sup> She determines that the cost of her plans will run to £100, a sum she is unable to pay up front, owing to Mr. Harrel’s exploitation of her income. These circumstances force her to negotiate again with Mrs. Hill’s cousin: “drawing up herself an agreement for their entering into partnership, [Cecilia] made each of them sign it and take a copy, and kept a third in her own possession: after which, she gave a promissory note to Mrs. Roberts for the rest of the money” (p. 203). Her involvement may read as another mark of privileged agency that allows her to insert herself into the business of laboring women, yet this is no idle charity. Cecilia keeps a copy of the Hill contract, affirming her financial and legal investment in the future of the haberdashery shop. If Cecilia’s and Mrs. Hill’s social and

economic statuses are far from equivalent, their relationship develops reciprocal results for both parties. For Mrs. Hill, labor not only leads to economic self-sufficiency but also functions as a balm to her keen suffering as widow and mother. Mrs. Hill confides to Cecilia that her work helps to manage her despair over the death of her only son: “if it had not been for very hard work, the loss of him would quite have broke my heart” (p. 86). Thus the haberdasher’s shop yields forms of security that originate from its role as a source of financial stability but extend outward to include emotional support, as women find a collective sense of shelter within its walls.

Moreover, Cecilia’s investments in the shop prompt her to enlarge her plans for the remainder of Mrs. Hill’s daughters, for whom there is no room to apprentice in the shop. Cecilia plans to pay for the education of the two middle daughters at “some cheap school, where they might be taught plain work, which could not but prove a useful qualification for whatever sort of business they might hereafter attempt” (p. 201). Of course, plain work comprised useful skills for many forms of female business in the period, most notably haberdashers, who could be expected to provide some sewing for customers (as do *The Wanderer*’s haberdashers). In *Cecilia*, the haberdasher’s shop becomes a locus for other forms of financial support for the Hill women, which are centered on developing skills that will yield future benefits long after their current acquaintance with Cecilia. Thus laboring and elite women derive various forms of pleasure and commerce—ranging from charitable giving to female community, present and future income—from their connections to trade.

The circumstances of Juliet in *The Wanderer* could not be more different from those of Cecilia, whose charity work is optional, something to give her life meaning once she has seen past the sham of fashionable society. *The Wanderer*’s sprawling plot details the “Female

Difficulties” (its subtitle) of a woman on the run from a French revolutionary soldier who has forced her into a civil marriage. Similar to Burney’s first novel *Evelina*, much of the plot is organized around Juliet’s quest to gain the recognition and protection of her late father’s family. Over the course of the novel, Juliet takes a series of positions that rely on her feminine accomplishments (including employment as a music teacher, milliner, seamstress, and paid companion).<sup>35</sup> At first glance, Juliet’s labor looks unusual when set alongside many histories of women’s contributions to the marketplace in the period. The general story told about women and business emphasizes the decline of female participation in trade in the late eighteenth century. Beginning in the 1990s, this historical arc was revisited by Berg and Kowaleski-Wallace, who pointed to the ways in which period ideals coupled with archival challenges make it difficult to find concrete evidence of such decline.<sup>36</sup> Bridget Hill has documented that apprenticeships for young women indicate their entry into a wide variety of professions, but that as the century advanced, trade and business options narrowed for women and much of women’s work shifted to occupations requiring fewer skills.<sup>37</sup> My interest lies less in trying to demonstrate how Burney’s haberdashers reflect actual historical shifts in women’s participation in trade and more in suggesting that literary scholarship shares responsibility for minimizing the evidence of women’s participation in business. Here my emphasis echoes Jennie Batchelor’s efforts to recuperate the presence of work across eighteenth-century fiction, especially in fiction authored by women and in domestic novels about women.<sup>38</sup>

*The Wanderer* stages the narrative and imaginative importance of women’s labor, embedding it within the heroine’s survival. Juliet engages in a variety of professions, but two businesses stand apart from the general degradation, both social and sexual, she experiences in shops and in the marketplace. She establishes both businesses—the first, doing fine embroidery

work; the second, a haberdashery shop—with her close childhood friend from France and fellow emigrée, Gabriella, who like Mrs. Hill, has suffered the death of a son.<sup>39</sup> Their partnerships reflect a world of eighteenth-century trade that, as Nicola Phillips has shown, “relied heavily on custom derived from interpersonal links, such as through kinship or friendship, and in particular on cultivating aristocratic patronage.”<sup>40</sup> Unlike in *Cecilia*, where retail networks between women begin from unequal social and family relations structured by the hierarchies of charity (the support of a wealthy heiress; a female cousin to which to turn), *The Wanderer* stresses the parity between the two friends, enlarging the scope and significance of the female networks explored in *Cecilia*. Gabriella and Juliet, both elite women temporarily dispossessed during the French Revolution, set up a first venture in Brighton, with the help of the wealthy feminist Elinor Joddrel, who gives them £50 to establish their business and solicits orders from her wide circle of friends. Indeed, as in the case of Cecilia and Mrs. Hill, the energetic support of a well-connected woman proves essential to the operation; Elinor “instantly attacked, by note or by message, every rich female at Brighthelmstone [Brighton]; urging the generous, and shaming the niggardly, till there was scarcely a woman of fortune in the place, who had not given, or promised, a commission for some fine muslin-work.”<sup>41</sup> As a result, Juliet and Gabriella “began their new plan of life under the most favourable auspices” with a surplus of orders that demanded all of their time (p. 401). Almost halfway into this novel about Juliet’s difficulties, for the first time, “first sweet contentment, soft hopes, and gentle happiness visited the bosom of Juliet” (p. 402). Burney depicts this period of intensive work as a joyful experience of friendship: “No privation was hard, no toil was severe, no application was tedious, while the friend of her heart was by her side” (p. 402). Just as Mrs. Hill’s hard work alongside her female kin softens the loss



of her son in *Cecilia*, here the friends' intensive labor is fueled by the personal rewards of a feminized work community.

This experience is short-lived, lasting only a week before Gabriella must leave for London to nurse her ill husband, an event "ruinous to [Juliet's] lately acquired contentment, and dearly prized social enjoyment" (p. 403). Thus the greater bonds of marriage intervene and interrupt the women's partnership. As Edward Copeland notes about this development, "needlework unsweetened by friendship turns bleak indeed."<sup>42</sup> Gabriella's departure destabilizes the business's financial basis, as Juliet uses a reserve of cash to pay for her friend's travel (a reserve to which she feels she has no right and which forces her to develop a personal debt to her suitor Albert Harleigh). Juliet then runs into further debt because she has no capital to purchase materials (p. 403). Moreover, Elinor's wealthy friends delay their payments, when they pay at all. Thus Juliet learns that diligent, solitary labor does not produce financial stability. Indeed, it results in the opposite: "inadequate for entering into any species of business was a mere knowledge of its theory" (p. 403). Juliet possesses a room of her own but neither the funds nor the female companionship necessary to her trade. She is forced to abandon the business after three weeks when the Brighton season ends. On her own and with no reliable partner in sight, Juliet joins Miss Matson's millinery shop, the site of her eventual social and sexual humiliation.

The brief embroidery business anticipates the second partnership between the friends, one, I argue, that attempts to rewrite the first venture's failures. Now a seasoned worker with experience both on the shop floor and in the work room, Juliet brings her knowledge to Gabriella's precarious haberdashery shop in Frith Street, Soho, whose physical premises are an improvement on the more informal embroidery partnership. Gabriella, "unpractised in every species of business," has suffered many of the challenges confronted by Juliet when she toiled

alone at the embroidery business, including a lack of capital, shaky credit, and bargain-hunting customers (p. 623). Working alone and still grieving for her son, Gabriella has struggled to navigate dishonest creditors and customers alike; to gage appropriate amounts of stock; to balance the low prices of old-fashioned necessities against those of vogueish items: “new to all this, the wary shop-keeper’s code, she was perpetually mistaken, or duped, through ignorance of ignorance, which leads to hazards, unsuspected to be hazards” (p. 622). Juliet steps in not only to provide emotional comfort to her friend, but also her manual labor and the small savings from her purse. Even as Burney recounts the many drawbacks faced by the honest, naïve retailer, she concludes her description of the women’s haberdashery by underscoring how female friendship diminishes the risks of commerce by sharing the division of labor:

Juliet now became a partner in all the occupations and cares of her friend: together they prepared the shop for their customers every morning, and decked it out to attract passers by; together they examined and re-arranged their goods every night; cast up their accounts, deposited sums for their creditors, and entered claims into their books for their debtors: together they sat in the shop, where one served and waited upon customers, and the other aided the household economy by the industry of her needle. Yet, laborious as might seem this existence to those who had known “other times,” Juliet, by the side of Gabriella, thought every employment delightful; Gabriella, in the society of Juliet, felt every exertion lightened, and every sorrow softened. (p. 624)

Burney paints an idealized and expansive picture of labor between friends, using the refrain of “together” to build an argument for productive feminine trade.<sup>43</sup> The narrator does not single the women out by name; rather, “they” work so closely together that individualism fades to the

background, strengthening the picture of unified toil. Thus the haberdashery shop performs double duty as a site of financial self-sufficiency and emotional support for the women, elaborating upon the feminine production hinted at in *Cecilia*. In a novel brimming with examples of punishing work experiences and labor conditions, the haberdasher's shop here sustains and supports Juliet.

### *The Romance of the Shop*

For Burney's heroines, debt and uncertain inheritances function as obstacles to courtship and matrimony that add to her critiques of the institution of marriage. With its clandestine marriage and heroine's temporary madness, *Cecilia* has been read as an indictment of coverture practices and secret contracts. Cecilia's marriage to Mortimer Delvile costs her the remains of her inheritance (following Harrel's abuse of her cash funds) because her snobbish in-laws refuse to allow their son to adopt her surname, a condition imposed by her late uncle's will. Cecilia's extensive losses are somewhat softened by a bequest from Delvile's aunt announced in the novel's last chapter, but this late-breaking reparation does little to paper over the general chaos that marks Cecilia and Delvile's marriage, temporary separation, and eventual reunion. Terry Castle offers perhaps the most damning assessment of Cecilia's marriage to Delvile, whose passivity confuses Cecilia and contributes to her temporary loss of sanity. For Castle, Cecilia's marriage, determined by the constraints of Burney's chosen novel form, slides all too easily into a pseudo-death: "A conventional female destiny overtakes the heroine in a way that is at once inexorable and gothically alienating, for in a final horrific touch Burney's makes her heroine's mock death indistinguishable from her marriage."<sup>44</sup> More recently Melissa J. Ganz has sought to highlight Cecilia and Delvile's marriage as an "affective agreement between two equal agents,"

seeing the novel as a demonstration of “the ethical and practical problems that result from private matches.”<sup>45</sup>

The haberdasher’s shop, however dangles the possibility of an alternative outcome to the female *Bildungsroman*’s teleological conclusion.<sup>46</sup> Thus the haberdasher narrative functions as both an aesthetic and market competitor to courtship novels that mark the transfer of feminine commodities from fathers to husbands. Burgess has described Burney’s novels as “economic romances” with marriages that indicate the novelist’s conservative acceptance of her readers’ demands for romance.<sup>47</sup> In Burgess’s view, even Burney’s resistance to courtship—as exhibited by the aggressive, unsuitable men that accost her heroines as well as their unstable values in the marriage market—marks her conservative critique of the marriage marketplace rather than a progressive indictment of the social and economic status of women.<sup>48</sup> Shopkeeping, especially small trade, introduces an alternative form of commercial exchange to the vexed role of the marriage marketplace in Burney’s fiction. *The Wanderer* rewrites the role of the haberdasher’s shop in *Cecilia*, in which the shop eventually becomes, as discussed below, a mixed site of commerce and romance, owing in large part to Cecilia’s use of it for private reasons. In *The Wanderer*, Burney extricates the shop from these ideological slippages, positioning it as a commercial sanctuary that exists as an escape from the romantic and financial hardships of the marriage market and commercial society.

In *Cecilia*, the initial promise of the haberdashery shop dims as the space becomes compromised by the novel’s intricate marriage plot. Cecilia requests Mrs. Hill’s help as a messenger to send a surgeon to Mr. Belfield, an acquaintance wounded in a duel: “she at length determined to have recourse to Mrs. Hill, to whose services she was entitled, and upon whose fidelity she could rely” (p. 227). Mrs. Hill emerges as a loyal aid to Cecilia, one eager to

reciprocate the support she has received from her elite acquaintance. Similar to her initial support of Mrs. Hill, Cecilia's interest in Belfield derives from her charitable impulses, as he cannot afford to pay for his own medical treatment. However, the two plans prove far from equivalent in their objects of charity; Cecilia finds it close to impossible to provide care for a male body, whereas her economic support of the female Hill family poses no such moral ambiguity. Cecilia's attempts to conceal her charity towards Belfield backfire when Delvile follows Mrs. Hill to her haberdashery. There Delvile poses as a customer interested in the gloves on display in the window. His performance allows him the chance to spot Cecilia discussing Belfield's treatment with Mrs. Hill, which to the jealous Delvile confirms her romantic feelings for Belfield—a misunderstanding that continues to build and threatens to derail their union, even after their secret marriage. As soon as Cecilia relies on Mrs. Hill for private favors rather than for charitable reasons, she exposes herself to the more common taint of women and commerce—or in her view, a “clandestine appearance”—and the haberdasher's shop becomes subject to the conventional associations of commerce and sexuality (p. 229). Initially, the haberdasher's shop joined women together in a stable economy, one that served their financial needs, palliated the loss of a husband and son, and promised future prosperity; now, rather than providing a reliable setting for Cecilia outside the marriage marketplace, the shop functions as another piece of evidence for Delvile's jealousy and mistrust.

In *Cecilia*, the haberdashery's role as feminized shelter is compromised by the intrusion of romantic love, which exposes likewise Cecilia's delusion that she possesses the agency to manage her private affairs. Kristina Straub has argued that “Burney begins to explore some of the issues of female life outside the ideology of romantic love” in *Cecilia* but that *The Wanderer* dramatizes to a more comprehensive degree “the economic, social, and psychological difficulties

of a woman trying to make a living outside of the ostensibly protective structure of domestic, family life in late eighteenth-century England.”<sup>49</sup> The novel tracks Juliet’s extensive—and often failed—efforts to support herself outside paternalistic economic institutions, but its plot is fueled by different marriage scenarios, including the one that sets the narrative in motion. Burney introduces her heroine as a penniless, anonymous woman desperate to join a boat of Britons headed for Dover in 1793. As we discover hundreds of pages later, Juliet is fleeing a coerced marriage to a French commissary. This undesirable and unconsummated marriage, rather than anointing her with a new name, shelter, and social ties, plunges her into a life of obscurity and subsistence.<sup>50</sup> Juliet’s economic hardships begin from the moment of her marital flight in France. Her English paternal family will neither claim her as legitimate nor acknowledge her right to a share of her deceased father’s estate.<sup>51</sup> Against this backdrop of failed family ties, Juliet strives to support herself in England through a number of respectable positions, amidst which the haberdasher’s shop stands alone as a desirable form of business. The haberdasher’s shop—“neither genteel nor picturesque” in Margaret Anne Doody’s words—constitutes the lowest form of trade on the ladder of professions Juliet descends.<sup>52</sup> Yet the trade that relies the least on her elite skills and education turns out to yield the most personal and financial benefits to this long-suffering heroine.

Burney positions the haberdasher’s shop as an alternative future to romantic love and the domestic constraints it placed upon elite women. The shop functions as refuge from undesirable and ill-timed professions when Juliet flees for London after an awkward exchange with Harleigh, her eventual husband. Harleigh made a jumbled romantic confession during which he presses for Juliet’s identity and betrays his jealousy of a man who is Juliet’s younger half-brother.<sup>53</sup> The terrified Juliet runs away, telling herself, “I must fly!—I must fly! . . . Danger here, attacks me in

every quarter,—assails me in every shape! I must fly!—I must fly!” (p. 620). Juliet goes directly to London and to the arms of her friend, fleeing the marriage marketplace for the democratic partnership of the female shop. Within the walls of Gabriella’s haberdasher shop, Juliet eludes the increased scrutiny of her identity, her precarious economic status, and her punishing experiences as a woman dependent on others. For Juliet, the haberdashery shop shelters her from the prying eyes of elite men, the rejection of her deceased father’s family, and the pursuit of her false French husband.

Together Juliet and Gabriella embark on a commercial venture that allows them a measure of privacy and financial security. Mui and Mui estimate that London haberdashers earned around £500 in gross sales with rent running to about £80; this income falls well below the standard of the women’s backgrounds but constitutes a stable profit, even with the costs of taxes and stock.<sup>54</sup> That the haberdasher’s shop is one of the few spaces—if not the only one—in which Juliet experiences happiness over the course of this five-volume novel elevates its role over the narrow set of commercial options for women. At the same time, the brevity of the period that Juliet spends within its walls indicates its precarious status. Indeed, Burney doubly links the demise of the haberdashery shop to the interference of men, underscoring the narrative and ideological tensions between the shop and the marriage marketplace. As soon as Juliet crosses the shop’s threshold into the surrounding streets, the old threats return. Her suitors and stalkers from Brighton also travel to London and find her by coincidence and design. Juliet is seen by her elderly suitor, Sir Jaspur Herrington, while out on an errand to collect ribbons. This encounter occurs by pure chance, but the coincidence suggests that Juliet cannot escape her past, especially when Sir Jaspur takes a seat at Juliet and Gabriella’s counter and begins a buying spree that hardly disguises his main interest in discovering Juliet’s identity. His self-positioning

as an eager and particular customer—“he did not want plain brown ribbons, but ribbons speckled, spotted, or splashed with brown”—reveals his desire to pay a price for his prying questions (p. 625). The shop’s small wares and Sir Jaspar’s performance leaven the seriousness of the scene, as he claims, “ribbons are a commodity of which I want a prodigious stock” before proceeding to purchase the women’s entire inventory (pp. 637, 647). His male presence transforms the shop into a space of flirtation, replaying familiar scenes from eighteenth-century literature that conflate shopping with romance and promiscuity and that Juliet herself experienced in Brighton.

Burney introduces a much more serious intrusion with the arrival of the foppish Mr. Riley, who first dismisses the haberdashery as “some shabby little bit of a shop” before disrupting its space by “mounting upon the counter, as he might have mounted upon his horse” (p. 650). Riley’s physical movement upends the haberdashery’s hierarchical and gender relations. It grants him spatial power over the shop although he is neither proprietor nor customer. Moreover, the comparison of his movement to the mounting of a horse reinforces his male privilege, founded on the customs of the landed gentry, to dispossess proper owners of their property rights. From his commanding perch, Riley announces that he has brought the agent hired by her false French husband to track Juliet. This intrusion prompts Juliet’s immediate retreat not only from the shop floor but from the partnership itself, as she tearfully confides to Gabriella, “Oh my beloved friend! . . . we must part again,—immediately part!” (p. 653). The friends do not meet again over the course of the novel; when Juliet later sends a letter to the shop, it is returned “with a line written by the post-man upon the cover, to say, No.— Frith-street, Soho, was empty” (p. 774). The economic contest between marriage and the haberdasher’s shop sharpens when we recall that Juliet’s French husband forced her into



marriage in order to possess her £6,000 dowry. What Burney develops, then, is a competition between marketplaces in which the institution of marriage doubly threatens the romance of small trade. The haberdasher's shop, however satisfying in personal terms, offers only temporary respite from the hierarchies and institutions that consolidate masculine privilege.

The haberdasher's shop in *The Wanderer* exists at the mercy of husbands, both false and legitimate, a fact that gathers further significance in the story of its closure. Juliet discovers late in the novel that Gabriella was forced to close the shop when her husband demanded her return to France. Gabriella would have preferred to stay in England in order to remain close to her son's grave—and after all France remains in a state of revolution. She has no choice but to follow her husband's orders: "She had relinquished, therefore, her shop, and paid the rent, and her debts; and obtained money for the journey by the sale of all her commodities" (p. 798). Her obedience costs her the business and proximity to her dead child, underscoring again the emotional and financial losses demanded by marriage. Within this story of demise, however, lies also a story of profit. Gabriella's letter conveys that the shop had become prosperous enough for her to settle her rent and debts. In addition, the sale of the remaining wares funds her return to the continent. Although the shop remains empty, Gabriella's negotiation of its closure testifies to her business skills and its value as a productive commercial site. In sharp contrast to the scale of debt at stake elsewhere in the novel—and indeed to the way that debt functions as a spectral presence across *Cecilia*—the haberdasher's shop more than breaks even, suggesting the promise of feminine trade as commercial alternatives to the cycle of debt experienced by so many of Burney's heroines.

Ultimately these feminine turns to self-sustaining businesses function as brief holidays from the marriage plots in these novels. The dissolution of the female partnership in *The*

*Wanderer* echoes the end of the fan shop, founded and operated by Burney's mother who, according to Erickson, eventually followed Charles Burney to King's Lynn, where he had relocated for health reasons.<sup>55</sup> Juliet and Gabriella's partnerships last one week each; Mrs. Hill fades to the novel's background as Cecilia confronts with increasing anxiety the demands placed on her estate and sanity. Nonetheless they alleviate the extensive difficulties suffered by Burney's heroines and other women characters. Both Mrs. Hill and Gabriella find financial and emotional sustenance in their work following the death of a son. Thus female partnerships soften the loss of children, heightening the contrast with living husbands who, in the cases of Gabriella and Juliet, threaten these feminine trade utopias.

Significantly, Burney settled on a gender-neutral trade, detached from the salacious reputation of dressmakers and milliners. Haberdashers were a vital segment of eighteenth-century commodity culture that supported other apparel trades, were responsive to rapid shifts in the culture of appearances, and allowed customers to style themselves with their small wares. Within the novels' *Bildungsroman* structures, the shops' temporal and narrative concision should not discount their exemplary status as strategic sites of resistance to the marriage marketplace and masculine economies. The romance of small trade proposed by these novels offers a vision of feminine trade decoupled from the widespread gender inequalities and humiliations exposed by Burney's novels. Mrs. Hill, Gabriella, and Juliet persist and resist the collusion of patriarchy and the marriage marketplace, making a feminist claim to their rights to contribute to urban trade and placing pressure on conventional portraits of women's roles in the marketplace as sexualized consumers. Rather than advocate a retreat to the country or idealize companionate marriage, Burney dangles small scale business as an alternative to the dominant social and literary models of the period. The Frith Street haberdasher's shop was a modest business—one significantly less

lucrative than the inheritance to which Juliet lays claim and the marriage she makes in the end (though one could argue that her inheritance enriches her husband). However, women's economic partnerships do promote, if only briefly, the stability, happiness, and immaterial rewards of female networks in the marketplace, the idealized feminine economy of the modest shop, and the mixing of women's business with their pleasure.

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#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary*'s first usage example of "shopping" dates to 1768; see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. "shopping, *adj.*," accessed 12 June 2018, <http://www.oed.com>.

<sup>2</sup> Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 266.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to discussing the figure of the woman who shops too much, Harriet Guest notes that "a kind of counterimage of equally undesirable feminine behavior emerges in the figure of the

woman who does not consume enough”; see Guest, *Small Change: Women, Learning, Patriotism, 1750-1810* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 76.

<sup>4</sup> See Jennie Batchelor, *Dress, Distress and Desire: Clothing and the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 40.

<sup>5</sup> See Eliza Haywood’s *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), Tobias Smollett’s *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), and Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1748).

<sup>6</sup> For important work on women’s relations to consumption, see Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> In Burney’s marriage plots, heroines, as well as minor female characters, often face excruciating experiences of embarrassment, harassment, suffering, and violence that highlight the condition of women in Georgian Britain. While too numerous to enumerate here, such experiences include escaping sexual assault during a brief kidnapping (*Evelina*, 1778), small pox (*Camilla*, 1796), temporary amnesia (*Cecilia*, 1782), and being stalked by a bounty hunter (*The Wanderer*, 1814).

<sup>8</sup> In addition to Burney’s novels, see Burney’s never-performed play, *The Witlings* (1779), for another satirical example of the apparel trades in Mrs. Wheedle’s millinery shop, which sells haberdashery items such as ribbons. Mrs. Wheedle’s millinery shop sells both items of necessity and fripperies.

<sup>9</sup> See also Mascha Gemmeke's *Frances Burney and the Female Bildungsroman: An Interpretation of "The Wanderer, Or, Female Difficulties"* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2004) on Burney's interests in the settings of female labor: Burney's "focus is not so much on the work itself as on the *network* around it" (p. 22).

<sup>10</sup> A member of the bluestocking circle of women intellectuals, Sarah Scott is most well known for her novel *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762), which details a female utopia, whose members establish a self-sufficient community of women in a country setting.

<sup>11</sup> For further detail on the promiscuous reputation of milliners, see Chrisman Campbell, "The Face of Fashion," 165-67; and my *Women, Work, and Clothes in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 162-69.

<sup>12</sup> Guest, *Small Change*, 14.

<sup>13</sup> Ann Bermingham, "The Picturesque and Ready-to-Wear Femininity," in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770*, ed. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 97. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>14</sup> Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 211.

<sup>15</sup> Amy Erickson, "Esther Sleepe, Fan-Maker, and Her Family," in "New Perspectives on the Burney Family," ed. Sophie Columbeau, special issue, *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 42, No. 2 (2018), 21.

<sup>16</sup> Erickson, "Esther Sleepe, Fan-Maker, and Her Family," 29, 26, 17-18. Burney's mother died when she was six, but Erickson notes that her grandmother, Frances Wood Sleepe, remained in the fan trade well into her eighties and into Burney's teenage years (p. 29).

<sup>17</sup> Kimberly Chrisman Campbell, “The Face of Fashion: Milliners in Eighteenth-Century Visual Culture,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 25 (2002), 158.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Rolt, *A New Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, Compiled from the Information of the Most Eminent Merchants and from the Works of the Best Writers on Commercial Subjects in all Languages* (London: T. Osborne and J. Shipton, J. Hodges, J. Newbery, G. Keith, and B. Collins, 1756), s. v. “haberdasher.”

<sup>19</sup> R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman, Being a Compendious View of all the Trades, Professions, Arts, Both Liberal and Mechanic, Now Practised in the Cities of London and Westminster* (London: T. Gardner, 1747), 199. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>20</sup> Hoh-Cheung Mui and Lorna H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1989), 57, 60.

<sup>21</sup> Trade card of Joseph Clare, haberdasher, Banks 70.17, British Museum.

<sup>22</sup> Trade cards of Jonathan Clarke, haberdasher, Banks 70.20, British Museum; Philip Hall, haberdasher, Banks 70.35, British Museum; Thomas Morgan, haberdasher, Banks 70.59, British Museum; Robert Matthews, haberdasher, Banks 70.58, British Museum; Thomas Cogan, haberdasher, Banks 70.22, British Museum; William Gower, haberdasher, Banks 70.32, British Museum; and Thomas Parsons, haberdasher, Banks 70.61, British Museum. For other “haberdashers of small wares,” see the trade cards of Thomas Sage, haberdasher, Banks 70.76, British Museum; Michael Roberts, haberdasher, Banks 70.73, British Museum; Thomas Saunders, haberdasher, Banks 70.77, British Museum; Percifull Chandler, haberdasher, Heal 70.28, British Museum; Ellis Crispe, haberdasher, Heal 70.42, British Museum; William Ward,

haberdasher, Heal 70.181, British Museum; and Edward Vaughan, haberdasher, Heal 70.174, British Museum.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, the trade cards of John Child, haberdasher, Banks 70.16, British Museum; Philip Hall, haberdasher, Banks 70.35, British Museum; Abraham Pinhorn, haberdasher, Banks 70.66, British Museum; William Smith, haberdasher, Banks 70.85, British Museum; Swainson, haberdasher, Banks 70.90, British Museum; Francis Smith, haberdasher, Banks 70.83, British Museum; Jeremiah Thody, haberdasher, Banks 70.93, British Museum; Samuel Weddell, haberdasher, Banks 70.100, British Museum; Harding, haberdasher, Heal 70.71, British Museum; Pearson, haberdasher, Heal 70.111, British Museum; and Robert Bright, haberdasher, Heal 70.17, British Museum.

<sup>24</sup> Trade card of Hannah Hatwell, haberdasher, Banks 70.38, British Museum. See also Ann Collard, haberdasher, Heal 70.40, British Museum; Jane Carr, haberdasher, Heal 70.25, British Museum; Sarah Wharton, haberdasher, Heal 70.186, British Museum; and Sarah Underwood, haberdasher, Heal 86.85, British Museum (also a “haberdasher of small wares”). Other women shopkeepers clearly advertised goods in keeping with haberdasheries but did not always use the title of haberdasher. See, for instance, Alice Page, Heal 70.108, British Museum.

<sup>25</sup> *The Haberdasher's Guide, or, A Complete Key to All the Intricacies of the Haberdashery Business* (London, 1826), 3. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>26</sup> See trade cards of William Asplin, haberdasher, glover, and milliner, Banks, 70.2, British Museum; John Beck, haberdasher, hatter, and hosier, Banks 70.6, British Museum; Henry Paulin, haberdasher and habit-maker, Banks 70.63, British Museum; Gillery Piggott, haberdasher and hosier, Banks 70.65, British Museum; and P. P. Shirreff, haberdasher and linen draper,

Banks 70.81, British Museum. The Banks and Heal collections at the British Museum include numerous other examples of cards advertising such combined services.

<sup>27</sup> See Catherine Gallagher, *Nobody's Story: The Vanishing Acts of Women Writers in the Marketplace, 1670-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 239.

<sup>28</sup> See Miranda J. Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order, 1740-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 92; D. Grant Campbell, "Fashionable Suicide: Conspicuous Consumption and the Collapse of Credit in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 20 (1991), 131-45; Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, 238-39; Catherine Keohane, "'Too neat for a beggar': Charity and Debt in Burney's *Cecilia*," *Studies in the Novel*, 33 (2001), 379-401; Cynthia Klekar, "'Her Gift Was Compelled': Gender and the Failure of the 'Gift' in *Cecilia*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 18 (2005), 107-26; and James Thompson, *Models of Value: Eighteenth-Century Political Economy and the Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 161-62. Keohane, in particular, reads *Cecilia* as a pointed critique of the "normalization of indebtedness" in late eighteenth-century London (p. 380), and D. Grant Campbell identifies how *Cecilia*'s economic activity places her outside this social norm: "she pays debts in a society with an insufficient cash supply for debt payments; she helps others in a society of atomistic, alienated, mutually-suspicious individuals" (p. 141).

<sup>29</sup> Gallagher, *Nobody's Story*, xxi.

<sup>30</sup> Deidre Shauna Lynch, *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 167. See especially Lynch's analysis of Camilla's shopping (pp. 181-86).

<sup>31</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 94. See also Lynch's reading of Mrs. Mitten and Camilla's ill-fated shopping excursion in Southampton (pp. 178-81).



<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Hill initially mistakes Cecilia for Priscilla Harrel. Keohane sees this confusion over identity as evidence of “the instability of the positions of creditor and debtor, giver and receiver” (p. 388). For an alternative argument about the importance of credit to both middling and laboring women, see Beverly Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 16-55.

<sup>33</sup> Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or, Memoirs of an Heiress*, ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 73. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>34</sup> Doody underlines how Cecilia follows a masculine form of philanthropy here: “Such practical, officious, and far-sighted charity belonged more properly to the masculine sphere of action in the eighteenth century”; see Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 127.

<sup>35</sup> I discuss Juliet’s employment further in *Women, Work, and Clothes* (pp. 169-73).

<sup>36</sup> Berg, “What Difference Did Women’s Work Make to the Industrial Revolution?,” *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians*, 35 (1993), 22-44; and Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 112-17.

<sup>37</sup> Bridget Hill, *Women, Work, and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1994), 259-60.

<sup>38</sup> Batchelor, *Women’s Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 9-15.

<sup>39</sup> In between these episodes of self-employment alongside Gabriella, Juliet works at Miss Matson's millinery shop and as a seamstress for Mrs. Hart, a mantua maker (both prove negative experiences).

<sup>40</sup> Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 102. See also Phillips's case study of Judith Baker's female business networks in Durham (pp. 95-119).

<sup>41</sup> Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, ed. Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 401. Subsequent references will be cited parenthetically in the text.

<sup>42</sup> Edward Copeland, *Women Writing about Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 181. See also his "Money in the Novels of Fanny Burney," *Studies in the Novel*, 8 (1976), 24-37.

<sup>43</sup> Helen Thompson reads such passages as working against a positive animation of labor because Juliet's labor becomes stylized, even as she admires how Juliet's work ethic "is distinguished by her stoic application to the most tedious of tasks"; see Thompson, "How *The Wanderer* Works: Reading Burney and Bourdieu," *English Literary History*, 68 (2001), 978, 977.

<sup>44</sup> Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), 276-77. See also Katherine Sobba Green's reading of Cecilia's marriage in *The Courtship Novel, 1740-1820: A Feminized Genre* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 87-90.

<sup>45</sup> Melissa J. Ganz, "Clandestine Schemes: Burney's *Cecilia* and the Marriage Act," *The Eighteenth Century*, 54 (2013), 27, 26. See also Ann Campbell, "Clandestine Marriage and Frances Burney's Critique of Matrimony in *Cecilia*," *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 37, No. 2 (2013), 85-103; and Meghan Jordan's interpretation of the novel's ambivalent representation of marriage

as demonstrating “a crisis over self-possession and a woman’s right to define the self” in “Madness and Matrimony in Frances Burney’s *Cecilia*,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 55 (2015), 559. Other lines of critique have focused on the novel’s indictment of commercial culture; Andrea Henderson, for instance, argues that Burney “complains of the incommensurability of the value generated by the laborer and the value recognized by the consumer” in “Burney’s *The Wanderer* and Early-Nineteenth-Century Commodity Fetishism,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 57, No. 1 (2002), 11.

<sup>46</sup> See Susan Fraiman’s argument about the logic of impediment that marks *Evelina*’s resistance to the female *Bildungsroman* in *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 34-58.

<sup>47</sup> Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order, 1740-1830*, 96.

<sup>48</sup> Burgess, *British Fiction and the Production of Social Order, 1740-1830*, 105. Claudia L. Johnson likewise sees the novel as a conservative reaction against Mary Wollstonecraft in that women are largely the source of Juliet’s struggles; see Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 171-80. See also Helen Thompson, “Burney’s Conservatism: Masculine Value and ‘the Ingenuous Cecilia,’” in *Recognizing the Romantic Novel: New Histories of British Fiction, 1780-1830*, ed. Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 99-125.

<sup>49</sup> Kristina Straub, *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 142.

<sup>50</sup> Burney conceals Juliet’s identity and name for more than half of the novel. For discussions of this concealment, see Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women’s*

*Writing* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 176-77; and Doody, *Frances Burney*, 319-20.

<sup>51</sup> Juliet's parents married in Flanders, to the disapproval of Juliet's paternal grandfather, and a fire later destroys the legal evidence of their union. Ganz emphasizes the novel's doubled critique of French marriage law, which made marriage a civil contract in 1792, and English nuptial law, which following Lord Hardwicke's 1753 Marriage Act, had made marriage subject to increased regulation in an effort to reduce secret marriage and strengthen the authority of guardians; see Ganz, "Freedom and Fetters: Nuptial Law in Burney's *The Wanderer*," in *Impassioned Jurisprudence: Law, Literature, and Emotion, 1760-1848*, ed. Nancy E. Johnson (Lanham, MD: Bucknell University Press, 2015), 66-88.

<sup>52</sup> Doody, *Frances Burney*, 358.

<sup>53</sup> Juliet flees from France in blackface and will not reveal her name. When her skin begins to turn white and her upper-class characteristics become apparent, she is hounded about her true identity.

<sup>54</sup> Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England*, 114.

<sup>55</sup> Erickson, "Esther Sleepe, Fan-Maker, and Her Family," 24.