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"Never, Most Certainly Never, Can I Perform in Public": Juliet and the Shame of Visibility in Burney's *The Wanderer*

KRISTIN M. DISTEL

Abstract: This essay proposes that in *The Wanderer*, Juliet's shame is inextricably linked with her poverty and her ambiguous national identity; because she is not readily identifiable as English when she meets elite Englishwomen in the novel's opening chapters, she becomes an object of derision and thus suffers shame. Juliet's shame and otherness are particularly evident in the proposed harp concert. She must make herself visible, calling special attention to her gender and class since her national ambiguity deprives her of protection and renders her vulnerable to people who would expose her to the public eye. This essay considers the important roles that the Admiral and Harleigh play in outlining the qualities expected of Englishwomen during this moment of national crisis and concludes by arguing that the novel endorses the humiliation of Elinor. As a supporter of the French Revolution and professed lover of Harleigh, Elinor's interruption of Juliet's concert reinscribes her shamelessness and her failure to display normative English femininity.

Written and set during the French Revolution, *The Wanderer* (1814) marks a distinct change in the types of cultural and political environments that Frances Burney's protagonists face, as well as the shame that they endure. I propose that in *The Wanderer*, Juliet's shame is inextricably linked with both her poverty and her ambiguous national identity; in short, because she is not readily identifiable as English, particularly when she first meets elite Englishwomen in the novel's first chapter, she becomes an object of derision and thus suffers shame.[1] While Evelina, the protagonist of Burney's first novel, commits a series of embarrassing yet innocent social *faux pas* during her first trip to London, Juliet, the titular wanderer of Burney's final novel, is a survivor of the French Revolution and has witnessed executions, political upheaval, and violence that Evelina cannot imagine. Though the people with whom Juliet interacts in England are unaware of the horrors she endured in France, they shame her for both her national ambiguity and her indigence.

As she flees France for England in a small boat full of upper-class English passengers, Juliet must hide her identity to protect herself and the life of the Bishop, who raised her in France. As Margaret Doody states in her critical introduction to the novel, "The heroine thus arrives as a nameless Everywoman: both black and white, both Eastern and Western, both high and low, both English and French" (7). Juliet's liminality means that she is subject to scrutiny as a member of the lower class (and is thus automatically deemed unethical, disgraceful, and shameful) while also being subjected to the social codes of the upper class (that is, she is violating the norms and codes of conduct of a lady because she is without

protection, money, or a home). Therefore, in terms of place and social standing, Juliet occupies the position of both high and low, as Doody states, and she fails in both roles while her identity is hidden. Juliet bears shame because of the stigma of her supposed national otherness during the French Revolution; to the wealthy English who attempt to interpret her, she appears to be a politically transgressive alien. Specifically, because Juliet seems to threaten the norms of feminine conduct, elite English women force shame upon her (and other culturally illegible women) in order to designate her as French in this period of national panic.

My essay argues that Juliet's shame and otherness are particularly evident in the proposed harp concert featured in the novel's second volume when Miss Arbe and Lady Kendover (both of whom are wealthy Englishwomen) propose that Juliet, a talented musician, sing and perform the harp publicly. In this scene, Juliet is forced to put herself on display in part because of her otherness—that is, because she cannot claim that she is English. She must make herself visible, calling special attention to her gender and class, because her national ambiguity deprives her of protection and renders her vulnerable to people who would expose her to the public eye. Her performance, Miss Arbe and Lady Kendover suggest, will help the impoverished Juliet become a popular music tutor in the neighborhood. Implicit in their suggestion, though, is that the beautiful, enigmatic Juliet (who is known as Ellis at this point in the narrative) will be on display for public consumption—she, not her musical talent, is the true attraction, and through the selling of concert tickets, she becomes commodified.

Here, it is important to note that the long eighteenth century is the era in which detailed representations of female shame take narrative form and become a crucial feature of prose fiction. Fiction of the long eighteenth century examines the formation of female consciousness within the confines of a patriarchal, heteronormative culture—what decisions women make, the spheres of action in which they can participate, and how they articulate their will and subjectivity. Descriptions of and warnings about shame appeared in myriad print forms during this era—in dictionary definitions, conduct book prescriptions, sermons, and fiction, an awareness of what constituted shameful behavior and, more importantly, what the consequences of such behavior would be for women, began to emerge. In 1755, Samuel Johnson defined shame as "The passion felt when reputation is supposed to be lost; disgrace; ignominy; reproach." Shame can thus arise not only from one's own behavior but also from embarrassing circumstances and the poor conduct of one's familial or social circle. The larger purpose behind warnings about shameful conduct was to ensure that women in particular—including female literary characters, such as Juliet—demonstrated docile, obedient conduct, essentially rendering them complicit in the surveillance of their bodies and behavior.

Juliet, for example, is painfully aware that displaying herself at the concert is a violation of the norms of English feminine comportment and behavior; in

short, a public concert would be deeply shameful:

> Ellis, amazed, exclaimed, "Can you mean, Madam,—can Lady Kendover mean—to propose my performing in public?"
>
> "Precisely that. 'Tis the only way in the world to settle the business, and conquer all parties."
>
> "If so, Madam, they can never be conquered! for never, most certainly never, can I perform in public!" (286-87)

She agrees to perform the concert in order to attract music students and earn money by giving them lessons; she feels compelled to replace the money given to her by her professed admirer, Harleigh, which she reluctantly used to discharge her debts. However, the fact that she agrees to perform the concert is ultimately meaningless, since without Juliet's permission, Miss Arbe has placed Juliet's name on the concert bill. Juliet has repeatedly and forcefully refused to perform at the concert, but when she finally relents, she learns that her consent was unnecessary, as Giles Arbe explains: "my cousin, not dreaming of any objection on your part, had already authorised Mr Vinstreigle to put your name in his bills" (333). Juliet has no right of refusal, but why?

I argue that elite Englishwomen determine that Juliet—because of her poverty and ambiguous nationality—does not merit the same protection and privacy as other women who are readily legible as English, and she thus loses the right to protect herself from shame. Indeed, Juliet believes that a public performance is shameful—an opinion that Harleigh forcefully shares, as he refers to his receipt of the concert bill as "fatal … information" and warns Juliet of the irreparable damage that "enter[ing] into a career of public life" would cause her reputation (337). The implicit belief that undergirds his warnings his simple: proper Englishwomen should not call attention to themselves since invisibility was a hallmark of respectable femininity for Englishwomen at the time. However, she cannot shield herself from the inevitable shame of exposure that she would suffer at the concert because she is impoverished and without protection.

I suggest that the harp concert typifies the type of exposure and public shame that Juliet attempts to avoid through much of the novel. She suffers shame because she has consented, albeit reluctantly, to play the harp publicly, to show her "beauty and grace to advantage," and thus to be a public "attraction," a word the novel uses when describing her presence at the concert (230, 358). Performing publicly would render Juliet a spectacle, an object that the wealthy elite treat as purchasable and existing only for their pleasure. Burney herself famously resisted public attention and felt deeply alarmed, even exposed, when she was revealed to be the author of *Evelina*; Burney sought privacy and invisibility, as does Juliet throughout *The Wanderer*. Indeed, Juliet is subject to public viewing and the shame of being a public attraction because the elite people with whom she associates (whose daughters, sisters, and nieces she tutors) reject the advice that the beginning of the novel dispenses through the character of the Admiral: that women deserve

protection, provided they are of good character (22). This essay considers Juliet's inability to protect herself and the shame that arises from her vulnerability and visibility, noting the particularly important roles that the Admiral and Harleigh play in outlining the qualities expected of Englishwomen during this moment of national crisis. I conclude by arguing that the novel endorses the humiliation of Elinor (a supporter of the French Revolution and professed lover of Harleigh), whose interruption of Juliet's concert reinscribes her shamelessness and her failure to display normative English femininity.

English Nationalism During the French Revolution

During the turbulent years of the French Revolution, one had to visibly perform one's national identity, gender, and class so that others could readily determine whether one belonged in England or was an intruder. Shame thus became a method of categorization in England as the French Revolution and the Terror raged across the Channel. Shameless people—those who did not properly demonstrate and enact their English identity—were marked as dangerous others. The importance of performance thus demonstrates the trouble of reading others' bodies and behavior. Burney herself was painfully aware of English prejudice against the French and, in her 1793 pamphlet, called attention to the sufferings, misery, and even starvation of the French emigrant clergy. Significantly, the pamphlet's full title places the onus of responsibility for the care and survival of these clergy on Englishwomen: "Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy: Earnestly Submitted to the Humane Consideration of the Ladies of Great Britain." In the pamphlet, as in *The Wanderer*, Burney charges elite Englishwomen to be compassionate and caring, thereby acknowledging the social power such women wield. In *The Wanderer*, however, these women enjoy full awareness of their social influence and use it to oppress and belittle nationally ambiguous characters like Juliet. Cultural expectations for women's conduct and education shifted drastically during this era, and Burney received largely unwarranted criticism from John Croker, William Hazlitt, and reviewers for failing to reflect these changes in *The Wanderer*. *The Wanderer*'s perceived anachronism thus stems from Burney's imposing the social codes of conduct from 1770s London onto Juliet—a character in a post-Revolution novel, suggesting that Burney's readers perhaps misinterpreted the representation of shame in *The Wanderer*. Juliet exhibits several of the same behaviors as Evelina (she is embarrassed and silent), but Juliet differs in the sense that she is penniless, and she must work to survive. She is an émigrée, and thus the English view her with suspicion, complicating her search for respectable employment, especially since expectations for upright conduct in the face of cultural anxieties about nationhood peaked at the time Burney wrote and published the novel.

It is important to note that Burney herself encountered the perils (and

frequently impossibilities) of travelling between France and England during this turbulent era. Burney's husband, Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Piochard d'Arblay, had a commission in the French army, which included a "stipulation that he never be required to bear arms against his wife's native land," a dispensation that Napoleon Bonaparte eventually invalidated (Doody 288). This invalidation required d'Arblay to return to France, with Frances and their young son, for a period meant to last no longer than one year; d'Arblay traveled to France to secure property as well. As Doody notes, though, "The proposed one year abroad extended to ten years" since travel between France and England was banned during the war, and "The exile Burney had tried to avert had come upon her" (289). Burney (now Madame d'Arblay) eagerly wished to return to England with her son, who was approaching the age at which he would be required to join the French army, "But a visit to England required permission—and that seemed impossible to obtain" until Napoleon left France for Russia, which resulted in bureaucratic "confusion" and the granting of some international travel (315).

By way of a well-placed bribe (an autographed copy of *Evelina* given to the chief of police, who enjoyed Burney's novels), Madame d'Arblay was able to escape France and secure a place for herself and her son on a boat: "The police chief knew that Mme. d'Arblay and her son wished to go to England, but the fact was not admissible; the pretense was that they were to visit the United States. Frances had to take a passage on a ship flying the American flag, although the captain intended to land a number of passengers privately at Dover" (Doody 315). Madame d'Arblay decided, while waiting for their ship to arrive, that she wished to take her in-progress novel, *The Wanderer*, with her on the journey. Doody notes that this, too, required explicit permission from the police chief who, "on being assured upon [Monsieur d'Arblay's] Honour, that the Work contained nothing in it political, nor even National, nor possibly offensive to the Government … invested him with the power to send … what papers he pleased" (316). These themes of fear, mobility, and nationalism during wartime—very much part of Burney's lived experience—pervade Juliet's own experience, particularly the shame and suffering she endures as an inscrutable woman in need of assistance.

In the opening chapters of *The Wanderer*, the Admiral, who ensures that Juliet is able to board the craft and thus safely flee France, delineates the ideal qualities that represent English national identity. He maintains that while Englishmen must (with some caveats) protect women, show loyalty to the English nation, and demonstrate piety, the qualities required of an Englishwomen are more complex—and more relational. That is, he asserts that women must be of good character and reputable conduct to merit protection from men. Juliet remarks that she has "no claim" to the Admiral's help; his response reveals both his definition of good English behavior and the contingencies upon which his help depend:

> "That's your mistake, gentlewoman. An unprotected female, provided she's of a good behaviour, has always a claim to a

> man's care, whether she be born amongst our friends or our foes. I should be ashamed to be an Englishman, if I held it my duty to think narrower than that. And a man who could bring himself to be ashamed of being an Englishman, would find it a difficult solution, let me tell you, my good gentlewoman, to discover what he might glory in." (22-23)

Though the Admiral's assistance ensures Juliet's survival, his comments reveal that he feels no obligation to aid a woman who is not "of a good behaviour." The Admiral's statement also indicates that his performance of Englishness relies upon women's upright behavior; "Every Englishman should honour and welcome you" and "Every true Briton should scorn to misuse … A woman, a child, and a fallen enemy (22). The Admiral says to Juliet in the novel's second chapter, "I take it for granted, though you are not in your own country, you are too good a woman to be without friends, as I know no worse sign of a person's character" (24).[2] Failure to demonstrate that one is part of a family calls into question a woman's claim to protection and safety; this, in particular, leaves Juliet open to suspicion and shaming.

The Admiral also serves the purpose of teaching his fellow English travelers on the boat how to conduct themselves toward a "foreigner" in a manner becoming of their national identity. English people, he maintains, should take pride in their national heritage and demonstrate piety *without* scorning an émigrée in need. When the boat reaches the English shore (and the Admiral and Harleigh shout "a hearty huzza" [16]), the Admiral ushers the passengers to an inn, where they rest by a fire and await dinner; while both the Admiral and Harleigh ensure that Juliet, "this meanly attired person," joins them, Mrs. Maple feels insulted by Juliet's presence and asks Harleigh, "Why can't that body as well stay in the kitchen?" (24). The Admiral, not Harleigh, answers her, which is significant because, as a naval officer, the Admiral emblematizes the English nation and its values. Empowered by his Englishness and masculinity, the Admiral sets the parameters for appropriate female conduct:

> [Juliet] would hastily have retired, but the Admiral, taking her softly by the shoulder, said, "I have been a commanding officer the best part of my life, Gentlewoman; and though a devil of a wound has put me upon the superannuated list, I am not sunk into quite such a fair weather chap, as to make over my authority, in such a little pitiful skiff's company as this, to petticoat government;—though no man has a better respect for the sex, in its proper element; which, however, is not the sea. Therefore, Madam," turning to Mrs. Maple, "this gentlewoman being my own passenger, and having comported herself without any offence either to God or man, I shall take it kind if you will treat her in a more Christian-like manner." (24)

Because Juliet has exhibited proper behavior, the Admiral claims her, offers her protection, and instructs Mrs. Maple regarding suitable English conduct—namely, that Mrs. Maple must demonstrate piety and kindness in order to be above reproach herself. That a high-ranking representative of the English nation—one who acts as Juliet's rescuer from the Terror *and* is later revealed to be her uncle—outlines the proper conduct for both men and women of English heritage is significant. His remarks, so prominently situated in the novel's opening chapters, establish the parameters for correct English behavior. In this novel, an Englishwoman must be patriotic, pious, of good character, and openly claimed by her relatives; failing to meet the final criterion in particular renders Juliet, in the opinion of elite Englishwomen, a dangerous émigrée (in this case, a threatening "French" outsider). These Englishwomen, particularly Mrs. Maple and Mrs. Ireton, reject the Admiral's assessment of Juliet's character and conduct, and it is they who wield social power in the circles in which Juliet moves.

Wealthy Englishwomen actively police Juliet's performance of national identity, and they impose shame upon Juliet as a means of distinguishing her from normative Englishwomen. Juliet's shame is thus not a reflection of her own failure or inherent flaws. Until she is able to claim her rightful name and class status at the end of the novel, Juliet feels shame because of the crassness of other characters—their poor behavior, rudeness, and carelessness, for which she often bears the blame—and because of her mandatory silence. That is, the dissociation between her status and her living conditions causes humiliation because she cannot reveal her identity. *The Wanderer* investigates the trap of female shame—namely, the way in which shame simultaneously forces Juliet to hide from others' scrutinizing eyes yet be hypervisible in her town as a shop worker, a tutor, and a performer. She cannot hide while working in the millinery shop, for example, since Miss Matson realizes that Juliet's beauty will attract customers and thus situates Juliet so that she is conspicuously visible to passersby. In this way, Juliet is the subject of observation and scrutiny (that is, she is hypervisible) in a way that her fellow employees, who are visible but not prominently placed as to attract notice, are not. In the eyes of elite Englishwomen, such conspicuousness marks Juliet as suspicious, particularly since it reinforces their already prejudiced opinion of her. These women force Juliet to suffer shame because they believe she appears to be a "Frenchified" swindler, and they closely observe and monitor Juliet because they do not know—but very much want to know—who she is, where she is from, why she is traveling, and what social status she occupies. Thus, in attempting to demean her by questioning her nationality, they ascribe to her a derogatory label and then shame her with said label. They determine that she cannot be English, presume that she is French, and then shame her for failing to meet the standards of English womanhood.

Yet throughout the novel, but especially in moments of crisis and desperation, Juliet upholds the social order, including gender norms, through shame and silence. Significantly, the novel rarely quotes Juliet, and she verbally

expresses her shame infrequently. Instead, she performs and demonstrates shame through silence—behavior that (wrongly) suggests that she is guilty and thus deserving of the shame others impose upon her. The text calls attention to and reinforces her silence by quoting other characters at length but rarely providing Juliet's exact words. Instead, Juliet "courts[ies] her thanks" (159), "could attempt no reply beyond a courtesy" (106), suffers an "inability to find words" (577), or simply truncates her speech, as when she discusses her nominal husband with Harleigh:

> "This, Sir, is my last word!—Adieu!"
>
> Harleigh, though looking nearly petrified, still stood before her.
>
> "You fly us, then," he cried, resentfully, though mournfully, "both alike? You put us upon a par?—"
>
> "No!" answered Juliet, hastily, "him I fly because I hate; —You—"
>
> The deep scarlet which mounted into her whole face finished the sentence. (779)

Juliet chooses silence as a mode of response, and the text reinforces this choice by quoting other characters' words but summarizing Juliet's responses and explaining her emotional reactions, often cursorily. Whereas Evelina does not understand how to express herself without committing social faux pas and incurring shame, Juliet chooses silence as a strategic response and a means of protection. Juliet's silence is not the absence of a reaction but rather a sophisticated way of navigating a perilous world. Even through free indirect discourse, readers gain limited access to Juliet's thoughts. The text quotes those who speak to Juliet, but her answers rarely come in the form of dialogue when she answers at all. As in the example above, oftentimes her responses are strictly somatic: moving to a corner when she does not want to be addressed, looking away, or leaving the room.[3]

English Femininity and Public Display

It is precisely these qualities—her meekness, modesty, and silence—that Harleigh so passionately praises in Juliet and maintains she will lose by publicly performing at the harp concert. Both Harleigh and Juliet understand that the concert will put her on display as an object that wealthy people will pay to observe, but only she, deeply aware of her financial precarity, realizes the necessity of this step. He repeatedly pleads with her to abandon her plan to perform, and his requests echo the Admiral's insistence that women "of a good behaviour" deserve protection, but that such women must also avoid bringing shame onto their families (22). In a letter to Juliet, Harleigh writes, "If, then, there be any family that you quit, yet that you may yourself desire should one day reclaim you; and if there be any family—leave mine alone!—to which you may hereafter be allied, and that you may wish should appreciate, should revere you, as you merit to be revered and appreciated—for such let me plead!" (343). His insistence that she avoid bringing

shame onto absent (and potentially nonexistent) relatives recalls the Admiral's insistence that women of good character should be claimed by their families and enjoy protection; Harleigh is, as Gillian Skinner asserts, "hamstrung by his determination to abide by the prejudices of his family and rank" (302).

Harleigh also reinscribes the Admiral's insistence on patriarchal gender norms when, in this same letter, he insists that if Juliet performs the concert, she will set a poor example for other women. Referring to the planned performance as "danger and death … in view," he charges her to avoid "Wound[ing] … the customs of their ancestors, the received notions of the world, the hitherto acknowledged boundaries of elegant life! … [and] deviating, alone and unsupported as you appear, from the long-beaten track of female timidity" (343). In referring to "the customs of their ancestors," Harleigh calls particular attention to the rigid expectations for Englishwomen's conduct, rendering him complicit with the type of nationalist policing that Juliet has suffered throughout the novel. Juliet internalizes Harleigh's judgment regarding the performance and feels the sting of his criticism because she values his good opinion but also because she shares his grave concerns for her reputation:

> She read it with strong emotion, dwelling chiefly upon the phrase, "long-beaten track of female timidity."—Ah! she cried, delicacy is what he means, though he possesses too much himself to mark more strongly his opinion that I swerve from it! And in that shall I be wanting? —And what he thinks—he, the most liberal of men!—will surely be thought by all whose esteem, whose regard I most covet!—How dreadfully am I involved! in what misery of helplessness!—What is woman,—with the most upright designs, the most rigid circumspection,—what is woman unprotected? She is pronounced upon only from outward semblance:—and, indeed, what other criterion has the world? Can it read the heart? (344)

The phrase "outward semblance" is of note here since it demonstrates that Juliet knows the weight that appearances carry with those whose good opinion she craves. She is painfully aware that "enter[ing] a career of public life," as Harleigh calls it, is beneath her, so his reminding her of this fact is both humiliating and unnecessary (337). He is attempting to shame her out of conduct that she already finds shameful.

Playing the harp in public is distasteful to Juliet specifically because she dreads and fears being visible to others; indeed, Juliet's clothing at the concert reinscribes her role as an *objet d'art*. Burney describes Juliet's beauty in this scene as "Grecian" and writes, "Even her attire, which, from the bright pink sarsenet, purchased by Miss Arbe, she had changed into plain white satin, with ornaments of which the simplicity shewed as much taste as modesty, contributed to the interest which she inspired" (358). Her refusal to wear bright pink at the concert marks

an important change since Miss Matson displayed Juliet and forced her to wear pink at the millinery shop where, as Chloe Wigston Smith notes, Juliet is situated much like an item to be assessed and observed by customers (172). Wigston Smith also notes that "By the mid 1790s, bright pink silk constituted a garish reminder of Rococo fashions" (175). Though Miss Arbe has coordinated (and insisted upon) the concert, Juliet makes the final determination of what she will wear and how her body will be displayed to others. Indeed, Juliet's clothing and the public display associated with her musical performance renders her an "ornament." Her body, just as much as her clothing, is part of this public spectacle. Wigston Smith notes, "Juliet never performs on stage … and so her white dress remains her only performance, as she pauses onstage before a large audience" (176). While I agree that the dress is indeed a type of performance, Juliet's body itself serves as an attraction and an object in this crucial scene. The dress calls attention to Juliet's body; precisely because the dress is white (and thus a sartorial symbol of purity), it allows the attendees to project their assessment of her appearance onto the blank space of her clothing. Burney underscores this by writing of the moment immediately before Juliet is set to begin playing, "but the moment that she rose, and *became visible*, a violent clapping was begun by Sir Lyell Sycamore, and seconded by every man present. What is new, of almost any description, is sure to be well received by the public; but when novelty is united with *peculiar attractions*, admiration becomes enthusiasm, and applause is nearly clamour. Such, upon the beholders, was the effect produced by the beauty, the youth, the elegance, and the timidity of Ellis" (358, emphasis added).

Performing at the concert is, however, the only way that Juliet can reestablish herself as a music tutor and find some level of economic security though she is well aware that becoming a public performer will permanently label her as a social outsider. Indeed, even Miss Arbe, Juliet's professed benefactor and the person responsible for arranging Juliet's harp concert, says:

> "And now, Miss Ellis," said Miss Arbe, "you will very soon have more scholars than you can teach. If once you get a fame and a name, your embarrassments will be at an end; for all enquiries about who people are, and what they are, and those sort of niceties, will be over. We all learn of the celebrated, be they what they will. Nobody asks how they live, and those sort of things. What signifies? as Miss Sycamore says. We don't visit them, to be sure, if there is any thing awkward about them. But that's not the least in the way against their making whole oceans of riches." (334)

This concept of work as a means of economic safety but social rejection is not new to Juliet; she also performs work that is beneath her inherent social station (that is, work that would be shameful for a gentlewoman of English heritage), yet she maintains her inherent dignity by being silent in the face of shame. In part,

this is why performing at a concert is, in her own assessment and that of Harleigh, entirely inappropriate: she would call attention to herself and become both audible and hypervisible. Juliet indeed feels ashamed because she must hide her name and background, thus allowing others to make unjust accusations about her character. However, she also feels ashamed because subterfuge (albeit self-preserving) and common work are beneath her—an elitist attitude that mirrors the snobbery of the Englishwomen whose judgment Juliet has suffered.[4] Juliet feels embarrassed at every turn because she must maintain secrecy and perform the role of a lower-class, illegible woman. She is an outlier, a rightful citizen without a passport, and a woman without any protection or title she can safely claim. The normative guidelines for women's conduct are unsustainable for someone who is attempting to survive without an intact family structure and the protection that one's friends can provide.

Performing labor becomes untenable and dangerous for Juliet because others force her to be the object of shame by making her visible and drawing attention to her. As previously noted, when working at the shop, she, unlike the rest of the employees, is required to wear pink and to sit so that she is visible to passersby; her employer, Miss Matson, is attempting to call attention to and capitalize on Juliet's beauty by luring customers into the store. Her role is not to work but to attract male shoppers. The color of her clothes and her positionality call attention to her beauty and set her apart from other people; both distinctions are shameful, since invisibility is a hallmark of English womanhood.[5] Miss Arbe's insistence that Juliet perform on the harp in front of a large audience similarly invites shame both because of the public nature of the performance and because Juliet has no choice but to agree to perform since she desperately needs the money that the concert would afford her.

The concert indeed brings in a large audience—a danger for a woman who fears attention and exposure. This dichotomy recurs repeatedly in *The Wanderer*: characters force Juliet to be visible because she is "other" (that is, potentially French), but they also demand that she remain invisible. She must be publicly accessible and inaccessible simultaneously. Juliet's ability to survive in the world is thus always in other characters' hands. Pecuniary need forces Juliet to work as a seamstress, a musician, and a companion to Mrs. Ireton, but, in part, shame at the lowliness of such work also prevents her from holding these positions for any extended period; she is aware that manual labor is beneath her rightful social status and that it makes her hypervisible. This shame is compounded by the abusive treatment she receives from her clients and tutees, who treat her rudely and refuse to pay her wages, which perpetuates her poverty. Such people drive Juliet into positions in which she cannot survive; Miss Arbe, Juliet's music scholars, Mrs. Ireton, and myriad others force Juliet to feel the shame of dependence because she appears "other" both nationally and in terms of class, and as such she does not merit the protection guaranteed to acquiescent, well-mannered Englishwomen.

The novel thus represents the ways in which female modesty, propriety, and silence are necessary features of English womanhood, though other female characters in the novel who defy such codes of conduct do not endure the same shame that Juliet does, since their class status and unquestioned English identity protect them. Juliet is inherently genteel but must work as if she were lowborn (since she arrives in England with no money), and because protecting the interests of the elite was crucial to the concept of English nationalism at the time of the French Revolution, Juliet thus has no viable way to survive. As a character, Juliet is already developed and fully realized both socially and psychologically, but the danger of exposing her identity forces her to be silent and ashamed. For genteel women, surviving by earning one's own money was nearly impossible, both because of the lack of job opportunities and because of the social expectation that women should not be publicly accessible in shops, concert halls, or elsewhere. For genteel Englishwomen, nearly all work resulted in visibility—which led to shame and exposure and defied the social restrictions dictating appropriate female conduct. Thus, the English culture of shame makes female autonomy impossible while simultaneously shaming women for failing to be readily identifiable as English; a woman who is particularly visible or conspicuous to others' scrutinizing gaze is especially vulnerable to allocations of shame. Because Juliet must perform labor to survive and because she cannot claim her English heritage, she suffers imputations of shame.

Endorsing Weaponized Shame: Elinor's Rejection of English Social Customs

Unlike Juliet, Elinor could readily claim her English heritage; however, she proudly denounces it at every turn and, instead, openly endorses French customs and praises the perceived merits of the French Revolution—the very terror from which Juliet has fled. This is one of many sharp points of contrast that separate Elinor from Juliet; while Elinor demands others' attention and expects them to respect her principles and political views, Juliet remains silent and fervently wishes to hide from others' gaze—a wish that her looming performance at the concert dashes entirely. Despite the novel's lengthy considerations as to whether Juliet can, in good conscience, "[enter] a career of public life," she never actually performs at the concert.[6] In an attempt to punish Harleigh for rejecting her and Juliet for (unwittingly) winning Harleigh's affections, Elinor impedes the concert with a public suicide attempt just as Juliet is set to take the stage:

> "Oh Harleigh!—adored Harleigh!—" she cried, as he flew to catch her desperate hand;—but he was not in time; for, in uttering his name, she plunged a dagger into her breast. The blood gushed out in torrents, while, with a smile of triumph, and eyes of idolizing love, she dropt into his arms, and clinging round him, feebly articulated, "Here let me end!—

> accept the oblation—the just tribute—of these dear, delicious, last moments!" (359)

Elinor's shamelessness in publicly professing her love and calling attention to herself overshadows and ultimately supplants Juliet's planned performance, which was shameful because she would have been calling attention to herself. Marcie Frank, in her study of shame in *The Wanderer*, provides an excellent analysis of what she has termed "perspectival reversals," wherein the focus of the narration alternately shifts from Juliet's horror to Elinor's suicide (120). Frank persuasively likens these perspectival shifts, which frequently occur during moments of embarrassment or humiliation, to the narrative technique of free indirect discourse and, in theater, the use of asides.[7] Frank's analysis explores the novel's various melodramatic scenes, with a particular emphasis on Elinor's several suicide attempts, which Frank likens to a "virtual … theater" that eventually results in Elinor experiencing shame during her subsequent suicide attempt at the church. However, Frank does not describe either Elinor or Juliet as experiencing shame during the suicide attempt at the harp concert, rather noting that this scene results in an accretion of tension between the two women and the mutual object of their affection, Harleigh. Moreover, Frank does not consider the various sources of Juliet's shame (including post-Revolution English nationalism and elite Englishwomen's class-based shaming of Juliet) (122). Though the novel criticizes the shaming of Juliet, it does not entirely dismiss the notion that public shaming has value, principally in terms of monitoring deviant women's conduct.

In particular, *The Wanderer* approves of the shaming that Elinor suffers because, as an Englishwoman who avidly supports the French Revolution, she violates norms for Englishwomen's conduct and values. Once again, Elinor, whom Cathrine Frank describes as "providing an object lesson in the contaminating influence of French thought," stands as a symbol for the type of shamelessness that marks a woman as "other" (and certainly not properly English) (431). This lack of shame is particularly observable in one of the earliest scenes in which Elinor tells Juliet of her love for Harleigh: "How paltry is shame where there can be no disgrace!—I disdain it!—disclaim it!—and am ready to avow to the whole world, that I dare speak and act, as well as think and feel for myself" (154). Elinor's behavior (which makes the reader, not Elinor herself, uncomfortable) and her humiliating, public demonstrations of love clearly identify her as a poor model of English womanhood and female conduct. My reading is an alternative to that of Kristina Straub, who argues that "Elinor's directness comes as something of a relief in contrast to the indirection of the heroine, who seeks to hide the marriage that renders her helpless" (187-88). Juliet comports herself as an ideal Englishwoman (particularly in that she is quiet, patriotic, and mild-mannered), while Elinor openly aligns herself with the French. Although she is English and enjoys a respectable class status—qualities that Juliet cannot openly claim—Elinor represents failed femininity; she is a distinct contrast to the model of grace, shame,

and silence that Juliet embodies throughout the novel.

Elinor's ostentatious avowals of love for Albert Harleigh and her public suicide attempts also make others deeply uncomfortable, prompting them to distance themselves from her. She insists on being highly visible to others, refusing to allow them to look away, even as she decries the very identity and principles she should, as an Englishwoman, embody. When Elinor stabs herself in the chest at the concert, she feels no shame, but she incites shame in those around her:

> Mrs. Maple, thunderstruck by the apparition of her niece, scandalized by her disguise, and wholly unsuspicious of her purpose, though sure of some extravagance, had pretended sudden indisposition, to escape the shame of witnessing her disgrace; but ere she could get away, the wound was inflicted, and the public voice, which alone she valued, forced her to return.…
>
> Mrs. Maple was now covered with shame, from apprehension that this conduct might be imputed either to any precepts or any neglect of her own.
>
> "My poor niece is quite light-headed, Mr. Harleigh," she cried, "and knows not what she says." …
>
> Gasping for breath, [Elinor] leant, half motionless, yet smiling, and with looks of transport, upon the shoulder of Harleigh; who, ashamed, in the midst of his concern, at his own situation, thus publicly avowed as the object of this desperate act; earnestly wished to retreat from the gazers and remarkers, with whom he shared the notice and the wonder excited by Elinor. (360-61)

Elinor does not feel the ignominy of her own conduct, and she implicates Mrs. Maple and Harleigh in her behavior; she exposes them as being involved with a shameless woman, and they in turn attempt to flee from her as they suffer their own shame (and hers). Throughout the novel, Elinor forces others to observe her apparently impudent behavior, as she loudly, repeatedly rejects the notion that she must be silent and shamefaced. Despite their best efforts, these characters cannot help but watch as Elinor makes a spectacle of herself, as she makes herself hypervisible—constantly appearing when characters attempt to avoid her. Indeed, both male and female characters in the novel try to withdraw from Elinor and her shameless conduct, as Harleigh winces and recoils when Elinor exclaims, "Oh suicide! triumphant antidote to woe! straight forward, unerring route to rest, to repose! I call upon thy aid!" (783). Whereas Juliet tries to make herself invisible—for example, she feels ashamed to be put on display during the home theatricals, at the concert, and at the milliner's shop—Elinor will not allow others to look away. In line with the deportment expected of Englishwomen, Juliet feels ashamed to approach Harleigh (especially when Elinor sends amorous messages to him

through Juliet), whereas Elinor actively and repeatedly seeks out his company and affection.

Though readers come to understand that the shaming Juliet suffered was needless and cruel, Elinor becomes an object of scorn and derision precisely because she feels no shame, even after others distance themselves from her because of her political views and brash conduct, particularly the public suicide attempt at Juliet's harp concert. The difference between Juliet's and Elinor's responses to others' contempt and allocations of shame becomes particularly clear when Elinor, recovering from her self-inflicted stab wounds, replies to Juliet's lament regarding "the severe DIFFICULTIES of a FEMALE":

> "Debility and folly! Put aside your prejudices, and forget that you are a dawdling woman, to remember that you are an active human being, and your FEMALE DIFFICULTIES will vanish into the vapour of which they are formed. Misery has taught me to conquer mine! and I am now as ready to defy the world, as the world can be ready to hold me up to ridicule. To make people wise, you must make them indifferent; to give them courage, you must make them desperate. 'Tis then, only, that we throw aside affectation and hypocrisy, and act from impulse." (397, emphasis original)

"Act[ing] from impulse" is precisely the revolutionary ideology that the novel so harshly criticizes in Elinor, as evidenced, for example, by her repeated (and highly visible) suicide attempts in order to win Harleigh's love and attention. The novel intensely criticizes Elinor's rejection of normative femininity and her dismissal of the world's censure; readers do not and are not meant to sympathize with her character's plight because she, unlike Juliet, *could* publicly perform socially prescribed English womanhood, but she chooses not to do so. Instead, she is outspoken, brash, proto-feminist, and openly supportive of the French Revolution. D. D. Devlin, by contrast, briefly argues that "It is not … the politics of the Revolution which interest" Elinor but rather the excitement and thrill that accompany political conflict (107). Her disdain for her native country is apparent from the novel's first chapter in which she gloomily returns to England from a two-year stay in France. She remarks that Juliet, if she is at all French, will feel stifled by England's "foggy atmosphere"—a criticism of England that Harleigh immediately condemns:

> "And has our atmosphere, Elinor, no purifying particles, that, in defiance of its occasional mists, render it salubrious?"
>
> "Oh, I don't mean alone the foggy air that she must inhale; but the foggy souls whom she must see and hear. If she have no political bias, that sets natural feelings aside, she'll go off in a lethargy, from *ennui*, the very first week. For myself I confess, from my happiness in going forth into the world at this

> sublime juncture, of turning men into infants, in order to teach them better how to grow up, I feel as if I had never awaked into life, till I had opened my eyes on that side of the channel."
>
> "And can you, Elinor, with a mind so powerful, however—pardon me!—wild, have witnessed. . . ."
>
> "Oh, I know what you mean!—but those excesses are only the first froth of the cauldron. When once 'tis skimmed, you will find the composition clear, sparkling, delicious!" (18)

Here, Elinor willingly overlooks the horrors of Robespierre's Terror and attributes her own "awakening" to her time spent in a nation that is at war with her own. Elinor actively courts political conflict. Indeed, she refers to the French Revolution—the very cause of Juliet's terrified flight from Paris—as "the finest thing in the world" (69).[8] The novel thus prompts readers to pity Juliet and feel compassion for her suffering since she does not deserve the scorn and shame she experiences, whereas readers (and Harleigh) cringe at Elinor's shamelessness and recoil from her lack of English decorum and patriotism.

The novel rejects and shames Elinor, without attempting to elicit sympathy for her, because she fails to perform her national identity properly (that is, according to the guidelines that the Admiral outlines and Juliet performs). As noted earlier, Burney uses the Admiral's speeches to define the parameters of true English womanhood; my reading of the Admiral thus differs from that of Katharine M. Rogers, who dismisses the Admiral because of his nationalism and frequent chauvinism (both of which, while true, are concomitant with the era in which Burney wrote the novel). The Admiral maintains that Englishwomen must behave in "a Christian-like manner" and must comport themselves modestly and be "of a good behavior" (24, 22). Despite the shaming she suffers, Juliet consistently meets these criteria as she prays frequently, and she feels "ashamed and grieved" and apologizes for "appear[ing] extremely importunate" when she is alone with Harleigh (158). Conversely, Elinor's conduct entirely opposes the novel's assertions that Englishwomen must be pious and modest; she rejects the notion that women's expressions of romantic love must necessarily be shameful and is subsequently isolated due to these views.

For these reasons, the novel ultimately determines that Elinor cannot be recovered, and she is doomed to suffer shame and exile; the novel repudiates her brand of outspoken protofeminism, and, like an agent of contagion, she must be isolated from her community.[9] The novel thus also polices national identity by ejecting women who refuse to embrace English femininity. Harleigh silently steals away while Elinor (reluctantly) prays after their protracted discussion about religion; Elinor, entirely rejected, calls for her carriage; she admits that nothing awaits her but "life and misery" (798). As she looks at Juliet with "pride and shame," she reveals that she is directionless and hopeless: "'Drive to the end of the world!' she says to her carriage driver, and "forcibly adding, 'Farewell, too happy Ellis!' she again drew

up all the blinds, and, in a minute, was out of sight" (796, 797). My interpretation of this critical scene differs from that of Straub, who reads Elinor's unhappy ending as "a return to conventional female behavior" (188). Instead, Elinor's shamelessness and alliance with French principles result in her exile and shame; instead of recovering her, the novel punishes her, as Elinor is ultimately irredeemable. By contrast, the novel rewards Juliet's suffering, shame, and properly performed English femininity with a companionate marriage, acceptance by her half-siblings, freedom from her brutish "husband," and a reunion with her beloved bishop.

Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* anticipates characters like Elinor Joddrel, and indeed, *The Wanderer* punishes Elinor for daring to express romantic desire, voice political opinions, and advocate for women's rights and equality. Elinor echoes Wollstonecraft's own language when she exclaims to Harleigh the importance of "the Rights of woman: Rights, however, which all your sex, with all its arbitrary assumption of superiority, can never disprove, for they are the Rights of human nature; to which the two sexes equally and unalienably belong" (175). She later adds, again building upon Wollstonecraft:

> "Why, not alone, is woman to be excluded from the exertions of courage, the field of glory, the immortal death of honour,—not alone to be denied deliberating upon the safety of the state of which she is a member, and the utility of the laws by which she must be governed:—must even her heart be circumscribed by boundaries as narrow as her sphere of action in life? Must she be taught to subdue all its native emotions? To hide them as sin, and to deny them as shame? Must her affections be bestowed but as the recompence of flattery received; not of merit discriminated? Must every thing that she does be prescribed by rule?" (177)

Elinor vocally, repeatedly decries women's suffering, but Juliet, not she, experiences this mistreatment. Juliet suffers—almost always in silence—the novel's titular "female difficulties" without incurring the novel's imputations of shame. In Elinor, Burney has created a dynamic, vibrant character who quite literally echoes Wollstonecraft, only to punish and exile her, while Juliet, a comparatively less engaging and less progressive character, obtains a normatively happy ending. The criticism that Juliet receives from wealthy Englishwomen for presenting herself as "a nameless Everywoman" is undergirded by a belief that an Englishwoman must be readily legible as English.[10] Elinor fails to exhibit normative English femininity, and the novel thus castigates her for the challenge she poses to the boundaries of national identity, gender, and status.

Ultimately, the novel rewards Juliet's awareness that such an exhibition of herself is a source of shame. Though critics have frequently asserted that Juliet mirrors Evelina far too closely, these characters are remarkably different from one another, both in their experiences of shame and silence and in the importance of shame and silence to their maturation and ultimate social acceptance. Despite

the assertions of Hazlitt, Croker, and others who maintain that Burney wrote the same novel twice, what differentiates Evelina and Juliet is the way in which they experience shame and, principally, the way in which shame functions as a means of protecting national identity and "purity." Whereas Evelina, amidst her minor social blunders, must be "silent, uncomfortable, and ashamed" at almost all times to prove her inherent nobility and ascend to her role, Juliet must demonstrate shame and silence because secrecy and disguise are essential to her survival (63). However, these devices also provoke the shaming of women who, like Juliet, are not transparently English, marked by being stationary, publicly invisible, and not claimed by a patriarchal family during a time of national crisis.

NOTES

[1]Burney scholarship, while broad and fruitful, has not yet thoroughly taken up the subject of shame in *The Wanderer*, other than the notable exception of Marcie Frank's chapter, "The Promise of Embarrassment: Frances Burney's Theater of Shame." Andrea Austin's "Between Women: Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*" and Justine Crump's "'Turning the World Upside Down" both astutely analyze the novel in original ways. Each mentions shame only one time. George Haggerty's "A Friend, a Fop, and a Feminist," Carmen Fernandez Rodriguez's "Frances Burney and Female Friendships," Pam Perkins's "Private Men and Public Women," and Debra Silverman's "Reading Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*" are also notably strong and insightful analyses—but they do not mention shame at all.

[2]Significantly, the novel uses this same character to validate Juliet's rightful status; the Admiral is revealed to be her uncle, and he provides the paperwork that proves Juliet's mother was indeed the legal wife of Lord Granville.

[3]My analysis differs from Suzie Asha Park's theory of compulsory narration, "'All Agog to Find Her Out'" (130), which focuses on how language and silence in *The Wanderer* reinforce characters' preconceived notions about one another. Park's analysis does not discuss shame as a feature of individual characters or a hallmark of their interactions with one another.

[4]Class-based shaming indeed functions as a weapon in *The Wanderer*, and Juliet both wields and falls victim to this particularly pointed brand of shame. Both Evelina and Juliet are aware of their high birth but are unable to claim the benefits that coincide with their status; their response to people of other (lower) classes markedly differs, though, with *The Wanderer* demonstrating a sharper critique of working- and lower-class people. Juliet is unafraid to reject "low" people like Flora who conduct themselves poorly and snubs Young Gooch's friendliness, for example. *The Wanderer* both indicts and validates upper-class culture, a culture that ostracizes Juliet but to which she ultimately belongs; her reward for performing her gender "correctly" and exhibiting appropriate shame is the ability to enjoy her rightful social status as the daughter of Lord Granville.

[5]Chloe Wigston Smith also notes the anxieties about national identity in this scene, particularly regarding customers' interest in Juliet's taste and recommendations, since she had recently arrived in England from France: "Within the millinery shop, few customers concern themselves with the 'good of a nation,' as they appraise the goods of other nations.… The customers' lack of interest in British dress and styles echoes their lack of sympathy for Burney's suffering heroine, who has fled French political tyranny" (172-73).

[6]The fact that the concert does not actually take place mirrors Burney's own extensive career as a playwright whose plays were not actually staged, with the exception of a single failed performance in 1795 of *Edwy and Elgiva*, which was ruined by poor acting and marred/forgotten lines. As Barbara Darby explains, "By 1795, when [*Edwy and Elgiva*] was produced at Drury Lane (21 March), Burney was married and was a new mother. Her tragedy, *Hubert De Vere* (written at approximately the same time as *Edwy and Elgiva*) and the comedy *Love and Fashion* (1798) were submitted to theatres but later withdrawn and though *The Witlings* (1779) was sought by Sheridan, it was never produced" (6).

[7]Frank explains: "The comparison with her use of asides suggests that Burney used free indirect discourse to locate readers in an imagined theater, thus reproducing the preferred scene of the heroines' socialization, but with the additional capacity for moving us closer to or farther away from the action or in different directions simultaneously according to appeals to our affective or cognitive responses" (114).

[8]Elinor's fiancé, Dennis Harleigh (brother of Albert, with whom Elinor falls in love) vehemently disagrees with her about the French Revolution and deems it "one of the very worst … thing[s] in the world" (69). Elinor's sister, Salina, explains the nature and extent of the couple's disagreement to Juliet: "But, for all that, he loved her so, that he had made his brother fetch her home, and wanted the marriage to take place directly: and Aunt Maple wished it too, of all things, because Sister Elinor was so hard to manage; for, now she was of age, she did everything that she liked; and she protested that she would not give her consent, unless Mr. Dennis promised to change his opinion upon the French Revolution, so they quarrelled again the day before they left town; and Aunt Maple, quite frightened, invited Mr. [Albert] Harleigh, the elder brother, to come and spend a week or two at Lewes, to try to bring matters round again" (69). She has privileged her political opinions over her fiancé, and it is during Albert's visit that Elinor falls in love with him.

[9]Francesca Saggini offers a compelling reading of Elinor's character in which she maintains that "Elinor willingly transforms herself into the victim of Harleigh's decisional powers and agrees to obey his will" (142).

[10]Burney is thus particularly criticizing female characters' failed insight and rude behavior, since male characters—namely the Admiral and Harleigh—correctly interpret Juliet's conduct on the boat and deem her pious, modest, and, most

importantly—English. The approval given by the Admiral and Harleigh also serves as an endorsement of these two characters, whom Burney clearly wants readers—and Juliet—to endorse and admire, since, at the novel's conclusion, the Admiral is revealed to be Juliet's maternal uncle and Harleigh becomes Juliet's husband. The fact that they correctly interpret Juliet throughout the novel situates them as upright characters who serve as Juliet's friends and protectors, even before she can rightfully claim them as such.

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