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Would it be pleasing to me?: Surveillance and Sexuality in Frances Burney's *Camilla*

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When Henry Tilney tells Catherine Morland that, in England, they are subjected to the constant judgment of a "neighbourhood of voluntary spies," his intention is to comfort and reassure (Austen 145). The surveillance exerted by these "voluntary spies" in *Northanger Abbey* is seen to ensure the stability of England at a time when fears regarding the potentially destabilizing influence of the French Revolution were mounting. Frances Burney's *Camilla* is a novel about these "voluntary spies" at work, an ambivalent portrayal that I will argue reveals much about Frances Burney's own response to the French Revolution. The post-French-Revolutionary alignment of rebellious women with anxieties about the potential for an English revolution permeates the claustrophobic, anxious world of *Camilla*. Left to their own devices, the men of *Camilla* suggest that women can be deviant, aberrant, and downright "revolutionary," and it is men's duty to attempt to control these instincts: a project entirely in keeping with the reactionary counter-revolutionary hysteria that characterized the second half of the 1790s. Yet Burney's representation of the interplay of surveillance and sexuality in her novels reveals that she can be considered neither a conservative nor a radical. Rather, Burney clearly believes that the French Revolution will result in no lasting societal change at all but, instead, has only served to heighten the injustices that were already part of the social order.

Edmund Burke's depiction of women storming the palace of Versailles, cheering the removal of the king and queen—"whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies; and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women"—both created and sustained fears that women could be a significant threat to the safety of the English monarchy (165). Women were, at least to the conservative or otherwise fearful imagination of the English, at the forefront of revolutionary violence in France, and, therefore, it is not difficult to see why female behavior was so obsessively scrutinized. The story of *Camilla* is the story of the surveillance of Camilla, Burney's exploration of the way that conservative fears of revolutionary ideology were enacted in the domestic arena. The constant monitoring of Camilla's behavior exerts a

heavy toll on Camilla as she lapses into delirium and insanity as a result of the pressure exerted upon her by her parents and suitor, Edgar Mandlebert.

Burney's treatment of surveillance as a corrosive manifestation of the chaos that was the French Revolution thus problematizes readings of Burney's novels that ally her to the conservative novelists Jane West and Hannah More, such as that of Chris Jones, who reads *Camilla* as "thoroughly conservative" (70).[1] West's *A Tale of the Times*, for example, is explicit about the potential for women's behavior to have catastrophic effects on social cohesion; the heroine's seduction by a Jacobin villain is an allegorical rendering of the potential fall of England to the dangerous glamour of France. However, Burney resists such a simplistic causal relationship between aberrant female behavior and social instability, but she is equally skeptical of revolutionary propaganda. Burney's sensitive rendering of the effects of paranoia and surveillance on women articulates her discomfort with many aspects of counter-revolutionary discourse while at the same time never lending unqualified support to the revolutionary cause.

"Nothing must escape you": The Education of Camilla Tyrold

It is in Burney's novel of the Revolutionary decade, *Camilla*, first published in 1796, that this claustrophobic sense of revolutionary paranoia is most vividly evoked. Camilla's behavior is constantly watched and circumscribed by a series of male auditors—her father, her uncle, Dr. Marchmont and, perhaps most disturbingly to the modern reader, Edgar Mandlebert, her eventual husband. This form of surveillance eventually results in a form of mad, suicidal frenzy in Camilla as over the course of the novel she blames herself for three traumatizing occurrences: the imprisonment of her father, the estrangement of her family, and the loss of Edgar's affections. Camilla's education has taught her that her behavior should be entirely governed by the wishes of the men that surround her, and, more importantly, that any slight "errors" of behavior in a woman have potentially dire consequences to herself and to her society. Burney repeatedly demonstrates that, within English society of the 1790s, the control and regulation of the behavior of women became a central preoccupation for a culture terrified by the prospect of political upheaval.

Indeed, the Revolution itself was gendered female in popular imagery of the time, with the allegorical Marianne figure the primary means of evoking Revolution. The English were no doubt aware of this visual and allegorical association between women and Revolution, and thus there is a demonstrable link between fear of revolution and anxiety at unregulated female behavior. If the French Republic could be encapsulated in the image of a woman, then it was not difficult to suggest that Liberty-seeking women were the root

cause of the Revolution itself. As Burke's images of "furies" hyperbolically suggests, it is women's dangerous and savage impetuosity that will initiate, or at least accompany from the outset, violent political upheaval. Camilla's experience of surveillance, then, is not merely personal, but political. She has to be monitored to secure her suitability as a wife and mother, but, more importantly, she must be monitored in order to secure the ongoing stability of the nation. While this is generally an unproblematic presumption in conservative novels, Burney questions the perceived necessity for men to regulate female behavior.

Camilla has, of course, learnt proper female subordination from her mother. Georgiana Tyrold always defers her own judgment to her husband's even though her assessment of character and circumstance is repeatedly proven to be the more accurate and discerning. However, Mrs. Tyrold must willingly yield to the wishes of husband: "Mrs. Tyrold now yielded; she never resisted a remonstrance of her husband; and as her sense of duty impelled her also never to murmur, she retired to her own room, to conceal with how ill a grace she complied" (13). The cost to the Tyrold family of Mrs. Tyrold's submission is dear: as predicted, the un-inoculated Eugenia falls prey to smallpox and disfigurement. Mrs. Tyrold is the perfect wife—prudent, rational, and submissive—and it is her cheerful submissiveness above all that earns her husband's respect: "[T]he cheerful acquiescence of lessened reluctance, raised her higher in that esteem to which her constant mind invariably looked up, as the summit of her chosen ambition" (14). This is the model of proper femininity that Edgar Mandlebert clearly expects from his chosen wife. That Burney believes this is a flawed model is clear from her emphasis on the superior judgment of Mrs. Tyrold.[2]

The ambivalence that marks Burney's depiction of Mrs. Tyrold's unquestioning submission to her husband is mirrored in the central relationship of the novel: the relationship of Camilla and Edgar. Spurred on by the bitter, woman-hating Dr. Marchmont, Edgar is encouraged to watch Camilla carefully at all times. He is warned:

> Nothing must escape you; you must view as if you had never seen her before; the interrogatory, *Were she mine?* must be present at every look, every word, every motion; you must forget her wholly as Camilla Tyrold, you must think of her only as Camilla Mandlebert; even justice is insufficient during this period of probation, and instead of inquiring, 'Is this right in her?', you must simply ask, 'Would it be pleasing to me?" (160)

Edgar takes this advice so literally that, at times, it seems that Camilla cannot utter a word without its being scrutinized closely by Edgar. He sees his close scrutiny of Camilla as completely legitimate, and even though often tempted to bypass Dr. Marchmont's advice and propose to Camilla

immediately, he is committed to subjecting Camilla to a long, drawn-out period of examination. In the late 1790s, conservative novelists were arguing that it was well within the power of one aberrant woman to have a catastrophic effect on the society around her. Mrs. Bullock's anti-Jacobin novel, *Dorothea; or, a Ray of the New Light*, constantly emphasizes the potentially disastrous effects of radical philosophies—the "new light"—on the behavior of women, and thus, the need to shield women from these philosophies: "is it not time to shew the deluded victims of modern philosophy, that whilst they open the door to the *new light*, conjugal peace, filial affection, retiring grace, and every feminine virtue shrinking from the blaze, takes that moment to depart, never more, alas! to return" (3). The concept of surveillance at this time was so prominent and ideologically weighted that it is impossible to read Edgar's surveillance of Camilla divorced from its political context.

Foucault, in his famous study of surveillance, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, draws attention to the way in which, during the eighteenth century, the "docile body" was developed by the operations of those in power: "it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed, the efficiency that one determines" (138). While Foucault is primarily discussing the industrialization of English society, this concept may be equally applied to women, for central to the counter-revolutionary project is an emphasis on ensuring that women remain tethered to the domestic sphere, under the careful control of their husbands and fathers, and well removed from the dangerous sphere of international politics. Similarly, Edgar exerts a program of control over Camilla that aims to turn her into just this form of "docile body"—the perfect, submissive and yielding woman exemplified by her mother. The gaiety and spirit that has initially diverted Edgar's attention from the beautiful and vacuous Indiana Lynmere to Camilla is transformed into a sign of her dangerous impulsiveness and unsuitability as a wife. Camilla Tyrold must effectively be destroyed in order to transform her into Camilla Mandelbert, who will be an object of Edgar's own creation, dedicated solely to his pleasure.

What Burney makes clear is that in the paranoia over the prospect of revolutionary energies crossing the Channel, women were seen as key sites of instability and potential danger. While Evelina can be guilty of various social gaffes, such as being seen in the company of prostitutes, Camilla is not allowed the same leeway: her social errors have far more serious consequences. The intervening factor between these two novels is the French Revolution, which lends acute political significance even to the most apparently neutral behaviors. As Mrs. Arlbery says, Edgar is a "watcher": "He is a watcher; and a watcher, restless and perturbed himself, infests all he pursues with uneasiness" (482). That Burney uses such language to

describe Edgar—"restless", "perturbed", and "uneasiness"—is an expression both of the prevailing fears of the age and Burney's ambivalent handling of Edgar. The culture of fear that gripped England—Austen's "neighbourhood of voluntary spies"—has translated to a hyper-vigilance over the behavior of England's women, a hyper-vigilance that Burney does not advocate as appropriate or desirable. It is this hysteria that prompts Edgar to respond so violently to Camilla's brief sojourn into the world of fashionable society.

"To follow in everything the bent of her own humour": Sex, Fashion, and Marie Antoinette

While Edgar finds Camilla's propensity towards gaiety troubling, it is her enjoyment of fashionable society that he finds more seriously alarming as a propensity towards fashionable excess in the late eighteenth century carried with it extremely damaging connotations: the suggestion of sexual promiscuity and an affinity with the Queen of Fashion herself, Marie Antoinette. Edgar is constantly at the edges of Camilla's experiences with fashionable society, shadowing her at nearly all of her social engagements and watching her from afar with a critical eye. The fashionable world is so threatening to Camilla's being found worthy enough to be transformed into "Camilla Mandlebert" that Edgar feels perfectly justified in attempting to circumscribe her choice of friends and clothes, both means by which he can exert some control over this chaotic world. That Burney is not sympathetic to Edgar's censoriousness is made increasingly clear through Burney's sensitive depiction of the mental cost to Camilla of Edgar's scrutiny of her behavior.

Early in their courtship, Edgar reminds Camilla that she has ceded to him the power of deciding who her friends should be, telling her "You cannot, I think, forget . . . that you had condescended to put into my hands the management and decision of the new acquaintance you are anxious to form?" (235) In seeking to disrupt Camilla's friendship with Mrs. Arlbery, a notorious woman of high fashion, Edgar is wishing to dissociate Camilla from a dangerous, revolutionary woman. Mrs. Arlbery is described as "guilty of no vices, but utterly careless of appearances, and though her character was wholly unimpeached, she had offended or frightened almost all the county around, by a wilful strangeness of behaviour, resulting from an undaunted determination to follow in every thing the bent of her own humour" (194). Mrs. Arlbery dresses lavishly in the morning, and shockingly casually at night. The implication is clear—Mrs. Arlbery represents a world turned upside down.

The world-upside-down topos is clearly basic to the conservative worldview that saw itself under threat in the mid-1790s. The fear that

revolution essentially means reversal and upheaval is clearly evoked in Samuel Johnson's essay denouncing the American Revolution, "Taxation No Tyranny," as he declares that the "madness of independence has spread from Colony to Colony, till order is lost and government despised, and all is filled with misrule, uproar, violence and confusion . . . to be quiet is disaffection, to be loyal is treason" (120). To live in a world where to be loyal is to be treasonous and day has turned into night, therefore, is to live in a dangerous world of instability and violence—a world where there are no absolutes and no authority. Read in the light of this political context, Mrs. Arlbery's significance in *Camilla* clearly goes beyond her status, in Edgar's eyes, as a "dangerous acquaintance for Camilla" (194). Women who dared to articulate their own desires, whether sexual or otherwise, were perceived as immensely threatening to social stability at a time when women were believed to be at the center of the upheaval that was the French Revolution.

Camilla's increasingly lavish clothing brings to mind the female at the heart of the French Revolution: Marie Antoinette herself. Marie Antoinette was, and perhaps still is, the most notoriously fashionable woman in the world, but her very lavishness was perceived by the French as the root cause of the Revolution.[3] Camilla's extravagant dresses are seen as signs of increasing moral degeneracy: "heart-breaking disappointment received the cruel aggravation of the most severe self-reproach, when . . . she considered the expensive elegance of her whole dress, now, even in her own estimation, by its abortive purpose, rendered glaringly extravagant" (721). Dress is so politicized during the 1790s, in fact, that it is through fashion and clothing that women's revolutionary potential is seen as at its most explicit and threatening. Burney describes Camilla's gown in minute detail, telling how the robe:

> was everywhere edged with the finest Valencienne lace; her lilac shoes, sash, and gloves, were richly spangled with silver, and finished with a silver fringe; her ear-rings and necklace were of lilac and gold beads; her fan and shoe roses were brilliant with lilac foil, and her bouquet of artificial lilac flowers, and her plumes of lilac feathers, were here and there tipt with the most tiny transparent white beads, to give them the effect of being glittered with the dew. (721)

By invoking the image of Marie Antoinette, Burney exposes the extent to which women's choices, even in dress, were considered of socio-political importance in this age of Revolution.[4] Camilla has attempted to appeal to Edgar on a sexual level, hoping to catch his eye with her sexual allure, but instead reflects that he will almost certainly not respond with lust but, rather, with disapproval. Camilla's use of her body to appeal to a man is yet another link to Marie Antoinette whose appearance in extremely graphic political pornography was an expression of the belief that she was using

her sexual allure to illegitimately interfere in national politics, presumably on behalf of her native Austria.[5] Camilla's ostentatious gown demonstrates how fears of female extravagance were linked to fears of revolution—women's over-spending on superficial adornments could, at least in theory, bleed the country dry while their sexual allure could allow them to enter into the masculine world of politics to gain their own ends. Even Camilla's brief flirtation with fashion is enough to provoke dire consequences for Camilla and her family as her over-spending has contributed to the Tyrold family's financial woes while the sexual attraction she presents to a number of men, such as Sir Sidney, provokes Edgar's jealousy and resentment. It is the impossibility of a woman's living in defiance of social convention that renders Camilla's revolt doomed to failure. Therefore, Camilla's capitulation to Edgar's desires cannot be read as an attempt by Burney to show that the surveillance of women is in itself necessary and justifiable, a proposition that her more conservative counter-revolutionary sister novelists would defend, but few contemporary scholars would now argue reflects Burney's position.[6]

"The bond that keeps society from disunion": The Costs of Rebellion

In her discussion of Mr. Tyrold's famous sermon to his daughter, Claudia Johnson argues that this sermon reveals the extent to which the control of female sexuality in the 1790s was linked to the safety and security of the British nation (155). Indeed, Mr. Tyrold's sermon, an extended piece of conventional morality which, in the early nineteenth century, was often extracted from the novel verbatim for use in conduct books, clearly exemplifies how central the management of female sexuality was to the counter-revolutionary moralists. Mr. Tyrold warns Camilla never to make her true feelings for a man known as otherwise she can expect no "consideration and respect from the community" and argues that this discretion is "the bond that keeps society from disunion; the veil that shades our weakness from exposure, giving time for that interior correction, which the publication of our infirmities would else, with respect to mankind, make of no avail" (361). If women were free to declare their emotions before men have authorized them to do so, the very fabric of society would be threatened—the world will be turned upside-down, just as Samuel Johnson (and many others) feared. That Mr. Tyrold sees such dire consequences as social "disunion" arising from a simple declaration of love from a woman to a man is indicative of the level of fear associated with any sign of sexual desire in a woman.

However, despite these warnings, Camilla resists the surveillance that she is placed under. Camilla finds Mrs. Arlbery's willfulness attractive and begins to act according to Mrs. Arlbery's self-described "philosophy": "You are made a slave in a moment by the world, if you don't begin life by defying

it. Take your own way, follow your own humour, and you and the world will both go on just as well, as if you ask its will and pleasure for everything you do, and want, and think" (246). Thus, Camilla flirts with other men in front of Edgar to make him jealous, spends her money on dresses and other accessories, and is frequently in the very sort of high spirits that Dr. Marchmont would so strongly condemn. At one point, she is driven to tell Edgar that "You do surely what is wisest, though not—perhaps—what is kindest," a judgment that the reader is impelled to share (383). Even the virtuous Tyrolds cannot understand why Edgar is so severe towards Camilla. By portraying her heroine as chafing against the restrictions imposed upon her and constantly drawing attention to the extent to which Edgar is misguided, Burney reveals dissatisfaction with the limits imposed upon women as a result of the growing social conservatism of the mid- to late 1790s.

Edgar is not presented as an ideal lover in the way that Lord Orville of *Evelina* is: rather, his actions force Camilla into unnecessary agitation and confusion. After it becomes clear that Edgar is not interested in marrying Indiana, the only obstacle standing between Edgar's and Camilla's marriage is Edgar's inability to see through the personal motivations lying behind Dr. Marchmont's misogynist scare-mongering. Dr. Marchmont's belief that women need to be monitored for their own good is challenged in the very last paragraph of the novel as he is shown "regretting the false light given by the spirit of comparison, in the hypothesis which he had formed from individual experience, acknowledge its injustice, its narrowness, and its arrogance" (913). Dr. Marchmont has been acting not out of a benevolent or genuine concern for Edgar's well-being but in light of his deep bitterness in his own relationships with women. It is not Camilla whose behavior needs to be corrected after all. Instead, it is Edgar's willingness to act on the biased advice of Dr. Marchmont that is the real source of the troubles faced by the couple. Edgar's attempt to subject Camilla to surveillance does not ensure the political or social stability of their society. Instead, it threatens to prevent their domestic happiness altogether.

Camilla's degeneration into madness is, ultimately, brought about both by her experience of stifling surveillance and by the impossibility of living in defiance of the rules that have been dictated to her. Camilla's temporary period of weakness would seem to justify Edgar's tyranny whereas, in fact, it is only the consequence of his severity. However, so effective has Edgar's scrutiny been that Camilla soon is taught to blame herself for all the calamities that fall upon her family. She says, "My parents' own prayers have been averted, and their prognostics fulfilled. *May the dread forfeiture*, said my dearest Father, *not extend through my daughters!*—Alas! Lionel himself has not brought upon him such a disgrace as I have done!" (867) The sins of the

daughter are far more severe than the sins of the son. Camilla is trapped by her fear of her parents' and Edgar's judgment yet longs for their forgiveness for transgressions that seem relatively minor.

That Burney depicts her heroine undergoing such torment cannot be read as Burney inflicting just punishment on her heroine. Margaret Anne Doody argues that Camilla's nightmare "is a frightening account of the greatest imaginable frustration and loss, and an expression of the total guilt which seems the feminine emotion appropriate to eternity" (23). Doody thus illuminates how Camilla's vision calls attention both to her overwhelming guilt over her family's suffering and to her crushing sense of unfair abandonment by those who have made negative judgments of her behavior: her family and Edgar. Camilla's self-effacement is enacted in her vision of death in which she takes up the iron pen and finds "that her pen made no mark!" (875). This is what excessive surveillance has done and will do to women: leave them so completely incapable of making their own mark that they will be annihilated completely. That Burney is so sensitive to the negative consequences of surveillance on the female psyche clearly differentiates her from the counter-revolutionary novelists with whom she might otherwise have been associated.

"Rarely parted from her fond Parents and enraptured Uncle": *Camilla* and Conservatism

Recent scholarship has moved away from the idea that Burney's depiction of the subdued Camilla at the end of the novel renders Burney an anti-feminist novelist, confident in the belief that women must be monitored and chastised for their own good.[7] Burney herself, of course, had taken up the "iron pen," both to inscribe her own life story in her extensive diaries and to imagine other stories of female existence in her novels, dramas, and non-fiction. Even Edgar finally admits that he has been misled by the misogyny of Dr. Marchmont, saying, "Suffer me, then, to hope a kind amnesty may take place of retrospection, a clear, liberal, open forgiveness anticipate explanation and enquiry?" (900). I should like to suggest, then, that what Burney implies is this: it may be literally impossible for women to escape from the socio-political systems of male power. To suggest as much is thus to suggest that Burney is a novelist deeply concerned with the political and social status of women in eighteenth-century society—but not one identifiable merely as a conservative, a legitimizer of the female status quo. Camilla's revolution cannot be successful, but neither has the strict surveillance she has been subjected to been justified. At the end of the novel, Camilla is still deeply ensconced in the world of her childhood, despite her new status as wife, as Edgar "rarely parted her from her fond Parents and enraptured Uncle"

(913). By returning Camilla to the safe confines of her family circle, Edgar ensures that she will never possess the independent, revolutionary potential that she embodied while moving in the circles of Mrs. Arlbery and wearing lavish, Marie Antoinette-esque gowns of lilac and dew. As misguided as Edgar's behavior has been, his wishes are ultimately fulfilled: Camilla Tyrold becomes Camilla Mandlebert and will presumably be as exemplary a wife and mother, as perfect and efficient a "docile body" as her own mother before her.

Burney displays a deep cynicism towards change of any kind, betraying in her novels a belief that revolution achieves nothing. To an audience unsettled by the upheaval of the French Revolution, this return to cosy domesticity must have been immensely comforting. Camilla will no longer have any "adventures," to borrow Arabella's term from Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (327). Burney sees little potential for a woman to navigate successfully an existence that substantially differs from this basic framework in which a woman's life story effectively ends after marriage. Burney's response to the French Revolution is borne out of an understanding that the French Revolution will not and cannot change the status of women in society. Power has simply changed hands between men, leaving women in much the same place as they ever were: powerless and vulnerable.

As *Camilla* illustrates, women's implication in the birth of the Revolution may only have confirmed old stereotypes of women as dangerous, impulsive, and potentially vampiric. Like Marie Antoinette, they are bleeding the country dry through wanton extravagance and sexual licentiousness. Even Camilla's brief moment of sartorial excess is coded as a sign of her potential moral degeneracy. From her father's sermons to Edgar's hyper-vigilance over her behavior, Camilla is not allowed the freedom to eke out her own existence, make her own choices, or even decide what to wear. Reading Burney's novels in terms of their emphasis on surveillance reveals much about her politics that has previously not been discovered, for the portrayal of surveillance in *Camilla* reveals that revolution, from Burney's perspective, is neither a means of triumphant liberation nor a threat to the established social order. Rather, Burney's depiction of the culture of fear and hysteria that overran English society in the 1790s shows that all the French Revolution has really achieved has been the exacerbation of tendencies that already existed within British collective psyche: violence and fear exerted primarily towards women. Burney never allows herself to believe that the Revolution will result in the widespread changes that radical ideologues promised, but neither does she endorse the patriarchal power structures that ensure women will always hold a subordinate social position, and it is through the ambivalent depiction of surveillance in *Camilla* that the nuances of Burney's response to the French Revolution are made unnervingly clear.

NOTES

[1] In her influential 1950 study, Joyce Hemlow read *Camilla* as a courtesy novel, thus allying it to a specifically conservative agenda. More recent critics who read Burney's novels as conservative include Miranda Burgess, whose work on Burney's "economic romances" is underpinned by the conviction that Burney is an essentially conservative novelist, and Claudia Johnson, who claims that "Burney's heroines, far from protesting their wretchedness, vindicate its justice and embrace it with all the strenuousness of real commitment" (141–42).

[2] Various critics have also drawn attention to the ambivalence surrounding the behavior of Camilla's parents but give their emphases to different aspects of this behavior. Kristina Straub, for instance, draws attention to the pattern throughout the novel of women giving in, against their better judgment, to "incompetent and inconsistent male authority figures" (184). Julia Epstein, however, makes the cogent point that when Camilla is actually in need of her mother's advice, Mrs Tyrold is nowhere to be found (*The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* 200).

[3] For an excellent discussion of Marie Antoinette and fashions during the French Revolution, see Caroline Weber.

[4] Andrea Henderson's useful reading of the intersection between commerce and desire in *Camilla* uncovers the sexual element to the incident in which Camilla becomes entangled in window shopping with Mrs Mittin: "Sightseeing with Mrs Mittin thus seems to establish Camilla's identity as a casual shopper in addition to stimulating the interest of other casual shoppers in her" (78).

[5] Chantal Thomas describes the way that Marie Antoinette was depicted in the political pornography circulating in France in the late 1780s and 1790s thus: "[Marie Antoinette was] the Foreign Woman, Messalina, Proserpine . . . [She] was evil, a fiend from hell. Confronting her, opposing the evil queen who will stop at nothing, were the combined forces of good, of the New World which can only be born of itself" (17).

[6] Novels such as Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of Modern Philosophers* (1800), Jane West's *A Tale of the Times* (1799), Sophia King's *Waldorf* (1798), Mrs Bullock's *Dorothea* (1801), and Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife* (1809) emphasized the potentially catastrophic consequences of radical philosophy and highlighted the damaging effect these philosophies would have on women in particular. While *Camilla* treats the surveillance of women with ambivalence, the anti-Jacobin novelists suggested that women must be monitored for their own good and for the good of the society of those around them. This is demonstrated most effectively within Jane West's *A Tale of the Times* where the seduction and fall of Geraldine Powerscourt functions as an allegory of the fate of England if left unmonitored. Similarly, it is Dorothea's unfettered access to radical novels, represented as particularly dangerous when left in the hands of susceptible women, that leads to the death of her son and the (temporary) breakdown of her marriage in *Dorothea.*

[7] Rose Marie Cutting was among the first critics to present a feminist reading of Burney's novels, arguing that Burney's novels demonstrated a "growing rebellion against the restrictions imposed upon women" (519-20). Similarly, Elisabeth Rose Gruner reads *Camilla,* in particular, as a feminist exploration of the role of women within the family. Few contemporary scholars now align Burney's works with those of the conservative novelists. See, in particular, the feminist readings of Burney's novels by Margaret Doody, Julia Epstein, and Kristina Straub, who emphasize the irony and subversive undercurrents of Burney's novels.

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