

*“Burney indicts Cecilia’s vague quest to be mistress of her own time as naïve and impossible, just as she does with the belief that music provides women with a reprieve from patriarchal politics.”*

## THE POWER OF HER VOICE

### *Music and Patriarchal Politics in Frances Burney's Cecilia*

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SAINT CECILIA IS, TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE PATRON SAINT OF MUSIC. BUT TO FEMINIST MUSICOLOGISTS SUSAN COOK AND JUDY TSOU, SHE IS INSTEAD THE “PATRONIZED” SAINT OF MUSIC, A SYMBOL OF THE LIMITED ROLE TO WHICH WOMEN HAVE BEEN TRADITIONALLY CONFINED IN WESTERN MUSIC. IN HER NOVEL *CECILIA*, HOWEVER, FRANCES BURNEY WORKS TO RECLAIM THE FIGURE OF THE FEMALE MUSICIAN FROM THE PERIPHERY OF ARTISTIC RELEVANCE. BURNEY’S MUSIC-LOVING PROTAGONIST CECILIA SERVES AS A VEHICLE TO EXPLORE A NUMBER OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CONCERNS, MOST NOTABLY EMERGING CLASS CONFLICTS AND THE TENSION BETWEEN A WOMAN’S PERSONAL INVESTMENT IN ART AND THE MALE, PUBLIC WORLD THAT DEVALUES THAT ART. BURNEY SITUATES HER HEROINE PARADOXICALLY BOTH INSIDE AND APART FROM PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY; IT IS CECILIA’S MUSIC THAT ALLOWS HER TO STAND ON THE BRINK. BURNEY CERTAINLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE WAYS IN WHICH MUSIC FUNCTIONS AS A TOOL OF PATRIARCHY, RENDERING WOMEN SUBMISSIVE. HOWEVER, IN RE-VISIONING SAINT CECILIA AS SIMPLY CECILIA SHE ALSO QUIETLY SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY OF CHANGE, A SUGGESTION THAT HOLDS WEIGHT FOR FEMALE ARTISTS TODAY.

Frances Burney's second novel *Cecilia* features a musical heroine, one whose name immediately conjures images of (and is arguably derived from) the early Christian martyr Cecilia, patron saint of music. How Saint Cecilia came to be known as the patron saint of music is somewhat baffling, as she herself was no musician. Her father wanted her to marry a young man named Valerian, and arranged for an organ to be played at their wedding. Cecilia, however, chose not to marry Valerian. Instead she "sang in her heart to God alone" as she was put to death.<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, young women studying music were often instructed to look to Saint Cecilia for inspiration. Her portrait, depicting her eyes upraised to heaven while she played a violin or an organ, hung over many ladies' pianofortes.<sup>2</sup>

Feminist musicologists Susan Cook and Judy Tsou argue that Cecilia's position as the patron saint of music renders her a "stereotypical and patriarchal" symbol.<sup>3</sup> They refer to her, rather, as the "patronized" saint of music, limited, by her sex, to a passive role of idealized, even swooning [or

*"For both the Burney family and the fictional Cecilia Beverley, music functions simultaneously as a tool of the dominant patriarchal society and a means to break with that society."*

dying] muse or performer [emphasis added]."<sup>4</sup> In all likelihood Cecilia never had any formal musical training; she was named a saint by the patriarchal institution of the Church, and the many portraits of her have all been imagined and painted by male artists. In her pioneering work, *Music & Women: The Story of Women in their Relation to Music*, Sophie Drinker notes that Saint Cecilia is a "representative of the pattern within which women as musicians have been confined" since the time of her canonization in the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Within Cecilia's perplexing and misleading musical symbolism, the whole history of female participation in music in the modern Western world, and how that participation has been directly defined by their sex, emerges.

In creating her heroine, Cecilia Beverley, Frances Burney self-consciously enters into this dialogue about women and music. As a music lover, Cecilia is a character bur-

dened with all of the traditional associations of the saint for whom she is named, such as modesty, chastity, piety, and a willingness to martyr herself. Yet Burney has not simply transplanted the patron saint of music into her novel. Cecilia Beverley is an eighteenth-century woman with eighteenth-century concerns, some of which are not entirely continuous with the legacy of Saint Cecilia. For example, while both stories are concerned with correct female behavior, *Cecilia* hinges significantly on class conflict, a dimension that is entirely absent from the story of Saint Cecilia's life. Burney uses the idea of "Cecilia," angel of music, as a vehicle to explore contemporary ideas about women in music; by titling it *Cecilia*, Burney signals this as one of her novel's major concerns. This is not the usual reading of the novel—Julia Epstein rightfully reads *Cecilia* as an exploration of class tensions and the social breakdown that occurs as a result of those tensions. But examining *Cecilia* through a musical lens allows us to observe different tensions that animate the novel. It not only illuminates those same class conflicts observed by Epstein but also reveals a critical tension between women's personal,

private investment in the arts and the public expectations imposed on women by men through those same arts.

The daughter of a prominent and arguably the first musicologist, and a creative woman herself, Burney was strongly invested in the arts and women's participation in them. In her essay on the Burney family, Kate Chisolm remarks that increased middle class trade wealth from the 1760s onward resulted in increased participation in leisure activities like music.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Frances' father, Charles Burney, wrote in *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*, the work that launched his career in 1771, that "there was hardly a private family . . . without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord, or guitar."<sup>7</sup> Born undeniably to the middle class, Dr. Burney was nevertheless determined to achieve upward social mobility for himself and his family. He became a private harpsichord tutor for children of the local gentry. His skill at teaching and innovation at his craft, exemplified by devising a new and unique method of strik-

ing the harpsichord keys, rendered him enormously successful within a short period of time. Kate Chisolm observes that it was indeed his “musical ability” that “gave him the opportunity to better himself, becoming as socially mobile as if he had been born rich and well connected.”<sup>8</sup> Particularly after the success of his work, *The Present State of Music*, Burney was able to associate with an exceptional variety of people, some of whom were the most well-known European musicians of his day; Frances later became friends with famous Italian castrato Pacchierotti, who is gleefully alluded to in *Cecilia*. Sunday afternoons were a treat for any London music-lover lucky enough to be invited to one of Dr. Burney’s informal concerts, which often starred the latest “operatic sensations” from the Continent, as well as Burney’s own musically gifted daughters, Susan and Hetty.<sup>9</sup> All this should have been impossible for a man who was the son of a struggling portrait painter and dancing master.

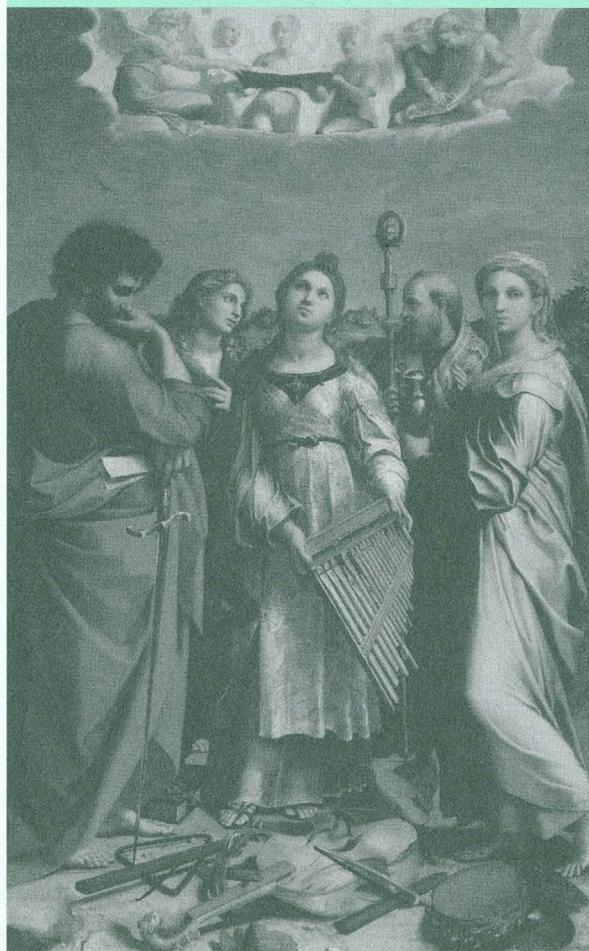
While not musically inclined—she once wrote of the “Theory of Music” that she had “no expectation of going so deep in the science myself”—Frances Burney certainly had a deep appreciation for music; she wrote frequently of her father’s “Musical Meetings” in her journals, and once declared simply that “I am most greedily hungry for a little music.”<sup>10</sup> She also recognized what social and economic possibilities it had opened to her family, revealed by *Cecilia*’s interrogation of the relationship between class and music.

For both the Burney family and the fictional Cecilia Beverley, music functions simultaneously as a tool of the dominant patriarchal society and a means to break with that society. Members of the eighteenth-century English gentry educated their daughters in music to make them better “products” on the marriage market. Charles Burney was able to use the conditions of that market to change the situation of his own daughters. Ironically, he did not remove them from the patriarchal economy, but rather chose to position them more advantageously. Regardless, his music made possible a social mobility and flexibility largely unheard of.<sup>11</sup> Cecilia’s love of music situates her in a similarly paradoxical manner. On the one hand, her natural but untutored love of music signals her appropriate participation in patriarchal society. As an audience member and as a performer, she maintains a docility of body consistent with the expectations of her society. Yet the genuineness of her appreciation separates her from the other women of the novel, like Mrs. Harrel or Miss Larrolles,

who enjoy music not in itself but merely as justification to be in public. This doubleness of the use of music in Burney’s own life, both freeing her from and locking her into a rigid class system, directly resembles the double representation of music in her novel.

In *Divided Fictions*, Kristina Straub likewise traces these cross-purposes in Burney’s fiction to “curiously” view women as “both ‘in’ and ‘out’ of what they do.”<sup>12</sup> In order to explain this ambivalence, Straub draws on the work of structural anthropology and Michel Foucault; she considers the difficulty of female identity in light of the fact that “the human mind and body are shaped by what they do.”<sup>13</sup> In the eighteenth century, middle and upper class single women did not have a concrete way to divide women’s oc-

ECSTASY OF SAINT CECILIA BY RAPHAEL.



cupations into either “work” or “play.” The lack of acceptable female occupations, as well as the ambiguity about how to categorize the few occupations that were acceptable, contributed, Straub argues, to “a general and pervasive tendency to devalue the ways in which women spend their time.”<sup>14</sup> Young women received intense mixed messages from patriarchal society, which told them that while single, they must innocently and productively fill their leisure hours, yet did not value the work of women’s hands beyond that. That is, women’s needlework or music-making or painting were not aesthetically valuable but only worthwhile in that these pursuits kept women out of trouble until they were married. Straub compares this attitude toward that of a parent amusing their child with finger painting on a rainy day.<sup>15</sup> Women like Frances Burney were encouraged to participate in activities such as playing the pianoforte, yet they were simultaneously urged not to take their art or themselves too seriously, making “ego-investment . . . foolish or perverse.”<sup>16</sup>

Burney attempts to situate her heroine both inside and apart from patriarchal society, and music serves as the means to both. Burney views music as transcendent and transformative to a certain extent. As a purely aesthetic experience, it lifts one out of one’s circumstances. In *Cecilia*, as in *Evelina*, the heroine at the opera is described as “enraptured” and “intent,” “with an avidity of attention almost painful from its own eagerness.”<sup>17</sup> Although Cecilia, like Burney herself, has “little skill,” she has what Burney deems a preferable, “natural love of the art.”<sup>18</sup> The sheer amount of page space devoted to Cecilia’s enjoyment of her first opera rehearsal does absolutely nothing to forward the plot of the novel; in it, we discover Burney’s personal commitment to the art. She describes at length “the pleasure she received from the music,” and Pacchierotti’s moving performance in particular, his voice “always either sweet or impassioned.”<sup>19</sup> In describing Cecilia’s enjoyment of the opera, Burney quite obviously channels her own, especially given her inclusion of personal friend Pacchierotti.

Like her contemporaries, Burney subscribes to the idea that what women do reflects something about their mind. However, unlike her contemporaries, who often tried to devalue women’s music, Burney indicates to her readers that women’s music is worth the investment. This message resonated deeply with Burney’s readers: while on a visit to the home of a family friend, “Burney was amused to find a copy of *Cecilia* in which ‘the chapter, An Opera

Rehearsal, was so well read, the leaves always flew apart to display it.”<sup>20</sup> Her readers appreciated her minutely detailed description of Pacchierotti’s performance and returned to it over and over again. Perhaps part of music’s appeal as a female occupation was located in its ability to be the vehicle for rebellion or liberation from larger patriarchal structures without actually looking like it. During the following opera performance, for instance, Mr. Monckton observes that Cecilia’s “whole mind had been intent upon the performance,” while at the rehearsal, “her mind” was scarcely “at liberty to attend to any emotions but its

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own.”<sup>21</sup> In the rest of the novel, Cecilia is always accountable to someone else (the Harrels, the Delviles) and is often out of control, whereas the opera provides Cecilia with an environment for mental self-sufficiency, in which she is sovereign over her own thoughts and feelings and accountable to no one but herself.

To forget that music also functions as a tool of the disciplinary apparatus would be foolish, or in the world of *Cecilia*, even dangerous. Burney repeatedly shows the reader that the public spaces of the novel in which music is performed—the Opera, Vauxhall, etc.—are compromised spaces, and as much as Cecilia might long to lose herself to music, in reality they can provide no entirely safe or permanent refuge. The problem inherent to performing music in public is that the public was a thoroughly male-dominated sphere. Therefore, as an activity either done by women (such as a soprano at the opera), or for women (as members of an audience), the performance always occurred only with male permission and supervision. At

least in public, there was no such thing as a totally feminine musical performance since it was, inevitably, a performance under the male gaze.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in one of the most dangerous incidents in the novel, Cecilia attends “a new serious opera” with the Harrels.<sup>23</sup> Sir Robert Floyer, who persists in his pursuit of Cecilia despite her discouragement, takes advantage of her immobility, “sauntering down fop’s alley, [he] stationed himself by her side . . . turned his eyes from the stage to her face, as better worth his notice, and equally destined for his amusement.”<sup>24</sup> Fop’s alley was the aisle along which gentlemen could walk



ATTRACTING ROMANTIC ATTENTION WAS ONE OF THE MANY USES OF FEMALE MUSIC.

during an opera in order to survey the ladies. Ladies, however, were supposed to “sit decorously and not to patrol the house.”<sup>25</sup> The Opera House is actually designed so that gentlemen can physically enact the patriarchal economy with every step they take along “fop’s alley.” Male subjugation of women is so institutional that it literally informs even the architecture of the eighteenth-century world. Sir

Robert’s “sauntering down fop’s alley” illuminates the deep roots of patriarchy even in a supposedly female site like the Opera House.

It is possible to see the Opera House as not designed for musical performance, but rather for *female* performance. Cecilia, in her attempt to enjoy the opera, is effectively paralyzed by and objectified under Sir Robert’s gaze. Her personhood is metonymically replaced by “her face”; she is reduced to her body, which becomes a kind of performance that in Floyer’s view, the view of the male patriarch, is as “destined for his amusement” as the opera. In this way, the Opera House is a space in which women are expected to perform for the patriarchal economy whether they are on stage or not. Women, particularly their bodies, are transformed into a spectacle. Although Cecilia would like to enjoy the music, she is unexpectedly thrust into the role of performer herself, and is therefore impeded in what she hoped would be a strictly private, aesthetic experience. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault considers the discipline of torture and concludes that “the fact that the guilty . . . should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect, it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force.”<sup>26</sup> Cecilia’s treatment at the hands of Sir Robert Floyer can be seen as a kind of torture, in that her discomfort under his gaze is not merely a “side-effect” of some larger project; his goal is in fact to make her feel objectified, as he admits numerous times throughout the novel (we will later see Gilbert and Gubar make a similar point about female illness as it applies to *Sense and Sensibility*). His offensive gaze, as well as his “sauntering” down the alley, is an enactment of his power as a man in a male, public space, and it occurs at Cecilia’s expense.<sup>27</sup> Cecilia’s night at the opera teaches her that she was mistaken to believe that music provides her any measure of cover from the male gaze, so long as that music is performed in the public sphere. The entire spectacle of opera is cynically cast not as a transformative, uniquely female experience, but rather, in the words of Foucault, as “a political ritual,” a ceremony “by which power is manifested,” in this case directly on the musical, female body.<sup>28</sup>

Cecilia’s night at the opera gets worse. As she leaves her seat, Mr. Belfield offers her his arm, which she accepts, just before Sir Robert Floyer does the same. In her disdain for Sir Robert, she accepts Mr. Belfield, which slightly infuriates Sir Robert. He insults Belfield by demanding of Cecilia, “Will you suffer such an impertinent fellow as that, Miss Beverley, to have the honour of taking your hand?”

and then nearly begins a duel in the Opera House, until young Delvile interferes.<sup>29</sup> Cecilia is very alarmed for both men's safety, in particular because she has an "immediate consciousness that she was herself the real cause of the quarrel."<sup>30</sup> Foucault argues that spectacle is an "exercise of terror" over its victims, and indeed Cecilia's night at the opera begins with discomfort while being looked at by Floyer and concludes with terror as the two men's disagreement escalates.<sup>31</sup> The duel takes place later in the novel and Belfield is almost mortally wounded. Although it is eventually revealed that the duel occurs for other reasons than over Cecilia, her "incautious emotion" in fearing for both men's lives "had given rise to suspicions of her harbouring a partiality for a man whom every day she more heartily disliked," and for a time ruins her chances with young Delvile, who thinks that she is engaged to one of them.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately what the almost-duel at the Opera House reveals to the reader is Cecilia's vulnerability even in a traditionally feminine space. While Cecilia may be-

lieve that she goes to the opera merely for the innocent enjoyment of music, Burney cynically casts that belief as an illusion; male control is permitted and even encouraged at the opera, and art therefore fails to protect women. Cecilia's hope of hearing the performance while remaining detached from the men that surround her turns out to be naïve and dangerous to her future chances of happiness. Sites of musical praxis are only secondarily intended to provide aesthetic enjoyment. Their primary purpose, according to Burney, is to reify patriarchal political values, including both gender and class hierarchies. In putting women on display both on and offstage, the Opera House functions as a locus for the enactment and display of patriarchal values.

To Burney, the Opera House is also compromised in other less dangerous but equally frustrating ways. For instance, almost no one in the novel, except Cecilia herself, takes music seriously. Mrs. Harrel's "love of the Opera" is instead "merely a love of company, fashion, and shew." Sim-

AMONGST THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ARISTOCRACY, THE FEMALE ROLE IN MUSICAL PERFORMANCE WAS MORE CEREMONIAL AND SOCIAL THAN ARTISTIC.



ilarly, Miss Larolles' only concern at the opera is to find a seat "at the outside" of her box "on purpose to speak to a person or two."<sup>33</sup> Neither of them attends the opera for the musical performance but rather to see and be seen. While at the opera itself, Cecilia is vexed that the Harrels arrive so late that they miss almost the entire first act, and the rest of the act is ruined by a group of young ladies, "whose tittering and loquacity allowed no one in their vicinity to hear," while they themselves "listened to not a note"; this seems to have been a pet peeve of Burney's, as she replicates this scene at a private concert later in the novel with a different group of young women and more "unmeaning conversation."<sup>34</sup> The second act is no better, as she is then seated near a group of young men and "no sooner was the second act begun, than their attention ended!"<sup>35</sup> Finally, the ennuyé, Mr. Meadows, expresses his opinion of the opera to Cecilia after its conclusion, perversely protesting that in spite of his attendance, "I hate a solo. . . . I hardly ever attempt to listen to a song. . . . One is sick to death of music."<sup>36</sup> With these repeated aggrieved reflections, Burney again reveals her personal investment in the art; as the daughter of the famous Dr. Burney and friend to many professional musicians, she plainly resents what is called "fashionable inattention" to music.<sup>37</sup> Austen will later depict the same general insensibility of the tone to the arts, most notably in *Sense and Sensibility*.

Through the subversive voice of Lady Honoria, Burney is able to further explore some of the more extreme opinions of music as a disciplinary tool. As Epstein notes in *The Iron Pen*, Lady Honoria's comments are disruptive but "knowing, calculated, and insightful."<sup>38</sup> Burney describes her as the average well-bred lady; she had received "a fashionable education. . . . She sung a little, played a little."<sup>39</sup> She is remarkable not for the breadth of her accomplish-

charmed by Lady Honoria, and although careful not to give her too much narrative power, Burney does grant her the novel's last word. She brazenly states her opinion of gender relations to senior Mr. Delvile, asserting,

*"Not a creature thinks of our principles, till they find them out by our conduct: and nobody can possibly do that till we are married, for they give us no power beforehand. The men know nothing of us in the world while we are single, but how we can . . . play a lesson upon the harpsichord."<sup>40</sup>*

One wonders if, after the heavy, melodramatic romance between Cecilia and Delvile, Burney felt the need to inject her novel with what might be a more honest and realistic look at relations between men and women. Epstein agrees, remarking that Lady Honoria's "sharp wit refreshingly challenges the staid codes of social behavior in the novel."<sup>41</sup> She reveals, in one swift comment, the culture of accomplishments as a mere patriarchal device to keep women superficial, the fulfillment of Hannah More's fear of woman as "ornament." She also echoes Mary Wollstonecraft's disdain for the so-called system of female education, as she sarcastically adds, "O no, Sir, I would not have her study at all; it's mighty well for children, but really after sixteen . . . one has quite enough fatigue in dressing . . . without all that torment of first and second position, and E upon the first line, and F upon the first space!"<sup>42</sup> Finally, Lady Honoria exposes class tensions between the aristocracy & gentry and the increasingly wealthy middle classes as she asks Mr. Delvile, "Dear Sir, what should we all do with birth if it was not for wealth? It would neither take us to Ranelagh nor the Opera."<sup>43</sup> The snobbish in-breeding advocated by Delvile senior is not financially unsustainable; a fashionable lifestyle, and the musical dissipations it demands, comes at a cost that only some can pay.

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ments, which are perfectly ordinary, but rather for the clarity and accuracy with which she observes her own society. She is perhaps the forerunner to Lizzy Bennet, the sardonic sociologist, or Mary Crawford, the brilliant but dangerous challenger of social norms. It is difficult not to be

Music, or at least certain kinds of music, is a diversion only available to the wealthy.

Julia Epstein, in *The Iron Pen*, also notes Burney's inclination to render public places of pleasure as "discursive sites

for the mapping of social classifications.”<sup>44</sup> Burney of course had personal reasons to insert herself into this discussion about music and class; her family’s financial and social successes were due to her father’s indirect forwarding of the patriarchal economy by teaching women music. Thus the Opera House, for example, is not merely a gendered space but a classed one as well. Epstein darkly interprets the novel primarily as “a perpetual game of gender and class warfare,” and Terry Castle calls it the “institutionalization of . . . sexual theater.”<sup>45</sup> Although both scholars primarily examine the ways in which this class warfare occurs during the masquerade, their analysis can easily be extended to comprehend the other public spaces of the novel where music is performed, such as balls, the opera, and Vauxhall. Class warfare is perfectly and literally apparent in the near duel between Belfield and Floyers at the Opera House; Floyers considers Belfield as an impertinent upstart in claiming Cecilia’s hand, while he is titled and therefore more worthy of it. In conjunction with this rigid upholding of class, music permits a kind of permissible crossing of class boundaries, which, in being permissible, maintains those boundaries. In her madness at the end of the novel, Cecilia, “though naturally and commonly of a silent and quiet disposition... was now not a moment still.”<sup>46</sup> Though not exactly making music, Cecilia-the-madwoman’s tongue is freed in her illness in a way that Cecilia-the-heiress was never allowed. However, the reader knows that Cecilia is in fact an heiress, and indeed, her recovery is marked by her again becoming “quiet and composed... contentedly silent.”<sup>47</sup> Her brief interlude of madness reinforces for the reader, as it does for Mr. Delvile senior, that Cecilia really does not belong in the Three Blue Balls, she belongs in Delvile Castle. Her restoration to silence demonstrates her ambivalently characterized restoration to her rightful class and social sphere.

Yet at the same time, Cecilia’s love of music also marks her as an appropriate partner for the well-born Delvile. He admits that before he met her, he had already heard of her “accomplishments,” a term by which musical talent was almost certainly implied. Mrs. Delvile, also, remarks a number of times that Cecilia’s “virtue, beauty, education, fortune and family were all unexceptionable.”<sup>48</sup> “Education,” like “accomplishments,” would have comprehended a wide range of subjects, music among them. Her musicality not only makes her desirable as a woman – it gives her “beauty” – but it also, as an indication of her “fortune and family,” makes her desirable as a financial partner. Young Delvile is convinced that her “accomplishments,

joined to the splendour of her fortune” cannot fail to convince his parents of her suitability as his wife.<sup>49</sup> Although Cecilia is not thrilled to participate in patriarchal society and sometimes seeks refuge in music, those around her insist on reading her music-making as a symbol of a woman invested in the dominant ideology.

Cecilia uses music-making to try to escape the disciplinary apparatus, specifically its strict control of her time. Rather than spending every day and every night in dissipation with the Harrels, Cecilia eventually desires to become “mistress of her own time.”<sup>50</sup> Ironically, of course, her “favourite studies” are also those that patriarchy would choose for her, music and reading, as well as walking and fancy work.<sup>51</sup> It is difficult to know if this is the choice of a truly liberated mind, one that can choose its own occupations without reference to the wider world, or if Cecilia is merely becoming her own patriarchal task-master. Kristina Straub would likely argue the latter, as Cecilia also uses these occupations to “keep emotional chaos at bay,” a tension later explored in Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*.<sup>52</sup> In order to distract herself from her affection for young Delvile, Cecilia throws herself into these rational employments. For instance, she asks Mr. Monckton to order her “a Piano Forte of Merlin’s.”<sup>53</sup> But the romantic plot will not leave her alone with her music. Moreover, Straub argues that “the very employments designed to give Cecilia control often betray her into helplessness.” For example, Lady Honoria remarks on Cecilia’s poor needlework when asking her for her feelings on Delvile.<sup>54</sup>

Cecilia’s already questionable plan for “independence” from patriarchal discipline is an utter failure. Neither music nor any other employment can keep her separated from Delvile, and Cecilia does not find satisfaction in pursuing them independently anyway because the solitude is overwhelmingly lonely. Although earlier at the opera Cecilia was thwarted in trying to enact private enjoyment of music in a public space, she now finds that privacy unsatisfying. Burney here demonstrates her native conservatism. She certainly has reservations about the patriarchal economy, as expressed by Cecilia’s uneasiness under Sir Robert Floyer’s gaze at the opera. Nonetheless, her heroine must and does participate in that economy in her marriage to young Delvile. Burney indicts Cecilia’s vague quest to be mistress of her own time as naïve and impossible, just as she does with the belief that music provides women with a reprieve from patriarchal politics. Those politics have even invaded the supposedly “safe” domestic, female

sphere, leaving Cecilia no refuge except that of Delville's arms.

At the very least, although Cecilia ends the novel subject to the voice of patriarchy made manifest both in her husband and her father-in-law, readers can rejoice that unlike Saint Cecilia, her musical talent is given to her not by man but by a fellow woman, her creator, Frances Burney. In writing a musical heroine, Burney begins the process of reclaiming Cecilia and other female musicians from a history written by men. In *Divided Fictions*, Straub convincingly proposes that Burney seeks "conventional, not revisionary" solutions to the problem of female self-identification under patriarchy.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, it would do violence to the novel not to acknowledge the darkness of its vision. *Cecilia* certainly presents a world of relentless, invasive patriarchy. Burney begins her novel by seeming to uphold the binary between public (male) and private (female). Yet by novel's end it is clear that Burney deconstructs that binary to suggest that in a world of patriarchal power, no space is exempt from that power. Thus the Opera House as well as the music parlor become sites for the exhibition of disciplinary politics. Even while making music alone in her home, Cecilia is still trapped by patriarchy, her range of motion and activities still restricted to those encouraged by the dominant ideology. Simply in the act of creating a female character who has a dynamic and engaging relationship with music, however, Burney was revisionary. This is not Saint Cecilia as presented to the world by a male priest or artist; it is Cecilia, recreated by a sister music-lover.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Drinker (264)
2. Drinker (263)
3. Cook and Tsou (1)
4. *Ibid.*
5. Drinker (264)
6. Chisolm (10)
7. Burney 1988 (6)
8. Chisolm (10)
9. *Ibid.*
10. D'Arblay (338, 436)
11. Frances in particular achieved such mobility, thanks to her father's fame, as well as her own literary reputation, that in 1786 she was offered and accepted a position at court with Queen Charlotte. Chisholm (20)
12. Straub (89)
13. Straub (78)
14. Straub (79)
15. Straub (88)
16. Straub (89)
17. Burney 1988 (65, 136)
18. Burney 1988 (64)
19. Burney 1988 (65)
20. Burney 1988 (962)
21. Burney 1988 (136, 65)
22. For more on the male gaze and women as "to-be-looked-at-ness," see Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema."
23. Burney 1988 (59)
24. Burney 1988 (135)
25. Burney 1988 (972)
26. Foucault (34)
27. In Burney's previous novel *Evelina*, the heroine, at her first ball, similarly remarks disgustedly that "the gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal." Burney 1997 (74)
28. Foucault (47)
29. Burney 1988 (137)
30. Burney 1988 (138)
31. Foucault (49)
32. Burney 1988 (162)
33. Burney 1988 (131, 286)
34. Burney 1988 (134, 323)
35. Burney 1988 (135)
36. Burney 1988 (266-267)
37. Burney 1988 (979); The theme is developed first in *Evelina*, in which the heroine writes of her first opera visit, "I could have thought I was in paradise, but for the continual talking of the company around me." Burney 1988 (84)
38. Epstein (167)
39. Burney 1988 (464)
40. Burney 1988 (934)
41. Epstein (167)
42. *Lady Honoria* is referring to notes on the musical staff. Burney (935)
43. Burney 1988 (936-937)
44. Epstein (161)
45. Epstein (167); Castle, cited in Epstein (162)
46. Burney 1988 (901)
47. Burney 1988 (920)
48. Burney 1988 (512)
49. Burney 1988 (564)
50. Burney 1988 (55)
51. *Ibid.*
52. Straub (132)
53. Burney 1988 (460)
54. Straub (134)
55. Straub (107)

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