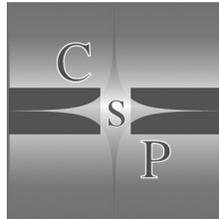


A Celebration of Frances Burney

A Celebration of Frances Burney

Edited by

Lorna J. Clark



CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PUBLISHING

A Celebration of Frances Burney, edited by Lorna J. Clark

This book first published 2007 by

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

15 Angerton Gardens, Newcastle, NE5 2JA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN 1-84718-320-4; ISBN 13: 9781847183200

DEDICATED
TO THE
MEMORY OF
JOYCE HEMLOW



The memorial window to Frances Burney in Poets' Corner,
Westminster Abbey.

By kind permission of Ann LaBeck.

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FOREWORD

It is a great honour for the Burney Society to present these essays given at a conference to celebrate Frances Burney's 250th birthday, as well as the installation of a memorial window in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. This tribute is not something she herself would have sought, but it is right that the woman whom Virginia Woolf called "the Mother of the English Novel" should at last join her literary peers in the Abbey, a place that honours both faith and literature.

What is most remarkable about Frances Burney, to my mind, is her "voice."

There have been times when it appeared she had been forgotten. Yet, her voice, in the form of her novels, diaries, letters and plays, would not be stilled despite the centuries that separate her life from our own. She lived a remarkable life and, what is even more striking, is that she wrote it all down. There has never been such a chronicle of a life and, in our digitized society, there may never be again.

In taking her place in Poets' Corner, Frances Burney represents not only herself but an entire century of women novelists, poets and playwrights. These include Elizabeth Inchbald, Hannah More, Charlotte Smith, Hannah Cowley and Ann Radcliffe—all of whom changed their chosen genre in important ways. Indeed, Frances Burney is the first woman to have been published in the eighteenth century to be so honoured inside the Abbey.

While Frances Burney was a celebrity in her own time, the full measure of her accomplishment is only now being recognized. Her works are in print again and, in some cases, have been published for the first time only recently. When her first novel, *Evelina*, burst upon the scene in 1778, it created a sensation. With *Evelina*, Burney created a new genre in English literature, the comedy of manners, that was so brilliantly polished by Jane Austen. Unlike the stock ingenues who preceded her, *Evelina* was a groundbreaking heroine, one who lived in contemporary London and actually learned from her mistakes. The novel captured contemporary life and manners with a vitality and wit that had not been seen before.

Burney's next two novels, *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, were also best-sellers. Jane Austen took the title of *Pride and Prejudice*, along with some plot lines, from *Cecilia*. Austen also subscribed to the first edition of *Camilla*.

Evelina was reprinted often in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while *Cecilia* and *Camilla* were more difficult to find but still were obtainable. It wasn't until 1988, however, that her last novel, *The Wanderer*, was reprinted for the first time since the first edition appeared in 1814. This novel, unappreciated in her time and underappreciated in ours, is a remarkable departure from anything she had written before. No one had depicted the difficulties of working class life for young women in quite this way. As such, it looked forward to Dickens. The novel's dramatic denouement at Stonehenge inspired Thomas Hardy and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

In the nineteenth century, Frances Burney became known more for her lively journals and letters than her novels. The full extent of this literary treasure is only just coming to light with the publication of the complete, unexpurgated text begun by the late Joyce Hemlow at McGill University in Montreal. Her work was continued by Lars Troide and is now under the directorship of Peter Sabor, assisted by Stewart Cooke, Lorna Clark, Geoffrey Sill, Nancy Johnson, and others.

These diaries, in addition to recording the wit flashing around Samuel Johnson, have become a key resource for everything from philology to nineteenth-century surgical techniques. Students of history, literature, language, medicine, music and theatre all bump into Frances Burney sooner or later.

She was an eyewitness to many important events of her time, including the trial of Warren Hastings, the madness of King George III and the aftermath of Waterloo. At age 63, she refused to evacuate Brussels along with the other British and nursed the English wounded as they came off the battlefield.

In the pages of her diaries, her voice is so vital, we are almost fooled into thinking she has just gone into another room or is about to pay a call. We laugh with her as she skewers a snob. We rejoice with her at her literary success. We suffer with her over a failed romance. We celebrate with her when she marries Alexandre d'Arblay. We mourn with her as she buries her close friends and relatives—including her husband and son.

In the diaries, she assumed the persona of a "shrinking miss" when it suited her, but in reality, she was a brave, smart, funny and observant woman, a brilliant writer, a loyal friend and sister, and a devoted wife and mother. Her plays were almost entirely unknown during her lifetime and were only published completely for the first time in 1995. The West End was introduced to her comic potential in 2000, when *A Busy Day* was produced 200 years after she wrote it, a feat brought about in part by the

persistent efforts of actor Ian Kelly, who was convinced of the zest and wit of Burney's comedy.

So in this volume, and in the Abbey itself, we pay tribute to Frances Burney, Writer, who lived a remarkable life in remarkable times. She made writing women—and women's writing—acceptable. She earned a place at the literary table, opening the door for many to follow.

She is surrounded by memorials to her literary heirs—Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, William Thackeray, Charles Dickens and Virginia Woolf, whose own work built in ways, both large and small, upon her own. Before June 13, 2002, Frances Burney's only presence in the Abbey was as the author of the memorial to her father, Dr. Charles Burney. From that day forward, she has her own place. How right, how welcome it is.

Paula LaBeck Stepankowsky
Co-founder, President, The Burney Society

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On a fine summer's day on 13th June 2002, a remarkable event took place in Westminster Abbey, witnessed by 120 people gathered from around the world. After an evensong service that featured the ethereal voices of the boys' choir, a special ceremony was held in a side-chapel off the nave. On the 250th anniversary of the birth of the writer Frances Burney (1752-1840), a window to her memory was placed in the arched recess of stained glass that graces Poets' Corner. Novelist, playwright and diarist, Frances Burney is one of the few women accorded such an honour. She joins the likes of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot who might in some ways be seen as her literary heirs. Burney's journey to recognition on the stage of the world has been a long one, crowned finally with triumph.

Remarks to celebrate the occasion were made by the Very Rev. Dr. Wesley Carr, Dean of Westminster Abbey; by a representative of the family, Mr. Charles Burney; and by the President of the Burney Society, Ms. Paula LaBeck Stepankowsky, who had spearheaded the movement to have Burney's achievements commemorated in such a fashion. Many journalists were in attendance, including one (Jill Walker) sent from overseas on assignment for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation which later aired a special programme dedicated to the event.

The service marked the mid-point of a two-day conference in which various aspects of Burney's life and achievement were canvassed. Her journals and letters, her novels and plays (both comedies and tragedies), her life, family and context were all given serious scholarly treatment. By way of lighter fare, scenes from her plays were presented and contemporary music was performed.

From the sense of euphoria inspired by that remarkable day, this volume was born, in an attempt to recapture the excitement in a more tangible form. With one exception, all the papers presented on those days are published here for the first time¹ to represent the many facets of a remarkable career. The volume represents the broad spectrum of scholarly approaches to the entire opus of Frances Burney. It shows how far Burney has come from being dismissed as a minor precursor to Jane Austen to being recognized in her own right as a powerful, complex and influential

writer, whose works had considerable impact on both her own and subsequent generations.

The process of bringing the project from conception to fruition could not have been accomplished without the help of many people. First of all, I would like to thank Paula LaBeck Stepankowsky, who first conceived of the idea of honouring Burney in Poets' Corner and whose tireless energy and enthusiasm drove the project forward. The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey were generous with their time in approving the proposal, ushering it through an intricate process and presiding over the ceremony. The UK committee made the on-site arrangements: Jean Bowden, Elizabeth Burney Parker, Kate Chisholm and Karin Fernald worked long and hard to organize the event, helped on the North American side by Lucy Magruder. The papers committee, chaired by Stewart Cooke (helped by Kate Chisholm, Lorna Clark and John Wiltshire), prepared a thoughtful and diverse programme. The several representatives of the Burney family, with Charles Burney at their head, helped to turn the occasion into a truly communal celebration, suggesting how far Burney's influence extends beyond the walls of the academy.

For his guidance and encouragement at every step of the way, Peter Sabor truly deserves our thanks. In his role as Director of the Burney Centre at McGill University, succeeding Joyce Hemlow and Lars Troide, he spearheads many projects, offering a role model of rigorous scholarship, cheerful energy, remarkable productivity and managerial efficiency; he acts as a generous mentor to Burney scholars from around the world.

For the cover photo, we thank Ann LaBeck and for permission to reproduce images, the Bristol Reference Library, Southampton Central Library, National Portrait Gallery, the Board of Trinity College, Dublin, and the Ashmolean Museum. The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, granted permission to quote from its manuscripts, as did the Huntington Library, San Marino, California and the British Library.

At later stages, Terry and Cynthia McIntyre helped prepare the manuscript with good-humoured expertise, and Erica Leighton organised the proof-reading. I am grateful to Stewart Cooke and Peter Sabor for vetting the proofs with meticulous care. At Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Andy Narcessian responded enthusiastically to the initial proposal, Carol Koulikourdi offered logistical support and Amanda Millar carefully ushered the manuscript through to publication.

The greatest debt of any Burney scholar is always owed to Joyce Hemlow, without whose pioneering efforts none of this would have been possible. This volume is dedicated to her memory.

Lorna J Clark
Carleton University

Notes

1. An expanded version of Marilyn Francus's paper, with the title "Stepmommy Dearest? The Burneys and the Construction of Motherhood," is appearing in Volume 5 of *Eighteenth-Century Women*. Peter Sabor's remarks that prefaced the dramatic presentations are also not included, but he has instead written the introduction to this volume.

INTRODUCTION

PETER SABOR

When the dedication of Burney's commemorative window in Westminster Abbey was still in the planning stages, there was much discussion among members of the Burney Society over the wording of the inscription. In addition to the still vexed question of her name—Frances or Fanny, Burney or d'Arblay—there was the matter of how she might best be described: as novelist, diarist and playwright, perhaps, but in what order? In the event, the exigencies of space dictated the simplest of inscriptions: "Frances Burney, 1752-1840." The dates, however, are suggestive in themselves. Burney was born in the decade in which Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding were publishing their final novels, *Sir Charles Grandison* and *Amelia*. She outlived Jane Austen, twenty-three years her junior, by a further twenty-three years. And by the time of her death, Dickens had already published *The Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, and *Nicholas Nickleby*. She was the author of four novels (three of Dickensian length), eight plays, a memoir of her father, a tract on the emigrant French clergy, and a series of journals and letters that will fill twenty-four substantial volumes in their modern editions, providing an invaluable record of her times. The eighteen essays collected in *A Celebration of Frances Burney* strive to do justice to her remarkably rich and varied life and writings.

Two of the contributors, Leslie Robertson and Linda Katrizky, focus on Burney's earliest surviving writings: the journals she kept from 1768, the year she turned sixteen. Robertson warns of the dangers of a teleological reading of these juvenile journals, begun ten years before the publication of *Evelina*, and proposes instead that they be studied in the context of juvenilia by Burney's contemporaries: Jane Austen and Anna Maria Porter, for example. Katrizky explores Burney's reading as discussed in these early journals, and there are some surprises here: Burney's pursuit of ancient history, including Plutarch, Thucydides and others, is more vigorous and sustained than might have been expected. Lars Troide too is concerned with the early journals, which he studies with an editorial eye, and here the other end of Burney's long life comes into

view. As Troide observes, Burney had over twenty years of widowhood in which to expurgate and rewrite her journals and letters and she did so with a vengeance; only in recent years have the early journals been published in something close to their original form.

Among the subjects of *A Celebration of Frances Burney* is the role of Burney's family in her life and writings. Lorna Clark, in addition to editing the volume, has contributed a revisionist essay, reevaluating the relationship between Frances and her half-sister, Sarah Harriet Burney, who produced five novels over a forty-year period, from 1796 to 1839. Clark modifies her earlier findings on the complex relationship between the two authors, noting that after the inevitable tensions of their youth, they achieved a closer friendship in their later years. There is a moving moment when Frances, having survived her appalling mastectomy, sympathizes with Sarah Harriet as she recovers from her own possible breast cancer in 1817. Marilyn Francus also complicates established views of the Burney family with some rare kind words for Elizabeth Allen Burney, Sarah Harriet's mother and Frances's stepmother. Francus points out that despite the hostility of her stepchildren, who referred to her by such derogatory names as "la Dama" and "Precious," Elizabeth Burney performed many acts of kindness, including the canvassing of subscriptions for *Camilla* before its publication in 1796. Francus observes that the often-told story of Elizabeth Burney's compelling of Frances, at fifteen, to destroy her juvenile writings is improbable; Frances is more likely to have burned the manuscripts voluntarily, to prevent her stepmother from seeing them. It is also worth noting that Elizabeth Burney, Boswell's source for Johnson's remark that "An English Merchant is a new species of Gentleman," plays an interesting part in a discussion on madness recorded in *The Life of Johnson*; Boswell reports that Johnson "seemed to be entertained with her conversation."¹ Kevin Jordan's essay on Burney's much-loved husband, Alexandre d'Arblay, whom she married in 1793, throws new light on the hero of *The Wanderer*, Albert Harleigh. Harleigh's weaknesses, as Jordan notes, resemble those of d'Arblay, which are also his strengths: the price that both d'Arblay and Harleigh pay for their capacities for sentiment is an inability to wield traditional masculine power.

Six of the essays in *A Celebration of Frances Burney* undertake close readings of the novels. Justine Crump, focusing on Burney's contemporary readers, cites some fascinating material, including a hitherto unpublished remark by Burney in a letter to her father, of 25 July 1782, shortly after the publication of *Cecilia*. Burney here expresses her astonishment at receiving "a very extraordinary anonymous Letter, from

some Girl of 16, who seriously writes to thank me for the moral & religious lessons inculcated in Cecilia, & which she professes an intention to make the rule of her own conduct.” Also published for the first time in Crump’s essay is a letter to Burney of 1814 by Ann Agnew, Mary Delany’s housekeeper and amanuensis, in praise of *The Wanderer*: “What a fine Example you set Madam to all Females in the Conduct of your heroine.” Barbara Seeber’s essay on the depiction of animals and birds in Burney’s novels places some familiar passages in a strikingly fresh context. The monkey passage in *Evelina* is especially well known, but Seeber is perhaps the first Burney critic to analyse it primarily from the monkey’s perspective. Helen Cooper, similarly, finds a new way of approaching the mentor figures in Burney’s novels by considering them alongside the unruly “noisy Mentor” who takes part in the celebrated masquerade scene in *Cecilia*. Cooper traces a steady development in Burney’s fiction, with the mentor figure being subverted in each successive novel before finally being jettisoned altogether in *The Wanderer*.

For Audrey Bilger and Victoria Kortes-Papp, in contrast, *The Wanderer* is central. Bilger makes the important point, in her essay on Burney as comic novelist, that the fiction cannot be categorized in terms of the standard eighteenth-century contrast between sentimental and laughing comedy. Instead Burney, as Bilger demonstrates, embraces laughter of all kinds, and blurs the boundary between laughing with and at someone. Kortes-Papp’s essay provides an analysis of malady, real and imagined, in Burney’s fiction. Illness plays a more spectacular role in the middle novels, *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, especially with the catastrophe that befalls Mrs. Delvile in *Cecilia*, blood gushing from a hemorrhaging blood vessel. In *The Wanderer*, however, for the first time, Burney uses illness as a generative force in the narrative. Francesca Saggini examines the theatrical qualities in *The Wanderer*, showing how Burney’s descriptions of Elinor Joddrel can be envisaged in dramatic terms. Elinor is the consummate actress, and among Saggini’s insights is the suggestion that Burney was drawing here on stage characters played by Sarah Siddons, including Euphrasia in Arthur Murphy’s *The Grecian Daughter*. *The Wanderer* was the last of Burney’s novels to appear in a modern edition, but in recent years it has come to play an ever more prominent role in critical discussions of her writings.

After almost two hundred years of neglect, Burney’s four sparkling stage comedies are now also receiving sustained attention. All are in print, several in classroom editions, and all have received professional and amateur productions in recent years. Alexander Pitofsky’s essay focuses

on the least known and perhaps the least esteemed of the comedies, *Love and Fashion*. Pitofsky suggests that the play's non-comedic elements have led to its being underestimated. It is perhaps the least likely of Burney's comedies to succeed on stage, as Burney herself suspected, but also the one that takes the clearest, most critical look at the materialist excesses of English society.

Burney's tragedies, however, remain the last frontier of her oeuvre. No new stage productions have been forthcoming: the botched Drury Lane premiere of *Edwy and Egiva* in 1795 remains the only performance of any of Burney's tragic plays. Burney was writing in the tradition of Gothic drama: a tradition that began with Horace Walpole's pioneering double-incest tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother* (1768). Burney's anguished response to this play, which she heard read aloud at court in 1786, is well known. Significantly, only two years after describing her aversion to a "story so horrible," Burney began writing *Edwy and Elgiva*, the first of what she described as her "Tales of Woe."² The tragedies are not as antithetical to her other writings as has often been suggested, and there are also close links between them and some of the most celebrated passages in her journals and letters, such as her account of her mastectomy in 1811, parts of the Waterloo Journal for 1815, and her narrow escape from drowning at Ilfracombe in 1817. Where they do, clearly, differ from all her other writings is in being in blank verse. Most critics of the tragedies believe that Burney failed wretchedly as a verse writer, although at least one reviewer who saw *Edwy and Elgiva* performed on stage in 1795 described the language as "beautiful and poetical."³ Over two centuries later it is surely time to give the play a second chance and let Burney's verse be heard again. A step in this direction was taken at the Westminster Abbey conference, when a scene from *Edwy and Elgiva* was performed by the actors Ian Kelly and Karin Fernald.

Three of the essays in *A Celebration of Frances Burney* consider her dealings with other authors. Betty Rizzo's subject is Burney's difficult, fascinating friendship with Hester Thrale, which Rizzo terms a romance. She concentrates on the period 1778-83, when the romance, or romantic friendship, flourished. Burney and Thrale continued to meet occasionally for several decades thereafter, but Thrale could never forgive her former friend for opposing her marriage to Gabriel Piozzi. Freya Johnston's essay on Burney and Samuel Johnson is concerned with the same years: from Burney's first meeting with Johnson in 1777 to his death in 1784. Thrale also plays an important role in this essay, as hostess of the salon in Streatham where Burney's friendship with Johnson flourished. John Wiltshire's essay on Burney and Jane Austen takes a different form, since

the two novelists, as far as is known, never met. His subject is the debt that Austen owed to Burney: a debt that Austen amply acknowledged in the famous tribute to *Cecilia* and *Camilla* in *Northanger Abbey* (I, 5) and elsewhere. Wiltshire concludes with the agreeable thought that Austen would, if she had had the opportunity, have joined the Burney Society.

Two essays in *A Celebration of Frances Burney*, by Hester Davenport and Brian McCrea, throw new light on different aspects of her life. Davenport contextualizes the remarkable scene at the end of *The Wanderer*, in which a bathing machine on the beach at Teignmouth provides temporary accommodation for Admiral Powel and Juliet's guardian, the Bishop, as they resolve her affairs. As Davenport shows, Burney had taken an interest in bathing machines since her own first dip in 1773, on the same beach at Teignmouth. In her Court journals, Burney also provides a celebrated description of the newly recovered George III swimming from a bathing machine at Weymouth in July 1789: "he had no sooner popt his Royal Head under water, than a Band of Music, concealed in a neighbouring Machine, struck up God Save Great George our King!"⁴ Brian McCrea's essay draws some intriguing comparisons between Burney's fictional depictions of doctors, Dr. Lyster in *Cecilia* and the surgeon Mr. Naird in *The Wanderer*, and the circumstances of her son Alexander's matriculation at Caius College, Cambridge. As McCrea observes, Alexander was awarded a Tancred fellowship in 1813, with the condition that he proceed to a medical degree. When Burney belatedly became aware that this stipulation would be enforced, she agreed that her son should resign the scholarship, despite the considerable loss of income this entailed. McCrea contends that the failings of Mr. Naird, a less impressive character than his predecessor, Dr. Lyster, reflect Burney's changing attitude towards the status of the medical profession.

The Burney Society was founded in 1994 "to promote the study and appreciation of Frances Burney's works and of the life and times of her and her family." This volume, with contributions by scholars from the United States, Canada, England, Italy, and Australia, marks a major development both for the Society and for the critical reception of its subject. While the commemorative window in Westminster Abbey could do no more than list the dates of Burney's birth and death, *A Celebration of Frances Burney* has ample space to approach her as one of the major novelists, dramatists and journal writers of her age.

Notes

1. *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill, rev. L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934-50), 1:491, n. 3; 4:208-9.
2. Frances Burney, *Journals and Letters*, ed. Peter Sabor and Lars E. Troide with Stewart Cooke and Victoria Kortes-Papp (London: Penguin, 2001), 250, 343.
3. Quoted in my Introduction to *Plays*, 1:xv.
4. Burney, *Journals and Letters*, 294.

ABBREVIATIONS

Quotations from the works of Frances Burney, as well as often-quoted critical or biographical studies, are cited in the text with the abbreviations listed below.

- Camilla* Frances Burney, *Camilla Or A Picture of Youth*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).
- Cecilia* Frances Burney, *Cecilia, Or Memoirs of an Heiress*, ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
- DL* *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay (1778-1840)*, ed. Austin Dobson after Charlotte Barrett, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1904-5).
- Doody Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988).
- ED* *The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols. (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1889).
- EJL* *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, ed. Lars E. Troide et al., 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988 -).
- Evelina* Frances Burney, *Evelina Or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, ed. Edward Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- Hemlow Joyce Hemlow, *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).
- JL* *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay), 1791-1840*, ed. Joyce Hemlow et al., 12 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972-84).
- Memoirs* *Memoirs of Doctor Burney, Arranged from His Own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections*, by his daughter, Madame d'Arblay, 3 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1832).
- Plays* *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor with Geoffrey M. Sill and Stewart J. Cooke, 2 vols. (London: Pickering and Chatto; Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).
- Wanderer* Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; Or, Female Difficulties*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

JOURNALS AND LETTERS

JOYCE HEMLOW AND THE MCGILL BURNEY PROJECT

LARS TROIDE

I am very pleased and honoured to be giving the first address on this auspicious day when Frances (Fanny) Burney, on her 250th birthday, is at long last admitted to the illustrious company of the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.¹

The dedication of her memorial this evening and the papers of this conference will give the reasons why Burney so richly deserves this distinction. She was of course an important novelist, a playwright, and a brilliant observer of society in her journals and letters. But at the outset of our celebration of Burney, I wish to call attention to the life and work of another woman, Joyce Hemlow, who is more responsible than anyone else for the resurgence of Burney's reputation in our time. It is altogether fitting and proper that the first talk today should be devoted to Joyce Hemlow, for indeed without Hemlow none of us would be here—now—at this moment—paying homage to the subject of her life's labour, Frances Burney.

Like Burney, who lived to be 87, Joyce Hemlow had a long and fruitful life which ended only last September, when she passed away in Halifax, Nova Scotia, at the grand old age of 95. Like Burney, whose great-great-grandfather James MacBurney was said to have emigrated from Scotland with James I in 1603, Hemlow traced her lineage back to John Umlach, who came to Nova Scotia from Scotland in the eighteenth century. She was born in Liscomb, Nova Scotia, on 30 July 1906, in her family's ancestral home commanding a view of an Atlantic Ocean bay containing Hemlow Island. While Burney's gifts were literary, Hemlow's were academic. At the age of 15, she began teaching in a one-room schoolhouse in Necum Teuch, and later went on to teach in several Nova Scotian high schools. She was 30 before she went to university, earning her B.A. in English literature from Queen's University in 1941. She proceeded to graduate studies at Harvard University. Though she certainly knew of Burney earlier, it was at Harvard that Burney became the focus of

an interest and devotion that would last the rest of her life. Under the direction of the noted Pope scholar George Sherburn, she wrote her dissertation on “Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books,” linking Burney’s novels to the tradition of books of manners, tracing their lineage back to works like Castiglione’s *The Courtier*.

Hemlow received her Ph.D. in 1948 and then came to the English Department of McGill University in Montreal where she would teach for the next 27 years, eventually becoming the first woman there to be named Greenshields Professor of English Literature. She brought to McGill her abiding interest in Burney. This interest was intensified by the reappearance of Burney’s voluminous manuscript journals and letters. Burney had begun keeping a diary in 1768, several months before her sixteenth birthday. By the time she died in January 1840, her diaries, journals and letters would number some ten thousand pages. These materials formed the basis for a seven-volume edition edited by her favourite niece and literary executor Charlotte Barrett and published in the 1840s.² A further one-volume edition of the earliest journals, omitted from the Barrett edition, would be published in 1889, edited by Annie Raine Ellis.³ The Ellis edition was quite complete, but the Barrett was highly selective and textually very inaccurate. The manuscripts themselves receded from view until a large portion appeared on the market in the 1920s and were bought by an American collector who subsequently sold them to the New York Public Library in 1941 (coincidentally the same year that Hemlow received her B.A. from Queen’s).

Hemlow was aware of these newly-surfaced manuscripts in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, and also aware that a sizeable cache was still missing. In the hope of locating the missing parts, she sent letters to various Burney and Barrett descendants. Her effort was rewarded in 1951 when she was contacted by Miss Ann Julia Wauchope, a Barrett descendant then 85 years old. Miss Wauchope had inherited over 2,000 items which Hemlow promptly helped her to transfer to the British Museum (as Wauchope’s father had wished), where they now comprise the so-called Barrett Collection of Burney Papers.

Since Burney’s death, a number of biographies of her had been written (including one by Austin Dobson, essayist and poet, who republished Barrett’s edition with his own notes)⁴—all of these, however, could be described as popular or lightweight. A truly scholarly life had yet to appear. Hemlow now set herself the task of examining thoroughly the great mass of Burney manuscripts newly available with a view to writing that comprehensive, scholarly life. Her biography, which she entitled *The History of Fanny Burney*, was published by the Clarendon Press of Oxford

University in 1958, and immediately acclaimed as a masterpiece, winning that year's James Tait Black Memorial Prize for the best biography in the United Kingdom and the Governor-General's Award for Academic Non-Fiction in Canada. Meticulously researched and engagingly written, it remains to this day an indispensable source for all Burney scholarship.

Frances Burney became famous virtually overnight with the publication of her first novel, *Evelina*, in 1778. Joyce Hemlow's academic fame was achieved just as quickly with her biography of Burney. Besides the prizes mentioned earlier, other honours to follow would include her being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada; and also receiving honorary LL.D.'s from both Queen's University and Dalhousie University. As I said earlier, she was also the first woman at McGill to be named Greenshields Professor of English Literature. Yet her biography would in fact prove to be only the beginning of her work on Burney. Having closely examined the Burney manuscript journals and letters, Hemlow realized that a brand new, modern and complete critical edition of these was badly needed. In the first place, the Barrett edition represented less than a third of the total materials. Charlotte Barrett and her publisher, Henry Colburn, had agreed to omit the first decade of Burney's journals, which Burney herself modestly dismissed as her "juvenile journals." It was decided to begin with the year of the publication of *Evelina*, 1778, when Burney became a public figure. In addition, it was felt that Burney's most interesting years were from 1778 until 1793, when she married General Alexandre d'Arblay—these were the years of her greatest literary fame, her friendship with notables like Samuel Johnson, and her service at the Court of King George and Queen Charlotte. Thus, less than a third of the Barrett volumes are devoted to the latter half of Burney's long life, the years of her marriage and widowhood and the period when she wrote and published her last two novels, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, met Napoleon, underwent an appalling mastectomy without anaesthetic, witnessed at Brussels the aftermath of the Battle of Waterloo, and so on.

Yet the 10,000 manuscript pages of journals and letters that survive are divided almost equally between the years of "Fanny Burney" and the years of "Madame d'Arblay." Since life is short but editorial scholarship is long, Hemlow's first decision was to begin with the under-represented later years of Burney's life (she actually begins with Burney's resignation from the Court in 1791). Armed with the success of her biography, she again approached the Delegates of the Oxford Press, this time with a proposal for a twelve-volume critical edition of *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay), 1791-1839*. Work on this new edition began

in 1960, the year she became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, in generous and well-appointed space provided by McGill University.

Hemlow's aim was to produce a complete edition, and an edition "freed from the lacquer of prudent afterthought," as another admiring scholar has phrased it.⁵ A consequence of Burney's longevity is that she had over twenty years of widowhood to pore over her own journals and letters, burning, crossing out and re-writing whatever she did not wish posterity to see, either at all or in its original state. For example, my own work on Burney's "juvenile journals" has revealed that at least a third of them were destroyed by her. These hundreds of destroyed pages are of course unrecoverable. But in the same batch of juvenile journals, there survive some 4,000 lines which were so heavily crossed over by Burney that we Burney editors call them "obliterations." These lines are on pages containing other material which Burney wished to leave intact. But in fact it is possible to read most of these "obliterated" lines with the aid of a strong light, a magnifying glass, and a close knowledge of Burney's idiom. Hemlow's edition, like mine of the early journals, recovers these obliterated lines as far as possible, besides eliminating Burney's later revisions in favour of her original text. An added complication is that Charlotte Barrett, in going over her aunt's manuscripts, felt no compunction whatever about snipping them up with a scissors and pasting them together (and over each other) in what she thought would be interesting new ways. In one extreme case, she took three separate letters and recombined them into a new single letter, writing her own connecting sentences where continuity demanded it. Hemlow had to undo this kind of damage in order to recover the original letters in their original form and chronology.

The earlier editions of Burney amount to "revised versions" authorized by Burney and her niece. What kinds of revisions were performed, and why? In the first place, as a born author Burney could not be content merely to go over the manuscripts, but had to make occasional purely stylistic corrections, eliminating grammatical slips or what she considered youthful inelegancies. Always devout, in her last years she was apt to suppress expressions like "Good Lord," substituting the more innocuous "Heaven" in their place, for example. She was sometimes anxious to delete material that she thought might bore posterity, such as requests for clothing items to her sisters or accounts of domestic economic matters. As many of you know, Burney's father, Dr. Charles Burney, became a famous music historian, and her sister Esther and cousin Charles (whom Esther married) were also accomplished musicians. Much remains about musical evenings in the Burney home and some of the concerts the

Burneys attended, but much was also deleted, partly, I fear, because Burney was a bit ashamed of her family's Bohemian origins and did not want the musical elements to loom quite so large. (Her father indeed aspired successfully to the position of "a man of letters" in order to escape the stigma of being a "mere musician," however talented.)

But the most important (and misleading) revisions by Burney are those whereby she wished to temper her candid criticisms of some of the people she knew, and suppress scandals in her own family. Thus, she softened considerably her portrait of Hester (Queeney) Thrale, the icy and imperious daughter of Hester Lynch Thrale, the author and society hostess who befriended Burney after the publication of *Evelina*. Queeney, who had become Lady Keith, she rightly suspected might outlive her, and would be hugely offended by revelations such as her coldness on the occasion of her father's premature death. And there were skeletons in the Burney family closet that had to be kept locked in. An early scandal was the dismissal of her brother Charles from Cambridge University for stealing books from the University Library. Even after Charles's death, Burney tried to explain away the disgrace (in a letter to Charles's son) (*JL* 10:95) as due to her brother's mad passion for collecting books, when in fact he had been selling the stolen books to pay off gambling debts he wished to keep hidden from his family. Her brother James, a naval officer who sailed with Capt. Cook, had a history of insubordination which ended in his being forcibly retired from active service. Later on he eloped from his wife and children with his half-sister Sally (the novelist Sarah Harriet Burney). A Burney stepsister, Maria Rishton, left her husband because of his affair with her erstwhile best friend. A half-brother, Richard Thomas, was banished to India forever for reasons we shall never exactly know. Blemishes like these on the Burney escutcheon had to be hidden or at least mitigated; the family honour required it.

As the newly famous author of *Evelina*, Burney was befriended by Dr Samuel Johnson, who lived during the week at the Thrales' Streatham estate, where Burney became a frequent visitor. Some of Burney's best journal pages are devoted to Johnson, revealing his fondness for her and a playfulness unknown to others. After Johnson's death in 1784 his famous biographer, James Boswell, teased her to give him Johnson's letters to her for inclusion in his yet-to-be-published *Life of Johnson*. Boswell rightly suspected that Johnson showed Burney a side of his nature that was closed to him. Burney refused, and in fact destroyed most of the letters.

Burney indeed considered Boswell a caricature of Johnson's other ardent admirers. But Boswell was of course right to want to be as comprehensive as possible in his collection of documentary evidence