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The Novelist and the Critics: Frances Burney’s Manuscript Corrections and Additions to *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*

Robert L. Mack

Frances Burney’s fourth and final novel, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, was first published in London by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown on 28 March 1814.¹ The unique, interleaved copy of *The Wanderer* currently held in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library reveals a fascinating and hitherto largely unexamined picture of Burney at work as the editor of her own work. Each of the novel’s five, unbound volumes has been drawn together into blue paper wrappers; each contains manuscript, holograph corrections and additions, in pencil, unquestionably written in the hand of the author. Burney’s remarks — which have never been included in any edition of the novel — offer a clear indication of the many changes that she intended eventually to undertake for an anticipated “corrected & revised Copy” of *The Wanderer*. Burney’s comments not only shed valuable light on the manner in which the novelist planned to proceed (soon after publication) with any revisions to the work, but also offer readers what amounts to a glimpse of the author herself — in a comparatively candid moment — assimilating and passing judgement on the legitimacy of the critical commentary that had greeted *The Wanderer* in the contemporary journals and reviews. My purpose in these pages is not fully to describe Burney’s markings, but rather to offer some representative examples of their commentary and, in so doing, to anticipate the general characteris-
tics of any changes, additions, and omissions that Burney might have effected in subsequent editions of the novel. As we shall see, a comprehensive overview of the novelist’s intentions with regard to the published text of *The Wanderer* offers a valuable corrective to a long-standing critical tradition that has tended to depict Burney as an editor and reviser who suffered largely and rather willingly at the mercy of her harshest professional critics.²

I.

The extended composition of *The Wanderer* was a process that had been, as Margaret Anne Doody put it in her 1988 biography of the author, a task “fraught with difficulty, excitement, and even danger” (Doody 316). A radical mastectomy performed without the benefit of an anaesthetic (an inconceivably painful operation judging from Burney’s own account of the surgery included in a letter to her sister Esther) interrupted work on the novel for several months in the autumn of 1811. (*JL*, vii.596-615).³ Throughout the first year following her return to England, the author worked diligently and with renewed vigour on the novel. She attempted whenever possible to devote the entire morning (“toute la matinée”) to her writing (*JL*, vii.27). A draft of *The Wanderer* was finished by 21 August 1813 — just over one year from Burney’s return from France. Burney busily revised the manuscript in the months that followed, aiming for a judiciously well-timed publication the following spring. She was on this occasion particularly anxious that her new novel be as much a popular as a critical success. Thanks largely to the instability precipitated by recent events in France (and, more particularly, to her husband’s status as a French military officer whose wholehearted loyalty to the Napoleonic regime had already, because of his marriage to an Englishwoman, become a matter of some dispute), Burney was never allowed to forget that the financial security of her family was very much her own particular responsibility. The final draft of *The Wanderer* manuscript was sent to the publishers in mid-October 8 (*JL*, vii. 190, n. 1). Although Burney confessed herself exhausted by the task of the final revision and the tedious copying of “illlegibilities” (“for tired I am of my Pen! Oh tired! tired!”), she was obviously glad to deliver “the Work” into the hands of the publishers (*JL*, vii. 163).⁴ She appears generally, at the time, to have been pleased with the finished product.⁵

By all accounts, the new Burney novel was eagerly awaited by the reading public (“I would almost fall sick . . .”), Byron wrote with some sincerity to John Murray of the book’s imminent publication, “to get at Mme D’Arblay’s writings”), and the initial response to *The Wanderer* was encouraging (Byron iii. 204). The first edition of *The Wanderer* — an impressive 3,000 copies — sold out two or three days before its publication date. Burney was overjoyed to learn of such advance sales. With reason, she anticipated in *The Wanderer* both the popular and the financial success to which she had looked forward. “They have already
ordered for 800 more! —,” she wrote excitedly to her brother Charles on
2 April, “Astonishing! incredible! impossible!” (JL, vii. 269). “The pub-
lishers,” she continued in the same letter, “have sent to beg me to pre-
pare my 2d Edition! . . . They entreat me to forbear seeing Revizes, of
proofs: not to check the sail [sic].”

Such enthusiasm was unfortunately destined to be short-lived. Even
as Burney’s publishers prepared a second edition for the press, over half
of the 800 advance orders for the novel were cancelled. The emended
second “edition” (which in actual fact effected only the most essential of
emendations in the text) was published by Longman on 15 April, but by
mid year barely half the imprint had been sold. In the months that fol-
lowed, Burney herself was confused regarding the printing schedule
and the status of the publication. A letter written to her husband on 29
April finds her supposing that “The 3d Edition is already printed & in
sale” (JL, vii. 327). Three years later she would write similarly to Long-
man, questioning whether she might possibly have misunderstood his
associate, Andrew Strahan, when he seemed to have told her that a fifth
edition had been prepared for the press (JL, vii. 327 n.13).

The situation of The Wanderer was, in truth, far more dismal than the
author supposed. Following the initial, respectable performance of the
second edition in the spring and early summer of 1814, sales of the novel
had practically ground to a complete halt. In 1824, ten years after pub-
lication, a remaining 465 copies of that same second edition were
deemed “waste” and were consequently destroyed by the publishers.
Foreign editions of The Wanderer fared little better. A single American
edition, published in New York in 1814, achieved only a modest circu-
lation. A French translation, La Femme Errante, ou les embarras d’une
femme (the accomplishment of which Burney herself described as
“abominable”) was also published in Paris in 1815 (JL, vii. 228, n.7).
Both editions remain volumes of considerable rarity. Frances Burney’s
The Wanderer was to remain out of print — and largely unread — until
the final decades of the twentieth century.

II.

How did it come to pass, then, that a novel written by one of the eigh-
teneth century’s most popular authors, and a work that had been so long
and so eagerly awaited by the most discriminating members of the
British reading public, should, when it was finally published, fare so
poorly? Recent Burney scholars have addressed the question with some
vigour. Insofar as The Wanderer was an historical novel that dealt open-
ly and unflinchingly with the “stupendous inequity and cruelty” that
had characterized events of the comparatively recent past in France —
insofar as it was an historical novel that sought, moreover, to draw cer-
tain unflattering parallels between conditions on “that side” of the
Channel and the social and political climate in England itself — the
work may at the very least have been perceived by Burney’s readers to
have been an unprecedented and even startling departure from the subject matter of her earlier novels (The Wanderer, 6). Rather than detailing, as in the early Evelina, the comic saga of one young girl’s entrance into polite society, or even, as in Burney’s second novel, Cecilia, pursuing the decidedly darker tale of another young heiress’s attempt to secure her solitary place in a metropolitan culture too often characterized by hypocrisy and frequently violent deceit, The Wanderer offered its readers a far more sweeping and comprehensive indictment of the mores of contemporary English society. The Wanderer is the novel in which, as Doody has argued, Burney dealt most consistently with “public and national”—rather than strictly private and personal—issues (Doody, 318).

Moreover, Burney’s latest novel was generically diverse and inclusive in a manner that may have baffled some of its earliest readers. “The novel is in some sense ‘haunted’ by the Gothic novel and its forms and formulae as curious instruments with which to observe repression” (Doody, “Introduction,” The Wanderer, xiv). An account of recent continental history and experience, The Wanderer is also in many respects a novel of suspense. Like any good mystery story, it looks to grasp its reader by the jugular vein in its spectacular opening moments, and then to keep that reader turning the pages until the riddles, paradoxes, and obscurities advanced in its murky and quite literally foggy opening scene have been made clear. “[The unusual structure of The Wanderer,] as Doody, again, has commented, “means that the reader must participate in mystery, must consent to be mystified . . . The Wanderer is literally a spy story” (Doody, “Introduction,” The Wanderer, xiv-xv). The true history of the narrative’s heroine, Juliet Granville, is not fully revealed until the novel’s fifth and final volume; indeed, so deliberately vague is her identity that we do not even learn so much as her proper name until volume three. The Wanderer likewise presents elements of tragedy and comedy in a manner that yields something rather different than what is generally perceived to constitute the more traditional or generally-received “tragi-comic” mode. Burney’s novel does not so much blend the elements of tragedy and comedy, as it does present them as being united only in a paratactic manner. Episodes of broad social satire are set against and so highlight scenes of intense emotional anguish and deep sentiment. The dynamics of the text mimics the radical uncertainty and unpredictability of our lived and constantly unfolding human experience; the effect is designedly unbalancing and disconcerting.

This having been said, the story of the novel’s heroine, Juliet Granville, would still in many other respects appear to be a reasonably straightforward one. A refugee from the “dire reign” of Maximilien de Robespierre in France, Juliet is first glimpsed making her dangerous escape across the English Channel in a small packet boat that eventually lands at Dover (11). The year is 1793. The heroine, who is known (thanks to a nice bit of auditory confusion) both to the other characters in the novel and to readers throughout much of the work only by the enigmatic appellation “Ellis,” is by chance accompanied on the vessel in
her flight from Robespierre’s agents by a handful of other English men and women who are likewise fleeing the persecution of the Terror and its machinery. Burney thus economically immediately introduces the reader to many of the novel’s central characters: the imperious Mrs. Maple, the querulous Mrs. Ireton and her self-absorbed son, and the “Cynical” Mr. Riley. Foremost among the passengers in the packet boat, however, are the young Albert Harleigh and the woman who was to have been his sister-in-law, the fiery Elinor Jodrell. We see that one of the incidental effects of revolutionary political turmoil in France would appear to have been to open Elinor’s eyes to the cowardly conformity that a loveless marriage to Harleigh’s brother Dennis, a lawyer, would have entailed, and subsequently to alert her to the more genuine nature of her increasingly volatile romantic attachment to Harleigh himself.

“The grand effect,” Elinor proclaims, “... of beholding so many millions of men, let loose from all ties, divine or human, gave such play to my fancy, such a range to my thoughts, and brought forth such new, unexpected, and untried combinations to my reason, that I frequently felt as if just created, and ushered into the world. ...” (156). Elinor throughout the novel gives voice to the unconventional — to the powerful, passionate, and at times over-powering and often destructive rhetoric of the French Revolution itself. Easily among the most vibrant characters in the novel, Elinor Jodrell is in many respects a proto-feminist, a disciple and student of late-century English reformists and “radicals” such as Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft. Her portrait — one that in the hands of any other novelist might very well have dwindled into a predictable anti-Jacobin caricature — is given a force of sensibility and, at critical points in the narrative, an intellectual certitude that together rival and even threaten to overwhelm the not inconsiderable depth of character granted to the novel’s nominal heroine herself. Although Juliet’s firm and discreet rectitude might seem at first to embody the decorous antithesis of Elinor’s out-spoken passion, the two are to some degree merely opposite sides of the same coin. Both Juliet and Elinor encounter in England only prejudice, betrayal, and hypocrisy in their several attempts to overcome the “female difficulties” anticipated in the novel’s sub-title.

Before the long-awaited anagnorisis that reveals the female wanderer’s true status and situation to the reader, Juliet’s various positions as a paid companion, a would-be governess, a public performer, a hired instructor, and a milliner suggest that there are few occupations in which a woman might engage without being exposed to the most callous and brutal treatment afforded by a society that has little use for — and a great deal of hostility towards — women seeking to make their own way in the world. Only in the final volume of Burney’s novel do we learn the true nature of Juliet’s situation — only then can we comprehend and so appreciate the fatal imperatives that have compelled her to conceal her true identity even from those few, generous individuals who would appear actively to assist her in her wanderings. Juliet,
though born in England and the legitimate daughter of Lord Granville (the product of that Lord’s first and clandestine marriage to the respectable Miss Powel), had subsequently been raised in France, under the care of Lord Granville’s friends, identified throughout the novel only as the Marchioness of *** and her brother, the Bishop of ***; while in France she formed her close, sisterly attachment to the Marchioness’s daughter, Gabriella. Lord Granville, variously protesting that “he could not support the fruitless pain of offending his sickly . . . father” (644) by acknowledging the true nature of his first attachment to Miss Powel (who died soon after giving birth to Juliet), or that the secret of his daughter’s birth would remain concealed only “till his child should be grown up, or till he became his own master” (642), subsequently formed an alliance with a sister of the imperious Lord Denmeath, by whom he produced two acknowledged heirs: Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora Granville. Following Lord Granville’s sudden death, the Bishop pressed Juliet’s claims to recognition with Lord Denmeath, who now stood as the guardian of Grenville’s two legitimate children. The Bishop’s attempts to sustain “the birth-right of the innocent orphan” (645) in the face of Lord Denmeath’s scepticism, however, prove fruitless. The violent “excesses” of the second phase of the revolution in France have also only just begun to reach their height when Juliet and the Bishop attempt to travel to England to secure some formal acknowledgment of Juliet’s status. Owing to Lord Denmeath’s attempts to buy off Juliet’s claims to her legitimacy by sending the Bishop “a promissory-note of six-thousand pounds sterling, for the portion of a young person . . . known by the name of Mademoiselle Juliette; to be paid by Messieurs ***, bankers, on the day of her marriage with a native of France, resident of that country” (646), Juliet is blackmailed — at the cost of the Bishop’s life — into a marriage with a villainous French Commissary. Juliet escapes the consummation of this marriage, and is equally fortunate eventually to make her safe return to England (the point at which the narrative begins), yet she remains in suspense throughout the novel regarding the Bishop’s safety. The slightest slip of the tongue might reveal her own whereabouts, and might thus put the life of the Bishop in jeopardy. Having lost her money in the course of her hasty flight from France, and having no refuge of her own, Juliet is forced to seek refuge within — and find sustenance among — the dubious kindness of strangers.

Burney’s representation of English insularity and meanness in the novel is distilled into concentrated character portraits of near pathological intensity. Certainly, each of the individuals Juliet is compelled to confront and with whom she is coerced into some sort of dependant relationship appears calculatedly to represent a different, refracted aspect of human psychosis. Mrs. Maple, as her name might suggest, is a woman concerned primarily with the hard and varnished surface of things; she is the stuff of floors and furniture. Defined herself by the social acceptability and acquiescence of her behaviour, she expects from others conformity and accountability — precisely the two things that the
disenfranchised Juliet is incapable of offering. Mrs. Ireton, her name similarly intimating her irascible and choleric character, is a self-conscious hypochondriac, expecting at all times a sure deference to her own whims and wishes, though denying the legitimacy of all such “affectations” in others (she directly anticipates the character of Mrs. Julia Witterly in Charles Dickens’s Nicholas Nickleby). Mr. Giles Arbe, although a fundamentally generous friend to Juliet, confronts the bad behaviour of others with displays of sociopathic honesty (or tactlessness), and might serve as a model of Freudian cryptomnesia. The benefits of Sir Jaspar Harrington, another of Juliet’s supporters, are close to annihilated by his childish participation in a self-contained and self-sufficient world of Rosicrurean fantasy.

Burney’s scathing portrait of English self-obsession and xenophobia in The Wanderer — her indictment of the culture’s underlying misogyny and fundamental inhumanity — would be reason enough for many of its contemporary readers to have found the work unappealing and even offensive. “A man is angry at a libel,” G. K. Chesterton is reported once to have said, “because it is false, but at a satire because it is true” — and the biting satire of Burney’s novel perhaps for some of its earliest readers was a bit too close to home. The Wanderer is from its very opening a uniquely discomfitting novel. Burney’s purposefully repetitious presentation of Juliet’s “difficulties” in England reads like an extended, narrative nightmare; there hangs in the air of the novel a sense of oneiric surrealism. The heroine’s inability to name herself or, for that matter, to put the nature of her dilemma into words resembles nothing so much as the baffled inarticulation of the nightmare-ish dreamer. Dreamlike, too, is the manner in which certain characters appear and reappear throughout the novel in strange and unexpected places, bobbing and bubbling to the surface of the narrative like the manifestations of phantasmagoric faces in the dreaming landscape. The confinement and concealment of Juliet’s plight and identity are reflected in reiterated scenes of entrapment (Juliet is constantly locked within rooms and buildings, encircled by chairs, by screens, by menacing physical bodies, on staircases and in hallways, or otherwise physically barred from escaping those who persecute her) and in the novelist’s presentation of the claustrophobia such scenes entail. She is driven to extremes — often quite literally pushed to the edge. Burney describes Juliet’s typical state of mind in the narrative at one point in the novel: “She felt as if cast upon a precipice, from which, though a kind hand might save, the least imprudence might precipitate her downfall” (571). In this respect, the novel recalls the predicaments of the often besieged heroines of Samuel Richardson’s novels — Pamela and Clarissa — while at the same time anticipating the menacing, phantasmagoric landscapes of works such as Lewis Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass (fantasy narratives that similarly depict the psychological and physical dilemmas accompanying the processes of cultural and sexual “acclimatization”). The Wanderer also presents in its subject an extended picture of isolation and men-
tal depression — a portrait perhaps unprecedented in English fiction. However much Juliet tries to keep her mind focused by occupying herself with simple mental and physical tasks, she is harassed on all sides by those who wish to call her into the anguished passing of the present moment.

There may have been even more specific reasons for the work's initially poor reception. Doody, among others, has convincingly argued that *The Wanderer* was the victim of an excessively harsh and ideologically-motivated series of critical reviews that appeared shortly after the novel's publication. English readers were by 1814 too self-complacent regarding the recent Allied victories over Napoleon to feel the need sympathetically to accept a novel that critically presented "a sombre view of deep-rooted wrongs in the structure of English social, economic, and sexual life." "It was a good time for right-wing triumph," Doody observes, "and a bad time for pleas for more social justice or appreciation for a better understanding of France" (Doody *Burney*, 332). By the time the novel finally appeared, such an argument stresses, English readers simply did not wish to be reminded of the revolutionary thought that was at last (or so it seemed) being safely placed where it belonged — firmly in the past. This sentiment was to some degree picked up and echoed by the contemporary reviews of *The Wanderer*. While pretending to mourn the passing of a younger writer ("Fanny" Burney — the late, lamented author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* — who had excelled in detailing the social and romantic trials of young women in polite society), the reviewers barely concealed their indignation at having been presented in her stead with a female author who dared to confront them with a very real and very powerful critique of the *status quo*.6

The consensus of the contemporary reviews that greeted *The Wanderer* in the year immediately following its publication, in any event, was clear. On the positive side, almost all conceded to Burney some skill in what John Wilson Croker called "discrimination of character," and both the *British Critic* and the *Edinburgh Review* singled out for particular praise the delineation of comic characters such as Mrs. Ireton and Mr. Giles Arbe. With the exception of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, little mention was made of the central character of Juliet, nor was there much attention devoted to the novel's ostensible hero, Albert Harleigh. Almost all the reviewers criticized the novel for being too long or, at least, for taking too much time in advancing its central plot. The objection that remained central to all the reviews, however — clearly voiced in Croker's notice in the *Quarterly Review*, embarrassingly conceded in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and lurking just beneath William Hazlitt's supposed consideration of romance novels in general in the *Edinburgh Review* — was Burney's rejection of political orthodoxy and, more specifically, her purposefully ambiguous presentation of the character of Eleanor Jodrell as the mouthpiece of many of the "new ideas" heard only because of the earth-shattering effects of the "sublimity of Revolution."
Burney had to some degree anticipated precisely these criticisms. Writing to Georgiana Waddington several months prior to the novel's publication, the author had confessed that she already suspected that the critics were looking to find in The Wanderer a very particular kind of historical novel — namely, a critical picture of life in France under Napoleon — that its author was simply not prepared to offer. "Expectation," she wrote in a letter to Waddington in December, 1813, "has taken a wrong scent, & must necessarily be disappointed" (JL, vii. 209). By the end of February, the publication of the novel was too imminent to prompt any feeling other than nervous anxiety and trepidation on the part of its author. Burney acknowledged to her brother Charles that she was "wofully [sic] worried" regarding the reception of the work (JL, vii. 251).

However, the sudden and unexpected death of Burney's father on 12 April, 1814 — just a few days after The Wanderer first appeared at the booksellers — quickly and completely pushed all thoughts of the work and its reception from Burney's mind. Shortly after her father's death, Burney wrote again to Mrs. Waddington, commenting, "[I] know nothing of how [The Wanderer] fares, either for censure or partiality . . . for I think of it so little as never to make any enquiry" (JL, vii. 360). Later in the year, still only barely recovered from her loss, she was able to write to her brother Charles about the work in a letter that displays a bemused awareness of the political motivations that lay beneath some of the more hostile reviews (she seems at least to have been quite aware of Croker's response and of the suggestion that she was a supporter of Napoleonic tyranny, in particular, although she claims not to have read any critiques). Burney displays a confidence that time would in fact see The Wanderer assume its rightful position of admiration and respect among her four published novels. "I do not fret myself, I thank Heav­en," she wrote,

about the Reviews. I shall not read any of them, to keep myself from useless vexation — till my spirits and my time are in harmony for preparing a corrected Edition. I shall then read all — & I expect, coolly and impartially. I think the public has its full right to criticise — & never have had the folly & vanity to set my heart upon escaping its late severity, which reminiscence keeps alive its early indulgence. But if, when all the effect of false expectation is over, in about five years, the work has ONLY criticism, — then, indeed, I shall be lessened in my own fallen fallen hopes — fed, now, not by any general conceit, but an opinion That — if the others were worthy of good opinion, THIS, when read fresh, & free from local circumstances of a mischievous tendency, will by no means be found lowest in the scale.

(JL, vii. 484)
The letter significantly reveals that Burney clearly intended to rework the novel for a subsequent revised edition. Although the death of her father may have deprived her of a necessary psychological audience for any fresh attempts at extended prose fiction, the author could still, within the years immediately following his death, at least contemplate “correcting” or abridging those novels already extant.

Such revision would have been nothing new to Burney. Indeed, although her third novel, *Camilla* (1790) had already been substantially rewritten for a new edition in 1802, Burney continued to plan her revisions for still another version of the work well into the 1830s. Her constant revisions of *Camilla* in fact form an interesting point of contrast to the manner in which she was to approach the possible rewriting of *The Wanderer*. In her study of the various editorial revisions to which *Camilla* was subjected (the novel was effectively rewritten three times over the period of a remarkable forty years), the critic Lillian Bloom argued some time ago that Burney’s attitude towards *Camilla* — a “recalcitrant novel” that “haunted its creator to the last years of her long life” — was similar to that of an indulgent mother towards “a beloved but intractable child” (see Bloom, 367-93). Continually picturing the novelist as a grotesque and vaguely Shelleyan “maker” and “shaper” of her fiction, Bloom contended that the first draft of the novel was the product both of “artistic compulsion” and “financial exigency.” “By the last month of 1794,” Bloom wrote of the composition of *Camilla*, “Fanny Burney — now Mme d’Arblay — began to animate her skeleton, give it connective tissue, some muscles, and far too much flesh.” Bloom argued that in the months that followed, Burney wrote so quickly that she lost sight of her original plot and, by the spring of 1796, produced a finished novel of five volumes, when she had intended to write only four. Burney’s own comments on the first edition of 1796 would appear to support Bloom’s claim that the narrative had somehow passed beyond its author’s control. “[*Camilla*] is longer by the whole fifth volume than I had at first planned,” Burney confessed in a letter to her father, “— & I am almost ashamed to look at it size! — & afraid my Readers would have been more obliged to me if I had left so much out — than for putting so much in! —.” The character of Burney’s revisions to the novel made after its initial publication would seem likewise to substantiate Bloom’s contention that the author subsequently thought the work “too long, inconsistent in characterization, lax in grammar and diction, [and] glutted with Gallicisms.” Throughout 1799 and into the early months of 1800, the author worked on the manuscript, stripping it of “superfluities,” omitting interruptions to the main narrative, and attempting to restore something of the “narrative rhythm” of her original conception.

The second, substantially altered edition of *Camilla* appeared in 1802. Although conceding that “not all of Mme d’Arblay’s deletions” in the new edition were “suggested by others,” Bloom nevertheless insinuated that many of Burney’s cuts were in actual fact dictated by the response to the novel of critics such as William Enfield (writing in the
Monthly Review), by her acquaintances (such as the Reverend Thomas Twining, a friend of Dr. Charles Burney), and by her father himself. The portrait of "the artist as editor" that emerges from Bloom's account of Burney's supposedly self-directed and self-ordered revisions to Camilla is in many respects an uncomplimentary and unflattering one. Rather than relying on her own proper sense of what kind of language, usage, and characterization were appropriate to her narrative, Burney is presented as having gone far beyond the strictures of the critics in her anxious desire to please. "When in those early months of 1802," Bloom notes of Burney, "the booksellers had demanded a stringently emended Camilla, she gave them all they asked for — and more" (Bloom 386). The "editor" that finally emerged from Bloom's study was little more than the largely indiscriminating tool of publishers and critics. The slips and scraps of paper on which Burney — from about 1819 forward — jotted down her ideas for a possible third edition of Camilla revealed only an inclination "further . . . to cater to a popular market." "Her excisions between 1819 and 1836" Bloom concluded, "fell into the same patterns as those for the 1802 impression. She hacked away mercilessly at her own bald expression" (386). The anticipated third edition of the novel was never to be printed, however, and the emendations that the novelist had intended to make in the text — many of them scribbled on the backs of letters and even on pages torn from her son's school notebooks — remain to this day among the unpublished papers relating to Burney in the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library.

III.

Also in the Berg collection, however, is a unique, interleaved copy of The Wanderer that reveals a very different picture of Burney as the editor of her own work. Her pencilled comments to The Wanderer are best divided into at least four categories. The first such category includes obvious corrections in typography and minor changes in grammar, vocabulary, and/or syntax. The second extends to more substantive and consequential changes and substitutions in matters such as individual word choice, or in the vocabulary and the disposition of short phrases. The third and most significant category comprehends suggestions both for specific transpositions and amalgamations of existing textual material, as well as plans for possible cuts to the text. Many of the marginal comments that fall within this third category — comments that on occasion consist of no more than one or two words — would appear to indicate a negative or in some way "corrective" critical judgement on the part of the author with regard to the text of the novel as it was originally printed in the first edition. The same category highlights individual words or modest commentary indicating an intention to edit the text in the specific interest of intensifying, diminishing, or otherwise modifying already existing elements of the novel's plot and/or characterization. Also included in this section are graphic or otherwise symbolic "mark-
ings” likewise indicating an apparent intention to edit the text in order to change, modify, or redirect the substance of the narrative; such shorthand markings consist most frequently of circles (apparently indicating a desire on the part of the author to cut or edit the material so designated), small crosses and parallel vertical lines (both of which indicate an intention to retain or occasionally even to amplify existing material), slashes, and rather more enigmatic single lines. Burney on occasion employs such vaguer and at times positively cryptic marks (consisting often of a single word or exclamatory ejaculation on the part of the author) suggestive of a desire to effect changes in character and exposition more fundamental and generally more comprehensive than those indicated by any more local, individual, or explicit commentary. The fourth — and, for our purposes, final — category of revision is given over to the marginal remarks, individual words, and graphic symbols indicating Burney’s general and at times heartily self-congratulatory approbation of the text of the novel as it had originally been printed. To the necessarily broad distinctions marked out by these four categories, readers should likewise and finally take note of at least one occasion on which the author — tired by or perhaps momentarily distracted from the difficult and unapologetically self-critical task of revision that lay before her — appears absent-mindedly to have doodled in the volumes (Burney at one point goes so far as to complete the rough profile of a male individual on one of the book’s interleaves).

We might also, at this stage, hazard some few other and rather more general observations on the nature and the distribution of Burney’s pencilled comments. Burney’s responses to the printed text, for example, are likely to be more thorough and copious toward the beginning of each of the five volumes; as the author reads through each of the five, printed volumes of her work, in other words, she becomes in each instance markedly less inclined to record any detailed judgements in the interleaves as she moves on, preferring rather (it would appear) increasingly to restrict her comments as she progresses to a series of brief, summary judgements, typically recorded on the interleaved page facing the conclusion of the text of each individual chapter. The incidental doodle mentioned above, for example, seems itself to serve as some indication of the degree to which the author might momentarily have grown weary of her self-imposed task of revision, although it is equally instructive to note that Burney’s comments seem actually to grow more determinedly positive and self-confident — rather than more negative or in any way censorious — as she makes her way through the work. Indeed, the author’s early anticipation that major revisions would need to be undertaken to ready and prepare The Wanderer for future editions in fact appears gradually but unmistakably to yield to a more positive assessment of her actual success and achievement in the first edition of the novel.

Having thus simply classified Burney’s anticipated revisions to the novel with reference to the broad distinctions of authorial intention and
design differentiated within the parameters of each of the four categories outlined above, we find ourselves already in a position to undertake a closer (albeit — given the scope and ambitions of the present survey — still and necessarily anecdotal) examination of the actual substance of some of these intended revisions.

The first such category, again, is meant to comprise only the most essential and fundamental changes to the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of the novel; it extends only as far as such emendations to what might for the sake of convenience be termed the verbal micro-structure — or to the most essential syntactic and linguistic units of the novel — as would merely, at the proof stage at least, have constituted judicial and painstaking (if finally and largely incidental) corrections to the original copy text. Consequently, most of these changes — however much they might clearly give voice to a desire generally and at the most basic levels to facilitate the flow of the author’s syntax and ideas — look with equal clarity to restrict themselves to the sorts of emendations that aim not to precipitate any profound transformations in the novel’s structure, style, or overall meaning, but seek rather to correct small errors in expression. More simply, we are in this first category not yet operating even within the realm of such linguistic data on the level of “text grammar” or even “sentence grammar” that might be expected to yield anything of fruitful, theoretical interest to the modern or post-modern stylistician. Moreover, and particularly in light of the aforementioned fact that Burney’s markings tend typically to be more patiently thorough in the earliest volumes of the work (and likewise, by a kind of logical extension, toward the earliest pages of those same volumes), the effect of the kinds of minor changes that fall into this first category are for our purposes most clearly exemplified by some of the pencilled comments that stand at the very beginning of the novel’s first volume.

In the extended “Dedication” to Dr. Charles Burney that opens the novel and that introduces Burney’s narrative to its readers, the author pointedly refers to a dedication she had addressed to that very same individual some years earlier — the dedication, that is, that had in like manner announced the tremulous ambitions of her first published effort, Evelina, in January, 1788. “Your name,” as Burney now notes with reference to the invocation of her father on that earlier occasion, “I did not dare then pronounce: and myself I believed to be ‘wrapt up in a mantle of impenetrable obscurity’” (The Wanderer, 3). Burney changes the passage leading to the reiteration of her own preface to Evelina so as instead to read: “Your name I did not then pronounce: and my own I believed to be ‘wrapt in the mantle of impenetrable obscurity.’” Another example of this straightforward kind of change will be found some few pages later in the Dedication, at which point the author effects a similarly modest correction to her articulation of the observation that “. . . the same being who, unnamed, passes unnoticed, if proceeded by the title of a hero, or a potentate, captures every eye, and is pursued with clamorous praise . . .” (8), by taking the opportunity of revision to intro-
duce into that sentence the parallel structure, "of a hero, or of a potentate." As in most cases of parallel construction, Burney's slight change in grammar results syntactically in a change of architectonic balance, the structural effect of which is absent from her earlier articulation; in so doing, the correction arguably (if almost imperceptibly) heightens the rhetorical effect of the idea being expressed in the passage. Though obviously not the sort of emendation that might by any stretch of the imagination be judged profound or even significant apart from the designedly confined and local nature of its effect, Burney's tiny alteration to the text in such an instance as this to some degree is very much of a piece with her more sweeping corrections to the text.

Some few alterations of this nature are made to the grammar and vocabulary of the novel proper, and — as in the case of the last example cited above — such changes, however small, can similarly effect subtle shifts in the meaning and the resonance of Burney's prose. In the narrative of Volume I, Chapter XIII, for instance, circumstances conspire to prevent the heroine Juliet, who has passed the afternoon pleasantly in the company of Lady Aurora Grenville while in the household of Mrs. Howel, from herself returning to her own temporary place within the establishment of Mrs. Maple. Having first described the nature of Juliet's dilemma, the text then reads: "A chamber [i.e. at Mrs. Howel's] was now prepared for Ellis in which nothing was omitted that could afford either comfort or elegance..." (114). Burney's markings indicate a desire to eliminate the slight shadow of reluctance cast by the verb "afford" in this same sentence with the conceivably more generous connotations (i.e., in the sense of "less constrained" or "more freely given") singled by its near-synonym, "offer" (so that the emended sentence would conclude "...in which nothing was omitted that could offer either comfort or elegance"). Such a minuscule change might admittedly indicate little more than the author's perception of a simple typographical mistake; similarly, it might capture nothing more significant than a snapshot of the author in the act of effecting the kinds of quick-sighted corrections of those errors that could easily have occurred in the mechanical process of transforming the precise substance of the author's own manuscript into the stuff of a printed text. Be that as it may, readers would do well to remain open to the possibility that even the apparently minor or inconsequential correction effected by an emendation such as that which replaces "afford" with "offer" can serve (as it may serve in this instance) subtly to change the underlying meaning of the passage in question. Such a change can in this particular case, for example, be interpreted as looking slyly to emphasize the fact that the domestic hospitality of Mrs. Howel and of her own particular charge, Lady Aurora, appears at this early stage of the novel to be extended cheerfully and even generously to the unknown and socially unplaceable heroine — the careful observation of which circumstance works in turn to establish that same household as standing in sharp contrast to that of the waspish and unwilling Mrs Maple, who only reluctantly and in a
spirit of unabashed self-interest shelters the same refugee close beneath the eaves of her own roof.

IV.

The second class of emendations to *The Wanderer* comprises its author's rather more substantial changes to the vocabulary of the novel, and extends to anticipated transformations in the wording and disposition of short phrases and even, in several cases, entire sentences. Once again, markings indicating such changes are far more likely to be found in the earliest interleaves of each of the work's first three volumes, rather than among their later pages, or in volumes four or five of the published text. Very early in the novel — at Volume I, Chapter II — Mrs. Maple's suspicions that Juliet could in time prove to have been a thief and even to have stolen some property of her own that she might not miss “for a twelvemonth afterwards” (25), prompts her to call for some authorities to be alerted to the fact of the supposed foreigner's arrival in England soon after the party has landed at Dover. The printed text reads: “... Mrs. Maple angrily desired the landlord to take notice, that a foreigner, of a suspicious character, had come over with them by force, whom he ought to keep in custody, unless she would tell her name and business” (26). Burney, in her pencilled emendations, alters the phrase “to take notice” in the sentence to “would send to the police.” The effect of this seemingly minor change is in this instance, the reader soon realizes, profound. Having effected such a revision, the novelist would have underscored the danger in which her heroine was now placed of being confronted not merely with the personal and arbitrary authority of the innkeeper, but rather with the official and rather more consequential power of established officers of the law — precisely those authorities, in fact, with whom Juliet is particularly desirous to avoid contact at this early stage of the novel. Likewise, the mere possibility that her fellow travellers might very well send for the police — as opposed to the simple request that the preoccupied innkeeper merely “take notice” of her arrival and behaviour — more than justifies Juliet's otherwise extreme and even violent reaction to the threat of any and all confrontations with established officials; the unsociable hostility and xenophobia of such a menace to Juliet's hard-won liberty heightens the effect of Harleigh's own singularly isolated and defiant protection of his “incognito” in the face of considerable opposition and even mockery.

Although, again, more frequently suggested in the earliest pages of the work, changes of this sort are not confined to the novel's first volume. At the opening of Volume II, for instance, Mrs. Maple's household has been thrown into confusion following the abrupt disappearance of Elinor Jodrell. Juliet, who has (to her own great consternation) been chosen by Elinor as a confidant to her extraordinary flight is told by Elinor’s younger sister, Selina, that the servants have begun to offer some information as to just how Elinor contrived her departure so as not to be
noticed by the other members of the household, yet concludes her account with the observation, “But we are no wiser still as to where she is gone” (198). Burney planned to change this sentence to read: “But we know nothing as to where she is gone.” This is an apparently minor change, yet it is an emendation that once again effectively deepens the meaning and underscores the dramatic tension of the scene and of the heroine’s dilemma. The transformation of the printed text’s litotes (“no wiser still”) to a more emphatic and absolute affirmation of ignorance (“we know nothing”) apart from obviously tightening the novel’s prose, serves to heighten the divide between Juliet’s (unwanted and on some level undesirable) knowledge of Elinor’s plans, and the absolute ignorance of those in whose charge the latter remains.

As late as Volume IV, Burney is still on the look-out for any slight changes that might similarly be made to give more precision to the novel’s prose. In the printed edition of the novel Juliet, in the opening paragraph of Chapter LXII, having finally entered the shelter of her own chamber following yet another near-disastrous confrontation with the increasingly unstable Elinor Jodrell, utters a private prayer to her friend Gabriella, soliciting her continued support. “Oh Gabriella,” she ejaculates, “receive, console, strengthen, and direct your terrified, — bewildered friend! —” (582). Burney intended to replace “receive” in that same sentence with “invigorate.” The novelist’s anticipated change on this occasion reflects a desire not merely to transform Juliet’s passive desire for reception and sanctuary with the more rigorous and active request for life and energy, but signals a wish to clarify the factual logic of the work. Juliet, though still planning at this stage of the novel once again to seek out the friend from whom she has so long been separated, is yet unclear within her own mind as to just when, where, and how she shall be reunited with her childhood companion. The sharp eye of the novelist, spotting an apparent inconsistency in the chronology and natural continuity of Elinor’s thoughts, moves quickly and subtly to grant a slightly more logical movement to her heroine’s near-silent prayer.

V.

The third and very comprehensive category of change indicated by Burney in the interleavings to the Berg Collection’s copy of The Wanderer anticipates possible amalgamations and transpositions of existing material in the printed text, and extends to projected omissions of larger blocks of the narrative (sentences, paragraphs, and even — it would seem — entire chapters) from the existing version of the novel. The changes that fall into this category are perhaps the most extensive and frequent kinds of transformations Burney contemplated for any future edition of the work. Had the author in fact gone on to effect even a fraction of the cuts she appears to have contemplated for any such edition, readers would have been faced with a very different Wanderer indeed.

Burney appears to have begun the ruthless process of trimming perceived excesses both in the style and in the substance of her work even
in the Dedication to the novel itself. On the interleaving that faces the first page of the existing Dedication, we find Burney noting a desire to "shorten where possible as a whole." Her injunction may well indicate a preliminary desire to cut as much as possible from the first two books of the novel (i.e. the material contained in Volume I "as a whole"), but some few marks and emendations within the dedicatory address to her father suggest that no portion of the printed text was to be spared the author's vigilant revision. Burney notes at the same place that she plans to omit many of the "Buts," "Nevertheless," and "However" that stand in the text. The desire to edit such coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs from the work, as we shall see, sits well with a clear desire on the part of the author to move her narrative forward at a swifter and less cluttered pace. Although such conjunctions obviously serve in the text to connect the author's words and word groups and — like subordinating and correlative conjunctions — serve as transitions between clauses, they tend necessarily to qualify and delimit the novel's narrative prose, to retreat and to qualify meaning. Burney's editorial revisions reveal at all times a concern rather to speed her story up and — particularly in matters of exposition of central plot and character — to get things moving with as little such qualification as possible.

Burney is at times ruthless in her desire to move the action of the novel forward at this swifter and less hesitant (at least as she saw it) pace. Some of her changes are surprising. Many readers, for example, are struck by the stunning effectiveness of The Wanderer's opening sentence/paragraph in presenting readers with a precise and economically clear vision of the novel's setting — with regards both to historical time and place — and with a dramatic situation the tension and danger of which is immediately vivid and visceral. The printed text at the opening of Book I, Chapter I, reads:

During the dire reign of the terrific Robespierre, and in the dead of night, braving the cold, the darkness and the damps of December, some English passengers, in a small vessel, were preparing to glide silently from the coast of France, when a voice of keen distress resounded from the shore, imploring, in the French language, pity and admission.

(11)

Few students of the novel would fail to recognize the suitability of such an abrupt opening to Burney's work. The reader is plunged headlong into the action of the novel. The notes of mystery, secrecy, darkness, and peril — the immediate threats of revelation and articulation — set exactly the right tone for the work as a whole. We are swiftly in medias res, and the questions concerning identity, purpose, and destination soon given voice by the passengers huddled together in this "small vessel" precisely reflect our own curiosity as readers. The damp and the darkness of the characters' situation form the misty, palpable counterpart to
our own, only slowly qualified hermeneutic darkness. The reader’s expectations of meaning are slowly and minutely to be adjusted as textual clues carefully reveal just where we are and what is happening — as the implications of the novel’s narrative syntax are skilfully parsed by the author in the chapters that follow. The apparent, absolutely certain precision of Burney’s language and, particularly, her choice of adjectives in the sentence (“During the dire reign of the terrific Robespierre . . .”) seems calculated to evoke a maximum of terror and menace: “dire,” for example, not only connotes that which is awful, portentous, and even evil, but manages as well to conjure in the shadows of its meaning “the dire sisters” — the tormenting Furies of classical mythology, the daughters of Night — figures who are, after all, appropriate muses to invoke from their drear domain in this novel of suffering and persecution. “Terrific,” likewise, linguistically captures the immensity of the danger inspired by the Committee of Public Safety during the “Reign of Terror” of 1792 - 94, while at the same time underscoring the British fascination with the impressive figure of Maximilian Robespierre himself who — like the line of kings he has temporarily replaced — enjoys not a tenure of office but a “reign” (this fascination is made explicit later in the work, not only in Elinor’s inclination towards French Republicanism, but in the comments and political speculations of young Gooch and the members of his club regarding the wily machinations an Anglicised “Mounseer Robert Speer.”

Given the care that seems to have been taken with this induction to the novel, it consequently comes as something of a surprise for the modern reader to find that Burney herself was inclined to omit the first, historicizing phrase of her sentence from any later editions of the novel; she would have done so, apparently, in order to effect what she describes in the interleavings as an even “more interesting” and “abrupt” opening to the work. Burney has crossed out the beginning of the opening sentence and seems prepared instead to have begun the volume with the words “In the dead of night, braving the cold, etc.” It is striking that the author’s proposed change, delaying the historical context provided by the opening clause of the sentence as printed in the first edition, would only have deepened the mystery of the novel’s action even further; indeed, such a change plunges us further into the darkness of narrative speculation and modestly increases the generic status of the novel as mystery. While other aspects of Burney’s revisions, as we shall see, may seek to clarify aspects of both plot and character — to make the reader more aware of what is immediately transpiring in her fiction — the author felt no reluctance in delaying the revelation of larger narrative “secrets.” The teleology of the novel is, in fact, strengthened, as the reader is compelled to pursue those secrets for him or her own self. What Roland Barthes (at least at one stage of his career) would have called the hermeneutic and cultural “codes” of the work — the interpretive structures that pose enigmas and maintain narrative suspense, or rely upon shared historical and cultural knowledge — are
only underscored by Burney in her contemplated changes to the novel. The desire further to entrench the reader in the mysteries concerning both Juliet’s identity as well as the circumstances surrounding her return to England led Burney not only to contemplate omitting crucial, early, contextualizing “bytes” of narrative information, but likewise to streamline the earliest chapters of the novel. Almost all the contemplated cuts work to draw the reader into the heroine’s predicament at a faster — and in some ways more designedly bewildering — narrative pace. The reader’s natural hunger for information is to be increased as he or she is moved swiftly through the initial situation of the fiction towards change and revelation. What J. Hillis Miller has described as “the patterning or repetition of elements surrounding a nuclear figure” (an element which, he notes, is one of the basic elements of any narrative) is consequently brought into sparer, starker relief (Miller, 66-79).

At Chapter VI, for example — in a passage that details the preparations of Mrs. Maple’s household, of which Juliet is temporarily a member, for their removal from London to Brighthelmstone — Burney appears first to have noted her desire simply to “shorten” several elements of her narration “a bit.” Although certain pieces of information furnished in the opening paragraphs of the chapter are in fact essential to our later understanding of the novel’s plot (we are here given the substantial background of Elinor’s engagement to Harleigh’s younger brother, and of her retreat to the south of France following the breaking of that engagement and subsequent return to England in the company of both Mrs. Maple and Harleigh himself), the incidents described in the body of the chapter itself are deemed by Burney to be overdrawn and unnecessary. The centerpiece of the section, which finds the now-undisguised Juliet almost forcibly dragged by Elinor into the presence of Mrs. Maple’s company and an embarrassed Harleigh, is dismissed by the author as “outrée”; the subsequent clamour produced by Selina, Mr. Ireton, and Mrs. Maple and Elinor themselves for Juliet to reveal her name and identity is described with a similar burst of (generally uncharacteristic) Gallic condemnation on the part of the author as “trop trop trop.”

By the end of the chapter, Burney arrives at a clearly articulated decision to “omit this scene” entirely. The essential narrative information could easily be included elsewhere; the pages-long repetition of the pestering and ill-usage suffered by Juliet at the hands of Mrs. Maple’s circle, by contrast, appears to have been deemed by the author to be quite simply unnecessary. Burney may well have suspected that the melodramatic, almost slap-stick nature of the abuse inflicted by Elinor on Juliet at this stage of their relationship mitigated against the latter’s choice — made later in the same volume — of the same individual as the bearer of her most intimate commissions to Harleigh.

By far the greater part of Burney’s notations suggesting further omissions and cuts to the novel, however, are made not — as in the examples above — on such precise occasional or syntactical levels, but are rather indicated by periodic and summary judgements introduced
only at the end of the individual chapters. At the end of Chapter VIII, for example, Burney judges the preceding pages to have been “Altogether long,” and indicates her intention to “curtail” the material contained therein “to a few paragraphs.” The conclusion of Chapter IX similarly finds Burney pencilling her desire — in any future edition of the novel — to “shorten and naturalize” the narrative of the chapter and, once again, to “curtail if not omit” the section entirely. Likewise at the end of Chapter X Burney indicates an intention to “curtail to the utmost all but Harleigh and Miss Arbe.” In later volumes, Burney will typically make notes to herself to “clear” or “shorten” or “abridge” her material.

Included in this third category of emendation are very brief comments — amounting, on many occasions, to no more than one or two words — that serve nevertheless often to indicate the author’s desire to modify existing elements of plot and characterization. Burney at times expresses a negative critical judgement with regard to some aspect of the text of the first edition. Her main intention in these revisions would appear to have been to clarify certain aspects of her narrative, and more precisely to omit from any future edition of the novel elements of the plot that she now perceived to be extraneous to her central design. Suggestions regarding the manner in which the plot was to move forward that were not emphatically or pointedly picked up in the later volumes of The Wanderer, for example, are noted now to be irrelevant or, at the very least, unnecessary. In Volume I, Chapter VI, for example, the author suggests that young Ireton, “urged by a rich old uncle, and an entailed estate, to an early marriage” (54), is eventually to be coupled with Elinor’s younger sister, Selina. In the printed edition of the novel, Burney writes of young Ireton’s conduct soon after the refugees have arrived in London:

He then saw Selina, Elinor’s younger sister, a wild little girl, only fourteen years of age, who was wholly unformed, but with whom he had become so desperately enamoured, that, when Mrs. Maple, knowing his character, and alarmed by his assiduities, cautioned him not to make a fool of her young niece, he abruptly demanded her in marriage. As he was very rich, Mrs. Maple had, of course, Elinor added, given her consent, desiring only that he would wait till Selina reached her fifteenth birthday; and the little girl, when told of the plan, had considered it as a frolic, and danced with delight.

(55)

Of this passage Burney noted in her corrections: “If this marriage does not take place let it be [omitted].”

Burney planned to effect similar changes elsewhere in the narrative, redirecting elements of her plot, as she had originally conceived it, or otherwise clarifying aspects of the narrative or of her characterization that proved in retrospect to be vague or ill-defined. The desire to effect
a closer delineation of character and motivation at times coincides with some potential redirection of the larger narrative. At the beginning of Volume IV, Chapter LXVII, Juliet has just arrived in London, and has left no time in joining her friend and confident Gabriella, whom she finds in a haberdasher’s shop in Frith Street, Soho. Burney had originally described their reunion as follows:

It was long ere either of them could speak; their swelling hearts denied all verbal utterance to their big emotions; though tears of poignant grief at the numerous woes by which they had been separated, were mingled with feelings of the softest felicity at their re-union. Yet vaguely only Juliet gave the history of her recent difficulties; the history which had preceded them, and upon which hung the mystery of her situation, still remained unrevealed. Gabriella forbore any investigation, but her look shewed disappointment. Juliet perceived it, and changed colour. Tears gushed from her eyes, and her head dropt upon the neck of her friend. “Oh my Gabriella!” she cried, “if my silence wounds, or offends you,—it is at an end!”

(622)

Burney questioned her original intentions in the passage by writing a question in the interleaved edition: “Why her reticence to Gabriella [?] Change or Expand.” The remark would appear to indicate that Burney, as careful a novelist as she tended to be, was not beyond losing sight of her original design or motivation at certain points in the novel.

It is far more often the case, however, that, upon re-reading the novel some time subsequent to its original publication, Burney gained some perspective on certain inconsistencies or redundancies in her portrayal of the novel’s characters. Observations such as that which note that Mrs. Maple is at one early point in the novel “too like Ireton,” or remarks indicating her intention at a certain passage to “keep only what is best” of Ireton, suggest that Burney planned entirely to trim the novel of possible repetition and superfluities, and bring her comic cast of characters into sharper focus. Throughout the volumes, the reader encounters notations such as: “Keep only what is quite best of Admiral,” “Omit all of Ireton not indispensable,” “Too much of Ireton,” and “Keep Sir Jaspar above Old Gooch, Mrs. Ireton, and Gabriella.” Similar remarks at times commend her characterization (e.g., “All of Lord Denmeath stet”). Burney’s vigilance in such matters of characterization would appear to have been sustained throughout her reading of all five volumes. At the end of Chapter LXXVII, in Volume V, at a point in the narrative that finds Juliet in “the bosom of retired and beautiful rusticity” (718) — the home of Dame Fairfield, in the New Forest — Burney can still be found noting her intention to edit her characterization, declaring her intention: “Fairfield naturalized [and] gayified + shortened And All clear to one or 2 paragraphs.”
Finally, our fourth category includes the presence of graphic, short-hand comments giving vaguer indications of a desire to effect substantive transformations in terms both of character and of plot and exposition. This short-hand includes changes and revision projected by Burney comprises vaguer indications of a desire to effect substantive transformations in terms both of character and of plot and exposition. Throughout all her projected revisions, Burney can be found indicating her intentions to cut the length of the novel and, it would seem, finally produce something closer to a three-volume novel. Again and again, Burney declares her intentions to “omit or change” everything from individual words, to exchanges between characters, to entire narrative episodes. Both Burney’s coherent, written comments as well as her graphic shorthand “comments” declare her desire to “shorten” sections “a bit.” Typical comments read: “Omit this scene,” “shorten,” “shorten and naturalize,” “curtail,” curtail if not omit,” “some shortening and much clearing,” “amalgamate,” “altered and abridged yet generally retained,” “shorten the Preliminary part,” “the rest more poignant and shortened” “the rest cleared and much shortened.” Burney clearly intended to make some dramatic excises in the existing text. The projected, revised edition of The Wanderer would have been a considerably less voluminous novel than its first edition counterpart.

VI.

I have reserved for the fourth and final category of revision those comments and markings of Burney’s that preserve and otherwise highlight what might well be characterized as the most rewarding and quite simply the most cheerfully positive of the author’s many and varied responses to her work. Throughout the five printed volumes of The Wanderer, Burney on many occasions indicates a sound and hearty approval of her own work; her marks and at times her extended notations of approval provide us with endearing if fleeting glimpses of Burney as a reader who not only read her work critically, but read it with obvious enjoyment as well. Her comments of approbation, while emphatic and decisive, are nevertheless rarely self-congratulatory or self-promotional in any public or self-conscious manner; we remember that the jottings and observations made throughout this copy of the novel were intended for the use of no one other than the novelist herself.

As is the case with some of Burney’s less self-congratulatory judgements on her work, recognition of those moments when she feels that she has in fact succeeded in creating a desired effect, or feels likewise that her writing has been equal to the demands of the narrative as a whole, is made as early as the first Book of Volume I. Chapter V, for example — in which the heroine (still, at this very early stage of the novel nameless and generally referred to by the other characters only as “the Incognita”) is brought to London and introduced into the London establishment of Mrs. Maple on Upper Brooke Street — is declared by
Burney to be “Generally faultless.” It is perhaps worthy of note that the chapter is one in which the narrative moves swiftly and economically; Juliet is deposited in London, effects a separation between herself and Mrs. Ireton — in whose company she had been compelled to travel from Dover — determines that her friend Gabriella is for the time being untraceable, and is welcomed by Elinor into the household of Mrs. Maple prior to leaving for Brighthelmstone; all these events occur within a matter of less than eight pages in a modern edition. In the same Volume Chapter XI, which describes the stunning triumph of Juliet in her last-moment assumption of the role of Lady Townly in Elinor’s amateur production of Vanburgh’s The Provok’d Husband, as well as her earliest acquaintance with Lady Aurora Grenville, is noted by the author to be “superior & interesting.” Although, as we have already has cause to observe, Burney anticipated cutting much material from these early pages of the novel, she appears nevertheless to have been absolutely pleased and satisfied precisely with those chapters toward the beginning of the work that contained the most crucial and consequential narrative information. Likewise, at precisely those moments when Burney’s rhetoric needed to be most captivating and persuasive, the author more often than not demonstrates a conviction that she has risen to the task at hand. The description of Juliet’s dramatic success in Chapter XI in fact brings the opening Book of The Wanderer to its conclusion, and thus marks the mid-point of the first volume as a whole; the success of the heroine’s performance in Vanburgh’s piece constitutes the first of the several critical and climactic moments, the intensity of which must together carry the narrative toward its conclusion. The final pages of the chapter focus specifically on the reactions of Lady Aurora and Lord Melbury to Juliet’s performance and — even more significantly — on the articulation of their sharp perception of the degree of sensibility and moral rectitude that underlay Juliet’s interpretation of the role of Lady Townley. When Lady Aurora, deep in conversation with Juliet, is reminded by an impatient Mrs. Howel that the horses have already been harnessed and kept waiting for some considerable time in the cold for her party’s departure, she responds apologetically that anyone who has had the opportunity to form even the slightest acquaintance with the captivating Miss Ellis should be able easily to understand how difficult it is to tear one’s self away from her company. The emotional exchange between Juliet, Lady Aurora, and her brother that follows this heartfelt declaration of sisterly attachment by necessity constitutes a crucial and determining moment in the dynamic of affection and sympathy that is to connect those same three characters to one another throughout the entire novel. The reader must, even from this early point in the narrative, be absolutely convinced of the unshakeable sincerity of such ties as would appear to bind the innate and seemingly “natural” gentility of the “Incognita” to the well-bred sensibilities of her more obviously aristocratic “friends.” Indeed, the indisputable if yet inexplicable nature of these ties forms the very basis of the carefully sustained mystery of the
novel; the apparently irreconcilable divide that would appear to separate the blank slate of Ellis’s social, professional, and personal history, on the one hand, from the unerringly scrupulous standard of conduct that characterizes her behaviour throughout the novel, on the other, is itself the primary site of the critique of the overburdened and inequitable politics of status and identification that motivates Burney’s satire in the first place, and which, as such, constitutes its author’s most significant contribution to the wide-ranging debate over sexual equality and the rights of women that frames the narrative as a whole. The reader must be absolutely convinced in these early pages that Lady Aurora’s instinctive sympathy for Juliet is as correct and as judiciously perceptive as it is well-meaning and sincere; for it is only by means of such a conviction that the inexplicable and genuinely perplexing enigma of the wanderer’s identity is furthered and intensified as the narrative progresses. Burney thus depicts Juliet as responding to Lady Aurora’s praise with an intensity that seems immediately and in turn only to reinscribe the validity of her friend’s judgement of her character:

“What honour Your Ladyship does me!” cried Ellis, her eyes glistening: “and Oh! — how happy you have made me!” —
“How kind you are to say so!” returned Lady Aurora, taking her hand.
She felt a tear drop upon her own from the bent-down eyes of Ellis. Startled and astonished, she hoped that Miss Ellis was not again indisposed?
Smilingly, yet in a voice that denoted extreme agitation, “Lady Aurora alone,” she answered, “can be surprised that so much goodness — so unlooked for — so unexpected — should be touching!”
“O Mrs. Maple,” cried Lady Aurora, in taking leave of that lady, “what a sweet creature is this Miss Ellis!”
“Such talents and a sensibility so attractive,” said Lord Melbury, “never met before!”
Ellis heard them, and with a pleasure that seemed exquisite, yet that died away the moment that they disappeared. All then crowded round her, who had hitherto abstained; but she drooped; tears flowed fast down her cheeks; she courted the acknowledgements which she could not pronounce to her complimenter and enquirers, and mounted to her chamber. Mrs. Maple concluded [Ellis] already so spoiled, by the praises of Lord Melbury and Lady Aurora Granville, that she held herself superior to all other; and the company in general imbibed the same notion. Many disdain, or affect to disdain, the notice of people of rank for themselves, but all are jealous of it for others. Not such was the opinion of Harleigh; her pleasure in their society seemed to him no more than a renovation to feelings of happier days. Who, who, thought he again, can’st thou be? And
why, thus evidently accustomed to grace society, why art thou thus strangely alone — thus friendless — thus desolate — thus mysterious?

(101-02)

In such a manner does Burney at once both clearly and economically reiterate the central mystery of her narrative (i.e. who is this enigmatic stranger, and how is it that — in spite of her otherwise unprepossessing appearance — she has come so naturally to manifest the gentility of a well-bred person?), while at the same time giving succinct expression to the nature and the effect of that servile and contemptible snobbery that constitutes the main target of her social satire. Moreover, Harleigh's own heightened curiosity with regard to the status of Miss Ellis, situated as it is within his clear approval of Lady Aurora's sentiments, forms a further connection between all four characters, drawing them together in an (as yet) unarticulated confederacy of sympathy and fellow-feeling, the honesty and spontaneous intensity of which subtly unites them against the unfeeling hypocrisy, prejudice, and self-interest that seems otherwise to characterize the norm of social interaction in the novel. It is to scenes and chapters such as this that Burney typically and quite justifiably appends her comments of approval; rereading them in print and with the sort of dispassionate, Horatian distance from their original conception that marks the work of any true "revision" from the lingering self-approval of a mere "rereading," the novelist seems to have been capable of gauging the success or failure of her narrative set-pieces with enviable candour. In this particular instance, she writes just at the end of the passage quoted above, "This last chap [stet] superior and interesting," much as she will judge other portions of her narrative as being suitably "funny" or "poignant," as the decorum of each particular situation demands.

Burney's notions of approval and her judgements regarding the ultimate success or failure of her intentions as manifest in the printed edition of her novel can be even more telling when her comments and revisions go one step further and address not merely issues of plot, pacing, and narrative suspense, but even more crucially confront the delineation in the novel of rather more complicated aspects of character, motivation, and ideology. This is perhaps most true in the case of her portrait of Elinor Jodrell. Elinor, as has already been noted, proved predictably to have been one of the most troubling elements of The Wanderer for Burney's contemporary reviewers to handle. Elinor's impassioned and uncompromising advocacy of radical notions including the political and social rights of women (though to some extent tempered by the judgement of characters such as Harleigh and of Juliet herself that she is a "mad woman" bent on "immediate self-destruction" [193]) emerges even when qualified and situated as the response of a disenfranchised hysteric with a force and with an audacity that was quite frankly too darkly powerful for comfort. The significant force of Elinor's character,
and thus the impress of the views to which she gives compelling voice in *The Wanderer*, is further complicated by the unusually strong position — by what might be described as the uniquely sovereign status — that Burney allows her to assume in relation to the novel's other characters, and particularly to its central protagonists, Juliet and Harleigh. Although she is clearly not meant to be thought of as the nominal heroine of the novel, Elinor, no less than Juliet, is herself represented as a kind of "wanderer" within the pages of Burney's fiction — a wanderer who is both compelled and to some degree condemned, if only by virtue of her own sustained and unflinching engagement with contemporary political ideas, over and over to transgress the socially acceptable boundaries that restrict, delimit, or otherwise seek to confine the thoughts and activities of women in England, no less effectively than they do in France. Burney would appear explicitly to acknowledge Elinor's status as the other "wandering" heroine of her work when, in the closing pages of the novel, she qualifies her final description of Elinor's reluctant capitulation to societal norms by allowing that character herself — and pointedly "in the anguish of her disappointment" — to cry out: "Alas! alas! . . . must Elinor too . . . find that she has strayed from the beaten road, only to discover that all others are pathless!" (873). Though the brief, concluding paragraphs of the novel that follow this final glimpse of Elinor return us to Juliet and to the broader lessons hopefully to be abstracted from the author's delineation of "the DIFFICULTIES with which a FEMALE has to struggle," Burney's rather more vivid account of the fate of Elinor effectively makes certain that her readers will close the book with this tortured cry of rage, regret and disappointment still ringing in their ears; Elinor's incredulous outrage in light of her grim "discovery" — in a manner somewhat similar to the frustrated gasp of anger that signals the abrupt departure of the "notoriously abused" Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* — intimates the enigmatic potential of such defiance and resistance as threaten further to undermine and even to unravel the novel's otherwise comic and conventionally "happy" ending.

Burney would appear to have been preparing for precisely this effect from the very beginning of *The Wanderer*. The first time we see her in the novel, Elinor is represented as welcoming the arrival of the Incognita among the passengers in the Channel vessel, particularly as the mysterious circumstances of the stranger's appearance seems to afford the other refugees an opportunity for speculation and conjecture. "I am glad, therefore, that 'tis dark," she whispers on that occasion to Harleigh, "for" — she adds knowingly — "discovery is almost always disappointment" (13). These are among her very first words in the novel. By the end of the last volume, unfortunately, it is Elinor's own disillusionment — the final disintegration of her rebel spirit under a crushing and tyrannical weight of custom that transforms human beings into "mere, sleepy, slavish, uninteresting automatons" (177) — that is revealed as close to complete. Discovery has indeed resulted in
disappointment. For Juliet, finally, the necessarily independent movements of the Wanderer are at least seen as leading to the felicitous recovery of personal and social identity — to "the acknowledgment of her name, and her family" (873). The knowledge and experience borne of the far wider circuits encompassed by the ambitious and free-thinking Elinor, by sharp contrast, would appear only to leave her still and even more emphatically a perpetual wanderer in the ways of men, alike unknowing and unknown.

Despite such disillusionment — and even in the work of a novelist who could never seriously be criticized for having pulled any punches when it came to the creation of outspoken and independently-minded female characters — Elinor Jodrell remains a figure of unusual standing and conviction. The proper education of a female and the fate of an intelligent woman in a male-dominated society had of course always figured prominently among those issues explored by Burney in the pages of her novels, as well as in the interchanges and set-pieces of her several dramatic works. Those features that define and help to distinguish Elinor as well as Juliet as vital and compelling fictional characters in The Wanderer, after all, might justly be seen as reflecting, augmenting, and in some ways building upon the similar traits and interests which had already motivated heroines such as Evelina, Cecilia, and Camilla. At the very least, the ideological structures and strictures of the world into which Burney chooses to place her final pair of heroines is much the same world with which readers of the earlier novels have already grown familiar. The more general refrains and concerns that characterize Augustus Tyrold's famous and frequently reprinted epistolary "sermon" to his daughter Camilla in the novel that bears her name — the inescapable truth of his nervous speculation that "the temporal destiny of women is enwrapt in still more impenetrable obscurity than that of man," for example, or his even more pessimistic reflection that the best course of education for any female poses itself a pedagogical problem the answer to which lies "beyond human solution" — the articulation of such concerns, again, would, at the very least, be in no way out of place in The Wanderer (Camilla, 355-62).

Nevertheless, Elinor's impassioned and carefully informed enthusiasm with regard to the liberation of ideas and possibilities that she sees as having been released upon the world by the overthrow of the ancien régime in France takes Burney's exploration of such familiar issues to some arguably new and increasingly complicated levels in her final novel. However much Elinor may be positioned in the closing pages of Burney's narrative as what might be called a "recovering" revolutionary, her extreme enthusiasms can still be interpreted as constituting a markedly more positive and constructive response to recent events on the continent than the ill-informed jingoism typical of such characters as young farmer Gooch and his friends — characters who, even as they give voice to the casual misconstructions borne of insularity and ignorance (such as the jingoistic "dumbing-down" of Robespierre to plain
“Bob Spear”), nevertheless protest their absolute and native right themselves to have a determining say in contemporary political debate. Elinor herself, as even her most concerned critics within the novel tend significantly to concede, is nothing if not prepared in her responses, and open-minded (too open-minded, such critics would contend) in her judgements. Harleigh’s own language in response to Elinor’s revolutionary rhetoric, moreover, suggests that while he most strongly professes a desire only to restore her to a state of mind in which she might more reasonably employ the “highly gifted” nature of her thought and feelings, he is perhaps more deeply threatened simply by the degree of intellectual freedom — by the seemingly boundless extent of theoretical license — to which, since her return from France, Elinor looks defiantly to lay claim. “So boundless is the license which the followers of the new systems allow themselves,” he frets to Juliet early in the novel, “that nothing is too dreadful to apprehend” (190 - 91). Such anxiety (approaching cowardice) in the face of any degree of political change sounds, even when articulated by the novel’s romantic hero, excessively timorous and fearful. Though Harleigh repeatedly exhorts Elinor to “compose” her spirits and to “exert” her strength of mind, a truly composed and conventionally articulate Elinor Jodrell is probably the very last person he would ever be capable of confronting, let alone converting. Elinor may well be presented as having backed political losers in the short-term, but, by the same token, her acumen in judging the liberal and progressive tendency of political thought in the long run is arguably far more accurate and foresighted than the judgements of the novel’s more conventionally conservative protagonists.

The rhetorical intensity with which Elinor is allowed by Burney — and on more than one occasion — to make her case for the sustained advocacy of extreme social and political reform is likely to strike even modern readers as somewhat audacious. The extended “conversation” or debate between Elinor, Juliet, and Harleigh that dominates the later chapters of the novel’s first volume — a debate that unflinchingly confronts the supposedly desirable decorum imposed by custom and convention, on the one hand, with the forces unleashed by “the late glorious revolutionary shake given to the universe” (154), on the other — can serve as a prime example of Burney’s fair-minded depiction of such matters. Elinor’s speech to Juliet at the end of Chapter XVI, in which she undertakes to provide a summary analysis of the effects of her own recent experiences in France, offers just one among many possible illustrations of the striking degree of rigor, coherence, and theoretically enlightened optimism that Burney tends typically to extend to the pronouncements of her female revolutionary. “The grand effect . . . of beholding so many millions of men, let loose from all ties, divine or human,” Elinor tells Juliet in that scene,

Gave such play to my fancy, such a range to my thoughts, and brought forth such new, unexpected, and untried combinations
to my reason, that I frequently felt as if just created, ushered into the world — not, perhaps, as wise as another Minerva, but equally formed to view and to judge all around me, without the gradations of infancy, childhood, and youth, that hitherto have prepared for maturity. Every thing now is upon a new scale, and man appears to be worthy of his faculties; which, during all these past ages, he has set aside, as if he could do just as well without them; holding it to be his bounden duty, to be trampled to the dust by old rules and forms, because all his papas and uncles were trampled so before him. However, I should not have troubled myself, probably, with any of these abstruse notions, had they not offered me a new road for life, when the old one was worn out. To find that all was novelty and regeneration throughout the finest country in the universe, soon infected me with the system-forming spirit.

(156-57)

Of such speeches Burney comments in her revisions only that they are of “deep interest” and are “[on] the whole ex[cellent],” and that they are, of all things in the novel, “altogether the best.”

VII.

What, then, are we finally to make of all these contemplated changes, cuts, and corrections? Do the results of the intense editorial focus that Burney brought to bear upon her own work amount to anything of greater consistency and significance? The answers to such questions might be summed up, briefly, as follows. In the face of criticisms regarding the length of *The Wanderer*, such as those put forth in the *British Critic* (e.g. “The plot is well conceived, but too much time is consumed before it is unravelled, and before we have the slightest idea of the history of our incognita”), Burney would appear to enter a qualified guilty plea (*British Critic*, 385). A close examination of the interleaved text of the novel indicates that the author did indeed intended, should the opportunity have presented itself, to make some sweeping cuts to the novel and so, as we have seen, to “shorten” and “curtail” her narrative material wherever she thought it possible to do so. Burney is far from indiscriminate in her contemplated cuts, however; she is not prepared to cater her critics. It is striking that those passages that might in the eyes of any other reader or editor appear ripe for the pruning, as it were, are pointedly retained in the contemplated, edited version of the novel. Those figures and ideas that gave most offence to Burney’s more conservative critics are rarely, if ever, singled out for excision, while precisely those characters which were in fact praised for being “drawn with a knowledge of human nature and kept up with continued vivacity” (e.g. Mrs Iretón, Giles Arbe) are deemed to be in many instances over-drawn or unnecessary (*British Critic*, 382). Burney indicates throughout
the interleaved copy of *The Wanderer* that she will be attempting to whittle her narrative down to a more manageable size, but that she will be doing so on her own terms, and on no one else's.

The personal priorities indicated by Burney's markings brings us directly to the second important point that must be made regarding her postulated revisions. Almost all the critics had had something good to say about the presentation of the novel's secondary characters; more particularly, almost all praised the satiric portraits of Mrs. Ireton and of Mr. Giles Arbe. It is highly significant, therefore, that Burney seems deliberately to fly in the face of such responses when she indicates her desire in any future edition of the novel to diminish the role of precisely these same characters. In fact, paying scant attention to the comments of the reviewers, Burney reveals her intentions to cut and excise from the work what she herself sees to have been a certain redundancy of character "types" in the figures of Ireton and Arbe. As matters now stood, they were too much alike — too repetitive — effectively to represent the grim diversity of threats that confront the female in modern British society. The critics had asked for cuts in the novel, and such cuts, Burney had decided, she could provide; but she would cut the very thing the critics had most praised. To the criticism that the behaviour of her characters were too inconsistent, or that they were merely two-dimensional caricatures as opposed to more fully "rounded" characters in a realistic fiction, Burney's response was no less clear — and no less unrepentant. Rather than omit or soften her portraits in any way, she would appear to have desired only to sharpen the bright satiric edges of those representations. Her comments that she should "omit" certain passages or "keep only what is best" of a certain character or set piece is more often than not less a tacit concession to her critics than it is a reiteration of her determination to heighten the standing lines of her original portraiture.

Surely the most significant issue raised by the generally hostile responses of Burney's contemporary critics, however, was that of the author's apparent sympathy with the radical and revolutionary ideas given voice in the novel by Elinor Jodrell. If Burney wished to placate her critics — if she wished to make any concessions to the journals and reviews — then this was the area in which they might most profitably be undertaken. Is particularly worthy of note, therefore, that Burney gives no indication that she is prepared in any way to compromise her original portrait of Elinor. While it might be necessary to effect some slight changes in Elinor's lengthy, polemical speeches, the substance of those speeches was to remain pretty much unchanged. The fiery and seemingly dangerous pronouncements of Burney's revolutionary new woman were to be left as they were. The ideological gauntlet that Elinor flings down in the face of the more conventionally romantic aspirations of the novel's heroine and hero was emphatically not to be picked up and placed back on some inconspicuous place on the shelf. In the face of her most vociferous critics, Burney the editor stands unrepentant and defiant.
Notes

1. On the publication history of Burney’s novel, see the “Note on the Text” in Fanny Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, Doody, Mack, and Sabor, eds., xxxviii-xxxxix. All quotations from *The Wanderer* have been taken from this edition, which reprints a modestly “corrected” text of the first edition of 1814, and will be cited parenthetically.

   In the prefatory dedication to the first edition (addressed to her father, Dr. Charles Burney) the novelist was to claim that she had already begun working on the novel “before the end of the last century” (4) — that is, at a period when she was still living in England and considerably prior to following her husband, M. Alexandre d’Arblay, to his native France in 1802. Some few entries in Burney’s memorandum book dating from the period of her residence in Paris during the Napoleonic years suggest that the author’s progress on the work in her new, adopted country was slow but steady (*JL*, vi. 785-86). These notes, which economically detail the precise nature of Burney’s monthly composition (e.g., “April, Com[posed]. Humours of Working for Shops”; “Sep­tember. c[omposed] Introduction to Toad Eating”; “October Comp[osed]. Toad Eating”), reveal that by 1806 she had begun to formulate the central narrative of her story, and was clearly well on her way to developing many of the major thematic concerns of the work. Burney was at the same time obviously making some considerable headway in fashioning the particular incidents and exchanges that distinguish some of the novel’s more memorable set pieces. The specifics of these carefully-delineated scenes were eventually to prove central to the social satire of the finished work. Burney intimates in her dedication that she had “sketched” the entire novel some time considerably prior to 1812 (*JL*, vi. 596-615).

2. See, primarily, Lillian D. Bloom’s study of Burney’s revisions to *Camil­la*, discussed later in this essay.

3. Burney’s decision to return to her native England with her young son Alex in the following year so as personally to attend to a number of business and family matters likewise entailed a physical move and adjustment that disrupted the progress of her writing. Although Burney apparently intended originally to leave the manuscript of the novel in the safekeeping of her husband in France, an enforced delay in her crossing to England from Dunkirk left the author with some time on her hands, and induced her to write to d’Arblay, requesting that the completed material be forwarded to her at the Channel port. Burney’s body of work on *The Wanderer* had by that time increased in size so as more than adequately to fill “a little portmanteau”. French customs officials, themselves operating (as Burney herself observed) during “a period of unexampled strictness of Police Discipline with respect to Letters and Papers between the two nations”, appear to have found the mere sight of such potentially subversive documents (written, of course, in Eng­lish) unnerving; on at least one occasion Burney came close to seeing the
“Fourth Child of [her] Brain” destroyed before her very eyes by the assiduous continental officers (6). Finally, after surviving a harrowing and eventful Channel crossing, both Burney and her manuscript arrived safely at the ancient and fortified town of Deal, in Kent, on 15 August 1812.

4. For Burney’s description of the novel as a “Work” — “PRAY call it a work; I am passed the time to endure being supposed to write a Love-tale” — see JL, vii. 104n.

5. The negotiations for the novel’s publication by Thomas Longman and his associates (Owen Rees was, on this occasion, the actual representative in the proceedings) were conducted primarily, on the part of the author, by Burney’s younger brother Charles. Charles Burney was by this time a trusted veteran when it came to such matters; it had been into his hands, after all, that Burney had entrusted the manuscript of her first published novel. The trio would appear to have done their job well. The deal these representatives eventually presented to Burney for her approval was indeed an advantageous one (JL, vii. 157 and 157.n. 5). According to the terms of the final agreement, the author was to receive the bookseller’s payment of £1,500 for the first edition of The Wanderer; this payment consisted of £500 on delivery of the manuscript, £500 six months after publication, and a further £500 a full calendar year after the novel had appeared in print. Burney was also positioned to receive a total of £1,500 for subsequent editions of the novel (£500 for a second edition and £250 for each later edition through the sixth). The author—who thus hoped to earn as much as £3,000 on the work, and who confessed to her father a frank and clear-sighted awareness that “the real win” of her efforts was practically “dependent upon success” — had every reason to be pleased (JL, vii. 195). “Oh my dear Padre”, Burney wrote, “if YOU approve the work — I shall have good hope” (JL, vii. 195).

6. The concerted reaction against The Wanderer began with John Wilson Croker’s scathing review of the work in the Quarterly Review for April, 1814 — just one month after the novel’s publication. Croker claimed that he was almost disinclined to believe that the novel was the child of Burney’s imagination at all. “If we had not been assured in the title-page”, Croker wrote: “that this work had been produced by the same pen as Cecilia, we should have pronounced Madame D’Arblay to be a feeble imitator of the style and manner of Miss Burney — we should have admitted the flat fidelity of her copy, but we should have lamented the total want of vigour, vivacity, and originality: and, conceding to the fair author... some discrimination of character, and some power of writing, we should have strenuously advised her to avoid, in future, the dull mediocrity of a copyist, and to try the flight if her own genius in some work, that should not recall to us in every page the mortifying recollection of excellence which, though she had the good sense to admire it, she never would have the power to rival (Croker in the Quarterly Review, xi [April, 1814], 124. The passage quoted above is reprinted as part of Appendix IV in JL, vii. 564). Far from bring concerned with any genuine
stylistic critique, however, Croker reserved the main body of his attack for an assault on the supposed political sympathies of the novel and its author. Calling attention to Burney's protestation in the dedicatory epistle to *The Wanderer* that she had not suffered any "personal disturbance" while living in Napoleonic France, Croker sneered at what he characterized as Burney's attempts to insinuate "her gratitude for the blessings, the tender mercies which France enjoyed under the dominion of that tyger . . ." The notion that life in France could be anything less than half-crazed with the activities of dangerous political radicals was scorned by Croker. The suggestion that some of these very radicals might themselves be women was, as Croker puts it, "monstrous."

A notice in the *British Critic* that appeared in the same month as Croker's critique acknowledged the great anticipation with which the news of a "new" Burney novel was greeted ("We can scarcely remember," the reviewer began, "an instance, when the public expectation was excited to so high a degree"), but similarly criticized the character of Elinor for displaying an absurd and (it is insinuated) passionate commitment to the cause of female equality that was "now no longer in existence" (*BC* 41, 374). The same reviewer decided that while some of the novel's characters — particularly Mrs. Ireton — were "drawn with a knowledge of human nature, and kept up with a continual vivacity," and while the plot itself was "well conceived," the novel took too long to get its story moving, and was hence "tedious and tiresome as a whole" (*BC*, 382-86).

The next review to appear was a generally favourable response in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1814. The reviewer early on acknowledged that any effort of Madame d'Arblay's would necessarily command the attention and respect of the public. The central character of Juliet was noted to be "an example of inflexible rectitude, suffering every privation that a fertile imagination could invent, and at length emerging from her miseries with an unsullied reputation, a pure mind, and a reward such as poetic justice should ever bestow as a return for the exercise of the best qualities of our nature" (*GM*, lxxxiv 579). Yet while the reviewer did concede Burney's argument in the prefatory epistle that the novel is not perforce an inappropriate vehicle for "so serious a subject" as the reign of terror in France and its concomitant persecutions, the author's depiction of Elinor Jodrell as "a genuine Republican and Free-thinker" again drew fire. Unwilling to contemplate the possibility that such a strong-minded female character might actually have something important to say to the novel's readers, the reviewer seemed almost wilfully to misread the novel (thinking, perhaps, to "protect" its author) by declaring decisively that Elinor is "exhibited in every light which is calculated to excite abhorrence for those doctrines that, the French themselves now blush to remember, once rendered their nation infamous in the eyes of all dispassionate persons." The political complexities of *The Wanderer* were thus quickly swept to one side as "secondary" and hence unimportant to the novel.

Such early reactions to the novel — particularly the first notice in the *Quarterly Review* — were, as critics such as Doody have argued, no
doubt partially responsible for the dramatic decline in sales of the novel by mid-April 1814. As harsh as such notices were, however, they hardly began to prepare the way for William Hazlitt’s grim and ill-intentioned assault on *The Wanderer* and its author in the *Edinburgh Review* in February, 1815. If Burney’s publishers had nurtured any hopes of advancing the sales of the novel gradually through word of mouth or even by issuing an abridged or revised edition, Hazlitt’s influential review would have been capable single-handedly of putting an end to any such designs. Hazlitt professed praise for “the class of writings” to which *The Wanderer* belongs, but — having specifically singled out Cervantes, Samuel Richardson, and Tobias Smollett as the early masters of the romance novel — he quickly dispensed with any of Burney’s claims to professionalism, maturity, and sophistication; she was infrequently and at best only a competent caricaturist, perhaps, but little more. Burney, Hazlitt decided, was a writer

quite of the old school, a mere common observer of manners, — and also a very woman. It is this last circumstance which form the peculiarity of her writings, and distinguishes them from those masterpieces which we have before mentioned [i.e. the work of Cervantes, Richardson, and Smollett]. She is unquestionably a quick, lively, and accurate observer of persons and things: but she always looks at them with a consciousness of her sex, and in that point of view which it is the particular business and interest of women to observe them.

(*ER*, xxiv, No. 48, 336)

Hazlitt had little use for such a feminine point of view. He moved on in the piece to dismiss women writers in general as having “less muscular power, — less power of continued voluntary attention, — of reason — passion and imagination.” One in fact leaves the essay wondering what might possibly have compelled Hazlitt to have condescended to pick up *The Wanderer* in the first place. He concluded his review with the criticism that in the course of her substantial five-volume novel Burney advanced no plot or story, and complained that she offered her readers only outward appearance and “superficial and confined” stereotypes. Hazlitt’s final dismissal of the work insinuated that Burney had lost none of her skill as a novelist (she possessed little enough of that when at the height of her powers, he had already made clear, to begin with), but rather that she had wilfully “perverted” that skill: “We are sorry to be compelled to speak so disadvantageously of the work of an excellent and favourite writer: and the more so, as we perceive no decay of talent, but a perversion of it. There is the same admirable spirit in the dialogues, and particularly in the character of Mrs Ireton, Sir Jasper Harrington, and Mr. Giles Arbe, as in her former novels. But these do not fill a hundred pages of the work: and there is nothing else good in it. In the story, which here occupies the attention of the reader almost exclu-
sively, Madame D’Arblay never excelled” (ER, xxiv, No. 48, 338). Hazlitt would have his readers believe that Burney had done the ultimate disservice to an entire class of novels which, when left in the more than capable hands of male authors such as Richardson and Smollett, had been getting along just fine, thank you very much. He accused Burney of having transformed the novel into an aberration, a grotesque, a very caricature of its legitimate self: he accused her of perverting and so deforming an entire genre with her superficial, feminine sensibilities.

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