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Annie Raine Ellis, Austin Dobson, and the Rise of Burney Studies

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Annie Raine Ellis (c.1829-1901) has made little impression on literary history. Her father, James Raine, antiquary, topographer, and founder of the Surtees Society, receives three columns in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, in an entry which finds room to name her brother, her mother, her uncle, and her grandfather, but not Ellis herself. Despite her significance as the first scholarly editor of Burney's novels and early journals, she is also absent from recent guides to women authors, such as the *Feminist Companion to Literature in English* or *British Women Writers*.[1] Her near contemporary Austin Dobson (1840-1921), although little read today, was a prominent late Victorian and Edwardian man of letters, with a particular interest in eighteenth-century literature. The author of several volumes of poetry, collections of critical essays, and biographies of Steele, Richardson, Hogarth, Goldsmith, and Horace Walpole, he also published the first life of Burney, in 1903. In the same year he wrote an introduction to a new edition of *Evelina*, and followed this, in 1904-05, with a revised version of Charlotte Barrett's edition of Burney's *Diary and Letters*.[2] My aim in this paper is to consider the respective contributions to Burney studies of Ellis and Dobson, focusing on the ways in which they surpassed their predecessors as well as the ways in which recent scholarship has built on and

gone beyond their work. It is thanks to Ellis and Dobson that Burney was first recognized as an author worthy of sustained attention: worthy, in fact, of being the subject of a society such as ours. They illuminated her achievement as both novelist and journal-writer at a time when little notice was being taken of her writings. They suggested, for the first time, that Burney was something more than just a minor woman writer, made passé by the advent of Jane Austen.

Ellis's first publications were two novels—*Marie; or, Glimpses of Life in France* (1879) and a sequel, *Mariette* (1880)—followed by a lightweight historical work, *Sylvestra: Studies of Manners in England from 1700 to 1800* (1881), lamenting the changes brought about in England and France in the wake of the French Revolution. While these books were of limited interest even to her Victorian readers and have long since been forgotten, her work as a Burney scholar is of much greater significance. It consists of three editions—*Evelina* (1881), *Cecilia* (1882), and *The Early Diary of Frances Burney* (1889)—all published by George Bell. With their extensive introductions, appendixes, and annotations, they provided a wealth of new information about an author whose novels had long since lost their initial fame, and whose early journals had not yet been published at all.

Evelina (1778), Burney's first and by far her most popular novel, went through four editions within a year and was reprinted over twenty times before 1800. In the nineteenth century about sixteen English editions had been published before Ellis's, the most recent in 1874. Ellis's *Evelina*, however, was the first edition of the novel to contain an introduction and annotations. Although R. Brimley Johnson, Dobson, and Ernest Rhys soon followed Ellis's lead, producing three rival editions of *Evelina* between 1893 and 1909, Ellis's edition remained in print for over fifty years.[3]

Ellis's fifty-page Introduction to *Evelina*, replete with anecdotal remarks about Burney, her family, and her times, is little concerned with the novel itself. For Ellis, Burney's novels

were light entertainment, admirable for their "clear, distinct way of showing what she saw, and nothing besides." They do not, Ellis declares, "tax the mind of any reader"; "Miss Burney may not be deep, but she is lucid" (xxxii). In Ellis's view, Burney is at her best as a comic writer; her "serious characters, and pathetic incidents," "commonly over-drawn and over-coloured . . . sometimes tempt smiles she little meant to provoke" (xxxiv). Ellis is more perceptive when she turns from text to context. She was the first critic to devote attention to what she terms the "grand subscription-list" (xxvi) to *Camilla*, with its remarkable range of women writers: Harriet and Sophia Lee, Anna Barbauld, Hester Chapone, Hester Lynch Piozzi, Hannah More, Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Montagu, Amelia Opie, Mary Berry, and Maria Edgeworth. In addition, of course, the list features "Miss J. Austen, Steventon Rectory," and again Ellis deserves credit as the first critic to notice that this must have been the first appearance of Austen's name in print.

Ellis's annotations to *Evelina* are perfunctory, and oddly truncated: the last 120 pages in her edition have no notes at all. The most useful are those in which she cites the opinions of Burney's contemporaries, such as Johnson, Boswell, and Hester Thrale, on characters and events in the novel, sometimes adding further remarks of her own. Burney's father, for example, had declared that his favourite character was Evelina's sententious guardian, Mr. Villars: Ellis, marvelling at his odd taste, observes that "the pages fretted by the tears of one generation are the least interesting to another" (16). On Evelina's would-be suitor, the appalling Mr. Smith, Ellis quotes Johnson's remarks that his "vulgar gentility was admirably portrayed," and that "Harry Fielding never drew so good a character! Such a fine varnish of low politeness." Ellis also records Hester Thrale's delight in Mr. Smith, whom she pretended to know "very well,—I always have him before me at the Hampstead Ball, dressed in a white coat, and a tambour waistcoat, worked in green silk" (209, 228).

Ellis's edition of Burney's second novel, *Cecilia* (1782), was a more ambitious undertaking. Although more highly regarded by Victorian readers than the long-forgotten *Camilla* (1796) or *The Wanderer* (1814), *Cecilia* was also an obscure work by now. No edition had been published since 1823, and Ellis had, in this case, to persuade her readers that the book merited their attention. Her introduction is more closely focused on the text than that to *Evelina*, and she makes larger claims for the novel, including a striking comparison with Balzac's *Comédie humaine* (I: vii). There are also several comparisons with Jane Austen's novels and in particular with *Pride and Prejudice* (I: viii-ix)—not surprisingly, since Burney's use of the phrase "pride and prejudice" in *Cecilia* had furnished Austen with her memorable title. And there are some justifiable criticisms, particularly of Burney's relentless use of coincidence:

> We know that if Cecilia visits Miss Belfield one or other Mr. Delvile is sure to surprise her; when Morrice skips on the stage, it is to disturb the actors, or derange the scenery; if Miss Larolles is flighty or Mrs. Harrel heedless or Sir Robert insolent, the voice of Albany is sure to come from a corner. (I: xiv)

In annotating *Cecilia*, Ellis's primary aim, as with *Evelina*, was to record both Burney's views of the novel and those of her first readers. To this end, she prints as an appendix Edmund Burke's remarkable letter to the author in praise of *Cecilia*, a useful strategy in commanding the respect of Victorian readers, for whom the name of Burke figured much larger than that of Burney. Ellis also records the responses of Dr. Burney, whose two favourite characters were "the old crazy moralist, Albany" and Belfield, "the tradesman *manqué*," who is "new, and may be not uninstructive" (I: 66, II: 207). Samuel Crisp, Burney's second "daddy," is quoted on the spectacular suicide scene at Vauxhall, which he regarded as a "noble piece of morality!—the variety—the contrast of the different characters quite new and unhackneyed" (I: 413). Hester

Chapone, in Ellis's commentary, provides an amusing anecdote about the miserly Briggs: "I was in a room some time ago where somebody said there could be no such character; and a poor little mean city man, who was there, started up and said, 'But there is though, for I'se one myself!'" (I: 440). The Duchess of Portland, reacting with aristocratic hauteur towards the arrogant but untitled Mrs. Delvile, was an especially active reader. Ellis furnishes Mary Delany's account of the Duchess's dropping her copy of *Cecilia* when Mrs. Delvile bursts a blood-vessel, and exclaiming "I'm glad of it, with all my heart!" (II: 219).

Several telling observations by Burney herself are also recorded in Ellis's notes. On the pride of the Delviles, Burney remarks that "though it is so odious when joined with meanness and incapacity, as in Mr. Delvile, it destroys neither respect nor affection when joined with real dignity and generosity of mind, as in Mrs. Delvile" (II: 45). Defending Mrs. Delvile's conduct in a letter to Samuel Crisp, Burney declares that "your anger at Mrs. Delvile's violence and obduracy is only what I meant to excite; your thinking it unnatural is all that disturbs me" (II: 224). Burney was also adamant in defending the Delviles' passionate attachment to their family name, and their consequent horror at the idea of their son's acquiring the surname Beverley were he to marry Cecilia. Answering the objections of both Crisp and Dr. Burney, Burney contended that other readers such as Lord de Ferrars and Hester Thrale, both themselves members of ancient families, were in this instance better able to judge. Burney was no fonder than the violent Duchess of Portland of Mr. Delvile, whom, she said, "I detested and made detestable; but I always asserted that, his character and situation considered, he did nothing that such a man would hesitate in doing" (II: 237).

Although Ellis's edition of *Cecilia* went through four reprints, the latest in 1914, the novel received little attention for much of the present century. In 1986, however, at the outset of the Burney revival, Ellis's scholarship received a curiously

backhanded tribute from Virago Press, which published a paperback edition of *Cecilia* with an introduction by Judy Simons. Although Ellis's name is nowhere mentioned here, the edition is a photographic reprint of her 1882 edition, removing her introduction but retaining the text and all of Ellis's annotations. Its fidelity to the original is such that even a cross-reference to a page of Ellis's edition is unaltered, although, since Virago had reprinted two volumes in one, the numbering is out by several hundred. Ellis's annotations, pioneering in their time, look distinctly odd when presented as feminist research of the 1980s. Her authorities on such matters as London topography and entertainments are Victorian ones, and scholarship has moved on since then. That Ellis's was still the best edition of *Cecilia* for Virago to plunder over a century after its first publication is a compliment of sorts, but the erasure of her name from the reprint is less flattery than fraud.

Having edited Burney's first two novels, Ellis turned her attention to Burney's letters and journals. On her death in 1840, Burney had left a huge mass of manuscript material to her niece and literary executrix, Charlotte Barrett. Barrett undertook to edit Burney's letters and journals for the publisher Henry Colburn, but they covered a period of 72 years, from 1768 to the last year of Burney's life, and would have occupied a plethora of printed volumes. Barrett's edition, published between 1842 and 1846, stayed within a manageable seven volumes by excluding everything before 1778, the year in which Burney became a public figure with the publication of *Evelina*, and by drastically condensing the material after 1791, the year in which she resigned her position at Court.[4] In 1885, the publisher George Bell, whose editions of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* had been well received, concluded an agreement with Barrett's heirs, now the owners of the early journals. They turned the manuscripts over to Annie Raine Ellis who was to prepare a new edition, printing Burney's hitherto unpublished letters and journals from 1768 to 1778. She submitted her work to Bell two years later, although the edition did not appear until 1889.[5]

The Early Diary of Frances Burney, reprinted on several occasions, was undoubtedly Ellis's most important publication. It remained the standard edition of Burney's early journals for one hundred years and was reprinted as recently as 1970 by Arno Press—happily with Ellis's name as editor where it belonged, on the title page. It has now, at last, been superseded by the first two volumes of Burney's *Early Journals and Letters* (1988 and 1990), edited by Lars Troide,[6] although it is still, as I shall show, a valuable source for material not yet published elsewhere.

In editing the early diaries, Ellis surpassed the standard set by her predecessor, Charlotte Barrett, in two important respects. First, she endeavoured to print the entire body of material available to her, without editorial deletions or alterations. She did not, admittedly, take note of the various additions and revisions made to the original text by Burney herself in her later years: this was done after Ellis's death by an anonymous editor, who bracketed such passages in a 1907 reprint of her edition.[7] Nor did she attempt to decipher the passages heavily obliterated by Burney in her old age: this would be done only one hundred years later by Troide and his colleagues at McGill. Remarkably, however, she steamed off at least some of the patches pasted onto the manuscript by Barrett, in order to recover material deemed unseeable, as well as unprintable, by her predecessor. This is the kind of operation normally associated with modern scholarly editors, rather than with their genteel Victorian precursors.

Ellis also went far beyond Barrett in the extent of her editorial material. Barrett's edition has a brief general introduction and a few pages of biographical notes appended to six of her seven volumes. Ellis's two volumes contain a ninety-page preface, a headnote for each year of the journals, and copious annotations. Much of the preface is devoted to Burney's two "daddies," Dr. Burney and Samuel Crisp. Recognizing that these figures, of such importance to Burney herself, were scarcely known to Victorian readers, Ellis

endeavoured to throw light on their lives and writings, providing a detailed account, for example, of the reception of Crisp's tragedy *Virginia* in 1754, as well as a description of the extant holograph (I: xli-xliv). Ellis also discusses Burney's family, friends, and the remoter reaches of her circle, devoting attention even to a figure such as Laetitia Hawkins, whom Burney, Ellis acknowledges, is not known to have met, but whose "early life ran singularly parallel" with hers: the father of each wrote a history of music; each toiled long hours working as her father's amanuensis; and each wrote a novel in secret, using a younger brother to help get it published anonymously (I: lxviii).

Ellis's commentary, like her Introduction, seems at times to proceed through a process of free association. A note on *A Series of Genuine Letters between Henry and Frances* by Elizabeth and Henry Griffith, which Burney was reading in 1768, explains that Henry Griffith is not to be confused with Ralph Griffiths, editor of the *Monthly Review* and employer of Oliver Goldsmith—whose *Vicar of Wakefield* is the subject of Burney's next journal entry (I: 11-12). Another note, inspired by Burney's use of the word "maccaroni," allows Ellis to furnish a short essay on the distinctions between "maccaronis," "beaux," "dandies," "bucks," and "bloods," with an account of the maccaronic Lord Viscount Fondville in Frances Brooke's novel *Lady Julia Mandeville* (I: 157). Unlike Burney's modern editors, whose annotations are meticulously accurate but never opinionated, Ellis is always willing to offer her own evaluations and ideas. Thus when Burney, in a letter to Crisp, compares the characters of men and women—"though I readily allow you a *general* superiority over us in most other particulars, yet in constancy, gratitude, and virtue, I regard you as unworthy all competition or comparison" (I: 282)—Ellis directs us to Anne Elliot's famous remarks on women's constancy in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: "All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone."[8]

For modern readers, much the most important part of Ellis's edition is the one hundred pages of supplementary material in the second volume: excerpts from the early journals and letters of Burney's sisters Susanna and Charlotte. Susanna's detailed accounts of the responses to *Evelina* by such readers as Johnson, Dr. Burney, and Hester Thrale, are especially significant: the most attractive, perhaps, being a letter to Frances in which she describes their parents reading *Evelina* aloud together in bed, together with interspersed remarks on the novel by Dr. Burney, and Susanna's own eavesdropping observations on the quality of the reading performance (II: 237-47).

Ellis also had access to letters by other Burney family members, and she printed some of these items to throw light on her primary subject. In introducing a letter by Burney's stepsister Maria Allen, Ellis notes disarmingly that she was wont to be "a little indiscreet" (I: 106). The sort of indiscretion she had in mind, but which, of course, she could not print, is seen in a letter printed as an appendix to volume one of Troide's edition, in which the imaginative Maria, then aged seventeen, conceives a plan for improving men:

> suppose we were to Cut of their *prominent members* and by that means render them Harmless innofencive Little Creatures; We might have such charming *vocal* Music Every house might be Qualified to get up an opera . . . & we might make such usefull Animals of them in other Respects Consider Well this scheme. (*Early Journals and Letters*, I: 331-32)

It has taken until 1997 for the letters of another of Burney's stepsisters, the novelist Sarah Harriet Burney, to be published—in a fine new edition by Lorna Clark.[9] The letters and journals of Susanna Burney, Charlotte Burney, and Maria Allen languish unseen, and Ellis's edition remains the only printed source for a mass of fascinating unpublished material.

Austin Dobson's edition of *Evelina* and his life of Burney were published together at the end of 1903, two years

after Ellis's death. Unlike Ellis, Dobson provided no notes for his edition, and the introduction is merely an abridged version of the chapter on *Evelina* in his biography.[10] The most notable features of Dobson's edition of *Evelina* are the elegance of the gold-edged paper and the seventy-five engravings by Hugh Thomson, one of the leading book illustrators of his time, who specialized in nostalgic recreations of a genteel and charming pre-industrial past. Dobson, in his introduction, is less concerned with the merits of the novel than with the good fortune of its being reissued "with all the prestige of a specially sympathetic pictorial interpreter" (xvi). He even launches an attack on the three frontispiece designs provided by John Mortimer for the 1779 edition of *Evelina*,[11] apparently to boost further the merits of those in his own edition. It is notable that none of Mortimer's illustrations shows Evelina in polite society and that two present acts of violence: a bedraggled Mme Duval emerging from a ditch, and Lovell being assaulted by a monkey. Dobson, with an Edwardian shudder, suggests that Mortimer was best suited to the depiction of "banditti and monsters," and deplores the choice of subjects; the publisher, Thomas Lowndes, "was not well advised in his venture" (xviii).

Dobson's life of Burney formed part of a well-received series, edited by John Morley, entitled "English Men of Letters." The thirty-nine volumes in the original series were accurately labelled: not a single woman author was admitted to the company. The new series of which Dobson's volume formed a part, however, was more even-handed: in addition to Burney, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot were all represented. Burney's inclusion in the group marks a significant moment in canon formation: not only had she become, by 1903, an honorary man of letters, she was one of just five women authors to have done so.

Dobson was himself a man of letters, rather than a scholar, and the research undertaken for his biography was perfunctory. His principal sources, in addition to Burney's novels, were her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, her *Diary and*

Letters, edited by Charlotte Barrett, which he was soon to revise himself, and Ellis's edition of the *Early Diary*. Dobson had access to some manuscript letters and paintings owned by a member of the Burney family living in Surbiton, a London suburb conveniently located a few miles from his own home in Ealing, and he consulted a granddaughter of Charlotte Barrett about other Burney papers, but in general he made little use of unpublished material.[12] His biography, none the less, provided the fullest and most accurate account of Burney's life and the publication of her novels until the appearance of Joyce Hemlow's *History of Fanny Burney* in 1958.

To modern sensibilities, many of Dobson's critical judgements on Burney's novels sound offensively patronising. The plot of *Evelina*, he declares, is "neither very original nor very intricate," and "there is no endeavour after mental analysis"; *Cecilia*, although "more skilfully constructed" than its predecessor, is "not so naturally written" and is "certainly too long" (*Fanny Burney*, 70, 72, 124). *Camilla* is written in a style that "by reason of its absurd roundabout pomposity, is simply unendurable" (188). As for *The Wanderer*, dealing with what he terms "the trivial and improbable adventures, in England, of a female refugee," Dobson gives no sign of having actually opened the book. Instead he notes that even Ellis, whom he terms Burney's "most faithful editor and admirer," makes "open and heartfelt thanksgiving that it is not her duty to read it again" (195, 196). Dobson does perceive some of the strengths of Burney's first two novels, and his insights can be valuable at times. Of *Evelina* he remarks:

> Its distinctive merit consists in the skill and graphic power of the character drawing; in the clever contrast of the different individualities; in the author's keen if somewhat crude sense of the ridiculous; and, above all, in the sprightliness and vivacity of her narrative, especially when she writes in the person of the heroine. (72)

Dobson also writes well on the various character types in *Cecilia*; Hobson the builder, for example, "with his large and puffy presence, his red waistcoat, and his round curled wig, is a capital specimen of the bumptious prosperous tradesman" (123).

Such close observation, however, is not Dobson's forté; he has much more to say about the novels' composition, publication, and reception than about the texts themselves. Like Ellis, he is intrigued by the subscription list to *Camilla*, and in showing that individuals could use subscription as a pretext for charitable acts, Dobson gives a foretaste of the work of modern scholars. Edmund Burke, Dobson notes, "who had lost both son and brother, subscribed nevertheless for them, as well as for his wife, sending £20 for a single copy" (186-87). Dobson also draws some interesting connections between Burney and nineteenth-century novelists. The youthful Disraeli, in a letter to his sister of 1832, wrote that "the staunchest admirer I have in London, and the most discerning appreciator of *Contarini*, is old Madame d'Arblay. I have a long letter, which I will show you,—capital!" (200). Regrettably, Burney's letter to Disraeli has not survived. In writing about Burney's journal account of the months preceding the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Dobson observes that her narrative supplied Thackeray with suggestions for the Brussels chapters of *Vanity Fair* (197); again this anticipates the work of recent Thackeray critics.

Dobson's evaluation of Burney's letters and journals shows none of the condescension he displays towards the novels. He concludes his biography with a generous tribute. Burney's diaries, which "deserve to rank with the great diaries of literature," provide "a gallery of portraits which speak and move; and a picture of society which we recognise as substantially true to life" (205-06). Margaret Anne Doody objects strongly to Dobson's privileging Burney the diarist over Burney the novelist: "It is rather hard on the novelist's art in general to decide that as reading matter 'real people' and true events should be essentially preferable to fictional ones."[13]

Doody's strictures apply as much to Ellis as to Dobson; although both critics found much of interest in *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, as well as much to deplore in *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, their primary concern was with Burney as a journal-writer. The final paragraph of Dobson's biography was, in fact, a kind of trailer for his third and final work on Burney: a revision of Charlotte Barrett's edition of the *Diary and Letters*, of which the first two volumes were published in the following year.

In preparing his revision of Barrett, Dobson made little effort to expand or correct her text. He was far from being a textual scholar, and the task, involving the examination of a huge mass of manuscript material then still in private hands, held few attractions for him. He did add a few previously unpublished letters, but he had no access to the manuscripts bequeathed to Charlotte Barrett and which had since passed down in her family. In a postscript printed in the final volume of his edition, Dobson stated that Barrett "no doubt religiously reproduced the papers which her aunt had arranged for the press" (*Diary and Letters*, VI: vi). Had he seen the papers—heavily altered, scored through, and pasted over by Barrett and many other hands—he could not have made this claim. Not until Joyce Hemlow's twelve-volume edition of the journals was published between 1972 and 1984 was the post-court years part of Barrett's edition finally re-edited. For the earlier section, covering 1778 to 1791, revision began only in 1994, when the third volume of Lars Troide's edition of the *Early Journals and Letters* was published. This volume contains letters and journals from 1778 to 1779; for the period 1780 to mid-1791, which includes the publication of *Cecilia* and all of the court years, Dobson's revision of Barrett is still the best available edition.

Although the text of Dobson's edition is merely a reprint of Barrett's, he did furnish much valuable new material in the form of annotations, appendixes dealing with particular issues, illustrations, and a comprehensive general index. The

"biographical notes" that Barrett provided instead of footnotes, were clearly inadequate, often failing to explain an individual's impact on Burney's life and writings. Dobson's annotations, although skimpier than those of Ellis and far inferior to the superb commentary in Hemlow's and Troide's editions, are useful none the less. At times they merely reveal his own prejudices, as in an aside on *Les Liaisons dangereuses*: "Miss Burney's instincts rightly prejudiced her against this book" (II: 178). In general, though, Dobson put his knowledge of eighteenth-century English and French literary history to good use, and his notes contain many helpful comments on Burney's dealings with figures such as Johnson, Reynolds, Garrick, Goldsmith, Horace Walpole, Hester Thrale, and Mme de Staël.

The appendixes attached to each of the volumes also vary in usefulness. Some merely furnish information readily available elsewhere, as in a redundant four-page excerpt from the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*. Another appendix, however, prints a previously unpublished letter to Burney from an aggrieved Thomas Lowndes, the publisher of *Evelina*, demanding to know why he was not offered the chance to publish *Cecilia*, together with Burney's chilly reply. And one item of special interest is an essay on Burney's important but seldom studied brother James, who, Dobson believed, "deserves fuller recognition" and who must, he declared, "have been a delightful specimen of the old-time seaman of the better type," despite having "lived so long among sailors and savages" (VI: 421, 425).

The most striking feature of Dobson's edition is the wealth of illustrative material, of a plenitude that few editions could hope to match today. Each of the six volumes contains a dozen or more illustrations, in the form of portraits, depictions of buildings and landscapes, and facsimiles of manuscripts. Among the portraits are well-known paintings of Dr. Burney, Johnson, Elizabeth Montagu, and Frances Crewe by Joshua Reynolds; Hester Piozzi and Charles Burney by George Dance;

Edmund Burke by George Romney; Queen Charlotte by Thomas Gainsborough; George III by Allan Ramsay; Elizabeth Delany by John Opie; and Burney herself and Samuel Crisp by Edward Francis Burney: the originals of most of these are now in the National Portrait Gallery and other public collections. There are also, however, some little-known portraits still in private hands today, such as a painting of Charles Burney by Thomas Lawrence (IV: 406), and a crayon drawing of Alexandre d'Arblay, probably by William Locke, Jr. (V: 163), showing him in much less formal regalia than the formidable military portrait by Carle and Horace Vernet.

Most of the many houses that Burney inhabited or frequently visited during her long life are illustrated, in Dobson's six volumes, in the form of contemporary sketches and engravings or later photographs. A sketch of Camilla Cottage by Charles Rousseau Burney, for example (V: 311), makes a fine companion to the better-known drawing of the cottage by Alexandre d'Arblay in the National Portrait Gallery. The letter facsimiles are also of considerable interest. A special prize is the reproduction of a letter to Burney from her son Alexander in Paris, entitled "Excessive important mémorandum." Here Alex formally requests his mother to provide him with a brother, not in flesh and blood but in print, to accompany "Evelina, Cecilia, and Camilla, my dear three sisters" (VI: 45). Regrettably, Dobson makes no comment on this intriguing find.

Recent Burney critics and scholars have, of course, taken approaches to Burney very different from those of Annie Raine Ellis and Austin Dobson. The publication of Joyce Hemlow's edition of Burney's post-1791 letters and journals made the shortcomings of the text that Dobson inherited from Barrett, as well as the severely limited scope of his annotations, all too apparent. Ellis's work on the pre-1778 diaries is less badly dated, but again the publication of the first three volumes of Lars Troide's new edition has shown how incomplete the text and how inadequate the commentary in her edition are.

In a rather defensive postscript to his edition of the journals, written in the wake of some critical reviews, Dobson defends the brevity of the explanatory notes by claiming that modern readers find extensive annotation rebarbative (VI: vii). When he refers later, however, to Burney's "somewhat exaggerated tribulations as Dresser to Queen Charlotte" (VI: ix-x), another reason for Dobson's reticence becomes clear: although he admired Burney's journals and, to a lesser extent, her early novels, he felt that to accord his subject the dignity of full scholarly treatment would be absurd. Ellis, similarly, despite devoting many years to studies of Burney, never regarded her as more than a delightful entertainer, one who fails to "tax the mind of any reader."

It is against this kind of condescension that Margaret Anne Doody protests so vigorously in her *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (1988), a book that deplores the use of "Fanny" as a "patronizing diminutive," making the author "sound the harmless, childish, priggish girl-woman that many critics want her to be" (6). In place of this image of Burney as a "cheerful little Augustan chatterbox" (387), Doody proposes a much darker author, whose writings are violent, grotesque, and macabre. A proper reading of Burney, Doody contends, will entail the recognition of her obsession with human suffering; and what Dobson terms her "exaggerated tribulations" during her court service Doody regards as five years of appalling servitude: an imprisonment that gave rise to the explorations of pain in *Camilla*, *The Wanderer*, and in four tragic dramas written in the late 1780s and early 1790s. Doody's trenchant introductions to recent editions of *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, and *The Wanderer*[14] all reinforce this portrait of Burney as Romantic novelist rather than Georgian comic satirist: depicting her as a writer of Jacobin fiction rather than a conservative upholder of female decorum and as an author immersed in the political conflicts of her time, rather than one creating novels to distract readers preoccupied with these conflicts.

Two other major revisionist studies of Burney were published in the late 1980s: Kristina Straub's *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (1987) and Julia Epstein's *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (1989). Straub's book, giving fuller consideration to *Evelina* and *Cecilia* than to *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*, and presenting Burney as a distinctly moderate feminist, concerned with female experience while simultaneously paying deference to masculine authority, is the more traditional of the two. Epstein's study is concerned primarily with what she terms the "reservoirs of rage" in Burney's novels and journals.[15] An entire chapter is devoted to Burney's appallingly vivid journal account of her mastectomy: a passage deleted from the Barrett edition of the journals and, not surprisingly, not so much as mentioned by either Ellis or Dobson. Epstein prizes the novels for their "anger and frustrated desire," and writes admiringly of "the chaos, ferocity, and violence of Burney's prose" (5). Like Doody, she finds the use of "Fanny" offensive, terming it a "particularly diminutive, super-feminized, and private name" (3), and like Doody she refuses to concede that Burney's later novels are marked by a deterioration in style and thus inferior to her early successes. Were Ellis and Dobson able to read Burney criticism of our time, it is, I believe, Epstein's work that would disturb them most: with chapter titles such as "Writing the Unspeakable," "Fictions of Violation," and "Fictions of Resistance," this is clearly not a book about a comic novelist or about a diarist wittily observing social life in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England. Other recent books on Burney, including those by Judy Simons, Katharine Rogers, and Joanne Cutting-Gray,[16] also contribute to the feminist and psychoanalytic revaluation of her work. Cutting-Gray, for example, links an exploration of namelessness, "Woman as Nobody," to the concept of "*écriture feminine*" posited by the French feminist theorists Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray: we are a long way from Austin Dobson here.

Another development in Burney criticism that would surely have astonished Ellis and Dobson is the attention now being paid to her comic and tragic dramas. Neither Ellis nor Dobson had access to any of Burney's eight plays, although this limitation did not prevent Dobson from devoting four pages of his biography to *The Witlings* and, without having read it, concluding that Dr. Burney and Crisp were right to have suppressed the play (104). An article by Joyce Hemlow of 1950, with the then startling title "Fanny Burney: Playwright,"[17] was the first to reveal Burney's remarkably broad dramatic range. Margaret Doody's book contains three substantial chapters on Burney's plays, while my own collected edition, published in 1995, brought all of Burney's comedies and tragedies into print for the first time.[18] In the past few years there have been productions of *The Witlings* and *A Busy Day*, and the first full-length study of Burney as dramatist, by Barbara Darby, has now been published.[19] While critics of Ellis's and Dobson's era liked to debate Burney's respective merits as novelist and diarist, she is becoming almost equally well known to readers of drama and, increasingly, to theatre producers.

Although recent Burney criticism and scholarship has been remarkably fruitful, I do not believe that we have yet gone far enough beyond the pioneering efforts of Ellis and Dobson. We know, for example, that Burney was a compulsive reviser, yet her recension of novels such as *Camilla* and of plays such as *Edwy and Elgiva* remains largely neglected. We have no Critical Heritage volume on Burney, so that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reception of her writings in England, France, and the United States is *terra incognita*. We still lack a modern edition for an eleven-year span of the journals, while Burney's final publication, the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*, has not been edited since its first publication in 1832. With few exceptions, modern critics have had almost nothing of interest to say about the problematic *Memoirs*, nor about Burney's 1795 pamphlet in support of the emigrant French clergy. Other

parts of Burney's writing, in contrast, are discussed incessantly: the "to nobody" passage in the early journals, the violent mock-account of proper etiquette at court, and, above all, the gruesome description of her mastectomy have become almost de rigueur for contemporary critics. And for all the current interest in Burney, the focus for most discussions of her fiction is still *Evelina*, which has been the subject of two recent collections of essays and of which there are currently some six competing editions in print.[20] It is worth recalling that Jane Austen, in her splendid tribute to Burney in *Northanger Abbey*, singled out for special mention not *Evelina* but *Cecilia* and *Camilla*.[21] Modern critics, in this respect, have been slow to follow Austen's lead, preferring to remain true to Ellis's and Dobson's *Evelina*-centred view of Burney's novels. The awakening of interest in Burney's plays has been largely confined to the comedies: neither producers nor critics have yet shown much interest in Burney as tragic dramatist. Unlike Ellis and Dobson, we now have full access to almost the entire range of Burney's work. We should put this access to good use: reading Burney's account of life at Bath during the Regency, as well as her early musings on woman as nobody; *The Wanderer* as well as *Evelina;* and *The Siege of Pevensey* and *Hubert De Vere*, as well as *The Witlings* and *A Busy Day*.

Notes

[1]*The Feminist Companion to Literature in English*, ed. Virginia Blain, Isobel Grundy, and Patricia Clements (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); and *British Women Writers*, ed. Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter (New York: Garland, 1988).

[2]Dobson, *Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay)* (London: Macmillan, 1903); Dobson, ed., *Evelina* (London: Macmillan, 1903); *Diary and Letters of Madame d'Arblay*, ed. Charlotte Barrett, Preface and Notes by Austin Dobson (London: Macmillan, 1904-05).

[3]Information on these editions is taken from Joseph A. Grau, *Fanny Burney: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1981). Citations from Ellis's edition of *Evelina* are from a reprint of 1904.

[4]See Joyce Hemlow, ed., *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972-84) I: v.

[5]See Lars E. Troide, ed., *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988-) I: xxvii.

[6]These volumes cover the years 1768 to 1777, the years spanned by Ellis's edition of Burney's *Early Diary*.

[7]See the "Publisher's Note" in the 1907 reprint of the *Early Diary*. My citations are from a reprint of 1913.

[8]*Persuasion*, The Oxford Illustrated Jane Austen, 3rd ed., ed. R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford University Press, 1975) V: 235.

[9]*The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, ed. Lorna J. Clark (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997).

[10]Also unlike Ellis, Dobson termed the author "Fanny" rather than "Frances": thus anticipating the current debate about what the subject of the Burney Society should be called. Using the surname alone will not suffice in Canada, at least, where "Burney" is taken to be the prominent Canadian poet and critic, Earle Birney.

[11]See T.C. Duncan Eaves, "Edward Burney's Illustrations to *Evelina*," *PMLA*, 62 (1947) 995-99.

[12]Hemlow notes that "unaware that Madame d'Arblay had bequeathed her manuscripts to a collateral line of the family, Austin Dobson, in his search for supplementary material, had apparently approached only members of the family in the direct line," *Journals and Letters*, I: lii, n. 2.

[13]Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 1.

[14]Doody, ed., *Evelina* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994); Introduction to *Cecilia*, ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody (Oxford: World's Classics, 1988); Introduction to *The Wanderer*, ed. Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: World's Classics, 1991).

[15]Epstein, *The Iron Pen* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 5.

[16]Simons, *Fanny Burney* (London: Macmillan, 1987); Rogers, *Frances Burney: The World of Female Difficulties* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); Cutting-Gray, *Woman as "Nobody" and the Novels of Fanny Burney* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).

[17]Hemlow, "Fanny Burney: Playwright," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 19 (1949-50) 170-89.

[18]Sabor et al., ed., *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, 2 vols. (London: Pickering, 1995); see also Sabor and Geoffrey Sill, ed., *The Witlings and The Woman-Hater* (London: Pickering, 1997).

[19]Darby, *Frances Burney Dramatist: Gender, Performance, and the Late-Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

[20]See Doody's remarks on "*Evelina* the Inevitable," in "Beyond *Evelina*: The Individual Novel and the Community of Literature," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 3 (1991) 359-71.

[21]See *Northanger Abbey*, The Oxford Illustrated Jane Austen, 38.