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Sharpening *Cecilia*: Frances Burney as Professional Writer

JANICE FARRAR THADDEUS

Day by day, as I worked on *Frances Burney: A Literary Life*, I found increasing evidence that the most important source for Burney's originality was her strength of character. Everywhere in her work I discovered what can only be called, somewhat anachronistically, her professionalism. As Burney saw it, no piece of writing was ever quite finished. She was always tinkering. Every word was important. Although prolixity was her vice, it was also her gift, and she loved to expatiate and expand. Whenever possible, she sharpened by adding, as a metal worker folds and tempers the layers for a sword. After *Evelina*, both to our delight and dismay, she unleashed herself. Unlike Burney herself, I did not have the freedom to elaborate in my biography. My publishers were holding me strictly to a page limit that felt like a gag, I did not have Burney's freedom to elaborate. I could not discuss in enough detail how Burney appears to have worked, what directions her plans took, and how she refined them, even as she enlarged them. This is truly the lifeblood of authorship, but it is perhaps the most difficult process fully to fathom and understand.

In this essay, I will try to reach under the surface of Burney's novel *Cecilia*, to see Burney at work, following her through the drafts of her manuscript to her final changes in the page proofs. I have concentrated on *Cecilia* in particular because of a discovery I made while I was reading my own corrected manuscript for my biography. There are so many Burney manuscripts that a biographer's chief activity is to read through the known materials and find fresh passages in them. But I had the lucky experience of discovering in the Houghton Library, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a new Burney holograph document, a

copy of Burney's corrected page proofs for *Cecilia*. I say "lucky," because I had a different reason for looking at this edition.

I had been struck by the poor quality of the printing and especially the paper in my own first edition of *Cecilia* (given to me by my generous friend Jan Fergus), and had made a point in my book that perhaps this poor-quality paper had affected early reviewers, causing them to complain more bitterly than they might otherwise have done that the book was too long. Peter Sabor, who with Margaret Doody edited *Cecilia*, and who generously read my manuscript, questioned this judgment, and insisted that I look at other first editions. Having many other questions to pursue and problems to chase down, I procrastinated over this particular task. So, in the few hours I could snatch from my job to add last improvements to my manuscript, I found myself also running to Houghton to look at their two first editions.

One of these copies, the cataloguer Hugh Amory had noted, was not really a first edition, but a corrected proof. Amory had seen that many of the corrections were printer's notations, but when I looked at some of the others, it seemed to me that they must be by Burney herself. I asked Hugh Amory if this thought had crossed his mind. It had not, but he considerately came to the library to check the text with me. I was quite sure that no one but Burney herself could have added the words and phrases that were neatly and regularly scattered through these pages. Was the handwriting Burney's? We checked the text against an example of Burney's handwriting. It seemed very similar, but there was no clincher, and in my flurry I had not brought with me enough examples of Burney holographs. Hugh Amory was not entirely convinced, and when he left he said, "Look for a capital 'F.'" I instantly understood the justice of that advice. My own name includes a capital "F," and I have always struggled over how to write it. "F" is one of the most difficult letters to write elegantly, and it brings out one's idiosyncrasies. Burney's Fs look rather like an upside down version of the sign for the English pound. They are unmistakable. It was when I found an "F" that I knew for certain that Burney herself had made many of the corrections in this proof.

As I studied this edition, I was fascinated to see how Burney acted in this straitjacket of page proofs, making changes without adding new lines to a page, working under the threat of incurring an extra

expense she could ill afford. The changes she made show what was most important to her, nuances she could not allow to pass.

Incidentally, the other copy at the Houghton, inscribed "From the Author," contains a note in Italian by subsequent owners that they bought this copy in 1887, when the famous castrato Gasparo Pacchierotti's library was sold. So this is Pac's presentation copy. It is in pristine condition (never read?), and the paper looks quite adequate. Even though an author might well have ordered special paper for a presentation copy, I decided to withdraw my surmise about the especially cheap paper used for the first edition. One thing is clear, however. In the case of her next novel, *Camilla*, Burney was exceedingly concerned about the quality of the paper.

Before returning to Burney's additions to the proof copy of *Cecilia*, I will take a look at the other manuscripts she saved. Ultimately, when in old age Burney organized her papers, she kept quite a lot of the detritus that most writers lose along the way, or finally throw out. She wanted us to know how she worked, to visualize her in the act of revising. For her period, the amount of information that exists about Burney's early drafts is truly exceptional. Many of Swift's and Pope's manuscripts have remained, and we have Boswell's heavily revised proofs of the *Life of Johnson*, but manuscript versions of novels are far to seek. In Burney's case, three of her novels exist to some degree in manuscript. At the British Library there are early versions of a fictional work that is quite different from *Camilla*, and yet by a strange metamorphosis changed into Burney's third novel.[1] At the New York Public Library Berg Collection, there are holograph versions of all the novels but *The Wanderer*: 208 pages of *Evelina*; 547 pages of *Cecilia*; and a miscellaneous collection of *Camilla*, with 95 sheets of clear-copy manuscript, a scattering of notes and jottings concerning the second edition, and General d'Arblay's complete copy of the manuscript as sent to the printer. In all three cases, Burney shows us that she revised heavily, even making changes in d'Arblay's clear copy of *Camilla*.[2] From the start, she evidently enjoyed blackening out phrases and paragraphs that she considered irrelevant or below par, often making them next to impossible for posterity to read, or—need I add—for herself to read again. She would first cross out the offending passages, and then cover them with closely connected o's, using a rather blunt pen, frequently dipped. To replace an old passage with a new one,

Burney occasionally used a paste-on, as we did before computers. Since even comparatively cheap paper was expensive, she carefully conserved paper. Throughout her drafts, she left a modicum of space for inserts between the lines, but no margins whatsoever. Her writing stretches from edge to edge.

In the case of Burney's diaries, such aids as a magnifying glass, a strong light, infrared reading machines, and nuclear activation autoradiography have enabled scholars to decipher materials Burney had hoped to remove from the record, but no one has had world enough and time to give this kind of fancy reading to the drafts. I have rushed in to analyze them (as did Margaret Doody before me), but I freely admit that where Burney decided that a passage needed to vanish, I have not taken extreme measures to read through the blackened mass. I should add also that when I quote from this material, I omit some of the changes that Burney made and crossed out before she erased the whole. To do otherwise would in theory be interesting, but in fact simply collapses into diminishing returns. Still, everyone must keep in mind that when Burney rewrites a passage, she often further refines it, peppering it with carats and erasures.

When Burney started to write her second book, she knew that the first question every reader would ask was whether or not it equaled *Evelina*. Many an author has been rendered totally immobile by the overwhelming success of a first book. Ralph Ellison is perhaps the most vivid recent example. Hosts of others, like D.H. Lawrence, have simply repeated the formula and the pattern for the rest of their lives. Facing this daunting situation, Burney made a formidable professional decision. She set herself the task of writing a much longer and wider book, no longer epistolary, with a more forceful and somewhat older heroine bolstered not by strong mentors, but by money. The vastness of *Cecilia*, its 400,000 words and its multitude of characters, enabled Burney to explore variety and inconsistency, the different ways money interacts with generosity, prejudice, and pride. Her hero, for instance, would no longer be so persistently idealized as *Evelina*'s Lord Orville. For this species of character and theme, she needed more pages. "The work will be a long one," she wrote, "& I cannot without ruining it make it otherwise" (*EJL*: 4). In 1780, she asked Daddy Crisp to read what she had written so far, and all he needed to say was "It will do! It will do!" Later, she emphasized that "From the moment I heard those

welcome Words, from the severest of all my Judges, I took inward courage." She occasionally lost confidence, as all writers do, bursting out in December of 1781, as she worked at "Daddy" Crisp's home in Chessington: "O if this Book proves as great a Bore to any one else as just now to me! L[d] help it" (*EJL: 4*). Dr. Burney put pressure on her to finish the book quickly so that it could be reviewed at the same time as the second volume of his *History of Music*, a publication plan that he quite rightly assumed would help them both. Did this pressure mean that she did not truly have an opportunity to finish *Cecilia* to her satisfaction? Would she have made the book shorter if she had had the time (Joyce Hemlow argues that she would have cut it down)? Whatever the answers to these questions may be, the ultimate result was Burney's most popular book in the eighteenth century, even outstripping *Evelina*. Burke claimed that he first read it "in a day," and ultimately read it "4 times aloud" with his "son and brother" (*DL* 3:114). Gibbon said that it took him three days, and that he read almost unceasingly. Choderlos de Laclos ranked the four best novels of the period as: *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*—and *Cecilia*. When Alexandre d'Arblay met Burney in 1793, his pet name for his future wife was "Cecilia."

Although Burney deliberately expanded her second novel, and insisted on doing so, many readers have complained about the number of pages, and certainly no one has ever wished it longer. Yet it is not really clear how Burney could have cut this work without reducing its complexity. Whether we accept Burke's one day or Gibbon's three, eighteenth-century readers evidently could give the book a kind of concentration and speed that we have somehow lost. Unlike these fast-reading and judgmental eighteenth-century readers, I don't play favorites among Burney's fictional works. Even though the novels certainly share the theme of what Burney ultimately called "female difficulties," they are satisfyingly different. Perhaps, for a twentieth-century reader, *The Wanderer* presents the most easily recognizable world, but to my mind no one of Burney's novels is "the best." Hence, in choosing *Cecilia*, I do not mean to slight her other works.

Like many contemporary readers, Samuel Johnson plumped for *Cecilia*. According to Mrs. Thrale, Johnson claimed that it was "far superior" to Fielding, because Burney's "Characters are nicer discriminated, and less prominent, Fielding could describe Horse or an

Ass, but he never reached a Mule" (555). One place where Burney defines the conception of character that Johnson is responding to is the first sentence of *Camilla*, where she says that she considers herself an "investigator of the human heart in its feelings and its changes." "Difficulty" and "intricacy" are to be found there, in the heart, not in outward "accidents and adventures." Besides emphasizing an inwardness that Burney always tried to foster, this statement signals that in *Camilla* the plot will be less engrossing than in *Cecilia*. Recently I recommended *Cecilia* to a friend who had just received tenure and was resting on his laurels. He took Burney's novel on his vacation to the Adirondacks, and luckily it rained, because he couldn't put *Cecilia* down. *Cecilia* is a page-turner. This is not to say that *Cecilia* neglects the human heart, but merely to emphasize that, unlike *Camilla*, *Cecilia* is full of "accidents and adventures."

Like its predecessors, the draft of *Cecilia* is written on cheap, folded paper, with no margins. The main difference, of course, is that Burney conserved three times as many draft pages of her second novel as her first. Perhaps the haste in finishing imposed by her father caused her to keep more of the original; perhaps she retained a sense of not really having quite finished the job the way she would have liked to have done. This sense that she was saving some of the book for future changes increases when we realize that she makes an uncharacteristic distinction in her crossings-out. Sometimes, she followed her usual habit. For instance, in the scene at the masquerade, when Mr. Monckton dressed as the devil is approaching Cecilia for the first time, Burney took up her blunt pen, dipped it often, and with heavy, black, joined-together w's, excised about half a page (107). Also in that scene, she simply removed a whole page. This is the only page, however, that she removed entire; the other excisions, though frequent, usually leave behind something of the original sheet. But what is most striking here is that besides these heavily blotted sections, there are many that leave the text perfectly legible. I would hazard that these are less decisive removals, that Burney felt less sure-footed about them, and did not want to lose altogether the passages she left legible, even though she had made a temporary decision to omit them. These kinds of deletions are particularly tantalizing, because they lure us to infer Burney's motives for deleting in the first place, and the causes of her tentativeness.

One of the most central elements of Burney's plan for *Cecilia* was to rub class against class till the sparks flew. Hence, she is concerned to docket each person's class precisely. Accordingly, when she first introduces Mr. Monckton, she amends her initial, imprecise description by adding with a carat that he "was the Younger Son of a Noble Family" (1: 5 r; 7).[3] This helps to account for his need to settle himself by marrying money, and possibly for his ingrained deviousness. Also, in a brilliant moment—which Burney marked with her characteristic this-is-important cross with four dots inserted between its arms—she realized that in order to characterize the ton set, she should use capitalized qualities. Scrawling at white heat on the back of a letter, she had so much to say that she continued on the front side, across the letter itself, racing between and among words from a servant informing Dr. Burney that Lady Coke wants him to know that Miss Coke cannot take her lesson. It is here that she has the idea that Mr. Gosport's designations of the subdivisions of the "TON" group will include Miss Larolles as " the VOLUBLE," Miss Leeson as "the SUPERCILIOUS," and Captain Aresby as a "JARGONIST" (2: 68r&v; 280, cf. 40). The inspiration to use capital letters is added as an afterthought. This was an inspiration, because the capital letters make these words particularly memorable. They help to center the otherwise too full cast of characters in *Cecilia*. Burney also made a change that expanded the hierarchy of men who were pursuing Cecilia, jettisoning a fellow variously named Sir Anthony Norwich and Sir Norbury Norwich and replacing him with Mr. Marriot (3: 81v; 354). This change is useful in another way, because Mr. Marriot, being of the proper class, ultimately becomes a mate for Harriet Belfield. Hence, we can see in these papers that one of Burney's most important concerns was to hone the questions about class that are so central to the novel, written in a period of uncertain shiftings that the English both suffered and learned from, and that in France were to end in revolution.

Burney's characters represent and also occasionally traduce or transcend their class. She is particularly fascinated with the social assumptions by which people act, and the systems and routines they use to stay within the strictures imposed on them. She is wrestling with this question throughout Volume Three, from which she saved three times as many pages as the other volumes. One day, feeling inspired, she wrote rapidly on the back of an organist's excuse that he could not play on Sunday because he had scalded his legs, marking her words with a

dotted plus. Here, Henrietta Belfield is describing her brother's reaction to the fact that she and her mother have accepted money from Cecilia. Cecilia's object was to help Belfield, who was suffering complications from a wound inflicted in a duel. In the published version Belfield simply said that "he should think himself a monster to make use of" this charity (339). In the original, however, Belfield continued in a passage Burney eventually chose to omit:

> And he begged my Mother over & over to live as She ought to do, & not think she did him any kindness in exposing herself & me to being thought of so meanly, when we had both of us enough to live comfortably & reputably if we w^{d} only make use of it. And he declared very angrily that if we then did so again, he w^{d} go & risk himself away from us for ever and ever; for he s^{d} he had a thousand & a million times rather die in a jail, than live only for half an Hour as an object of Charity. (3: 74A, r)

Possibly Burney thought that this passionate speech was ultimately too idealistic, and that such idealism would not fit within the parameters of Belfield's egotism, his often simply self-serving desire to break away from class restrictions. To omit this effusion was, to my mind, a correct choice. Yet I can understand as well why Burney left her original words legible. This passage deftly catches the rhythms of Henrietta's speech, and yet also funnels to us her brother's emotions, strong and hasty. Any writer would be pleased with it. Burney's dotted plus sign shows that she deleted it regretfully, painfully.

One of Burney's chief concerns as she revised *Cecilia* was to modulate carefully her heroine's character, to monitor her unusual strengths and render credible her occasional misjudgements. Cecilia is a much more fully nuanced character than Evelina, less clogged by idealism, more intrepid. The colleague to whom I recently recommended *Cecilia*, the just-tenured Medieval historian, was most interested in the panorama of class distinctions in the novel, something he thought was quite new for the period. But he was also fascinated by Cecilia herself. He liked her "for what she <u>does</u> and what she <u>is</u>," he said. Others are a fortune or a name, and Cecilia is both of these, but Cecilia is also self-reliant, generous, and open. Often blinded by her

lack of experience, Cecilia is nonetheless a "fair traveler" (5), representing for Burney's readers a woman with gifts who deserves these gifts. Burney had earlier considered writing about an ugly heroine, but she never actually took this unusual step, eventually bestowing ugliness on a less central character in *Camilla*. Like other heroines, Cecilia has beauty, intelligence, and sensibility. But she does not carry these gifts lightly. Her "sweetness was tempered with dignity, and gentleness with fortitude" (7). She reaches out for knowledge, accepting "all new ideas with avidity" (9). Unfortunately, she accepts the new ideas wherever she finds them, and this phrase occurs when she is talking with the devilish Mr. Monckton. Still, as my friend said, it is not only what Cecilia is but what she does that is important. Although she is smart, rich, and occasionally naive, she persistently tries to know, understand, and help those less fortunate than she. Albany, the self-appointed idiosyncratic go-between who introduces the needy to the affluent, finds a ready generosity in Cecilia.

No summary can inadequately evoke the character of Cecilia. The subtleties change throughout, like a landscape on a cloudy day. It is important to catch the distinctions Burney makes here. For instance, when Lady Honoria endorses the rejected Lord Ernulph as a husband for Cecilia, she says as a recommendation: "you might have done exactly what you pleased with him." Cecilia's rejoinder is, "When I want a pupil . . . I shall think that an admirable recommendation: but were I to marry, I would rather find a tutor, of the two" (465). Here, the operative phrase is "of the two." Cecilia is not saying that she is looking for a tutor, but that if limited to these two choices she would prefer someone who could teach her new things, rather than someone she needed to mold and inform. She is not, however, like that later heroine George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke, looking for Socrates. Burney, raised in a society where opposing dualities were an habitual mode of speech and way of life, resisted these simple oppositions.

Burney's manuscript revisions show how carefully she was attending to the intricacies of character. For instance, fairly early in the novel, Cecilia tries to convince her guardians to release some of her money to repay Mr. Harrel's debts. She claims that she owes £600 to a bookseller. This is the famous moment when Mr. Delvile wonders how any woman could possibly owe money to a bookseller, since a woman has no need for any literature except magazines like the *Tatler* and the

Spectator. In fact, of course, Cecilia does not owe this much money to her bookseller. She is lying. Rereading this passage, Burney realized that she needed to address this situation more fully. She added in manuscript the following exchange:

> "A bookseller's bill?" cried he: "and do you want £600 for a bookseller's bill?"
>
> "No, Sir," said she, stammering, "No,—not all for that,—I have some other—I have a particular occasion----" (I: 56v; 186)

Since for Cecilia lying is unusual, Burney focuses on her feelings, reflected in her voice. She stammers, and stumbles into incoherent phrases. Burney saves her from worse self-incrimination by emphasizing Mr. Delvile's self-centredness. Listening to others is not his habit. He interrupts Cecilia, launching abruptly into his opinion about what women should read. His own predisposition blinds him—but not the reader—to her embarrassment.

When making changes between the draft and the final copy, Burney sometimes needs to intercept her desire to make Cecilia more forceful than she could credibly be. For instance, when Cecilia finds herself in the toils of the Harrels' misfortunes, she attempts to save from ruin Priscilla Harrel's brother, the warm and pleasant Mr. Arnott. Arnott naturally wants to help his sister, but Cecilia justly perceives that Harrel will spend everything that is lent him, pulling everyone else into the vortex of his own catastrophe. In the draft, Cecilia (Albina) speaks directly to Arnott:

> I am both astonished & shocked at this acct.," said Albina, "& to find that y^{r} Sister's connection with Mr. Harrel has been as unfortunate for you as for her. I am sorry to speak with severity of one so nearly allied to you, but the too great ascendant with which he has gained over y^{r} soft & compassionate mind, will end in y^{r} utter ruin if you are not made sensible of y^{r} danger: be steady, therefore, in refusing to part with even an Inch of Land, for if there you once Waver, depend upon it, you are undone!" (I: 92r)

The beginning of this forceful statement is even stronger at first, with "indeed" added after "astonished." But the whole outburst vanishes from the final text. The fact that Burney did not dip her blunt pen and cross out this piece shows, I believe, that she rather liked it, with its intensity and its commanding Johnsonian "depend upon it" toward the end. But she knew that this harangue does not sound like a woman talking to a man. Cecilia is strong, but she must modulate her strength, or at any rate Burney must restrain it for her.

Another passage also disappears, but this time Burney intensifies the situation. Here, Cecilia is talking with Priscilla Harrel. When Cecilia admits that she has told Mr. Arnott not to lend his sister any more money, Mrs. Harrel bursts out that her husband will "abuse & insult her" (3: 101r). In the actual text this eruption becomes the much stronger statement: "I am sure he will kill me!" (391). How seriously does Burney want us to take this addition, "I am sure he will kill me"? How many women did she know or hear about who lived with violent men and truly feared that their husbands would kill them? Eventually Harrel kills himself. In the later novel *Camilla*, the heroine's sister Eugenia does not believe that her husband Bellamy would really have killed her as he threatened to do if she did not ask her uncle for money. Yet the gun was certainly loaded. "This is no child's play," Bellamy insisted (887). In *The Wanderer*, Juliet's French husband stalks her, and he frightens her, but she is worth quite a lot to him alive. Many husbands in Burney's novels abuse and insult, but none of them actually kills his wife directly. I say "directly," because Evelina's father in effect killed her mother by his repudiation and neglect. In *Cecilia* this expressed fear which she added in revision, even though it comes from a rattle like Mrs. Harrel, adds markedly to the grimness of this text.

After all the pressure and all the haste of trying to finish in time to publish in tandem with Dr. Burney's *History of Music*, Burney must have been particularly rattled when she received her page proofs. The intolerable fact that this book would have to compete with *Evelina* must also have weighed on her. Given this situation, the precision apparent in the corrections here is truly remarkable. She evidently performed her task expeditiously, especially in the fifth volume, where she twice wrote at the top of the page, "Please to send more copy" (5: 121, 193).

Working effectively in the stifling frustration of page proofs, Burney had to quell her tendency toward expansion. For a woman who

is so often depicted as shy and self-subordinating, she emerges here as crisp and professional. When she changed a word or a few words, she pared the addition so that it would fit exactly in the allotted space. Although the third volume of *Cecilia* is the thickest part of the manuscript remaining at the Berg, Burney allowed the scenes leading to Harrel's death to proceed into print with few modifications. As Burney worked hard-headedly through her printed text, her dissatisfaction gradually increased. In the book as a whole, keeping her additions and deletions more or less in balance, she made more than 300 substantial changes, most of them clustered at the end of Volume 4 and throughout Volume 5. In nearly every case, even as the alterations proliferated, she wrote in a firm, splendidly legible hand.

The moment where Burney felt the greatest hesitation was over an inadequate verb halfway through the fifth volume, toward the beginning of the final book. This struggle over a comparatively minor change shows how meticulously she oversaw her language. Here, Cecilia has just said good-bye to Delvile, who is going to sequester himself so as to protect himself from the consequences of his duel with Monckton, should Monckton die. When Delvile left, Cecilia listened to his departing footsteps as long as she could, and then:

> she went to the chair upon which he had been seated, and taking possession of it, sat with her arms crossed, silent, quiet, and erect, almost vacant of all thought, yet with a secret idea she was doing something right.

The poignant uselessness of this gesture, together with its psychological acuity, represents Burney's writing at its best. Sitting "erect" in Delvile's chair, Cecilia's body takes possession of him. She does not fling herself down or slump into tears. With her arms crossed like a beneficent deity, she clasps his power, his affection, to herself.

The next segment contains the offending word. When Henrietta Belfield came into the room, Cecilia decided not to tell her where Delvile had gone, but she accepted her offer to stay, because "she was soothed by her gentleness, and her conversation was some security from the dangerous rambling of her ideas." Rightly, Burney saw the word "was" as a weakness in here, and she made three stabs at replacing it, crossing out each effort completely with lines so thick that I cannot

read through them. At last, she settled for "was" and wrote "stet." This is the sole moment when she hesitated, the only time she left a mess with "stet" (5: 10, 2, 241; 851).[4] How many of us can say the same?

What else does Burney actually change at this ultimate moment? Her self-critical bar is high. She patrols for clichés, removing, for instance, "The conscious Cecilia made not any reply" (4: 7, 9,135; 603, line 15). More idiosyncratically, she decides that she must excise the word "now" wherever she is using it simply as an intensifier. The now's account for a large percentage of the deletions; they drop out like apples in November. But she is clearly and habitually drawn to the immediacy of "now," and she occasionally lowers her guard and adds it. Throughout, she strives to be precise. For a few pages in the last volume, she decides that "grew" is not the proper verb, and in one place it expands into "became," and in another deflates into "was." Like all of us, she quite often finds that she has used a word twice within a few lines, and she swoops down to insert a synonym.

In the draft manuscript, as we saw, she refined the relationships of different classes in *Cecilia*. At least one instance of this kind of sharpening occurs in the proof when the pew opener, Mrs. Matt, who had called on Cecilia "begged to speak with her." In the published copy this request becomes "begged an audience " (5: 10, 1, 212; 834). Mrs. Matt is far enough down in the hierarchy to beg an audience only, even though she has important information to impart—that Mr. Monckton's servant had been the person who had "put a stop" to Cecilia's wedding.

Chiefly, however, at this last opportunity, able to change only a word here and there, Burney leaves the class relationships alone and turns to delicate details of character, the way someone will react at a particular moment, the way shifting circumstances will alter reactions and modify relationships. Like Burney herself, I will concentrate mainly on the alterations she made to the last volume of *Cecilia*. This volume bursts with action. It is not surprising that Burney felt the need to polish it one last time. Here, the heroine at last comes into her own fortune; forfeits her income by marrying Delvile; finds out for certain about Mr. Monckton's perfidy; precipitately moves out of her house because her relatives suddenly discover her marriage and claim their inheritance; endures isolation because Delvile's duel with Mr. Monckton has forced him to flee; suffers a mental collapse; and then recovers and lives, not happily ever after, but as happily as she can. At

the end, Cecilia recognizes clearly that by giving up her fortune and marrying an impetuous and rather weak man she has made a less than perfect choice.

Through Burney's deft changes, Mr. Delvile becomes stiffer and nastier. His son, who in the proof apologizes for his "petulance" is allowed instead to refer to his "inconsistency" (4: 8, 6, 275; 684). Cecilia, by virtue of a number of alterations, becomes both more dignified and more passionate, less obsequious and more mentally active. Since Cecilia is not really the sort to lose her mind, Burney approaches that scene more discreetly. When Cecilia is unable to find Delvile, she is at first merely "agitated" instead of "frantic," and her "increasing agitation" relaxes into "eagerness and emotion." Hence, Burney emphasizes that when Cecilia's mind goes, the shattering is sudden. At this juncture, instead of allowing the insistent but weak phrase that her reason is "really failing her," Burney changes the adverb to "totally" (5: 10, 7, 318 ; 895; 319; 896-7). Only at this moment does Burney allow "frenzy" to usurp reason. This time it stays unchanged in the text, and "frantic" soon follows.

Mrs. Delvile's particularly complex character needed special last-minute sculpting. Augusta Delvile is bound in marriage to a man whose pride and insensibility are so great that she must alter herself in order to accommodate to her circumstances. Even so, she remains a proud woman in her own right. In 1782, the high-born and aggressive hostess Charlotte Walsingham, who was grilling Burney about the just-published *Cecilia*, suggested that Mrs. Delvile was not proud, that "the pride is commanded by the husband." Burney replied patiently that her characters were more strongly independent than Mrs. Walsingham had discerned, that a woman was a person as well as a wife: "I merely meant to show how differently pride, like every other quality, operates upon different minds, and 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" (*D&L 2:154*). "Odious" is a strong word, but Burney had decided that it was definitely the right word for Mr. Delvile. In the page proof Burney changed Lady Honoria's description of Mr. Delvile from "vastly disagreeable" to "vastly odious" (5:10.385; 933).

Forseeing the prejudices of readers like Charlotte Walsingham, Burney in the proof emphasized the resemblances between Cecilia and

her lover's mother by capitalizing the "d" in Mrs. Delvile's exclamation, "Oh Daughter of my mind!" (4: 8, 4, 218; 651). She also made Mrs. Delvile somewhat gentler: "serenity was only to be given her," rather than "procured her" (5: 9, 10, 183; 818); she says to her now-married son, "Content yourself," instead of the stronger imperative "Be content" (5: 9, 11, 200; 827). Still, the opportunities for this kind of change in a proof are precious few. What must have been Burney's excitement when she found at the end of one chapter a blank space where she could add a whole new sentence about Mrs. Delvile. This is the agonizing chapter where the representative of Cecilia's relative Mr. Eggleston suddenly appears and insists she leave her house immediately, because by marrying she has forfeited her right to inherit it. At the end of this chapter in the proof copy Cecilia blames herself for being "weak, vain, blind enough" to agree to a

> clandestine scheme! betrayed by those I have trusted, discovered by those I have not thought of, exposed to the cruellest alarms, and defenceless from the most shocking attacks!—Such has been the life I have led since the moment I first consented to a private engagement!----

This is where the chapter ends, with a tirade against the self. When Burney came upon it, she added what, for a page proof, is quite a lot:

> Ah Delvile! your mother, in her tenderness, forgot her dignity, or she would not have concurred in an action which to such disgrace made me liable!" (5: 10, 3, 252; 857-8)

Burney's concern here is to add another important dimension to the character of Mrs. Delvile, to emphasize once more the complicated relationship of tenderness and dignity in a society where such women are always having to balance their private and their public selves.

There is not a word here about the fact that Delvile might have acted with less haste in shooting it out with Mr. Monckton. His hastiness and weaknesses receive full treatment later in the book. To mention him here would have drawn attention away from a woman who is an important model for the heroine and for her readers. An insensitive reader like Mrs. Walsingham might miss these subtleties in Mrs. Delvile, but Burney has brilliantly insisted on them. Burney has

avoided the stereotype of the woman who simply models herself after her husband, of the proud woman who is also disdainful and "odious." Mrs. Delvile harbors inconsistent qualities, as people in life and in Burney novels must do. Passions which are apparently similar may operate differently in different people. This subtle truth was so difficult for people of her period to understand that Burney had to explain Mrs. Delvile to Mrs. Walsingham.

It is passages like the ones I have been opening out in this analysis of Burney's revisions that caused Burke to read *Cecilia* aloud four times, and captured the heart of the smart and sensual General d'Arblay. Burney's alterations bring us closer to the writer who sharpened her language right up to the moment of publication.

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NOTES

[1] Margaret Doody discusses the draft of what she calls the "*Clarinda* fragment," 202-15.

[2] These corrections diminish, especially after the first fifty pages of the second volume. One feels that Burney was simply too busy—with her baby son Alexander, perhaps—to go over d'Arblay's clear copy with the fastidious care she ordinarily practiced. She was to regret this omission when in the *Monthly Review* William Enfield listed the many verbal errors in *Camilla*.

[3] This means Volume 1: folio 5 recto; Sabor-Doody edition, p. 7. Subsequent notes will follow this form.

[4] This means Volume 5: Book 10, Chapter 1, p. 212; Sabor-Doody edition, p. 834. Volume 1 of the proof copy is missing; throughout, the printer has made corrections, and in some cases, especially of punctuation, attribution is simply a guessing game. In general, the punctuation is heavier, with semi-colons replacing commas, commas replacing the lack of punctuation, etc. All substantive alterations are in Burney's hand. A summary and list of the most important changes will appear in *EJL*: 5.