



SENSIBILITY IN FRANCES BURNEY'S NOVELS

Kathleen M. Twidale, M.A.

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STATEMENT

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university; nor, to the best of my knowledge and belief, does it contain any material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text or notes.

I am willing to make this thesis available for loan and photocopying if it is accepted for the award of the degree.

K.M. Twidale

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Although a considerable amount of literature and research exists on the role of sensibility in the novels of, for instance, Richardson, Sterne, Henry Mackenzie and Austen, there has been no full investigation of this theme as it emerges in Burney's novels. This thesis proposes to go some way toward filling this gap by examining how Burney uses the word "sensibility" in her novels; to explore what it appears to connote to her; how she uses it to define her characters; and how she presents her interpretation of the world of "female difficulties"¹ through the conventions of the "novel of Sensibility."²

Burney's novels perhaps cannot strictly be defined as novels of sensibility: the satire and comedy in the novels and the examination of the good and bad aspects of the cult of sensibility make this description too narrow. However, sensibility is an important element in the novels, and Burney does use some of the conventions of the novel of sensibility to reach her reader. One of Burney's methods, as

¹ Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814), ed. Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor, introd. Margaret Anne Doody, *The World's Classics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991). (All references to this edition. Volume number and page number in parenthesis in text.)

² M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) 88.

will be demonstrated, is to use the theme of “virtue in distress”³ to appeal to her readers’ sensibilities: their “readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art.”⁴ The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that, though Burney, like Austen and Wollstonecraft, recognised the dangers of some aspects of the cult of sensibility (which was an important philosophical, social and literary preoccupation of the period), she shows in her depiction of the characters in her novels that sensibility is a necessary part of the thinking, feeling, human being. In this, she was following in the tradition of philosophers in the school of Locke who argued for sensibility - the ability to sympathise or empathise with others - as the distinction between humans and the lower animals. It became, in fact, a measure of morality.

Several critics have made reference to Burney’s novels when discussing the novels of sensibility of the period. Gary Kelly, for instance, refers to Burney as “the acknowledged master of the novel of manners and sentiment [... .]” pointing out that “[a]ll of Burney’s novels rely on the classic situation of novels of Sensibility, namely ‘virtue in distress’ or ‘female difficulties’.”⁵ Kelly suggests that Burney “set a mark for dozens of followers,” citing Elizabeth Inchbald, Charlotte Smith, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, “and even Sir Walter Scott” as those influenced by her models (Kelly 45).

³ The epigraph to R.F. Brissenden’s *Virtue in Distress* comes from Lady Bradshaigh’s letter to Richardson when she writes apropos of *Clarissa*: “Tears I would choose to shed for virtue in distress.” R.F. Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1974) (hereinafter referred to as *Virtue in Distress*); *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, 6 vols. (London: Printed for Richard Phillips, 1804) IV:178.

⁴ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, “Sensibility,” definition (6). (All references to the Second Edition.)

⁵ Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period: 1789-1830* (London: Longman, 1989) 45.

Muriel Masfield looks at this aspect of her novels in *Women Novelists from Fanny Burney to George Eliot*.⁶ Joyce Hemlow in her *History of Fanny Burney* places *Evelina* in the “age of sensibility.”⁷ More recently, G.J. Barker-Benfield makes reference to Burney in his *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* published in 1992.⁸ However, although recognised as an author who wrote novels of sentiment, there has been no detailed analysis of the use of the word “sensibility” in Burney’s novels or of how she uses it to define her characters and manipulate the reader through the devices established in the eighteenth-century novel of sensibility.

As will be discussed in Chapter 3, in the eighteenth century the concept of sensibility was central to the philosophical, scientific and, in modern terms, psychological investigation of man and his relationship to society and the environment. The theories of philosophers such as Locke and his followers, influenced as they were by empirical scientists of the period, stressed that all knowledge was based on the evidence of sense perception; that our ideas of the world around us were all subjective. These theories, together with those which stressed man’s benevolent instincts and the importance of sensibility, the ability to feel for others, as a cohesive force in society, influenced writers such as Richardson, Sterne, Mackenzie and a generation of authors who explored these themes in the “novels of sensibility” of the period. The benevolent

⁶ Muriel Masfield, *Women Novelists from Fanny Burney to George Eliot* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1934).

⁷ Joyce Hemlow, *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1958) 97 (hereinafter referred to as *History*.)

⁸ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1992).

aspects of the cult of sensibility are particularly important in Burney's novels, as will be discussed in later chapters.

Burney's novels are not always included in this genre; rather they were seen in the past as "conduct books" or novels of manners. However, there is no doubt that she was influenced by Richardson and his successors in the genre of the novel of sensibility. An ambivalent word, "sensibility" was much discussed at the time when Burney was writing. It was a word which carried both positive and negative connotations, especially during the course of the French Revolution when it became "tainted" with radicalism. The word "sensibility" occurs many times in Burney's last three novels. She stresses the need for sensibility in the exemplary human being, that "capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art" which was so important in the context of Burney's novels. In all her novels her exemplary characters are endowed with this attribute in association with the ability to reason from the evidence of the senses and from experience.

The literary critical approach adopted in this thesis is that of a close textual examination of Burney's four novels to examine how she uses the word sensibility itself, what are its contexts, and what is its meaning within those contexts. Burney's appeal to her readers' sensibilities and her attempt to educate those who are deficient in this quality are also explored. It will be argued that sensibility - a refined intuitive response to others - is seen by Burney as indispensable to the individual and of benefit to society as a whole. The thesis is not written from a post-modernist, feminist literary critical stance, though such studies have undoubtedly opened up

texts to interesting and rewarding readings. However, as the novels which form the focus of this investigation were written by a woman about women in a time when expectations of women were different from those of today, there will obviously be an emphasis on Burney's depiction of the role and, sometimes, the plight of women. The novels all focus on the experiences of a young woman and all bear the name of the heroine in their titles, except *The Wanderer*, whose anonymity is an important element in the novel. All these heroines are shown to be women of sensibility, as will be discussed later. The obverse side of sensibility, when perverted into a cult, is seen to inhibit women in their full development as human beings, making them instead trivial and emotional creatures, unable to think for themselves. Burney shows that this is how many men perceive women and that women become trapped in the role ascribed to them as emotional, sensuous creatures. This perception of women on the part of some men, and the tendency of some women to conform to that perception in order to attain some little power, is demonstrated through Burney's description of minor characters in the novels.

Chapter 2 looks at Burney's personal background and her growth as an author. It will show the changes in criticism of Burney's work from contemporary critics' views of her as a writer in the comedy of manners genre, to mid-twentieth-century analyses of her novels as "conduct books." Currently, feminist writers are discovering a more militant message in Burney's fictions. This gradual shift in interpretation of the novels demonstrates how each generation brings its own preoccupations, prejudices and understandings to a reading. No reading is ever quite neutral but I

shall make the effort to tune my response to Burney's time and ethos.

Although the emphasis in this thesis will be on sensibility as it is depicted in Burney's novels, it will be necessary to establish briefly the general background to the concept of sensibility in the eighteenth century and place Burney within that context. This will be the subject of Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will analyse in general terms how Burney herself uses the word "sensibility" with examples from the four novels. Subsequent chapters will give close consideration to each of the novels in turn, and discuss the issues raised in relation to the theme of this thesis.

A short Conclusion will draw together the strands of argument to show the consistency of Burney's interest in the theme of sensibility and how it affects her heroines' lives as she constructs them. It will show that Burney's work was part of a contemporary dialogue concerning the role of women and the role of sensibility during her period, a period which for her starts with the publication of *Evelina* in 1778, when novels of sensibility were enjoying great popularity, and closes with the appearance of *The Wanderer* in 1814, when sensibility had become almost synonymous with sentimentality. It will also show that Burney herself considered sensibility an indispensable attribute of humane persons of either sex; an attribute which was particularly meritorious in the uncaring world she saw around her and which she describes in her novels. The contemporary emphasis on capitalism and materialism led to the neglect of the sick, the poor, and those who were not enfranchised. In Burney's time the latter category automatically included women.

Two Appendices are attached which provide tools for the investigation of my theme. Appendix A gives a list of Burney's specific usages of the words "sensibility" and "sensibilities" and a select list of the occurrences of the word "insensibility" in the novels. Appendix B lists some examples of the occurrences of the related words "insensible," "insensibly," "sense," "senseless," "senses," "sensible" and "sensibly."

Whilst the emphasis in this thesis will be on Burney's novels, some comparison will be made with other writers of the period, especially those whose work reflects current ideas on the contemporary cult of sensibility. For example, reference will be made to Mary Wollstonecraft's and Jane Austen's attitudes to this theme, as well as that of the relative roles of reason and the passions in the discourse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Whilst allowing that Austen refined on Burney's exploration of the education of a young woman and her "entrance into the world" - the former's novels, written in her concise, polished style, are of course quite different from Burney's "baggy monsters"⁹ - we should also acknowledge that Austen was influenced by her predecessor's writings. In stressing what Burney achieved in opening up possibilities for women authors who succeeded her, Virginia Woolf suggested that Austen "should have laid a wreath upon the grave of Fanny Burney."¹⁰ The sentiment behind her remark is a valid one, though the statement is anachronistic since

⁹ Henry James, Preface to *The Tragic Muse*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1921) I:xi. Henry James was referring, of course, to the nineteenth-century novel, specifically to *The Newcomes*, *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and Tolstoy's *Peace and War* [sic], when he used the phrase: "such large, loose, baggy monsters." However, it could equally as well be applied to Burney's last three novels, the last one in fact published in the nineteenth century.

¹⁰ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth P, 1929) 98.

Austen pre-deceased Burney by twenty-three years. Although Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was begun as *First Impressions* as early as 1796, her first published novel was *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811. Her last two novels to be published were *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, published posthumously in 1818.¹¹ Burney's first work *Evelina* was published in 1778, her last novel, *The Wanderer*, in 1814.¹² *Cecilia* was first published in 1782 and *Camilla* in 1796.¹³

The chapter which follows examines Frances Burney in her role as a novelist and her reception by readers and by critics, past and present.

¹¹ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), introd. V.S. Pritchett (London: Collins, 1952); *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), introd. A.C. Ward (London: Collins, 1953); *Northanger Abbey* (1818), introd. R. Brimley Johnson (London: Collins, 1953); *Persuasion* (1818), introd. R. Brimley Johnson (London: Collins, 1953). (All references to these editions.)

¹² Fanny Burney, *Evelina: or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), ed. and introd. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, *The World's Classics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982). (All references to this edition. Volume number and page number in parenthesis in text.)

¹³ Frances Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), ed. Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody, introd. Margaret Anne Doody, *The World's Classics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1988). (All references to this edition. Volume number and page number in parenthesis in text.)

Fanny Burney, *Camilla: or A Picture of Youth* (1796), ed. and introd. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, *The World's Classics* (London: Oxford UP, 1983). (All references to this edition. Volume number and page number in parenthesis in text.)

CHAPTER 2

FRANCES BURNEY - THE NOVELIST

Burney's first novel was extremely popular and well received in literary circles. It was written in the epistolary form used to such good effect by Richardson, with its advantages of creating an illusion of direct access to the heroine's thoughts and feelings, the involvement of the reader in the fictional heroine's "becoming" - her moment by moment struggle into life - a device of obvious importance to the development of the novel because of its introspective mode. Clive T. Probyn, in *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century: 1700-1789*, writes apropos of *Clarissa*:

Like the letter itself, whose form is principally defined from within, *Clarissa's* [sic] concern is to realize the inner self and her individual consciousness in the act of writing. It is more than an accident that the novel form, itself marginal and without a respectable social or literary lineage at the time, takes as its subject the social and spiritual marginality of women.¹⁴

These comments are equally apt in their application to Burney's novel, *Evelina*.

As one critic, Harrison Steeves, has it, *Evelina* was the first novel in the history of English fiction "to examine seriously, through a woman's eyes, the effects of the usages of the time upon the

¹⁴ Clive T. Probyn, *English Fiction of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1789* (London: Longman, 1987) 67.

position and the life of a woman.”¹⁵ He sees *Evelina* as a “sort of island of graceful womanly understanding in a sea of shallow, patronizing, or satirical eighteenth century attitudes upon women and their ways” (Steeves 205). Women have not always had a very good press, as Austen reminds us through Anne Elliot’s remark to Captain Harville in *Persuasion* that she would accept no examples of women from literature, which was mostly written by men “who have had every advantage of [women] in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much a higher degree; the pen has been in their hands” (*Persuasion* 364).

Subsequent novels by Burney were written in the third person so that a moralising narrator is more obvious, but by adopting this technique in her later novels she was able to make use of irony directed towards individual hypocrisy and that of society in general, especially her society’s attitudes to women. In addition, she adopted some of the conventions of the novels of sensibility of the period to reach, and perhaps teach, her readers.

Burney has been treated rather negatively in some accounts of eighteenth-century novels. For instance, she does not rate a mention in Alastair Fowler’s recent *History of English Literature* published in 1987, and her later books have been under-estimated to some extent.¹⁶ The entry for Frances Burney in *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, first published in 1932, revised in 1967, describes her as the “originator of the simple novel of home life.”¹⁷ As recently

¹⁵ Harrison R. Steeves, *Before Jane Austen: The Shaping of the English Novel in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966) 204.

¹⁶ Alastair Fowler, *A History of English Literature: Forms and Kinds from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

¹⁷ *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, compiled and ed. Sir Paul Harvey, 4th ed. revised by Dorothy Eagle (1932: Oxford: Clarendon P, 1967) 126.

as 1988, an entry by Joseph A. Grau in *An Encyclopaedia of British Women Writers* suggests that her fame as a novelist “depends almost entirely on her first published work, *Evelina*,” which is described as “the first important example of the domestic novel of manners.”¹⁸ *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature* published in 1983 also places most of the emphasis on Burney’s first novel and suggests that her “strength lay in social comedy and the comedy of domestic life, and her quality reached its highest level in *Evelina*.”¹⁹ Stapleton argues that in *Evelina* Burney: “uses the best of Richardson and Fielding. The sentiment is from Richardson and the social comedy from Fielding - the English novel was taken a stage farther, and Fanny Burney was famous” (116).

Partly because of the political satire of *The Wanderer*, contemporary critics were scathing in their reviews of this, her last novel. It was deemed to be out of step with post-revolutionary thought. For instance, John Wilson Croker accused her of political expediency in making a distinction between the France of Robespierre and that of Bonaparte.²⁰ However, the public’s reception was different. In her *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, Margaret Anne Doody tells us the first edition sold out immediately “and a second edition had to be run off at the time of publication; 3,500 copies were sold almost instantly - an extremely large issue of a novel for the time”.²¹

¹⁸ Paul Schlueter, ed., *An Encyclopaedia of British Women Writers* (New York: Garland, 1988) 73-5.

¹⁹ Michael Stapleton, *The Cambridge Guide to English Literature*, consultant ed. Nicholas Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983) 117.

²⁰ John Wilson Croker, rev. of *The Wanderer; or Female Difficulties*, by the Author of *Evelina*, *Cecilia* and *Camilla* [sic] (Madame D’Arblay), *The Quarterly Review* (London: John Murray, 1814): XI, April and July, 129-30.

²¹ Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1988) 332.

Writing in 1843, after Burney's death, Macaulay reviews the *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* published in 1842, and also Burney's contribution to English literature. Macaulay sees her later works as "complete failures," though it is her convoluted and studied style which he most criticises, particularly in *The Memoirs*, one quite remote from the "clear, natural and lively" style of the *Diary and Letters* - and too, of course, of *Evelina*.²² He notes that Burney made the English novel respectable and opened the way for subsequent women writers:

It is not only on account of the intrinsic merit of Madame D'Arblay's early works that she is entitled to honourable mention. Her appearance is an important epoch in our literary history. *Evelina* [sic] was the first tale written by a woman, and purporting to be a picture of life and manners, that lived or deserved to live. (668)

She herself "lived to be a classic," in Macaulay's words (668).

Croker, in a review of *The Wanderer*, equally praises her earlier novels but accuses her in the later works of becoming a mannerist, and self-imitative (Croker, 124; 125). He reminds us that, until Burney, no female novelist ever reached such an early and high reputation. He describes *Evelina* as evidence of an extraordinary example of early talent, and he writes of the excellence of *Cecilia* (123-4). However, his criticism of *The Wanderer* is that it:

has the identical features of *Evelina* - but of *Evelina* grown old; the vivacity, the bloom, the elegance, "the purple light of love" are vanished; the eyes are there, but they are dim; the cheek, but it is furrowed; the lips, but they are withered. And when to this description we add that Madame D'Arblay endeavours

²² Thomas Babington (Lord) Macaulay, rev. of *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay*, by Madame D'Arblay, *Critical and Historical Essays: Contributed to the Edinburgh Review* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1870) 698; 668.

to make up for the want of originality in her characters by the most absurd mysteries, the most extravagant incidents, and the most violent events, we have completed the portrait of an old coquette who endeavours, by the wild tawdriness and laborious gaiety of her attire, to compensate for the loss of the natural charms of freshness, novelty, and youth. (126)

The analogy between the later novel and the older novelist makes this review read quite offensively, especially as there is no evidence Madame D'Arblay was a coquette at any time in her life. In fact she particularly points the dangers of coquetry in her novels. In *Camilla*, for instance, she stresses the fact that her heroine had been "bred to hold in horror every species of art, all idea of coquetry was foreign to her meaning" (*Camilla* IV:679). As Joyce Hemlow points out, Burney was much influenced by the courtesy books of the period and although her novels cannot be seen merely as conduct books, they do quite clearly emphasise morals and manners.²³ More justly, Croker, like Macaulay, criticises Burney's later style, describing her Preface to *The Wanderer* as tortuous in construction and involved in expression.

Though Dobson's evaluation of *Evelina*, "Mme. D'Arblay's masterpiece," and *Cecilia* is that they could stand on own their merits, he too is critical of *Camilla* and *The Wanderer*.²⁴ *The Wanderer* he describes as a "wearisome" book "which nobody could read"; its theme "trivial and improbable" (196). His praise of the *Diary* is fulsome, and he feels that it deserves a place amongst the "great diaries of literature" (205-6).

Nigel Wood argues that notwithstanding unsympathetic contemporary reviews of *The Wanderer*, "[t]hroughout the 1780s into

²³ Joyce Hemlow, "Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books," *PMLA* Sept. (1950): 65.5 732-61.

²⁴ Austin Dobson, *Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, *English Men of Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1903) 203; 202.

the next century no male novelist rivalled the achievement of Fanny Burney or Maria Edgeworth [...].”²⁵ Johnson knew only her first two novels, of course. He admired *Evelina*, calling “little Burney” a “character-monger” and comparing her work favourably with that of Richardson and Fielding.²⁶ He felt there was “nothing so delicately finished in all Harry Fielding’s works, as in *Evelina!*” and that there were “things and characters in it more than worthy of Fielding” (*DL* I:95). Johnson is reported as saying of Fielding’s novels that he “knew nothing but the shell of life,” perhaps recognising by comparison Burney’s ability to show the internal thought processes of her heroines (*DL* I:95).

Generally, however, she has been seen in the past as mainly an observer of manners. Even in the middle of this century, one eminent critic, Lord David Cecil, writes of her as a “bright, light, humorous observer of the outward scene, not a psychological analyst [...].”²⁷ Her portrait of “the watcher,” Edgar, in *Camilla*, and her depiction of complicated characters such as Mrs. Delvile and even Harrell in *Cecilia*, trapped in his own image-making, suggest that she was more aware of motivation in character than perhaps some critics have allowed. However, Cecil does allow Burney “[p]ower of storytelling, of character drawing [and the] ability to trace the process of feeling” (221). He sees Burney as innovative in that she brings for the first time the “entry of the woman, or perhaps one should say the lady, into English fiction” and reminds us that few first novels were more successful than *Evelina*: “Not only was it a best-seller, but it

²⁵ Nigel Wood, *Dr. Johnson and Fanny Burney* (Bristol: Bristol Classical P, 1989) ix.

²⁶ Frances Burney, *Diary and Letters of Madame D’Arblay (1778-1840)*, ed. Charlotte Barrett, preface and notes by Austin Dobson, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1904) I:90; I:90; I:72).

²⁷ Lord David Cecil, “Fanny Burney’s Novels,” *Essays on the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1945): 212-24; 212.

won enthusiastic praise from the most distinguished minds of the age" (212).

The rather narrow views of some critics in the past are presently being redressed by various scholars and critics. In July, 1991 a special issue of *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* was devoted to Burney's *Evelina*, a direct reflection of the growing interest in the writer's work by scholars.²⁸ Her novels have been re-issued in accessible paperback editions rather than in the three or five separate volumes of their original production. Oxford University Press have recently issued *Evelina: or The History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*, edited by Edward A. Bloom assisted by Lillian D. Bloom; *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress*, edited by Peter Sabor and Margaret Anne Doody; *Camilla: or A Picture of Youth*, edited by Edward and Lillian Bloom; and *The Wanderer; or, "Female Difficulties,"* edited by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack and Peter Sabor. In 1986 Virago Press published *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* with an introduction by Judy Simons,²⁹ and in 1988 Pandora published *The Wanderer, Or Female Difficulties*, introduction by Margaret Drabble.³⁰

Although well-known for her novels during her lifetime, after her death, Burney became for some time more famous for her journals. An edition of *The Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay (1778-1840)* was first published by her niece, Charlotte Barrett, in seven volumes in 1842-6.³¹ Annie Raine Ellis published *The Early*

²⁸ *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Special *Evelina* Issue: 3.4 July (1991): 277-388.

²⁹ Fanny Burney, *Cecilia: or Memoirs of an Heiress*, introd. Judy Simons (London: Virago, 1986).

³⁰ Fanny Burney, *The Wanderer: or Female Difficulties*, introd. Margaret Drabble, Mothers of the Novel Series (London: Pandora, 1988).

³¹ *The Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay (1778-1840)*, ed. by her niece, Charlotte Barrett [with Plates including a portrait], 7 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1842-6).

Diary of Frances Burney in 1889, in two volumes, covering the period 1768-1778.³² In 1904-5 Charlotte Barrett's edition of the *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay (1778-1840)* was re-issued in six volumes with prefaces and notes by Austin Dobson. Twelve volumes of the journals and letters from 1791 to 1840, from just prior to the time of her marriage in 1793, at the age of forty-one, to Alexandre d'Arblay, exiled Adjutant-General to the Marquis de Lafayette, to her death, have been published under the general editorship of Joyce Hemlow.³³ Lars Troide, as part of the "Burney Project," is now in the process of editing the early journals written from the age of fifteen.³⁴ The first two of these are now out, and another ten volumes are projected. As one can see, Burney may have written about the silencing of women, but she found ways of expressing her sense of self. She was not only amanuensis to her father, the music historian, but also a compulsive writer.

Margaret Doody, in her biographical and critical examination of Frances Burney and her work which was published in 1988, demonstrates the new interest in and new readings of Burney which are adding to Joyce Hemlow's scholarly work of the late 'fifties. Doody sees her as a "large-scale novelist" like Dickens and like him also in her attack on society's principles (3). She argues that Burney uses the framework of a conventional love story "more and more strangely treated in each novel" for her own purposes, in order to

³² *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778*, ed. Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols. (1889; London: Bell, 1913).

³³ *Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, ed. Joyce Hemlow, et al., 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972-84).

³⁴ *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney Vol. I, 1768-1773*, ed. Lars E. Troide, 2 vols. to date (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1988).

The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney Vol. II, 1774-1777, ed. Lars E. Troide, 2 vols. to date (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens UP, 1990).

examine the beliefs and structures of her particular society. Stressing the mystery, intertextuality and bizarre metaphor she sees in Burney's novels, Doody recognises the experimental elements in her work rather than seeing them as mere "conduct books." She insists that: "All of Burney's novels are violent. She is a student of aggression and obsession; one of her major motifs is suicide" (3). Doody looks at the tensions that exist between Burney the woman and Burney the writer and in her psychological analysis of the relationship between Frances Burney and her father, musicologist Dr. Charles Burney, she, like Dale Spender, sees the root of much of this tension.³⁵

Other critics have pointed to the problems of being a professional woman writer and remaining respectable as a source of tension for many women writers of the period. Burney had no desire to be seen as other than a "proper lady." On the other hand, such tensions can be a source of creative energy. A motive for creativity may well be discovered in the desire to explore in a subversive but non-strident manner the structuring of the role of women, to investigate the whole question of "becoming a heroine" in a society which prefers women to be passive and which demands of them only negative virtues. The very idea of "becoming" implies a positive, ongoing process.

Kristina Straub, in *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy*, argues that in Burney's depiction of the heroines in her fiction she attempts to come to terms with the difficulties, both domestic and professional, of women of her period. She argues

³⁵ Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora, 1986).

that Burney, through the struggles of her heroines for a place in society, presents these problems of the need to conform to expectations of womanhood in the eighteenth century, and her own need to express herself as artist in the face of the dubious reputation of contemporary female authors. In discussing Burney's novels, Straub speaks of:

the disrupted and disruptive nature of *Evelina*, and of all of Burney's fiction, [which] results from strategies for surviving some of the psychic and social contradictions that confront any human being in a constantly changing social context but are often especially acute in women's thinking. The ability to sustain and express contradiction is both a response to ideological conflicts in the culture and a strategy for female psychic survival in mid-eighteenth century life.³⁶

Straub goes on to suggest that Burney's novels reflect the author's *own* feelings and her conception of her *own* situation as a writer in a society that preferred women to be passive and silent (4).

This tension between the need for the silence demanded by propriety and the need for self-expression impelled by Burney's conception of herself as author is reflected in the construction of heroines such as *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, *Camilla* and *Juliet*. Burney's anxiety of authorship can be traced through the anxieties that beset her heroines in their confrontation with the world and the demands made and restrictions placed upon them.³⁷ The dilemma implicit in the behaviour expected of women of the eighteenth century with their limited horizons is seen by Straub to express itself in texts which display "gaps in the ideological *bricollage* [sic]" (25):

³⁶ Kristina Straub, *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (Lexington, Ky: UP of Kentucky, 1987) 3.

³⁷ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1973). Harold Bloom's phrase is adapted here to describe Burney's own particular anxieties as an eighteenth-century female author encroaching on a male domain.

[...] Burney's novel [*Evelina*] is not a seamless representation of the patriarchal ideology that Burney learned from her culture; nor is it, I would argue, a "palimpsest" such as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar see as the form of nineteenth-century women's writing, a buried female subtext within a patriarchal cover story. Rather it is a divided text that reveals its own dividedness - if we, as critics, can eschew the neat but perhaps reductive resolutions between dissonant impulses that a too-zealous devotion to aesthetic "unity" can insist on. (24)

In *Cecilia*, these conflicts lead to temporary madness; in *The Wanderer*, to Juliet's desperate flight from France, and then across southern England; and in *Camilla*, to alienation from her parents, banishment from her home, and near-death.

The journals and diaries Burney kept during her years as Second Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte not only provide insight into Court life but have also been analysed by various scholars to show the tensions between Burney as author and Burney as the dutiful daughter who submitted to her father's wish for her to accept a stultifying position at a formal court for the sake of royal influence which might be useful to the family.

In her journal-letter to her sister, Esther Burney, dated 17 December 1785, Burney gives ironic directions for dealing with the petty restrictions of court life in the presence of the royal couple, restrictions which actually led to a collapse of Burney's health. A cough must be stifled, even though it leads to choking to death; a sneeze subdued, even if one bursts a blood-vessel. She also gives instructions to survive hours of standing without moving even if a pin should penetrate one's head:

If [...] the agony is very great, you may, privately, bite the inside of your cheek, or of your lips, for a little relief; taking care, meanwhile, to do it so cautiously as to make no apparent dent outwardly. And, with that precaution, if you even gnaw a

piece out, it will not be minded, only be sure either to swallow it, or commit it to a corner of the inside of your mouth till they are gone - for you must not spit. (*DL* II:353)

This apparently macabrely humorous passage becomes less funny when viewed as a metaphor for the inhibitions placed on a “proper lady” of Burney’s time and the stifled screams of many silenced women.³⁸

As will be discussed more fully later, in her novels Burney adopts the device of giving provocative sentiments and statements to women characters who may be thought of as “improper” by her readers as they do not conform to the current ideal. In this way, she could voice protests and resentments through her characters which could not be spoken in her own name if she wished to be heard or read. As will be demonstrated in the chapter on *Camilla*, Mrs. Arlbery voices criticism of the men in her circle which are not repudiated by Burney; only her manner is criticised. In giving Mrs. Selwyn in *Evelina*, Mrs. Arlbery in *Camilla*, Lady Honoria in *Cecilia* and Elinor in *The Wanderer*, all independent and therefore potentially subversive women, the opportunity to speak out against hypocrisy and the abuse of women, but at the same time appearing to criticise them as “unfeminine,” Burney is able to voice her own protest and remain a “proper woman.” Burney demonstrates in the male characters’ reactions to women such as Mrs. Arlbery and, in *Evelina*, Mrs. Selwyn, the marginalisation of such women by men who resent their outspokenness. Burney recognised the proscriptions on women authors of her time; she had experienced

³⁸ See Kay Torney, “Fanny Burney’s Mastectomy” for an interesting analysis of Burney’s strategies for retaining control of her rational self and her self-expression after the trauma of a mastectomy without anaesthetic which reduced her to a “primeval scream.” *Border Crossing: Studies in English and Other Disciplines* (Bundoora, Vic.: La Trobe UP, 1991) 79-85.

them herself when her father and “Daddy” Crisp³⁹ disapproved of her writing a play, and she adopted subtle methods in her novels to voice her protest. As Anais Nin comments in another context: “It is feminine to be oblique.”⁴⁰

Many of the problems of Burney’s heroines are caused by their harassment by predatory men. Each of the novels has an example of a man bent on careless seduction who plays on a girl’s ignorance and vanity, irrespective of what might result to her once discarded by her “protector.” A theme which connects all the novels is the satirising of misogynists. Burney’s play, “The Woman Hater,” has not been performed but its title alone gives an indication of one of her objects of scrutiny.⁴¹ Through Dr. Marchmont in *Camilla*, Captain Mirvan and Lord Merton in *Evelina* and minor characters in all the novels Burney exposes the male prejudices of her times. Many of her misogynists would agree with the brutal Lord Merton when he says: “I don’t know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks [sic] way” (*Evelina* III:275).

All Burney’s novels deal with female difficulties. They all deal in one way or another with a young woman’s entrance into a world which becomes more and more threatening and complex with each successive novel. An embryo novel, telling the tragic story of Evelina’s mother, was consumed in the flames of a pyre built by Frances Burney in her teenage years. This she did in order to destroy her “scribbling[s]”⁴² just prior to her father’s second

³⁹ Samuel Crisp, a friend of the Burney family and Frances Burney’s mentor until his death.

⁴⁰ *The Diary of Anais Nin*, 5 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966) I:58; qtd. in Judy Simons, *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women from Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 4.

⁴¹ Berg MS., see Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*: 21n33; 312.

⁴² Burney refers to her writing as “scribbling” in a reference to the “nocturnal scribbling” of *Evelina*. *ED* April, 1777, II:162.

marriage.⁴³ Her stepmother did not approve of “scribbling” which is of necessity a private, unsociable activity. Burney’s guilt and anxiety about her writing is demonstrated in her determination to restrict this necessarily solitary activity to the afternoon, and to spend the morning in the company of other female members of the family “industriously” sewing. This was in order to conform to her stepmother’s ideas of the proper pastime for a woman. Hemlow tells us that in her early diaries Burney writes:

“I make a kind of rule, never to indulge myself in my two *most* favourite pursuits, reading and writing, in the morning.’ It was best in the morning to ply her needle with the others, ‘by which means my reading and writing in the afternoon is a pleasure I cannot be blamed for by my mother’.” (*ED*, i.I. ff.; qtd. Hemlow *History*, 29)

Evelina was sometimes written late at night, when she was safe from interruption. This is similar to Austen’s habit of writing under cover of a sheet of paper which could quickly conceal from unexpected visitors the creative activity that might be construed as improper in a woman and, for the same reason, her insistence on retaining a squeak in the swing door to the common sitting room where she wrote “because it gave her warning in time to conceal her manuscript.”⁴⁴

Judy Simons, in her *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women from Fanny Burney to Virginia Woolf*, notes how diaries and letters were used as ways of constructing an image of self by women who were not encouraged toward self-expression in a patriarchal society. As she points out:

⁴³ *ED*, II:162; A.L. (Berg) from FBA to EBB, 1 July, 1815; qtd. in Hemlow 1.

⁴⁴ Stanley J. Kunitz, ed., assoc. ed. Howard Haycraft, *British Authors of the Nineteenth Century* (1936 New York: Wilson, 1964) 23.

for many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women, their personal journals became indirect means of resistance to codes of behaviour with which they were uncomfortable, allowing for a release of feelings and opinions which had no other vent.
(4)

Other workers have noted this function of the eighteenth-century woman's journal. For instance, Simons refers to Felicity Nussbaum's remarks on the question of establishing a sense of identity: "In writing to themselves, eighteenth-century women, in particular, could create a private place in which to speak the unthought, unsaid and undervalued."⁴⁵ Nussbaum, in her "Eighteenth-Century Women's Autobiographical Commonplaces," goes on: "In writing private daily records, they could speak as subjects who reflected and produced their multiple positions in text and in culture as they read, reread, and revised their gendered textual formulations" (154). One contemporary eighteenth-century diarist, Nussbaum reports, wrote: "Was it not for her diary she would neither know what she did, nor who she was, nor what she had."⁴⁶ Simons construes this as an admission of the fundamental importance of the diary to eighteenth-century women as a means of self-definition.

Burney's anxiety of authorship, her fear of failure and her almost pathological desire for anonymity are linked to her realisation of the expectations of women by contemporary society. Dale Spender sees this anxiety of authorship as directly related to Burney's fear of criticism from her father and her fear of embarrassing him (285).

⁴⁵ Felicity Nussbaum, "Eighteenth-Century Women's Autobiographical Commonplaces," *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Shari Benstock (London: Routledge, 1988) 147-71: 154.

⁴⁶ Felicity Nussbaum, "The Female Autobiographical Subject," conference paper given at the Institute of Historical Studies, University of London, November, 1988; qtd. in Simons, *Diaries and Journals of Literary Women* 4.

It is Dr. Burney whom Spender blames for much of the moralising and wordiness of Burney's novels written after *Evelina*, the novel Burney wrote in secret over a period of some ten years. Hemlow too points to the different circumstances which faced Burney as writer when her anonymity was gone. As Hemlow points out: "Anonymity had afforded temporary security and made for uninhibited writing" (*History*, 139). When her identity as the author of *Evelina* was discovered, Dr. Burney and Mr. Crisp pressured her to complete and publish her second novel, *Cecilia*. Hemlow writes:

the new work was not a spontaneous but a forced production, written largely because Dr. Burney thought that the new author should seize and capitalize on the shining hour of her first success. *Cecilia*, in short, took form under pressures of time and compulsion that had never entered into the composition of *Evelina* and, as Fanny's complaints to her sisters indicate, the book often proceeded with great travail.

Hemlow goes on to quote one of Burney's letters to her sister on this theme:

"I go on but indifferently, - I don't write as I did, the certainty of being known, the high success of *Evelina* [sic], which, as Mr. Crisp says, to fail in a 2d would *tarnish*, - these thoughts worry & depress me, - & a desire to do more than I have been able, by writing at unseasonable Hours, & never letting my Brains rest even when my *corporeal machine* was succumbent."
(A.L.S. (Berg) from FB to EBB, 7-8 Jan. 1781, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 139-40)

Many of Burney's letters and journal entries during late 1780 and early 1781 speak of tiredness and reaction to hard work as well as fear of disappointing her father:

"One way or other my Hand scarce rests an Hour in the whole Day. Whenever this work is done - if ever that Day arrives, I believe I shall not write another word for 3 years! however, I

really believe I must still publish it *in part*, for I begin to grow horribly tired, & yet am by no means *near* any thing *bordering* upon an end. And the eternal fagging of my mind & Brains does really much mischief to my Health.” (A.L.S. (Berg) from FB to SB, 3 Feb. 1781, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 142)

Mrs. Thrale upbraided Dr. Burney for making his daughter ill with his demands (A.L.S. (Barrett) from HLT to FB, 20 Feb (1781), qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 143). Burney writes to her sister Susan:

“He will expect me to have just *done*, when I am so behind hand as not even to see land! - yet I have written a great deal, but the work will be a long one, & I cannot without ruining it make it otherwise. . . . I am *afraid* of seeing my father.” (A.L.S. and A.L. (Berg) from FB to SB, 19 Feb. [1781], and n.d., qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 143)

Burney’s anxiety of authorship is clear when she writes in 1778: “I tremble for what all this will end in. I verily think I had best stop where I am, and never again attempt writing: for after so much honour, so much success - how shall I bear a downfall?” (*DL* I:126-27). As late as 1795, when she is writing *Camilla*, she informs her father:

I will make my Work the best I can, my dearest Father. I will neither be indolent, nor negligent, nor avaricious. I can never half answer the expectations that seem excited! I must try to forget them, or I shall be in a continual quivering [...]. I am gratified & frightened in turn every other Hour by this application of Booksellers - it shews such expectation!⁴⁷

This concern may well be a natural reaction to early success but her letters and journals show a dichotomy between Burney’s desire for fame and desire for anonymity: the impulse to authorship and the need to conform to the role ascribed to a “proper lady” in her day. Significantly, the impulse to authorship won when she continued to

⁴⁷ *Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D’Arblay)* Vol. III 1793-1797, ed. Joyce Hemlow with Patricia Boutilier and Althea Douglas, 12 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon 1973), Letter 175 to Dr. Burney from FB, 6 July, 1795, III:129-30.

write plays, only one of which was ever performed, even after her father and "Daddy Crisp" rejected her first work for the stage, "The Witlings" (Berg MS, 126 pp.; *DL* I:256-9), and advised her to stick to novel-writing.

Mary Poovey in *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* has described the difficulties facing women who aspire to appropriate the pen, seen in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as more properly man's tool, as too have Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar.⁴⁸ Gilbert and Gubar interpret the pen as the phallic symbol of the power of the word to order the world through moral and religious laws, and through our perception of our place in that world. They have analysed strategies adopted by women authors in order to remain respectable but still to circumvent restrictions placed upon them as to subject, form and language. Such strategies might be to confine their work to a lesser genre, such as children's literature; to write as males *manqué*, as Charlotte Brontë did for instance in her first novel *The Professor* where, though she wrote under the deliberately ambiguous name of "Currer Bell," her *narrator* in *The Professor* was a man; or they might effect a literary "swerve" by dealing with the central female experience from a specifically female perspective, at the same time creating submerged meanings hidden within or behind more acceptable content.* Gilbert and Gubar suggest that some women writers "produced literary works that are

⁴⁸ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1984). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979).

* Gilbert and Gubar (73) quote Harold Bloom's use of the word "swerve" in his *The Anxiety of Influence*, 44. Bloom, in his turn, has taken the term from Lucretius's descriptions of how atoms traverse through space, and how, "at quite indeterminate times and places they swerve ever so little from their course," - a phenomenon by which Lucretius explains the act of creation. Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. and introd. R.E. Latham (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) II:66.

in some sense palimpsestic, works whose [sic] surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning" (73).

Burney's problem of balancing her impulse as a creative artist and her need to appear "a proper lady" is expressed through her heroines who all voice protests at the frivolous demands made on women's time. In considering this question of the demands on a female creative artist in terms of time and her duties as a wife and mother, it is interesting that her husband speaks of Burney's novel *Camilla* as her daughter, drawing a parallel between the child of her brain and the son she had recently borne.⁴⁹ Burney herself speaks of it as her "little baby," and puns on the labour involved in producing both book and child.⁵⁰ Just as Evelina complains that she cannot write her journal letters to her guardian because her time is eaten into by social commitments and by the necessary, time-consuming toilette which she must undergo to prepare her for her "entry into the world," so Cecilia chafes at the encroachments of society which rob her of time when she might be making worthwhile friendships, improving her mind, or following her plans for charitable work. Many of *Camilla's* financial problems are the result of expenses incurred in presenting herself in the elaborate fashions a woman of her class is expected to adopt. These expenses, which are aggravated by Lionel's extortion of money from his sister, lead to her

⁴⁹ Monsieur d'Arblay writes: "The mother of *Camilla* had left her daughter asleep in order to nurse for a short time her brisk & lively boy, [...]." (Letter 189 to Dr. Burney from Monsieur d'Arblay, 11 March, 1796, *JL* III:160).

⁵⁰ To George III's enquiry as to how much time she gave to the composition of *Camilla* she replied "All my time, sir! - from the period I planned publishing it, I devoted myself to it wholly; - I had no Episode - but a little baby! - My subject grew upon me, & encreased my materials to a bulk - that, I am afraid, will be still more laborious to wade through for the Readers, than the Writer!" (Letter FB to Dr. Burney, 5-6 July, 1796, *JL* III:176)

temporary alienation from her parents and her perception of herself as responsible for her father's imprisonment for debt.

Like Richardson's Clarissa, an earlier heroine struggling for some control of her life, Burney's heroines are in metaphorical or real terms orphaned and left to survive in a hostile environment. For Clarissa, there is no way back since, until her death, her family remains corrupt and unrepentant, and Richardson sees that she must be victim and martyr in order that their redemption be achieved. The individual woman is sacrificed so that the family may be cleansed. Richardson thereby makes a plea for changes in attitudes to women, and especially to the contemporary practice of restoring or elevating the status of a family through arranged marriages, with no consideration for the desires or future happiness of the woman in the case.

This had in fact been a common practice in England. For instance, as early as the sixteenth century (like the eighteenth century, a period of considerable social mobility) Hugh Latimer made the tendency to use children as a means of financial and social improvement of the family the subject of a sermon. On the one hand, he castigated parents for the practice of forced marriages and, on the other, those that "inveigle men's daughters, in the contempt of their fathers, and go about to marry them without their consent":

23. (iv) There was never such marrying in England as is now. I hear tell of stealing of wards to marry the children to. This is a strange kind of stealing: but it is not the wards, it is the lands that they steal. And some there be that knit up marriage together, not for any love, or godliness in the parties, *but to get friendship, and make them strong in the realm, to increase their possessions, and to join land to land.* And other there be that inveigle mens' [sic] daughters, in the contempt of their fathers, and go about to marry them without their consent:

this marrying is ungodly. And many parents constrain their sons and daughters to marry where they love not, and some are beaten and compelled. And they that marry thus, marry in a forgetfulness and obliviousness of God's commandments.⁵¹ (Emphasis added)

Lawrence Stone argues for marriage in sixteenth-century England among property-owning classes as being a collective decision of the family and their kin rather than an individual one. "Past lineage associations, political patronage, extension of lineage connections, and property preservation and accumulation were the principal considerations."⁵² The kinship/friendship network created with powerful families was an important element in these arranged marriages. Stone argues that the results of the growth of the desire for a more intimate and affectionate relationship within the immediate family in the late seventeenth century - "affective individualism" in Stone's phrase - were a decline in the strength of kinship ties and more free choice in the selection of a marital partner based on love and esteem rather than the achievement of more power, money or status (412). Qualifying this view, however, Bridget Hill marshals considerable documentary evidence for the practice of dynastic or financially motivated unions continuing in the eighteenth century despite "a new liberalism in notions of child-rearing," and argues that:

So long as parents' main criterion of a successful marriage was expressed in terms of money, property and rank, daughters continued to be treated as valuable commodities. However much parents might subscribe to the idea of a

⁵¹ *Sermons by Hugh Latimer*, G.E. Currie, ed., (Parker Soc.) 4th Sermon preached before Edward VI, 29 March, 1549, 101 in C.H. Williams, ed., *English Historical Documents: 1485-1558*, vol. 5 of *English Historical Documents*, gen. ed. David. D. Douglas, 13 vols.(London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1955-77) V:274.

⁵² Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800*, abridged edition, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979) 70.

daughter's consent to a marriage, mercenary considerations often outweighed such principles [...]. Yet in the course of the century pressure on parents not to enforce a marriage against their children's inclinations grew [...].⁵³

James Thompson, too, takes issue with Stone, arguing that the changes Stone describes as complete were not reflected in the novels of the period. Thompson writes: "Based on the evidence found in Austen's writings, the companionate marriage of affective individualism remained more an ideal than a common social practice."⁵⁴ He feels that though parental tyranny in arranged marriage was not approved by Austen, neither was marriage motivated merely by romantic love. However, in both Austen's and Burney's novels the marriage of hero and heroine at the end of each novel, admittedly based on an ideal paradigm, indicates the changes Stone suggests. The far from ideal marriages of some of the older generation in both novelists' works are compared to the hopes and expectations of the next, based on affection, mutual respect and common aims.

Burney explores in her novels the effect on women of the arranged marriages Hill describes. In *Camilla* she does this through the abortive plans of Sir Hugh, a wealthy, childless man, to arrange endogamous marriages for his nieces which would keep them all close to him. He wishes to atone for a series of mistaken judgments which led to his disinheriting some of his nephews and nieces at the expense of one particular niece, because of his conscience-stricken concern for her. Sir Hugh's plan to marry his heiress Eugenia to his nephew, Clermont Lynmere, would also have had the effect, because

⁵³ Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1984) 69-70.

⁵⁴ James Thompson, "Sense and Sensibility: Finance and Romance," *Sensibility in Transformation: Creative Resistance to Sentiment from the Augustans to the Romantics*, ed. Syndy McMillen Conger (London: Associated UP, 1990): 147-71.

of the marriage laws regarding property, of restoring the hereditary estates of the Tyrols to the male side of the family in conformity with patrilineal custom. In *Cecilia* the effects of a bleak, loveless marriage of convenience are explored through Mrs. Delvile's experiences. Burney also exposes the vulnerability of heiresses pursued by fortune hunters. Just as the eponymous heroine of *Cecilia*, a wealthy heiress, faces danger from predatory men, so, too, Eugenia in *Camilla* is dogged by the ironically named Bellamy for the same reasons.⁵⁵

Burney, again like Richardson, makes demands on the readers' sensibilities so that they will empathise with her characters, especially with her heroines who all combine common sense, defined as good judgment, with sensibility, the ability to feel for others, or at least the promise of such a combination. The balance between these two aspects of character may vary when Burney's heroines are first introduced to the world; some, like *Camilla*, must learn to temper their strong sensibilities with the exercise of their native sense. However, as will be discussed later, although it is uncontrolled sensibility which is sometimes responsible for their difficulties in the world, it is also their sensibility which is one of the strong attractions these heroines hold for the heroes Burney constructs for them. In this way Burney shows that sensibility is a double-edged sword. Her depiction of the attribute of sensibility in her characters shows a split similar to Austen's and Hannah More's discussed later. She makes a distinction between those characters who evince "real" sensibility and those who pride themselves on their superior taste

⁵⁵ Julia Epstein notes Burney's irony in naming the villain of *Camilla* Bellamy: a pun on "Bel-ami" of course, and the typical name for a hero in stage comedy of the period. Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (Bristol: Bristol Classical P, 1989) 133.

and delicate responses to beauty, whether of nature or art. In this latter application of the word, Burney is demonstrating the dangers of “false” sensibility; and in her portrayal of characters such as Lionel Tyrold, and Indiana and Clermont Lynmere in *Camilla* and Captain Mirvan in *Evelina*, for example, characters entirely lacking in sensibility, Burney defines the word by its opposite.

Harrison Steeves notes that:

There are aspects of the feminine that a gifted woman writer can not only realize but represent with a surer hand than a mere male. In quite different ways Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Virginia Woolf have proved that superiority over, let us say, Dickens, Hardy, and E.M. Forster, all of whom have shown more than ordinary knowledge of women’s mental viscera. It is no mistake to place Fanny Burney among the able and knowing writers in this respect. (204-5)

It is this “feminine sensibility” which is brought to bear by Burney on her examination of her society and the inconsistencies and suffering which arise out of accepted patterns of behaviour. Among these were those inscribed in the “cult” of sensibility as it was interpreted in relation to women.

Ian Watt, too, in his *The Rise of the Novel* speaks of the “feminine sensibility” which women writers of the eighteenth century brought to the novel.⁵⁶ He states that Austen, building on what Burney started, had shown that “the feminine sensibility was in some ways better equipped to reveal the intricacies of personal relationships and was therefore at a real advantage in the realm of the novel” (Watt 298). One of these advantages is suggested in Henry James’s remarks which Watt quotes: “Women are delicate and patient observers; they hold their noses close, as it were, to the

⁵⁶ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Hogarth, 1987) 298.

texture of life. They feel and perceive the real with a kind of personal tact, and their observations are recorded in a thousand delightful volumes."⁵⁷ Despite James's somewhat disparaging phrase "delightful volumes," this is a fair comment on most of the women writers of the eighteenth century who did, of course, work within a restricted social framework. In Austen's case, as Duckworth has shown, the small community is the mirror to show the ills of the larger:

unity resides in Jane Austen's conception of the "estate" and in her idea of "improvement." For Jane Austen, in *Mansfield Park*, the estate as an ordered physical structure is a metonym for other inherited structures - society as a whole, a code of morality, a body of manners, a system of language - and "improvements," or the manners in which individuals relate to their cultural inheritance, are a means of distinguishing responsible from irresponsible action and of defining a proper attitude toward social change.⁵⁸

Burney too, though using different methods, demonstrates how the lack of "a proper attitude toward social change" is reflected in behaviour. Margaret Anne Doody, in *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, has written perceptively on this point and plots how Burney reflects and criticises the changing values of the growing middle class in her novels. Burney also paints a telling picture of the dead hand of the aristocracy and a resistance to change in her portrait of Mr. Delvile, Senior, in *Cecilia*.

Mary Poovey, too, makes James's point that women writers could write about feelings and emotions, even if they were denied

⁵⁷ Henry James, "Anthony Trollope," *Partial Portraits* (London: n.p., 1888) 50; qtd. in Watt 298.

⁵⁸ Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1971) ix.

the education and experience to write of the larger world of endeavour:

feeling was one significant theater of experience that could not be completely denied to women. Excluded from learned argument - indeed, from an entire tradition of intellectual achievement - because they were not taught Latin or Greek, women could nevertheless write of their own feelings and from their own imaginations, especially when "expression" replaced intellectual substance as the primary criterion of quality. (Poovey 37)

Such a criterion applied to the novel of sensibility, which Poovey sees as a genre "tailor-made" for women's experience (38). These writers were able to concentrate their gaze inward on the domestic scene in their analyses of society.

In one area in particular women writers such as Burney and Austen could bring a new sensibility to the exploration of relationships between men and women and this was in their examination of the politics of marriage. The need for the woman of sensibility to choose her partner for life wisely is reinforced in both writers' novels by the portraits of marriages where worldly, sensual or romantic criteria take precedence; so, too, for men, though they have their compensations if the marriage fails and are not usually under the economic hegemony of their spouse. Austen shows us the disillusionment of Bennet when his wife loses her youthful attractions, a scenario which will doubtless be repeated in the Wickham-Lydia relationship. Burney's Mrs. Arlbery has something to say on this point which is reminiscent of Mary Wollstonecraft's or, indeed, Swift's views:

"A man looks enchanted while his beautiful young bride talks nonsense; it comes so prettily from her ruby lips, and she blushes and dimples with such lovely attraction while she

utters it; he casts his eyes around him with conscious elation to see her admirers, and his enviers; but he has amply his turn for looking like a fool himself, when youth and beauty take flight, and when his ugly old wife exposes her ignorance or folly at every word." (*Camilla* II:254-5)

Burney satirises the husband who makes his choice beguiled by external attractions, but she also notices his desire to compete with other men who envy him his possession. In this way, she shows how women are judged as sexual objects and as status symbols among men. In the same way, Sir Clement Willoughby, in *Evelina*, imagines that Lord Orville's earlier apparent lack of interest in Evelina has given him, as slightly lower in the social scale, right of possession by default.

Other motives for marriage such as economic advancement of individuals or families are also examined by both Burney and Austen. In *Mansfield Park*, for instance, Sir Thomas Bertram's displeasure with Fanny Price for not thinking seriously about Henry Crawford's proposal is because he sees it as a means of her helping her own family to better their circumstances, as he, of course, had helped his own wife's family.⁵⁹ He is proved wrong in his judgment of Crawford, suggesting that where there is not respect and compatibility between the partners these arguments are insufficient. Austen and Burney have their heroines marry "well," or at least "comfortably," in a financial sense, though Cecilia must forfeit her own fortune in order to take her husband's name. Nevertheless, allowing for the manipulation of plot necessitated by the demand for a conventional fairy-tale ending, the point is made that these marriages are based on mutual affection and to mutual advantage in

⁵⁹ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814), introd. G.B. Stern (London: Collins, 1953). (All references to this edition.)

that in several cases each partner will modify in some way a fault in the other. The women in question too are "proper ladies"; it is never openly voiced that the attraction of their lover is enhanced by his wealth or position. Elizabeth Bennet can wryly joke that she dated her love for Darcy from her first view of "his beautiful grounds at Pemberley," but such self-mockery is not a characteristic of Burney's heroines (*Pride and Prejudice* 338). However, some of Burney's female characters do have an opportunity of giving their views of bad marriages in the course of the action of the novels.

In *Evelina* the Mirvans' marriage is an object lesson in male manipulation and female strategies for survival. *Cecilia* examines closely three marriages, those of the Moncktons, the Delviles and the Harrels, the first a mismatch between an older wealthy woman and a young impecunious man who is only waiting for his wife to die; the second an arranged marriage for family advantage; the third between a clever, but corrupt, young man who attempts to keep his place in society by squandering money at the gambling tables, and a foolish woman who eventually is left penniless by her husband.

Burney also comments on marriages between older men and younger women arranged by families for their own purposes when she gives the history of Mrs. Berlinton's descent into near-ruin. *Camilla* shows a marriage, the Tyrols', of intellectual equals who yet lack a proper knowledge of the role of the emotions and feelings and who are too distanced from their children. In Marchmont's experiences, Burney examines the expectations of men when choosing wives for their own comfort rather than for mutual support. The projected marriage of Isabella and Edgar Mandlebert gives an opportunity for discussion of marrying for looks rather than

intelligence and compatibility. Eugenia is tricked into marriage with an adventurer who soon changes his romantic wooing to belligerence and blackmail.

In *The Wanderer*, Juliet's unconsummated forced marriage to a brutal husband who marries her for her inheritance is an example of the trap in which women find themselves as a result of the marriage laws of the day which gave the man rights over the woman and her possessions. Neither Eugenia nor Juliet will break their marriage vows, though they probably could have had their marriages annulled. Bridget Hill tells us that, although the English marriage laws in the eighteenth century were draconian where women were concerned and very few women were able to divorce their husbands, a marriage "could [...] be annulled if proof was available that [it] had been made under duress, or on proof of insanity, or on the grounds that the parties to the marriage were too young to consent to marriage" (109). However, for Eugenia and Juliet, religious and moral laws inscribed in their marriage vows, even though obtained under duress, take precedence over man-made civil laws. For Eugenia "her word once given, with whatever violence torn from her, would be held sacred" (*Camilla* V:887). Burney solves the problem by having both men die. One of them, with poetic justice, dies accidentally by his own hand whilst he is threatening suicide in order to blackmail Eugenia; the other pays the penalty of treason.

In all of Burney's novels themes can be isolated which stem from a consideration of the moral life of her principal characters and a consideration of woman's role in society and the expectations men have of women. By using the device of a young woman's entrance into the world, as she does in *Evelina*, in *Cecilia* and in *Camilla*,

Burney can compare the effects of a sheltered country upbringing on her young heroines who are later exposed to city life with its temptations and corruptions. The idea of the relative values of nature versus art, and the parallel between the country and innocence as opposed to the city and sophistication or decadence are metaphors for this exploration. This is a theme much discussed in the eighteenth century of course, and surfaces in the writings of Richardson, Fielding and Rousseau.

Other common themes in the novels are the proper uses of wealth and of time. The right use of inheritance is a major theme in *Cecilia*, whose heroine has plans for the benevolent distribution of her wealth. For the woman or man of sensibility, benevolence was a necessary prerequisite since the ethos of the cult of sensibility is grounded in Locke's and Hutcheson's exploration of the basis for the establishment of social and moral harmony. It was Hutcheson's insistence on "the *greatest Happiness* for the *greatest Numbers*" which was the cornerstone of this philosophy.⁶⁰

In the discussion that follows in this thesis the concept of "sensibility" is understood to be a way of perceiving and interpreting the world and a moral and philosophical approach to ways of living with an emphasis on benevolence and sensitivity to others' rights and feelings. The connection between sensibility and benevolence will be elaborated upon in the next chapter. Since the cult of sensibility assumes that one cannot be happy in another's distress, the pursuit of happiness includes the happiness of others. If it is reasonable to wish for a productive society whose members live in

⁶⁰ Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in Two Treatises*, 3rd ed. (London: Printed for J. and J. Knapton, J. Darby, etc., 1729) 180.

harmony one with the other, it is sensibility - sympathy, empathy, benevolence - which provides the impulse for this harmony. Only by imagining oneself in another's position can one truly empathise with that human being and this attribute requires sensibility. Samuel Richardson proclaimed: "The man is to be honour'd who can weep for the distresses of others [...]."⁶¹

Burney's heroes and heroines all demonstrate the propensity to feel for others less fortunate than themselves. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, characters such as Mrs. Ireton in *The Wanderer* lack the possibility of developing this capacity, since they can always distance themselves from other, less fortunate, human beings, putting them into a category of the sub-human. Burney's emphasis on the attribute of sensibility, and especially on its moral implications, is consistent with the philosophical thinking of her day. Her heroines are often guilty of error, or at least of imprudence and precipitance, but they also feel and inspire benevolence, and ultimately learn to channel their own benevolent impulses where they can do most good.

Edward and Lillian Bloom seem to agree with earlier critics in suggesting that Burney "became, in effect, self-imitative" (Introduction to *Camilla* xiv). However, contemporary feminist critics such as Doody, Epstein, Spacks,⁶² Spender and Straub, see her novels

⁶¹ Samuel Richardson, *A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflexions, Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* (London: Printed for S. Richardson; and sold by C. Hitch [et al.] Bath, 1755) 204-5; see also *Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady Comprehending the most Important Concerns of Private Life and Particularly Showing the Distresses that may Attend the Misconduct both of Parents and Children in Relation to Marriage* (1747-8). Published by the Editor of *Pamela*, Samuel Richardson, ed. Angus Ross, introd. Angus Wilson, 2 vols. (London: Folio, 1991): Letter 419 Belford to Lovelace: "I ever honoured a man that could weep for the distresses of others;" (II:1224).

⁶² Patricia Meyer Spacks, *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP, 1976).

as addressing, in a cumulative manner, the problems eighteenth-century women faced: in *Evelina*, the entrance into a world which undervalued and harassed women and most often thereafter escape into marriage which placed them legally at their husband's disposal; in *Cecilia*, the horror of madness through misunderstandings and the pressures placed on women by society; in *Camilla*, the often flimsy education available to females; and in *The Wanderer*, the limited possibilities in the workforce for those thrown on their own resources. They strongly disagree with those critics who argue a falling off in performance after *Evelina* through three successive novels. Patricia Meyer Spacks takes issue with Edwine Montague and Louis L. Martz who see only a "narrow and vanishing margin between literature and life" when they compare Burney's novels and her diaries. Stressing the creativity, artistry and patterning which she finds in Burney's work in both genres, Spacks insists that: "neither novels nor diaries in fact offer anything like a 'direct transcript' [of Burney's life]. Both demonstrate the shaping of experience by a special sensibility, the artistry of pattern almost as manifest in letters and journals as in fiction" (159).

In their introduction to the Oxford University Press edition of *Camilla*, Edward and Lillian Bloom write:

From the very beginning of composition, Fanny Burney meant *Camilla* (or *Ariella* as she initially conceived the title) to exploit the pathos of "the tender sympathy". Because it was axiomatic that "a crying volume" brought its author more money "in six months than a heavy merry thing", she permitted herself few stops. She would have her readers weep in sympathy over the heroine's mistakes, in wonder over Eugenia's resignation, in anger over Mr. Tyrold's unwarranted imprisonment. If *Cecilia* made Mrs. Thrale cry herself "blind

over the conclusion . . . 'tis so excessively pathetic", then the third novel must provoke sobs only intermittently stifled.⁶³

Camilla was specifically written, of course, in the hope of improving the family's financial situation, since Burney had only her pension from her days at Court as Second Keeper of the Robes, and her husband was deprived of his lands in France. She was also anxious to provide for their young son: hence the emphasis on financial rewards for her labour. Accordingly, in *Camilla* Burney deliberately uses some of the conventions of the popular novel of sensibility to appeal to the sensibilities of her readers: their "readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art." They were meant to weep for the troubles and anguish of the heroine of her novels which mount with ever increasing tension to the final pages.

Burney's technique in writing her novels is to pile up the effects of her heroines' dilemmas which increase in intensity as the stories progress. Resolution is constantly and teasingly deferred until the final harmony. This deferral is often achieved by the device of silencing the heroine; she is unable to voice her protests or express her feelings and thoughts because of society's demands upon her in her role of "proper lady." The effects of the heroine's entrapment in circumstances beyond her control, of her harassment by men, and of her silencing, contain elements of the Gothic novel, as do Cecilia's madness and Camilla's sickness and isolation. The novel of sensibility has strong links with Gothic literature: both make a powerful appeal to the emotions and stress the ability of an

⁶³ Edward and Lillian Blooms' note to this reference reads: "For the financial value of the 'tender sympathy' (*Camilla*, p. 845), see Joyce Hemlow, *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford, 1958), p. 97. For Mrs. Thrale's reaction, see *Diary and Letters*, ii. 53-4." (Introduction *Camilla* xviii.)

imaginative mind to create its own horrors. Burney used the conventions of both genres to suit her purposes. Gothic literature is a mode adopted by women writers from Mrs. Radcliffe through Frances Burney to Charlotte and Emily Brontë and many contemporary writers. It speaks in a language which makes use of the psychological, the instinctive and what cannot in fact be articulated, but only felt.

Katharine M. Rogers sees Burney as bringing to the developing novel an "intense rendition of the psychological problems of women - problems that are characteristic of her own time, but are also perennial."⁶⁴ Stressing Burney's exposure of the conventions of patriarchal authority, authority which is often shown by Burney as faulty, Rogers goes on:

As a perceptive, creative, energetic woman, she saw through pretentious authority and resented narrow restrictions. As an inhibited, conventional one, she suffered guilt and ambivalence, felt herself helpless before established authority, struggled to be self-effacing and blameless. Her novels do not present clear criticism, but rather the anxiety, the frustration, the painful ambivalence felt by women imprisoned in a patriarchal ideology which makes them suffer but which they are not equipped to challenge. (5)

These insights come from Burney's own situation as author in a world which imposed restrictions and silences on women. They are the product of her own feminine sensibility, a sensibility shaped by the world she saw around her. This "feminine sensibility" is the attribute she brought to the eighteenth-century novel.

⁶⁴ Katharine M. Rogers, *Frances Burney: The World of 'Female Difficulties'* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990) 4-5.

The chapter which follows will look at the ideas which lay behind the concept of sensibility in the eighteenth century and some of the ramifications of these ideas on the writers of the period.

CHAPTER 3

THE BACKGROUND TO THE CONCEPT OF SENSIBILITY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In order to establish what the word “sensibility” signifies in the context of Burney’s novels it is necessary to explore its connotations in the eighteenth century, its role in Enlightenment philosophy, and what influence the concept of sensibility had on the novels of sensibility of the period. The various meanings of the word and the repercussions on philosophical enquiry will first be addressed in this chapter. Then the effects on novelists of the ideas generated from these discussions, and especially on those who wrote in the genre of the novel of sensibility, will be considered. Finally, attitudes of women writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen will be explored. Chapter 4, which follows, will look at the meanings Burney herself ascribes to the word.

As will be seen, sensibility was closely associated with both moral values, man’s treatment of his fellow man, and aesthetics, which in the eighteenth century related to things perceptible to the senses and ways of seeing. In Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* sensibility is associated with the source of morality and is the “mother of humanity, of generosity,” as can be seen in the following excerpt from the article on “Humanity”:

Sensibility. A tender and delicate disposition of the soul which makes it easy to be moved, to be touched.

This *sensibility* of soul gives one a kind of sagacity about virtuous matters and goes further than the mind merely working on its own. Souls with sensibility can quickly fall into errors which pragmatic men never make; but they far exceed such men by the amount of goodness they achieve. Souls with sensibility have more vivacity than other people: both goods and evils are exaggerated. Reflection may produce an honest man; but *sensibility* makes him virtuous. *Sensibility* is the mother of humanity, of generosity; it preserves merit, gives aid to the intellect and carries belief along in its train.⁶⁵

Sensibility is thus closely linked to morality through humanity and generosity - benevolence - and becomes the moving spirit behind the virtuous act. In this definition, sensibility is privileged above intellect as being more penetrating, which brings it into line with Locke's idea of sensibility as being allied to the intuition which informs the intellect.

The word "sensibility" did not gain wide currency in England until the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, it is recorded in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (definition 1.a) as occurring in Chaucer in 1374 in his *Boethius*, though, of course, with different connotations. Edith Birkhead, in "Sentiment and Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century Novel," provides the genesis for both these words in the literature of the period.⁶⁶ The word is of course closely associated with "sentimental." Sensibility had been in vogue in France for some time before it became fashionable in England, and was cultivated as a fine art by the French (Birkhead 96). In the French use of the word "*sensibilité*" it seems to connote taste rather than Richardson's

⁶⁵ Diderot, *Les Classiques Du Peuple: Textes Choisis de L'Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*. Introd. Albert Soboul. (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1962) 239.

⁶⁶ Edith Birkhead, "Sentiment and Sensibility in the Eighteenth-Century Novel," *Essays and Studies by Members of The English Association*, ed. Oliver Elton (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1925) XI: 92-116. See also R.F. Brissenden, "'Sentiment': Some Uses of the Word in the Writings of David Hume," *Studies in the Eighteenth Century: Papers Presented at the David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra, 1966*. Ed. R.F. Brissenden (Canberra: Australian National UP, 1968) 89-107.

“delicacy of feeling, swiftness of response to the emotions of love and pity” (Birkhead 96). Richardson’s use of the word, with his emphasis on love and pity, has strong connections with benevolence.

Always connected with the sensations, either of mind or body, to Johnson it was “quickness of perception,” “delicacy.” The entry under “Sensibility” in Johnson’s *Dictionary* reads:

SENSIBILITY. *n.f.* [sensibilité, French.]

(1). Quickness of sensation.

Modesty is a kind of quick and delicate feeling in the soul: it is such an exquisite sensibility, as warns a woman to shun the first appearance of every thing hurtful. [*Addison’s Spectator*]

(2). Quickness of perception.⁶⁷

His example from Addison’s *Spectator* links women particularly with the attribute. Modesty becomes one facet of woman’s sensibility in this particular example, and her sensibility acts to warn her of danger. As will be discussed later, it is this modesty which prevents Juliet, in *The Wanderer*, from performing professionally in public. In *Mansfield Park*, too, Austen shows the gap between Fanny Price and Mary Crawford’s ideas of propriety, their sensitivity or lack of sensitivity to the perception others might have of them, in their reactions to acting in a play deemed unsuitable for private performance. In any case, acting a part was shown to be totally out of character for Fanny Price. She is shown to be a woman of real sensibility in her responses to the beauties of nature and of music and literature. For instance, she is moved, almost against her will, by Henry Crawford’s “capital” reading from Shakespeare (*Mansfield*

⁶⁷ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are deduced from their Originals*, etc., 2 vols. (London: Printed by Strahan, for J. and P. Knapton, T. and T. Longman, etc. 1755).

Park 276). However, she recognises the dangers of play-acting, and was proved to be an accurate observer of the dangers of wearing a mask behind which to masquerade. For Fanny, truth was indispensable.

The word “sensible” to Johnson is connected with perception, either through the senses or through the mind, which presumably means the mental process of evaluating information received through the senses or by experience. It is also connected with moral perception. One who is “sensible” has moral perception; has “quick intellectual feeling”; and is “easily or strongly affected.” “Sense” to Johnson can be the faculty by which external objects are perceived, using the five senses. It is also connected with the understanding, but again it can be: “Sensibility; quickness or keenness of perception.” In this instance, the two words “sensibility” and “sense” are synonymous.

Of the seven definitions of “sensibility” given in *The Oxford English Dictionary* number three gives: “Mental perception, awareness of something” and quotes its usage in the early fifteenth century (c1412) by Hoccleve, *De Reg. Princ.* 5009: “pei erren foule, & goon out of þe wey; Of trouth have pei scant sensibilité”; and before 1635, by Naunton, “That he said unto the Queen, with some sensibility of the Spanish designs on France: Madam, I beseech you be content not to fear [etc.]” Both these examples suggest a connection with the mind: with knowledge and understanding. Its usages in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, quoted in *The Oxford English Dictionary* (“Sensibility,” definition 6), vary from “Sweet Sensibility” of Cowper (1762); “Dear sensibility” of Sterne (1768), used in a partly ironical sense; degenerating by 1807 to

Byron's "sickly Sensibility" - though in this sense of the word it is used in conjunction with "Affectation" and therefore signifies false or degraded sensibility.

Other words associated with sensibility in the eighteenth century which have been affected to a greater or lesser extent by historical changes are the words "sense," "senses" and "sensible." "Sensible" in particular is rarely used now as it was in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for instance as Burney and Austen would have used it to mean "aware of." Of the several meanings given for the word "sense" in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, some apply to perception, such as the verb "sense," (definition 1.a): "to perceive (an outward object) by the senses"; (definition 1.b): "to feel, be conscious of"; others to understanding, (definition 4): "to understand, comprehend, grasp." In the first case the five senses are the tools of experience and the more "sensible" a person, the more finely tuned their "sensibility." As discussed below, Locke's argument for the senses, together with our powers of reflection, providing the information by which we experience the world led to the privileging of sensibility. In the last definition of "sense" given above it is associated with understanding, or "common" sense.

Eighteenth-century philosophical thought was much influenced by Locke's theory of knowledge with its emphasis on the senses as the avenue to all knowledge. Perception and acute sensibilities were key elements in this theory. Newton's idea of the nerves as a solid structure which conveyed sense impressions to the brain and organs by way of vibration underpins Locke's concept of sensibility and its function. Vibrations from the air, as well as tactile sense perceptions, were included in Newton's theory, and the elasticity of the nerves

influenced the degree of vibration and therefore the impressions received. Newton uses the analogy of sight when describing the effects of rays of light falling on the eye, hence setting off vibrations along the optic nerves to the brain and resulting in an image of the object viewed.⁶⁸ As well as Locke, George Cheyne, physician to Samuel Richardson, was also influenced by these ideas of the nerves acting as media for vibrations which conveyed messages to the brain. As will be discussed later, Cheyne adapted Newton's theory to his own concept of the nerves as a musical stringed instrument whose sensitivity and harmony depended upon whether or not the instrument was properly tuned.⁶⁹

Locke's theory implies that as knowledge is based on the evidence of the senses the more "sensible" a person is, the more sensitive and the more knowledgeable. "Sensible" is used here of course to denote one whose senses are acute and who is perceptive. Locke argues for a scale of sensibility in animals and humans and suggests that a man "in whom decrepid old Age has blotted out the Memory of his past Knowledge" and has lost his sense of taste, hearing and smell will be in a state of almost "perfect Insensibility." He likens such a man to one of the lower species, for instance, an oyster or a cockle, whose dull perceptions make them almost insensible.⁷⁰ Locke, here, of course takes no account of the sensitivity to light and warmth of, for instance, living plants and

⁶⁸ Sir Isaac Newton, *Opticks: or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*, (based on the 4th ed. London, 1730), forward Albert Einstein, introd. Sir Edmund Whittaker, preface I. Bernard Cohen, analytical Table of Contents prepared by Duane H.D. Roller (New York: Dover, 1952): Preface xxxi-ii; 345; 353.

⁶⁹ George Cheyne, *The English Malady* (1733), ed. and introd. Roy Porter (London: Tavistock/Routledge, 1991) 4-5.

⁷⁰ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (4th ed., 1700), ed. and introd. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1975): II:ix:14:148.

vegetables, since it is the ability to reason, the “internal sense,” which he sees as the distinguishing feature in humans and especially in human beings of sensibility.

Locke puts considerable emphasis on perception as the key to knowledge:

Perception then being the first step and degree towards Knowledge, and the inlet of all the Materials of it, the fewer Senses any Man, as well as any other Creature, hath; and the fewer and duller the Impressions are, that are made by them; and the duller the Faculties are, that are employed about them, the more remote are they from that Knowledge, which is to be found in some Men. [...]. It suffices me only to have remarked here, that Perception is the first Operation of all our intellectual Faculties, and the inlet of all Knowledge into our Minds.
(II:ix:15:149.)

For Locke the senses are the first inlet to knowledge and what he calls an “internal sense” (II:i:4:105), or reflection, formulates ideas from the material gained through means of our perceptions: the five senses. In rejecting the concept of *a priori* knowledge and placing the full weight of his philosophical arguments on empirical means, he revolutionised thinking and deliberately went counter to scholastic teachings on received knowledge.

He uses metaphors such as “white Paper,” “empty Cabinet” and “*dark Room*” to express his concept of the mind not yet furnished with the raw material for thought and for ideas:

Let us then suppose the Mind to be, as we say, white Paper, void of all Characters, without any *Ideas*; How comes it to be furnished? Whence comes it by that vast store, which the busy and boundless Fancy of Man has painted on it, with an almost endless variety? Whence has it all the materials of Reason and Knowledge? To this I answer, in one word, From *Experience*: In that, all our Knowledge is founded; and from that it

ultimately derives it self. Our Observation employ'd either about *external, sensible Objects; or about the internal Operations of our Minds, perceived and reflected on by our selves, is that, which supplies our Understandings with all the materials of thinking.* These two are the Fountains of Knowledge, from whence all the *Ideas* we have, or can naturally have, do spring. (II:i:2:104)

Again, he writes:

The Senses at first let in particular *Ideas*, and furnish the yet empty Cabinet: And the Mind by degrees growing familiar with some of them, they are lodged in the Memory, and Names got to them. Afterwards the Mind proceeding farther, abstracts them, and by Degrees learns the use of general Names. In this manner the Mind comes to be furnish'd with *Ideas* and Language, the Materials about which to exercise its discursive Faculty: And the use of Reason becomes daily more visible, as these Materials, that give it Employment, increase. (I:ii:15:55)

I pretend not to teach, but to enquire; and therefore cannot but confess here again, That external and internal Sensation, are the only passages that I can find, of Knowledge, to the Understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the Windows by which light is let into this *dark Room*. For, methinks, the *Understanding* is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or *Ideas* of things without; [...]. (II:xi:17:162-3)

Throughout his thesis he insists that it is the senses (Sensation) and Reflection (“internal Sense”) that are the source of all our ideas:

The Understanding seems to me, not to have the least glimmering of any *Ideas*, which it doth not receive from one of these two. *External Objects furnish the Mind with the Ideas of sensible qualities*, which are all those different perceptions they produce in us: And the *Mind furnishes the Understanding with Ideas of its own Operations.* (II:i:5:106)

Although the faculty of reason is an important element in Locke's system of knowledge, intuition also plays a part for it is *Intuitive Knowledge* which for him acts as arbiter of the truth of a proposition. It is through intuitive knowledge that the mind “perceives the Truth,

as the Eye doth light, only by being directed toward it" (IV:ii:1:531). It is also intuitive knowledge which is sensitive to the feelings of others and which is aware of others' needs.

The ethical theory that evolved from Locke's theory of knowledge was grounded in his belief in the pursuit of happiness as the basic impulse of all men. He equated pleasure with happiness and pain with misery and, by extension, argued that happiness was "good" and misery "evil": "what has an aptness to produce Pleasure in us, is that we call *Good*, and what is apt to produce Pain in us, we call *Evil*, for no other reason, but for its aptness to produce Pleasure and Pain in us, wherein consists our *Happiness* and *Misery*" (II:xxi:42:259):

Good and Evil, as hath been shewn, B.II.Ch.XX.S.2. and Ch.XXI.S.42. are nothing but Pleasure or Pain, or that which occasions, or procures Pleasure or Pain to us. *Morally Good and Evil* then, is only the Conformity or Disagreement of our voluntary Actions to some Law, whereby Good or Evil is drawn on us, from the Will and Power of the Law-maker; which Good and Evil, Pleasure or Pain, attending our observance, or breach of the Law, by the Decree of the Law-maker, is that we call *Reward* and *Punishment*. (II:xxviii:5:351)

As a liberal thinker and with his belief in a benign creator Locke also believed in the fundamental goodness of his fellow men and saw their happiness as dependent upon each man's conscience: no man could be happy at another's expense. From this it is a short step to Shaftesbury's "benevolent man" thesis which goes counter to Hobbes's argument for man as a solely selfish being.⁷¹

⁷¹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, "An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit," Treatise IV in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times etc.*, 3 vols. (London: Printed James Purser 1737-8): II:ii:2:172-6.

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), ed. and introd. C.B. Macpherson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

Bertrand Russell in evaluating the practical ramifications of Locke's theories writes:

On the whole, the school which owed its origin to Locke, and which preached enlightened self-interest, did more to increase human happiness, and less to increase human misery, than was done by the schools which despised it in the name of heroism and self-sacrifice. I do not forget the horrors of early industrialism, but these, after all, were mitigated within the system.⁷²

As Jonathan Culler tells us: "Because it is arbitrary, the sign is totally subject to history, and the combination at a particular moment of a given signifier and signified is a contingent result of the historical process."⁷³ Nowhere is this, perhaps, more evident than in the changing connotations of abstract and sometimes fashionable words such as "sensibility." Even in the eighteenth century, there were misgivings amongst moralists and philosophers about some aspects of the consequences of Locke's ideas, and particularly in relation to the culture of sensibility. The notion that the individual is constantly re-made as new impressions and associations are absorbed into the psyche, but that, conversely, the individual is trapped within the cycle of memory set up by these recurring associations, is one feature of Locke's theories. As well, his theory of the association of ideas and its effect on the individual's psychological growth contains ambivalences, since it contains within itself the threat of passivity, just as the culture of sensibility was found to do for some men and for most women.

One reason for ambiguity felt towards the emphasis on sensibility was that it might lead to effeminacy in men. Cheyne

⁷² Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy and its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948) 672.

⁷³ Jonathan Culler, *Saussure* (n.p.: Fontana, 1984) 36.

argued that people with weak nerves were more subject to excessive sensibility, and this was applied to women as sensibility became gendered in the imagination of the period.

Cheyne writes in his introduction to *The English Malady*:

[...] the Human Body is a Machin of an infinite Number and Variety of different Channels and Pipes, filled with various and different Liquors and Fluids, perpetually running, glideing, or creeping forward, or returning backward, in a constant *Circle*, and sending out little Branches and Outlets, to moisten, nourish and repair the Expences of Living. That the Intelligent Principle, or *Soul*, resides somewhere in the Brain, where all the Nerves, or Instruments of Sensation terminate, like a *Musician* in a finely fram'd and well-tun'd Organ-Case; that these Nerves are like *Keys*, which, being struck on or touch'd, convey the Sound and Harmony to this sentient Principle, or *Musician*." (Introd. 4-5)

In the analogous situation of the human nerves, they must be properly tuned by correct diet and exercise to strengthen them. Cheyne applied the theory to his medical descriptions of hypochondria and hysteria, arguing that the weaker the nerves the greater the degree of sensibility, making for vulnerability to illness or breakdown. He blames civilisation, "Luxury and Laziness," and conditions in large, populous centres in cities such as London for nervous distempers and weak nerves (I:VI:i:48-49), and argues:

Now since this present Age has made Efforts to go beyond former Times, in all the Arts of *Ingenuity, Invention, Study, Learning*, and all the contemplative and sedentary Professions, (I speak only here of our own Nation, our own Times, and of the better Sort, whose chief Employments and Studies these are) the Organs of these Faculties being thereby worn and spoil'd, must affect and deaden the whole *System*, and lay a Foundation for the Diseases of Lowness and Weakness. Add to this, that those who are likeliest to excel and apply in this Manner, are most capable, and most in hazard of following that Way of Life which I have mention'd, as the likeliest to produce

these Diseases. *Great Wits* are generally great *Epicures*, at least, Men of *Taste*. (Cheyne I:VI:v:54)

As can be seen from this extract from *The English Malady*, Cheyne correlates a sedentary life and intellectual pursuits with nervous diseases, and argues that such people “have a great Degree of Sensibility; are quick Thinkers, feel Pleasure or Pain the most readily, and are of the most lively Imagination” (Cheyne I:XI:xi:105).

Cheyne sees women as particularly vulnerable to nervous complaints because of their weaker constitutions and their addiction to “*Coffee, Tea, Chocolate, and Snuff*” (I:VI:i:49). In singling out members of the “Fair Sex” as sensual creatures and as immoderate in their desire for luxury goods, Cheyne continues the process of the gendering of sensibility. As Porter notes in his introduction to Cheyne’s *The English Malady*, nervous disorders became associated with the “fair sex” and men treated with the same problems were thought of as suffering a disease of effeminacy.

Healthy nerves and muscles had masculine attributes: they were strong, hard, resilient; the weak nerves which were such danger sources were, by contrast, soft, languid, passive, or, in other words, feminine. As polite culture increasingly fabricated the image of the fashionable lady as frail, yielding and delicate, it is no wonder that nervous disorders such as the vapours and hysteria became increasingly their prerogative (Introd. xli).

In their portraits of such women as Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park* and Lady Louisa Larparent in *Evelina*, Austen and Burney satirised this image of the frail, languid, passive female.

The danger of the link between sensibility and sexuality and its effect on the suspect female libido was also of concern to moralists of the period. A fictional representation of this link between sensibility and sexuality could be cited in Austen’s depiction of Marianne

Dashwood in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Marianne's life-threatening fever could be interpreted as a manifestation of a psychological illness caused by frustrated libido.

In an article entitled "Hypochondria and Hysteria: Sensibility and the Physicians," John Mullan discusses the contemporary medical view of hysteria, which was linked with sensibility. He makes a connection between the writings of physicians and novelists of the eighteenth century, and suggests that "an examination of the function of sensibility in eighteenth-century writings on hypochondria, hysteria and nervous disorder will illuminate the literary cult of sensibility."⁷⁴

The physicians of the period suggested that there was a strong connection between a retired or studious life and sensibility, with its auxiliaries melancholy and hypochondria in men, and hysteria in women. The maladies associated with sensibility afflict the studious, such as Cowper and Hume, and women, who of necessity were remote from the active life of business. "The English Malady," as it was called after the treatise by Cheyne, was by no means seen as degrading; in fact it was associated with "refinement" and "imagination":

It is, it seems, an affliction liable to be visited upon a man, "blest with all the powers of genius and understanding in a degree far above the ordinary state of human nature."⁷⁵ But, more specifically, it is seen to be visited upon those for whom refinement, study or "imagination" involves solitude or retreat, the meditation which excludes all but the subjects of its fixation, the "lucubration" which implies cloistered nocturnal reflection and the writing which comes out of it.

⁷⁴ John Mullan, "Hypochondria and Hysteria: Sensibility and the Physicians," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretations* 25.2 Spring (1984) 141-74: 141.

⁷⁵ James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R.W. Chapman (1904: rpt. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980) 47-8; qtd. in Mullan 149.

In literature, and particularly novels, of the mid-eighteenth century, the apotheosis of "sensibility" typically involves the production of certain kinds of retreat or specialization [...]. The domain of sensibility and sentiment in novels - in Richardson that of a specifically feminine "correspondence," in Mackenzie a precarious and idealized rural domesticity, in Sterne a knowing and delimited rhetorical playfulness - is constituted, in various ways, out of an opposition to a "world" of masculine desire, commercial endeavour and material ambition [...]. Outside the "world" of, in this case, specifically commercial and mercantile activity are hypochondria, melancholy, nervous disorder - but also sensibility, imagination, delicacy. (Mullan 149-50)

The melancholy, hypochondriac man, who is withdrawn from the active world of commercial endeavour, parallels the woman confined to domestic life, restricted in freedom of action and prone to hysteria, or "the vapours." The ambivalence of sensibility is stressed in this version of the eighteenth-century view of the attribute. It can be "either privilege or affliction [...]. For, in both the novel and the 'medical' text, sensibility can be a special and desirable capacity, but it can also usher in the possibilities of melancholy, delirium and defeat" (Mullan 141).

Whilst men are seen to express an excess of sensibility through symptoms of hypochondria (an example is the fictional character Matthew Bramble in Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*), with women, judged even in this pre-Freudian period in the light of their biological role, it is seen to be exhibited through hysteria.⁷⁶ This is consistent with Marianne Dashwood's collapse into feverish illness and, in Burney's novels, with Camilla's escape into near-death and Cecilia's temporary withdrawal into madness. Indeed, Camilla's desire for death in order to escape the horror of her father's

⁷⁶ Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), (Westminster: Folio Society, 1955).

imprisonment, for which she blames herself, combines hysteria with the desire literally to withdraw from the world - the "reclusive sensibility" Mullan discusses (150).

One aspect of the discussion that supports the theory that manifestations of sensibility could be seen as gender-based is the fact that men of sensibility were, as mentioned earlier, thought to be in some way emasculated. Mackenzie's "man of feeling" is obsessed by his love for the heroine of the novel of that name, written at the height of the cult of sensibility. His love is never consummated; it is expressed through tears and suffering, and he finally dies without revealing his feelings for the woman in question.⁷⁷ Similarly, the hero in *Julia de Roubigné* never speaks his love until it is too late.⁷⁸ He leaves France without telling his feelings to his childhood friend, hoping to make his fortune, as indeed he does, and return for her. By then it is too late. Her family's financial circumstances have made it necessary for her to succumb to pressure and marry a wealthy suitor: this sets the scene for the final tragedy.

Janet Todd, in speaking of the novel of sensibility in general, sees "the plot of the man of feeling [as] strangely desexualized, although its language may render the pathos erotic."⁷⁹ She stresses the sentimental aspects of Sterne and Mackenzie's novels which deal with love which never comes to fruition, despite the "familial erotic sentiment" of, for instance, Yorick. The Shandy men, she suggests "appear emasculated in one way or another" (100-101). Todd argues that "[s]exual impotence or refusal, stressed more as the century

⁷⁷ Mackenzie, Henry. *The Man of Feeling*, ed. and introd. Hamish Miles from the 1773 edition by Cadell and Strahan, London (London: Scholartis, 1928).

⁷⁸ Henry Mackenzie, *Julia de Roubigné: A Tale in a Series of Letters*, 2 vols. From the 1777 edition by Strahan and Cadell, Edinburgh (rpt. New York: Garland, 1979).

⁷⁹ Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986) 100.

progresses, goes some way towards bringing the male to the social condition of the female and so investing him with female sentimental significance: 'I am as weak as a woman', says Yorick with pride" (101). For Todd, sensibility in men is linked to impotence, though in Sterne's case, one should also allow for his ironical sense, and the fact that he may not be telling all. In women, the symptoms of sensibility: hysteria, tears, desire to escape through fainting, madness or death, might well indicate repressed or disappointed sexual instincts,

Novels of sensibility were seen as dangerous in the light of what was felt to be their emasculating effect on men. In the political climate of the day novels which appealed to the reader's pity for a victim from the disadvantaged classes could well be stigmatised as dangerous, irrational and, by extension in conventional minds, effeminate. England was, after all, on the defensive, under threat from the infection of political turmoil across the Channel, and for many years at war with France. Such subversive ideas could be seen as destabilising. A further threat from the novels of sensibility was anxiety because of the unsettling effects they might have on women. As Todd ironically puts it: "Presumably because of their vapid lives, their weak heads and their greater susceptibility, which allowed them to be both more virtuous and more vulnerable, women, it was surmised, might start to live through fantasy and so avoid becoming devoted wives and practical mothers" (134).

Adam Smith, in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, sees both sides of the question when discussing sensibility and men. He equates sensibility with civilisation and humanity when he compares the attitudes of "savages" with "civilized nations." He compares the

“Spartan” bravery and endurance required of men in “savage” societies, such as those of the North American Indian, with European civilised mores:

The hardiness demanded of savages diminishes their humanity; and, perhaps, the delicate sensibility required in civilized nations sometimes destroys the masculine firmness of the character. [...]. Hardiness is the character most suitable to the circumstances of a savage; sensibility to those of one who lives in a very civilized society.⁸⁰

He argues that sensibility to the feelings of others is not inconsistent with manhood or self-command; it is indeed “the very principle upon which that manhood is founded. The very same principle or instinct which, in the misfortune of our neighbour, prompts us to compassionate his sorrow, in our own misfortune, prompts us to restrain the abject and miserable lamentations of our own sorrow” (Smith III:iii:213-4). Where the danger lies is in too much sensibility towards one’s *own* feelings, which Smith sees as leading to a lack of “self-command,” and as arising from “weakness of nerves” (Smith III:iii:220).

For men, sensibility was a part of life, they had other roles to play, often in the public arena. For the bourgeois, upwardly mobile man, Locke’s theories and the culture of sensibility offered a chance to fashion himself anew. For women, circumscribed within the home, passive and dependent, the *cult* of sensibility became another form of imprisonment within the ways men had of seeing them, reified as they were as irrational, sensual, luxury-loving consumers who must be controlled.

⁸⁰ Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments; to which is added, A Dissertation on the Origin of Languages*, new edition with a Biographical and Critical Memoir of the Author, by Dugald Stewart (London: Bell and Daldy, 1869) V:ii:303-4.

Fear of feminisation of men and the effects of sensibility on women were not the only dangers seen as inherent in the culture of sensibility. Sensibility became associated with both morality and aesthetics, thus creating a dichotomy between these two seemingly disparate attributes, the one relating to taste, the other to behaviour. To Shaftesbury sensibility was connected with aesthetics as well as with benevolence. In Burke's theory of aesthetics, too, sensibility was a pre-requisite of good taste.⁸¹ Judgment and knowledge provided the tools to evaluate beauty which was apprehended through the senses, especially the senses of sight and hearing.⁸² One deficient in sensibility was also lacking in perception and not able to develop good taste. Sensibility therefore became associated with highly cultivated, civilised people and races, as Adam Smith argues when he compares the manners and mores of "rude and barbarous" societies with those of the civilised races of his day (V:ii:297). He credits the latter with the "gentle virtue of humanity" (III:iii:215).

The dichotomy between morality and aesthetics in this debate can be seen to be resolved elegantly in Shaftesbury's thesis of the "good and the beautiful" - where what is truly beautiful must be good.⁸³ In countering Locke's arguments against innate ideas of

⁸¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, (2nd ed. 1759) ed. and introd. J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) 24.

⁸² For a discussion of the physiological aspects of sensibility as interpreted in the literature of the period, especially as influenced by contemporary medical knowledge of the nervous system and the workings of the five senses, see Ann Jessie Van Sant, *Eighteenth-Century Sensibility and the Novel: The Senses in Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993) 143 pp.

⁸³ Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, "The Moralists, A Philosophical Rhapsody being A Recital of Certain Conversations on Natural and Moral Subjects," Treatise V in *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times etc.*, 3 vols. (London: Printed James Purser 1737-8): II:iii:2:399 and 405.

Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit* (1699) introd. David Walford (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977) II:i:1:48-50; II:i:2:50-1. (All subsequent references to this edition.)

virtue, Shaftesbury insists that the very idea of God is the same as the idea of "order and virtue." He argues that:

The question is not about the time the *ideas* entered, or the moment that one body came out of the other, but whether the constitution of man be such that, being adult and grown up, at such or such a time, sooner or later (no matter when), the idea and sense of order, administration, and a God, will not infallibly, inevitably, necessarily spring up in him.⁸⁴

"Goodness" is closely associated with benevolence towards others: the virtuous man is the benevolent man. To Shaftesbury the good of society flows from the good of the individual since it was believed and argued that pleasure and pain were the chief principles in the impulse to action. Hume and Locke put it slightly differently by arguing that motivation for action is the function of the passions: Hume when he wrote that "[r]eason alone can never produce any action, or give rise to volition, [...]. Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions,"⁸⁵ and Locke, "Tis our passions [...] that dispose of our thoughts and actions."⁸⁶ Nevertheless, both see that "*Reason* must be our last Judge and Guide in every Thing" as Locke puts it (*Essay* IV:xix:14:704). Hume argues that in fact the passions are always reasonable: "The moment we perceive the falsehood of any supposition, or the insufficiency of any means our passions yield to our reason without any opposition" (II:iii:3:464).

Shaftesbury's argument that man is naturally biassed towards the preservation of the species provides an inbuilt motive for acting

⁸⁴ Benjamin Rand, ed. *The Life, Unpublished Letters, and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, New York: Macmillan 1900) Letter to Michael Ainsworth, 3rd June, 1709, 403.

⁸⁵ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature (1739 and 1740)*, ed. and introd. Ernest C. Mossner (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969) II:iii:3:462.

⁸⁶ John Locke, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, ed. E.S. de Beer, 8 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976) I:123.

reasonably and, for him, resolves the dilemma of the dichotomy between reason and the passions, the argument as to whether reason or the passions ought to, or did, control actions. As Shaftesbury writes in *An Inquiry concerning Virtue, or Merit*:

130 It has been already shewn, that in the Passions and Affections of particular Creatures, there is a constant relation to the Interest of a *Species*, or *common Nature*. This has been demonstrated in the case of *natural Affection*, parental Kindness, Zeal for Posterity, Concern for the Propagation and Nurture of the Young, Love of Fellowship and Company, Compassion, mutual Succour, and the rest of this kind. Nor will any-one deny that this Affection of a Creature towards the Good of the Species or common Nature, is as *proper* and *natural* to him, as it is to any Organ, Part or Member of an Animal-Body, or mere Vegetable, to work in its known Course, and regular way of Growth. (II:i:1:48)

A man's private Good is served by subscribing to the public good: "he is *ill*, with respect to himself; as he certainly is, with respect to others of his kind, when any [such] Appetites or Passions make him any-way injurious to them." Shaftesbury's stated aim in the *Inquiry* is to prove that virtue and self-interest in fact agree (I:ii:1:8). Like Socrates he argues that no "sensible" man *knowingly* does wrong, that if he applies reason he will do the morally correct thing. Benevolence or "mutual succour" is one route to virtue, and as has been seen benevolence is closely linked to sensibility. As will be discussed in the chapters on *Cecilia* and *Camilla*, sensibility is similarly tied to benevolence in Burney's novels.

The ideas put forward by Locke and his followers had their repercussions on novelists of the period. For writers such as Richardson, Sterne, Mackenzie and Burney, sympathy for another's misfortune became an important feature in their novels. Locke's

arguments for the senses being the inlet to all knowledge, his explanation of the place of intuition, and his emphasis on happiness as the motive for action, his equation of happiness with benevolence and sympathy for one's fellow man, are all aspects of the cult of sensibility and informed the novel of sensibility. In *Julia de Roubigné* Mackenzie explores the moral implications of a philosophy based on enlightened self-interest through Savillon's experiments in labour relations on a West Indian plantation worked by slaves. The message Savillon delivers is that it is in the masters' interests to care for their slaves, since this will improve productivity. He sees that he must adopt a pragmatic approach in his arguments in order to convince his capitalist colleagues to improve their treatment of those in their care, or, more properly, at their mercy. The utilitarian aspects of the eighteenth-century attitude to benevolence are confronted by Mackenzie in his novel.

Sterne, too, demonstrates in his novels his interest in the theme of sensibility, ironically, it must be added. Locke's influence on Sterne is implicit in *Tristram Shandy*, for instance, in his adaptation of the theory of the association of ideas.

Novels of sensibility were extremely popular from the mid-eighteenth century, with the publication of *Clarissa* in 1748, to the third quarter of that century. Although there was always some ambivalence toward the ideas which lay behind the cult of sensibility, toward the end of the century a reaction to the concept became more evident. This reaction R. F. Brissenden explains as partly attributable to the French Revolution:

The French Revolution has to be seen, of course, as the attempt to express in practical social and political terms many of the

ideas about man and society which I am suggesting can be called sentimental - and indeed [...] it was looked on in this way at the time. The Revolution was at once an expression of hope and belief in man and paradoxically, because it *was* a revolution and eventually a violent and bloody one, an expression of rage and despair at human folly and inadequacy. It is in the context of the Revolution that the semantic changes in words like "sentiment", "sentimental", and "sensibility" most obviously took place; and the course the Revolution took in part explains them. (*Virtue in Distress* 49)

As will be discussed later in this chapter, attitudes to sensibility changed, so that from being an admirable attribute denoting delicacy and fine aesthetic responses, particularly associated with the aristocracy, it became a term of disapprobation linked to "Jacobins." Brissenden locates the growing unease in connection with sensibility in the:

logical and metaphysical instability in the concepts of "sentiment" and "sensibility" themselves. The source of this instability may be found in the relationship between the reason and the feelings and the question of determining which of these faculties or attributes of man either is or ought to be the more important constituted one of the central and enduring grounds of debate throughout the period. (*Virtue in Distress* 49-50)

In a poem entitled "Sensibility" Hannah More stresses the ambiguity of the word which "eludes the chains / Of Definition."⁸⁷ She extols the faculty of sensibility as a virtue and draws attention to its connection with benevolence, but emphasises the two aspects of sensibility: that false sensibility which is preoccupied with self and its own rarefied responses, and true sensibility which "silently relieves" another's suffering:

Sweet Sensibility! thou soothing pow'r,

⁸⁷ Hannah More, *Sacred Dramas: Chiefly Intended for Young Persons, The Subjects Taken From The Bible; To Which is Added, 'Sensibility,' a Poem* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1799) 269-90.

Who shedd'st thy blessings on the natal hour
 Like fairy favours! Art can never seize,
 Nor Affectation catch thy pow'r to please;
 Thy subtile essence still eludes the chains
 Of Definition, and defeats her pains.
 Sweet Sensibility! thou keen delight!
 Thou hasty moral! sudden sense of right!
 Thou untaught goodness! Virtue's precious seed!
 Thou sweet precursor of the gen'rous deed!
 Beauty's quick relish! Reason's radiant morn,
 Which dawns soft light before Reflection's born!
 To those who know thee not, no words can paint!
 And those who know thee, know all words are faint!
 'Tis not to mourn because a sparrow dies;
 To rave in artificial extasies:
 'Tis not to melt in tender *Otway's* fires;
 'Tis not to faint when injur'd Shore expires:
 'Tis not because the ready eye o'erflows
 At *Clementina's*, or *Clarissa's* woes.

Forgive, O RICHARDSON! nor think I mean,
 With cold contempt, to blast thy peerless scene:
 If some faint love of virtue glow in me,
 Pure spirit! I first caught that flame from thee.

While soft Compassion silently relieves,
 Loquacious *Feeling* hints how much she gives;
 Laments how oft her wounded heart has bled,
 And boasts of many a tear she never shed.

In this poem, Hannah More points the difference between real and assumed sensibility, which "boasts of many a tear she never shed." She does not equate true sensibility with tears shed for a fictional character. Nevertheless she attributes to Richardson the spark ("I first caught that flame from thee") which opened her heart to compassionate feeling for others. She seems to suggest that through fiction novelists of the eighteenth century were able to enlarge the experience of their readers and teach them pity and compassion. Later, like Wollstonecraft, but for different reasons, she became more

dubious of the dangerous aspects of the cult of sensibility, especially to women.

Max Byrd in his *Visits to Bedlam: Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century* analyses the changing emphases in the literature during the second half of the eighteenth century, the "age of sensibility" in Northrop Frye's phrase.⁸⁸ Byrd suggests that "By the late 1740s in England a general dissatisfaction with the premises of Augustan literature existed. Formalist, neoclassic writing had proved somehow to be inadequate, the feeling ran; it had failed somehow to touch fully or rightly the emotions literature aims for [...]."⁸⁹

Sensibility in the novels of the period, however, was not just a matter of art and aesthetics. It is argued here that it also had much to do with ideas of morality since the beautiful was equated with the good and the novels of sensibility called attention to the sufferings of the poor and otherwise disadvantaged members of society, an area where benevolence could be exercised and demonstrated. As Diana Spearman, in her discussion of the cross fertilization between current philosophical ideas, social circumstances, and the novel, writes in *The Novel and Society*:

Ridiculous as some of the literary manifestations of sensibility may have been, it was not the mere fashion it has frequently been considered; it was rather foam on the deeper current of feeling, which at least showed which way the stream was flowing. *Clarissa*, in its aspect of sympathy with suffering, was one of the sources of sensibility. If *Clarissa's* misfortunes were exceptional - and considered in cold blood may look rather contrived - the tears shed over her probably contributed

⁸⁸ Northrop Frye, "Towards Defining an Age of Sensibility," *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1963) 130-7.

⁸⁹ Max Byrd, *Visits to Bedlam: Madness and Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (Columbia, SC: U of South Carolina P, 1975) 113.

something to the increasing awareness of the cruelty in everyday life.⁹⁰

Spearman sees the novel of the period as providing both a window onto a cruel world and, with its appeal to the sensibilities of the reader and the reader's ability to empathise with characters in the novel, a means of persuasion prompting much needed changes in attitude to the unfortunates in that society. Historian Robert Gray reminds us of how necessary such change was when he writes: "It was the age of reason that was the real age of callousness."⁹¹

Spearman goes on to discuss the ramifications of the cult of sensibility and its connection with liberal ideas of the period, but she oversimplifies when she writes that "[t]his kind of thing is not the mere sentimentality it afterwards became, since it was based on a solid philosophic foundation. Fielding and the other eighteenth-century novelists, except Defoe, believed in the fundamental goodness of human nature" (222-3). This argument that Fielding saw goodness as a fundamental aspect of human nature must be modified by his picture of the depraved fictional character, Blifil. The narrator of *Tom Jones* thought Blifil was born evil. Fielding's involvement with the criminal world through his position as magistrate at the Bow Street Court provided him with much insight into the motives and background which led to crime. Gray writes of magistrates John and Henry Fielding: "On the one hand they recognized that many of those who appeared before them were 'guilty of no crime but poverty'; indeed they were capable of giving the accused money to set up in a trade. On the other hand they were determined to bring hardened criminals to justice" (230). This dual view of human nature,

⁹⁰ Diana Spearman, *The Novel and Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966) 222.

⁹¹ Robert Gray, *A History of London* (London: Hutchinson, 1978) 228.

which sees social conditions as responsible for crime and demonstrates a belief in the inherent "goodness of human nature" but which, at the same time, believes that nothing can be done for "hardened criminals" expresses itself in an attitude which will only authorise charity to those who "deserve" it. Blifil, a complicated character who is certainly not the victim of social circumstances, lies outside what can be understood by any simplistic appeal to socio-economic explanations.

Like Brissenden, Spearman argues that the experience of the French Revolution undermined the philosophy which stressed man's innate goodness. She sees "the experience of the French Revolution, no less than the evangelical insistence on human depravity" as important influences on the defeat of this sanguine view of human propensities (223). This changing ethos is reflected in the arts. Marilyn Butler argues for a "sea-change" occurring in the arts around 1800 and suggests that "a sharp change of tone, a loss of confidence and assertiveness, affects the arts shortly before the turn of the century, and affects them regardless of the political persuasion of the individual author."⁹² Events in France and the growing influence of the Romantic movement in art and politics created tensions and doubts in the assumptions that underlay Enlightenment thinking.

Bertrand Russell, in showing the development of the Romantic movement, which he sees as closely associated with the cult of sensibility, traces the connection between sensibility, romanticism and the political scene in France:

⁹² Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981) 125-6.

The first great figure in the [romantic] movement is Rousseau, but to some extent he only expressed already existing tendencies. Cultivated people in eighteenth-century France greatly admired what they called *la sensibilité*, which means a proneness to emotion, and more particularly to the emotion of sympathy. To be thoroughly satisfactory, the emotion must be direct and violent and quite uninformed by thought. The man of sensibility would be moved to tears by the sight of a single destitute peasant family, but would be cold to well-thought-out schemes for ameliorating the lot of peasants as a class. The poor were supposed to possess more virtue than the rich; the sage was thought of as a man who retires from the corruption of courts to enjoy the peaceful pleasures of the unambitious rural existence (Russell 701).

Russell sketches out the basic plot of the novel of sensibility: the poor family supporting itself on a few acres, lost through no fault of its own, an aged father whose lovely daughter inevitably goes "into a decline," and the obligatory wicked landlord threatening the daughter's virtue (702). To Russell, the arch-rationalist, this view of the poor as virtuous victims is naive and he stresses the anarchic tendencies of the Romantic revolt.

Sensibility became tainted by association with the political ideas current in the period and was linked with the excesses of the French Revolution. From being associated particularly with the culture of the aristocracy in the early part of the century, it later became linked to radicalism and Jacobinism. It was thought, with its sentimentalising of the suffering poor and its appeal to the emotions rather than to reason, to encourage dangerously irrational and subversive ideas, undermining the status quo and suspect because of its connection with Jacobin philosophy. In tracing the reaction to the cult of sensibility, Janet Todd finds that conservative opinion in the late eighteenth century "worked to bind sensibility to radicalism, or 'Jacobinism' as it insisted on calling any reformist view, and it

blamed both for the unrest it feared was spreading in England” (Todd 130). The label “Jacobinism” became an emotive word which could effectively silence all call for reform in England. The contemptuous attitude to what was thought of as an irrational and errant way of thinking was encapsulated in a James Gillray cartoon depicting “the figure of Sensibility weeping over a dead bird, with the works of Rousseau in one hand; a foot rest[ing] on the unregarded head of Louis XVI” (Todd 130). This is the inappropriate sensibility against which Hannah More takes a stand in her poem when she writes: “’Tis not to mourn because a sparrow dies [...].”

The ambivalent and changing view of sensibility in the ethos of eighteenth-century culture is perhaps best expressed through Mary Wollstonecraft’s experience of the ideas adhering to the cult of sensibility and her later reaction against all that it seemed to her to stand for. In her novel *Mary*,⁹³ published in 1788 but written during 1787, she privileges that sensibility and feeling which make her heroine live at a high pitch of emotion, interpreting the world romantically, seeking solitary experience of the sublime in nature, tortured by sympathy for others and enthusiastically indulging in the “hasty moral sense of right” in her benevolent reaction to the misfortune of others. Wollstonecraft makes the heroine of *Mary* personify both Rousseau’s definition of sensibility as “the physical and emotional capacity for feeling” (*Mary*, introd. ix), and Shaftesbury’s liberal ideas on the importance of benevolence. Mary

⁹³ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Mary and The Wrongs of Women* (1788; 1798), ed. and introd. Gary Kelly, *The World’s Classics* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989).

finds happiness only in assisting others and is a firm believer in the perfectibility of the species.

Liberals of the period, such as Wollstonecraft and Wordsworth, were influenced by Lockean thought, with its emphasis on the importance of environment to man's destiny rather than of an inherent hereditary superiority. They welcomed the French Revolution as a step towards the overthrow of the old order and a move to equality. Both were to be disillusioned by events, in Wollstonecraft's case leading to a reaction against sensibility which she saw as not only dangerous at the national and political level, but disadvantageous to women. By the time she wrote *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, sensibility was seen by her as one of the most pernicious cultural accretions to the idea of femininity, hampering, as Wollstonecraft argued it did, women's development as rational creatures.⁹⁴ In her stringent call for a proper education for women she criticises male writers, such as Rousseau, who insist that:

man was made to reason, woman to feel: and that together, flesh and spirit, they make the most perfect whole, by blending happily reason and sensibility into one character.

And what is sensibility? "Quickness of sensation, quickness of perception, delicacy." Thus is it defined by Dr. Johnson; and the definition gives me no other idea than of the most exquisitely polished instinct. I discern not a trace of the image of God in either sensation or matter. Refined seventy times seven they are still material; intellect dwells not there; nor will fire ever make lead gold! (*Vindication* 154-5)

Wollstonecraft saw how such writers had power to create images and expectations of women that enslaved them by denying them reason and intellect, making them merely ancillary to men and subject only

⁹⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), ed. and introd. Miriam A. Brody, Penguin Classics (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) (hereinafter referred to as *Vindication*).

to their own emotions. Rousseau's arguments for women as more sentient creatures than men, rather than gifting them with more sensitivity and understanding, could be interpreted to suggest they were less capable of rational thought, more at the mercy of their passions than men were. As Kelly writes: "if [Rousseau's] life and works showed how sensibility could liberate, they also showed how it could limit. This was especially clear to those English Jacobin writers who were women" (Introd. to *Mary* ix).

Wollstonecraft, in her study of the education of women of her period, puts the blame squarely on the shoulders of the educators for creating weak, passive creatures, "like member[s] of a harem," putting their energies and time into dress and external adornments since their only profession is marriage. She argues that the cult of sensibility which was part of the education of women of her time keeps them dependent when they should be developing their minds and their autonomy in order to be sensible wives and mothers and, if spinsters or widows, able to manage their own lives. These "short-lived queens" (*Vindication* 145) are betrayed into the slavery of marriage: what Miriam Brody, in the introduction to her edition of *Vindication*, terms the "'civil death' of women [as] written into the *Commentaries on the English Constitution* (1758) by William Blackstone" (*Vindication* Introd. 34).

In Wollstonecraft's own Introduction to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* she deplores the sacrifice of women's strength and usefulness on the altar of beauty:

One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring

mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and the understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect. (*Vindication* 79)

One of Wollstonecraft's chief targets for criticism amongst the "books written on this subject by men" is *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in which Rousseau advocates a system of education for woman which emphasises her subservient role, her weak and passive nature formed to please and be subject to man.⁹⁵ He bases his argument on an assumption that because women are weaker physically than men they are *naturally* weaker in every way. As he constructs women they are purely sentient creatures: capable of feelings, but not of intellectual enquiry. The faculty of reason becomes a male preserve; sensibility - the realm of the emotions and sensations - is woman's. Wollstonecraft argues against this thesis and says:

[...] I will allow that bodily strength seems to give man a natural superiority over woman; and this is the only solid basis on which the superiority of the sex can be built. But I still insist that not only the virtue but the *knowledge* of the two sexes should be the same in nature, if not in degree, and that women, considered not only as moral but rational creatures, ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the *same* means as men, instead of being educated like a fanciful kind of *half* being - one of Rousseau's wild chimeras. (*Vindication* 124)

It is one of the basic assumptions of novelists such as Burney and Austen that "women [should be] considered not only as moral but rational creatures, [and] ought to endeavour to acquire human virtues (or perfections) by the *same* means as men" (*Vindication*

⁹⁵ Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, *Eloisa, or a Series of Original Letters Collected and Published by Mr. J.J. Rousseau, Citizen of Geneva*, trans. William Kenrick, 4 vols. (London: Vernon and Hood, 1761). Rpt. 2 vols. (Oxford: Woodstock, 1989).

124) - through education, through an active and useful life and through a process of reasoning from experience.

Exposure to circulating libraries which stocked a large proportion of sentimental novels and "novels of sensibility" was seen as a threat to middle class women, who were becoming more literate and were keen subscribers.⁹⁶ Moralists were dubious of the effect on women of this type of reading which might set up expectations which could not be satisfied by the circumstances of their own lives. Charlotte Lennox in *The Female Quixote* explores this aspect of the effects of literature on the life of her heroine. Because it is itself, of course, a fiction, *The Female Quixote* becomes part of the literary tradition which its author attempts to explore; she uses the tools of fiction to unlock the conventions and responses that underlie the genre. Flaubert was perhaps anticipated by these writers who feared the effect of fiction on these eighteenth-century Mesdames Bovary.

In discussing the demise of the picaresque novel, Alice Green Fredman notes the influence of the cult of sensibility on this change in literary tastes. She suggests that the novel of sensibility satisfied a taste for a more introspective and questioning style of novel, rather than the generally more active, extroverted mode of the picaresque:

By 1748 the Sensibility Movement was assuming increasing dominance, both in France and in England, and it contributed to the decline of the picaresque. For in its attitude; in its inward, emotional focus; in its techniques of presentation, there is no place for the energy of invention and improvisation, for the world of physical action, and for the multiplicity of quick,

⁹⁶ See Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965) 130-50 for a discussion of the effects of the circulating libraries on literary tastes and habits.

transitory surface relationships that make up the world of the picaresque.⁹⁷

There are, of course, exceptions to the rule which do not conform to Fredman's prescription for the world of the picaresque. However, many of the novels in this genre, novels such as *Tom Jones* and *Moll Flanders*, with their emphasis on physical action, brief, casual relationships and constantly changing scenes, do match her paradigm of the picaresque. Burney's last novel, *The Wanderer*, where the heroine might appear to be in a situation similar to the picaresque hero or heroine, travelling from adventure to adventure, in fact stresses the passivity imposed on Juliet, the lack of choice; she is escaping her fate rather than seeking her fortune. The psychological examination of a character's motives and impulses which grew out of the novel of sensibility marked a step forward in the development of the novel, and Burney was one of the writers who shifted the emphasis from narrative to motivation and thereby set a trend for later writers to follow.

Burney's successor, Austen, wrote in a conservative period of English history. Her use of the word "sensibility" goes through the full gamut of meanings. De Rose and McGuire's concordance lists thirty-three occurrences of the words "sensibility" and "sensibilities" in her writings.⁹⁸ Interestingly, they list two hundred and twenty-two occurrences of the word "sense" and one hundred and thirty-three of "sensible." The references to sensibility vary in application from "delicate sensibility," "little sensibility" (as a term of disapprobation by Marianne Dashwood, the archetypal "woman of

⁹⁷ Alice Green Fredman, "The Picaresque in Decline: Smollett's First Novel," *English Writers of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. John H. Middelndorf (New York: Columbia UP, 1971) 189-207: 206.

⁹⁸ Peter De Rose and S.W. McGuire, *A Concordance to the Works of Jane Austen*, 3 vols. (NY: Garland Publishing, 1982) II:1022.

sensibility”), through “affectionate sensibility,” “artificial sensibility,” “great sensibility” to “true” or “real sensibility.” In one of the most positive applications of the word, the exemplary Anne Elliot is described as “Glowing and lovely in sensibility and happiness” (*Persuasion* 372). The word is often qualified by an adjective, and Austen, despite her burlesque of the woman of false sensibility in “Love and Friendship” and her warnings of the dangers of too much indulgence of sensibility in her portrait of Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, finds it an indispensable attribute in her heroines and her heroes.⁹⁹

In *Sense and Sensibility* Austen seems to be presenting two contrasting modes for approaching life: the one rational, emphasising control of the emotions; the other imaginative, romantic and at the mercy of the subject’s emotions. Her two heroines seem to provide a dichotomy: the one representing sense, the other sensibility. In fact, the two words blur as aspects of Elinor’s character, just as they do in the various dictionary meanings of the words.

The word “sense” has many meanings. It is often used to mean natural understanding, intelligence. It is also used of the subjective sensory perceptions by which we interpret the physical world. The five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch act as media between the subject and external experience. But to confuse the issue, one of the several definitions of sense is in fact sensibility, which narrows the distinction between these two terms. At their furthest point of diversion, sense is equated, on the one hand, with “[n]atural understanding, intelligence, [...]”; practical soundness of

⁹⁹ Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Volume the Second*, ed. B.C. Southam (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1963).

judgement" (*OED* definition 11.a), on the other, it is synonymous with sensibility. Thus, even at this basic interpretative level of meaning, ambiguity is apparent.

Elinor's practical soundness of judgment which is stressed in the novel is based in her sensibility: her acute responses to the world around her and her reading of the people who inhabit that world. To Austen, as to Burney, the true heroine combines sense, meaning judgment, intuition and understanding, with sensibility - compassion, feeling. Marianne's sensibility is directed inwards in a self-reflexive manner, not outwards like Elinor's. She allows her emotions to rule her. Marianne's sensibility is similar in type to Wollstonecraft's definition of "that sensibility, of which self is the centre" (*Vindication* 158). An example of how Austen demonstrates this distinction in a subtle but revealing way can be seen if one compares the exemplary Anne Elliot in a scene in *Persuasion* with Marianne Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, both women with a love of music. Anne Elliot, for whom the fulfilment of love seems to be something that will now never be, provides music so that the young people may dance. The significance of Anne's taking the role of "musician" rather than a "more active post" is enhanced when one remembers the importance of dancing in Austen's novels - both as a way members of the opposite sex may come together and as a metaphor for marriage, as Henry Tilney light-heartedly, but shrewdly, describes it (*Persuasion* 227; *Northanger Abbey* 66-7). Anne puts aside her own sad feelings of loss and selflessly plays for the younger, more hopeful, participants in this social pairing. Marianne on the other hand plays for her own or Willoughby's amusement. Although in one scene she provides cover for Elinor's

and Lucy's conversation, Austen stresses her unconsciousness of this fact (*Sense and Sensibility* 140). Marianne has withdrawn into her private world.

It is significant in this connection that in Marianne's construction of Willoughby as an appropriate lover for herself there is an element of narcissism in her view of him. In an early scene in the novel, before she meets Willoughby, she criticises Edward Ferrars and gives her prescription for the man she herself could love. The "other" Marianne seeks must be her alter ego: "To satisfy me, those characters [a lover and a connoisseur] must be united. I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own. He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both" (*Sense and Sensibility* 30).

In Willoughby, Marianne seems to have found a man who fulfils her romantic dreams: in his appearance, his liveliness, his tastes, which latter soon become converted if they do not immediately coincide with Marianne's. In fact Willoughby is more akin to those heroines of false sensibility Austen depicts in "Love and Friendship," whose attractive appearance and assumed fine sensibilities mask a hard core of greed, both economic and sexual, and irresponsibility. The narrator stresses the element of fantasy and idealisation in Marianne's response to Willoughby in the following passage of indirect speech which describes Marianne's own conception of him:

His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favourite story; and in his carrying her into the house with so little previous formality, there was a rapidity of thought which particularly recommended the action to her. Every circumstance belonging to him was interesting.

His name was good, his residence was in their favourite village, and she soon found out that of all manly dresses a shooting-jacket was the most becoming. Her imagination was busy, her reflections were pleasant, and the pain of a sprained ankle was disregarded. (*Sense and Sensibility* 53)

The gentle irony of the reference to Marianne's predilection for a "shooting-jacket" is consistent with the narrator's attitude to Marianne, which is slightly mocking, but affectionate. The emphasis in the passage on words such as "fancy," "imagination," "favourite story" hints at the fictionality of Marianne's understanding of Willoughby; it stresses the fact that to a great extent he is a product of her imagination, a construction projected by her from the pages of romantic literature. It is perhaps significant, and indicative of the fact that Austen recognises the dangers of literature in its ability to affect and indeed shape life and blur reality (one need only think of *Northanger Abbey*, that parody of the Gothic novel) that Marianne and Willoughby both discover that they have a favourite writer in Scott. When the narrator gives her ironical description of Willoughby's eagerness to conform to Marianne's opinions on books and music she shows how, if Marianne has made Willoughby in her own image in her imagination, he is now busily attempting to help her in her Promethean task.

Marianne is a young woman of considerable intelligence and judgment when her emotions are not involved. It is her excessive sensibility, her inability to hide her emotions, her lack of prudence and ability to accept things as they are for a woman of her time which bring her very close to disaster; in fact almost to the fate of the two Elizas in *Sense and Sensibility*. Their fate, like Clarissa's, is to be betrayed into folly and so to die, either literally or socially. This is the necessary conclusion to such a fall, according to the ethos of an

eighteenth-century novel which reflects society's mores, as Austen demonstrates in the social death of Maria Rushworth in *Mansfield Park*. As Steeves puts it:

The "ruin" of a girl meant generally her becoming ultimately a common prostitute. The typical "harlot's progress," to use Hogarth's title, is illustrated with striking uniformity in the familiar interpolated stories, the so-called "little histories," of abandoned women which appear and reappear in the best-known novels of the time. (98)

The threat of this destiny lies behind much of the fear invoked in Burney's novels and in Austen's it is reinforced through her insertion into *Sense and Sensibility* of the stories of the two Elizas as subtexts and warnings. In their narratives Burney and Austen could not escape the effects of the double sexual standards obtaining at the time, though Austen might question, as she does in *Mansfield Park*, the gap between the lack of *public* punishment of Henry Crawford and the social ostracism of Maria Rushworth. Through Marianne, Austen points the same lesson that Burney does through her characterisation of Mrs. Berlington in *Camilla*, who constructs a picture of Bellamy, a more sinister Willoughby figure, which is far from the truth but which is consistent with her own conception of him, the product of her own over-indulged sensibilities fed as they are on romantic literature. Like Mary Wollstonecraft, Burney and Austen distrust the faculty of sensibility unchecked by reason and untempered by experience.

Austen was writing at a time when the word "sensibility" had acquired ominous overtones. As Marilyn Butler, in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*,¹⁰⁰ and Janet Todd, in *Sensibility: An Introduction*,

¹⁰⁰ Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1987).

demonstrate, in the latter part of the eighteenth century the cult of sensibility had become associated with a literature which was noted for its sentimental quality, stressing as it did in the novels and plays of the period the futile emotional reactions to life's misfortunes of its fictional characters. Todd suggests that novels of sensibility taught responses to emotional situations rather than virtuous action itself. She emphasises the "lachrymose" elements in the novel of sensibility, and argues that it "met a public hungry for sentimental scenes and emotionally prepared to receive them" (3). She sees one of the main pleasures of reading in the mid-eighteenth century as a means of indulging "the lachrymose desires of the public for a man of sensibility who, continually suffering, would allow the luxury of sympathetic grief" (88). Leslie Stephen, much earlier, identified the "indulgence in emotion for its own sake" as "sentimentalism," and sees Richardson as the "inventor" of this literary fashion, though he stresses Richardson's moral purpose in writing his novels, especially *Clarissa*.¹⁰¹

In Burney's use of the conventions of the genre she seeks to show both class and gender inequities in society, the thoughtlessness of the wealthy toward the less fortunate who depend upon them, and the arrogance of those in power. Through her rhetorical devices, such as the use of the "virtue in distress" theme and her depiction of characters who evince sensibility and those who do not, she attempts to call on the sympathy of her reader. She also aims to educate her reader in a "proper sensibility," in both its aesthetic and moral senses, as already defined, through her vision of life. In the tradition

¹⁰¹ Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1920) 160-1.

of other eighteenth-century writers, her intention is to educate as well as to entertain her readers.

Burney's attitude to sensibility is, like Wollstonecraft's and Austen's, ambivalent. When Burney uses the word in a positive sense she conforms to the benign connotations which were prevalent in the third quarter of the eighteenth century and which linked sensibility with sensitivity to others, with the capacity to love, with benevolent feelings, and with the ability to appreciate the good and the beautiful in nature: human or inanimate. However, through characters such as Melmond and his sister Mrs. Berlinton, in *Camilla*, Burney describes the dangers and ill effects of the cult of sensibility: sensibility which is self-reflexive, solipsistic, self-congratulatory and, in the end, anti-social. She also demonstrates the limiting effect of sensibility on women's development. The emphasis on refinement and delicacy required of the woman of sensibility meant that she was caught in its decorative but inhibiting net, or to use another metaphor: the pedestal becomes the prison.

In *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, *Camilla*, and *The Wanderer*, however, Burney shows heroines whose sensibility is directed outwards toward their fellows and it is their acts of benevolence which originate in their sensitivity to the distress of others which in fact make them heroines. She makes the same distinction which Austen does between women of *real* sensibility and those of Wollstonecraft's "sensibility of which self is the centre" (*Vindication* 158).

Janet Todd does not mention Frances Burney's novels in her *Sensibility: An Introduction*, though she discusses the novels of sensibility of the period and Jane Austen's attack on the cult of sensibility. This is a somewhat surprising omission. Of course,

Burney places a great deal of emphasis on her heroines' "good" sense - their intelligence - and on their ability to learn to avoid the dangers which beset the vulnerable female of her period; however, the novels are redolent with the emotional appeal of the novel of sensibility of the period. Tears flow, emotions are patent and descriptions of fainting, blushing, sighing, the effects of embarrassment - Freudian or otherwise - fear, terror and agony abound in the pages of these novels. In fact her stated aim in writing *Camilla* was to make her readers weep. As Hemlow comments:

In the eighteenth century only the lost souls did not weep. The response of tears was the indication of benevolence and of the right feeling heart, and the ability of the author to evoke them was one criterion of success. (*History*, 158)

Tastes change and the taste for novels of sensibility with it, but modern critics are uncovering other levels of meaning in Burney's novels. Although this thesis is concerned primarily with her depiction of the ideas that link her novels with the theme of sensibility, and she must be seen in the context of her times, some of those other "levels of meaning" must also of necessity emerge in any contemporary synchronic reading.

CHAPTER 4

FRANCES BURNEY AND SENSIBILITY

In this chapter, which gives a broad perspective on the theme of sensibility in her novels, Burney's own use of the word "sensibility" will be analysed, with an emphasis on the metaphors attaching to its use, how the word functions in a sentence, whether used ironically or not, what qualifying words are commonly found in association with the word as it occurs in her novels, and whether she links it to benevolence, aesthetics and sensuality. The question of Burney's attitude to sensibility and how she views its relationship to morality will also be addressed, as well as the concept of its opposite. It will be seen that Burney's use of the word is grounded in the eighteenth-century interpretation of sensibility discussed in Chapter 3. Burney's contribution to the debate on sensibility is demonstrated both in how she uses the word in her novels and its associations and contexts, and also in the construction of her characters. She recognised the ambiguities which surrounded the concept and its pitfalls, especially for women. Her characters cover the spectrum from those who have too little sensibility to those who have too much. The exemplary characters feel for others, but are also able to control their reactions and act in a constructive manner, as Adam Smith expects of civilised people for whom sensibility is a sign of their humanity (III:iii:213-4; III:iii:220).

As will be noted from Appendix A, words associated with sensibility in Burney's novels are nouns such as *beauty, benevolence, delicacy, dignity, elegance, feeling, goodness, happiness, heart, joy, justice, loveliness, mercy, respect, soul, talents, tears*. Commonly, verbs such as *to embrace, feel, hear, see, think, weep, wound, love* and *be loved* appear in conjunction with its use. The adjectives which most often describe sensibility are: *acute, charmed, discerning, generous, grateful, keen, noble, proper, softest, strong, tenderest, touching*. These attributes link sensibility with aesthetic and moral functions and the ability to feel for others. When used negatively by Burney, it is associated with *irregularity* and *fancy*, and with adjectives such as *fatal, impetuous, ungovernable* and *wayward*.

The precise use of the word, its tone and significance, will be discussed, with examples to illustrate the points made. These examples will be elaborated upon in the chapters which follow, when each novel will be examined individually for Burney's interpretation of the theme of sensibility and her positive emphasis on this quality in the construction of her heroines. The word in fact is most commonly applied by Burney in her descriptions of these heroines. For the purpose of this chapter, the examples will serve to emphasise specifically the meaning Burney herself assigns to the word.

As opposites of sensibility Burney speaks of insensibility, apathy, coldness, egotism and delicacy perverted. The adjectives describing insensibility (see Appendix A) are: *callous, cruel, dreadful, hardened, morbid, rigid, savage, strange* and *utter*. It is also characterised by indifference.

The word "sensibility" occurs fairly early in Frances Burney's journals. During a conversation one day on the subject of "happiness

and misery, sensibility and a total want of feeling” Mrs. Burney, her stepmother, says of Frances: “Here’s a girl will *never* be happy! *Never* while she lives! - for she possesses perhaps as feeling a heart as ever girl had!” (ED, I:8). As will be argued in this thesis, in Burney’s novels her heroines *all* experience suffering because of their acute sensibilities, but their rewards too are dependent upon those same sensibilities. “For mortals greatly to live is greatly to suffer,”¹⁰² or as the article on “*Sensibilité*” in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* puts it: “Souls with sensibility have more in their life than other people: both goods and evils are exaggerated in their perception” (Diderot 239).

As will be discussed in the chapter on *Evelina*, the term “sensibility” occurs rarely in *Evelina* but much more frequently in *Camilla*, *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*, all written in the third person. In two occurrences in *Evelina* it is associated with beauty and sensitivity. Both applications are to the heroine, Evelina. The first occurrence in the text is when Villars writes to Lady Howard on her suggesting that Evelina be taken to London for the season. He writes:

The town-acquaintance of Mrs. Mirvan are all in the circle of high life; this artless young creature, with too much beauty to escape notice, has too much sensibility to be indifferent to it; but she has too little wealth to be sought with propriety by men of the fashionable world. (I:18)

The second example is when he suggests a course of action in approaching her father which will be “most conducive to the happiness of my child, and least liable to wound her sensibility” (I:127). In both examples “sensibility” appears to denote a sensitive

¹⁰² Sophocles, *Antigone* in *The Theban Plays*, trans. E.F. Watling (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) II. 612-3.

awareness of Evelina's situation in the world and that capacity for refined emotion so much a part of the eighteenth-century connotation of the word. However, though the word itself is little used in this first novel, the theme of "virtue in distress" reflects that of the novels of sensibility as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In contrast to *Evelina*, Burney uses the word "sensibility" frequently in *Cecilia*, as can be seen from Appendix A. It occurs early in the novel in the descriptions of Cecilia herself, as will be discussed in Chapter 6; it is part of her charm and the spur to her benevolent actions. She is more in control of her *emotions* than Camilla in Burney's later novel; she is also older than Camilla whom we first meet as a child. However, Cecilia is shown to be at the mercy of designing men because of her inheritance, so that she is in fact not so much in control of her life and her choices as she imagines herself to be. One guardian has firm control of her money until she is twenty-one, another is plotting to gain control of it by marrying her to one of his creditors, a third is arrogant and full of self-importance and lacks any feeling or sensitivity to Cecilia's needs or the responsibility placed in him. He also provides the first stumbling block to Cecilia's marriage to the man she loves: his son.

In *Cecilia*, as in the other novels, sensibility is associated with benevolence, as it is for Diderot and Shaftesbury. It is also associated with female friendship and affection. In her reunion with an old school friend, Mrs. Harrel, the meeting is described in terms which stress the warmth of Cecilia's feelings for the friend of her childhood: "Their meeting was tender and affectionate; the sensibility of Cecilia's heart flowed from her eyes, and the gladness of Mrs. Harrel's dimpled her cheeks" (*Cecilia* I:21). Significantly, Cecilia's sensibility

is demonstrated in a gush of tears, the expression of her heartfelt pleasure in the reunion. These signs demonstrate her feelings for her childhood friend. For Burney, the eyes are the metaphorical window onto the heart. Mrs. Harrel's feelings are not so poignantly expressed; her reactions are expressed in a more superficial manner. The orphaned Cecilia places far more hope and expectation of rewarding companionship in her friendship with Mrs. Harrel than Mrs. Harrel herself requires or seems, and in the event proves, likely to provide.

Mrs. Delvile, the wife of Cecilia's guardian, with whom she stays after Harrel's suicide, warns Cecilia against unequal friendships when she suggests that her niece Lady Honoria is an inappropriate associate for Cecilia. She insists that Cecilia has "too much sensibility for this mad-cap of a companion" (III:496). Lady Honoria, though an acute observer, is given to gossip, often unsubstantiated and, as Mrs. Delvile proves, in one particular case totally untrue, mischievous and harmful. The inference is that a "woman of sensibility" must be careful of the company she keeps. Lady Honoria is shown to be lacking in sensibility toward others' feelings.

Genuine female friendships, sisterly or otherwise, are privileged in a Burney novel and are an expression of shared sensibility. Relations between parents and children too are given a highly favoured position, and the duty a child owes to a parent, whether natural or adoptive, is sacrosanct. In dedicating the anonymously published *Evelina*, to her father, Burney inscribes him as "the author of [my] being." Friendship, love, duty and benevolence all become signifiers of sensibility.

Cecilia has come to the Harrels in London from the home of another old friend, Mrs. Charlton, many years her senior but a woman who proves to have Cecilia's happiness at heart. She is described as "her benevolent friend," "an aged and maternal counsellor, whom she loved as her mother, and to whom she had been known from her childhood" (I:6). Though benevolent and much loved, and for Burney, as for Shaftesbury, sensibility and benevolence are symbiotically linked, Mrs. Charlton carries sensibility too far for discretion. The narrator explains that :

though old and infirm, [she] preserved an understanding, which, whenever unbiassed by her affections, was sure to direct her unerringly; but the extreme softness of her temper frequently misled her judgment, by making it, at the pleasure either of misfortune or of artifice, always yield to compassion, and pliant to entreaty. Where her counsel and opinion were demanded, they were certain to reflect honour on her capacity and discernment; but where her assistance or her pity were supplicated, her purse and her tears were immediately bestowed, and in her zeal to alleviate distress she forgot if the object were deserving her solicitude, and stopt not to consider propriety or discretion, if happiness, however momentary, were in her power to grant. (IV:530)

In this description of Mrs. Charlton, whose pity overcomes her caution, Burney expounds the eighteenth-century view of "proper" charity and the appropriate responses to claims on benevolence. The emphasis of this description of Mrs. Charlton's motives for charity seems to imply she is gratifying her *own* desire for happiness through giving, rather than carefully considering the consequences of her benevolent action. Self-interest, the desire for personal happiness and gratification, is here shown to overwhelm judgment.

As will be discussed in the chapter on *Camilla*, the worthiness of the recipient must be considered, and the long-term benefit of the

assistance must be evaluated. Cecilia, for instance, when she comes into her own, for however short a duration that proves to be, fulfils her benevolent feelings by settling the pew-opener, who has been of service to her, together with her family, in her neighbourhood. The woman finds work and Cecilia makes up any deficiencies: "The children, however, she order[s] to be coarsely brought up, having no intention to provide for them but by helping them to common employments" (*Cecilia* V:791). This suggests that Burney feels education should be appropriate to situation or expectations in society - a theme taken up by Austen in *Mansfield Park* through discussion of the proper upbringing and education of Fanny Price, a poor relation for whom there appears to be little chance of making a "good" marriage. It also emerges in *Camilla* in the Tyrols' decisions regarding the education of their three daughters since, as he argues, "[t]he temporal destiny of woman is enwrapt in still more impenetrable obscurity than that of man" (*Camilla* III:356).

At the end of the novel, Cecilia, who has commitments to several dependents, has lost her inheritance through her marriage to Mortimer and must repay all she has spent during the eight months since that time, learns the "error of profusion, even in charity and beneficence" (V:939). All this speaks of the benevolent aspects of sensibility under the control of reason, rather than a spontaneous response to need. There is also the question of "artifice" against which the sensible benevolent man or woman must be armed. However, despite the various warnings against *thoughtless* indulgence of the impulse to charity, sensibility remains placed within a context of sympathy and benevolence.

Mrs. Charlton provides a haven of "alleviating tenderness" when Cecilia's uncle, the Dean, dies: "Here she had dwelt since the interment of her uncle; and here, from the affectionate gratitude of her disposition, she had perhaps been content to dwell till her own, had not her guardians interfered to remove her" (I:6). It is in fact, one particular guardian, Harrel, who interferes to remove her. He has plans which require her presence in London. He is embarrassed for money and requires Cecilia's presence, as a wealthy heiress under his guardianship, to prop up his credit and to act as collateral security in his more sinister plans.

Cecilia is shocked at Harrel's indifference to the distress he causes his tradesmen creditors. On discovering his callousness toward the widow who desperately awaits payment for work completed on his summer house by her husband, Cecilia exclaims: "what strange, what cruel insensibility! to suffer a wretched family to starve, from an obstinate determination to assert that they can live!" (I:76). The opposite of sensibility is here seen to denote the attitude of members of an uncaring upper class who selfishly ignore the plight of the worthy poor. Harrel's view of his social inferiors is similar to that of Mrs. Ireton in *The Wanderer*, which will be discussed later.

Sensibility is equated with nobility and dignity in the scene where Mortimer discovers Cecilia's feelings for him when he overhears her confiding her love for him to his dog, appropriately named Fidel. Mortimer has to readjust his reading of Cecilia's behaviour. She has acted as the proper young lady of the eighteenth century must, by hiding her feelings for him, a subject which in the novel, *Camilla*, forms the basis of the sermon-letter to Camilla from

her father, Mr. Tyrold (*Camilla* III:355-62). Mortimer exclaims: “what I took for indifference, was dignity; I perceive what I imagined the most rigid insensibility, was nobleness, was propriety, was true greatness of mind!” (IV:549). When he learns of her love for him, Mortimer speaks of Cecilia as having previously been “all perfect in goodness and virtue; but it was virtue in its highest majesty, not, as now, blended with the softest sensibility” (IV:572). Mortimer’s description of Cecilia before she admits her love compares her to a higher being - all majesty, in fact an angel, but through the betrayal of her sensibility she becomes human and approachable. Burney hints here that Cecilia’s capacity to love is linked to her sensibility, and that her sexuality is a part of that sensibility.

The opposite to “rigid insensibility” is “nobleness” and “true greatness of mind.” Cecilia, who is aware of her uncle’s codicil to the will which requires her future husband to take her name, demonstrates this when she struggles against her feelings for a man from a family proud of its ancient name. “Dignity,” “nobility” and “greatness” are words which Mortimer uses to try to reassure Cecilia in her humiliation when she finds she has betrayed her feelings for him. The narrator describes her feeling of shame: “all her recollection returned [...], and the wild rambling of fancy with which she had incautiously indulged her sorrow, rushing suddenly upon her mind, she felt herself wholly overpowered by consciousness and shame, and sunk, almost fainting, upon a window-seat” (IV:547). Cecilia is ashamed of acting, as she would see it, immodestly.

In *Camilla*, in Tyrold’s various warnings to his daughter, he stresses the risks which a young woman faces when she betrays

“those outward marks of sensibility which, to the common or unfeeling observers, seem but the effect of an unbecoming remissness in the self-command which should dignify every female who would do herself honour” (*Camilla* III:348). It is noteworthy that the woman of sensibility who betrays her feelings is metaphorically “marked,” as though by sin or disease. The basic theme of Tyrold’s arguments to *Camilla* is that a woman must avoid calumny by *not* betraying her feelings until she has received a definite proposal of marriage.

Tyrold’s sermon-letter was so much admired as a courtesy guide to the proper behaviour of an unmarried woman that it was published in full in the *Critical Review* (xviii, September, 1796, 26-40). Whether or not it was meant as such by the author, who is capable of irony on occasions, is not known. Burney’s own experience of waiting for a disappointing lover who fails to come to the point and propose marriage is documented in her *Journal* and analysed by Doody (151-8). A knowledge of the gap between the sentiments expressed in Tyrold’s sermon and Burney’s own experiences adds tension to a reading of Burney’s novels. She was “chosen” by Mr. Barlow (*see* Doody 42-3; Hemlow *History*, 56, 253) and *not* chosen by the man in whom she *was* interested, George Cambridge, a situation which finds expression in Burney’s novel *Evelina* in metaphorical terms through Evelina’s dismay at the arrogance of young men at a ball who flaunt their right of choice. Julia Epstein argues that “Burney encodes a series of contradictions into her writing: self-control and violence; acceptance and protest; passivity and rebellion” (33). In a journal entry relating to the gap between Cambridge’s attentions to Burney and her

consequent expectations, and his cautious withdrawal, she writes somewhat bitterly: "His prudence is stronger than his affection" (Diary MSS. (Berg), suppressed fragments, 1788-9, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 197).

Burney seems to struggle against the message embodied in Tyrold's sermon which articulates the conventional view of women's behaviour when he reminds Camilla of woman's "doubly appendant state," first on father, then on husband (III:356). Avoiding discussion of the rights or wrongs of the case, Tyrold continues: "We will not here canvass the equity of that freedom by which women as well as men should be allowed to dispose of their own affections" (III:358). He insists the choice can only be made by one, and woman's *delicacy* and *propriety* will make clear which one (III:358). In his sermon-letter to Camilla he reminds her that "Delicacy is an attribute [...] peculiarly feminine" (III:359), and warns that the woman whose fancy rules her and leads her to read more into a man's behaviour than is meant might well achieve her aim, but she will awake "tenderness without respect" (III:360). This fear of offending against the code of behaviour laid down for the "proper lady" of course neatly inhibits a woman from any independence in this matter. It also leaves her in the position in which Jane Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* finds herself. By showing less affection than she feels until a declaration is made, the woman may be misunderstood. However, according to the ethos behind Tyrold's sermon, the woman must remain passive in love. She must not betray her feelings until the man has declared his intentions, especially if he is rich, since otherwise the woman will be deemed a fortune-hunter.

Cecilia need not fear the last imputation, since she is a wealthy heiress and Mortimer, like Algernon Moncrieff in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, "has [almost] nothing but [...] looks everything."¹⁰³ He comes of an ancient family whose name is its most prized possession, and which has a mouldering castle complete with drawbridge to keep out the commons and reality, and a few unproductive estates badly run by the foolish, proud Mr. Delvile, Senior. However, the other prohibitions have been ingrained in Cecilia by her upbringing, as they have by other Burney heroines. So that her heroine may avoid falling into the trap which Tyrold describes, Burney contrives a scene whereby Cecilia can openly confess her feelings but without being aware that Mortimer will overhear. In *Camilla*, she similarly circumvents the proscriptions on a woman's voicing her feelings by having her heroine admit her love in a letter she thinks Edgar will not see until after she is dead. Unknown to Camilla it is delivered to him by the maid to whom Camilla has been a benefactress in the past, Peggy Higden. Burney thus suggests that benevolence will be its own reward.

If Cecilia's control over her sensibilities is stressed in Burney's second novel, her third novel, *Camilla*, most clearly exemplifies a young heroine who is characterised by an excess of sensibility - a too-feeling heart and uncontrolled emotional responses to stimuli - over the good judgment which comes from experience. In *Camilla* Burney describes two kinds of sensibility - one admirable since it has its seat in empathy for others and in benevolence, the other dangerous because it is self-engrossed and leaves the faculty of

¹⁰³ Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest in The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, introd. Vyvyan Holland (London: Collins, 1971) Act IV, 375, line 12.

reason at the mercy of sensuality and vanity. In this view of the negative effects of sensibility, especially on women, Burney's depiction coincides with those expressed by Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. The latter deplores the fact that women are brought up with the idea that they must please men through their external attractions, taught to think of nothing but their appearances, clothes and luxury, and to assume a delicate sensibility with which to charm men, whilst their education as rational beings is neglected: "the sensibility is thus increased at the expense of reason, and even the imagination" (*Vindication* 156). The evil effects of sensibility are depicted when she describes:

a weak woman of fashion, who was more than commonly proud of her delicacy and sensibility. She thought a distinguishing taste and puny appetite the height of all human perfection, and acted accordingly. I have seen this weak sophisticated being neglect all the duties of life, yet recline with self-complacency on a sofa, and boast of her want of appetite as a proof of delicacy that extended to, or, perhaps, arose from, her exquisite sensibility; [...]. (*Vindication* 130)

Sensibility combined with reason, however, has her approbation; then it gives rise to: "Modesty! sacred offspring of sensibility and reason! - true delicacy of mind!" (*Vindication* 227).

In describing Camilla's attempts to gain Edgar's good opinion and his love, Burney shows her as a country girl led astray both by her association with the worldly values of those she finds herself amongst in the city and by her own imagination, untempered by good judgment:

Accident, want of due consideration, and sudden recollection, in an agitated moment, of the worldly doctrine of Mrs. Arlbery, had led Camilla, once more, into the semblance of a character, which, without thinking of, she was acting. Born

simple and ingenuous, and bred to hold in horror every species of art, all idea of coquetry was foreign to her meaning, though an untoward contrariety of circumstances, playing upon feelings too potent for deliberations, had eluded her into a conduct as mischievous in its effects and as wide from artlessness in its appearance, as if she had been brought up and nourished in fashionable egotism.

Such, however, was not Camilla: her every propensity was pure, and, when reflection came to her aid, her conduct was as exemplary as her wishes. But the ardour of her imagination, acted upon by every passing idea, shook her Judgment from its yet unsteady seat, and left her at the mercy of wayward Sensibility - that delicate, but irregular power, which now impels to all that is most disinterested for others, now forgets all mankind, to watch the pulsations of its own fancies. (IV:679-80)

Camilla's native sense has been forgotten whilst acting a role.

Burney, in the language she adopts to describe Camilla's realisation of her mistake, emphasises the artificiality of her pose when she speaks of her adopting "the semblance of a character," and using the "art" of coquetry in following the prompting of her "feelings." Sensibility takes on aspects of the false when linked with theatrical metaphors. The jealous Edgar is confused and misled by Camilla's behaviour, so that he more easily falls prey to the Iago-like poison of Marchmont's misogynistic teachings on women. In this context sensibility is "wayward" and leads Camilla to be likewise.

The passage quoted from *Camilla* also stresses how Burney sees sensibility as capable of operating as the seat of "disinterested" action. Burney is at pains to document this aspect of Camilla's sensibility in pursuing her theme of the marriage of the economic ability to *perform* good action, usually vested in the male, to the feminine principle of sympathy, understanding and benevolence. Through Edgar's servant's words of praise she provides a vision of

Camilla's role as "Lady Bountiful" to the local community when empowered by Edgar's wealth:

"What a power of good she'll do," continued Jacob, "when she's mistress of Beech Park! I warrant she'll go about, visiting the poor, and making them clothes, and broths, and wine possets, and baby-linen, all day long. She has done it at Etherington quite from a child; and when she had nothing to give 'em, she used to take her thread papers and needle books, and sit down and work for them, and carry them bits and scraps of things to help 'em to patch their gowns. Why when she's got your fine fortunes, she'll bring a blessing upon the whole county."

Edgar felt touched; his wrath was softened into tenderness, and he ejaculated to himself: "Such, indeed, I thought Camilla! active in charity, gentle in good works! . . . I thought that in putting my fortune into her hands, I was serving the unhappy, . . . feeding the indigent, . . . reviving the sick!" (*Camilla* IV:574)

This scene where the faithful servant speaks for the benevolent mistress is redolent with the values entrenched in novels of sensibility. Edgar, too, sees Camilla as the active principle of benevolence; his wealth as the means to good works.

However, such "disinterested" sensibility requires the exercise of reason, so that the imagination, fancy or sentimentality do not pervert the impulse to good. In the character of Sir Hugh Tyrold, in *Camilla*, Burney shows very clearly the impotence or, at times, mischief to which sensibility to another's pains or misfortune will lead when uncontrolled by reason. It is Sir Hugh's sensibility, his feeling heart, amounting at times to sentimentality, which is responsible for the tragic accidents to Eugenia, both at the fair and as a result of the fall from the seesaw. In thoughtlessly indulging the children, he also indulges himself, but causes mischief. Sir Hugh's reactions to Eugenia's injuries are compared with her mother's.

Whilst Sir Hugh can provide no rational aid and bursts into a "passionate flood of tears" on the arrival of his sister-in-law,

Mrs. Tyrold, though nearly overpowered by a sight so affecting, still preserved her faculties for better uses than lamentation. She held the child in her arms while the necessary operations were performing by the surgeon; she put her to bed, and watched by her side the whole night; during which, in defiance of all precautions, a high fever came on, and she grew worse every moment. (I:28)

Burney compares Mrs. Tyrold's self-control, despite her fears for her daughter, with Sir Hugh's useless indulgence of his emotions and his sense of guilt, just as in "Love and Friendship" Jane Austen mocks the futility of her heroines' addiction to tears and fainting, and in *Persuasion* compares Anne Elliot's presence of mind in the scene on the Cobb at Lyme Regis with her sister Mary's collapse. Burney gives credit to Sir Hugh for his real feeling for his niece, and makes a point that he feels deeply responsible, but she shows that uncontrollable sensibility is counter-productive and that in fact it is his efforts to redress the harm he has done Eugenia which cause many of his nieces' trials, both Eugenia's and Camilla's. Sensibility without common sense - understanding the link between cause and effect - is personified in Sir Hugh.

It is Sir Hugh's sensibility, his sympathy towards his servants and dependants, which will not allow retrenchment when it becomes necessary as a result of his nephews', Clermont Lynmere's and Lionel Tyrold's, extravagance because such retrenchment will mean that many of his servants will have to go, and that the horses remaining on the estate be harder worked. Eventually, his short-sightedness leads to more hardship than a rational approach to economy would have done.



In her analysis of both kinds of sensibility in the passage quoted above Burney speaks of that “delicate but irregular power” which forgets others “to watch the pulsations of its own fancies” (*Camilla* IV:680). This aspect of sensibility may be compared to Sterne’s depiction of the attribute, especially in *A Sentimental Journey*, and also bears a strong resemblance to Hannah More and Wollstonecraft’s view of its negative side. Sensibility in the passage from *Camilla* is allied to irregularity and fancy, both words which suggest instability and carry derogatory connotations. The negative “but” qualifies the word by associating it with fancy, which takes sensibility into the realms of the irrational. *The Oxford English Dictionary* gives several definitions of *fancy*, of which several stress its connection with delusion: “3. Delusive imagination; hallucination; an instance of this”; “6. A supposition resting on no solid grounds; an arbitrary notion.” This same source tells us that in early use it was synonymous with creative imagination, but that, later, fancy and imagination were viewed as separate faculties. The former became identified with an “aptitude for the invention of illustrative or decorative imagery, while *imagination* [was seen as] the power of giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of realities” (*OED*, “Fancy,” definition 4.a).

This aspect of sensibility which links it with fancy, stressing its dissociation from reality, is personified in the character of Mrs. Berlinton in *Camilla*. She teeters on the edge of disaster as a result of the indulgence of her romantic and artistic sensibilities. She exposes herself to danger and insult by her romantic disposition which demands that her letter from Bellamy be read in an ideal setting:

alone, in an isolated, moonlit spot. The literature she reads and the cast of her mind make her easy prey to the hypocrite, Bellamy, who acts the role of the platonic lover, but with other roles in view. Bellamy assumes a cloak of sensibility with Mrs. Berlinton and with Eugenia.

All Burney's villains act a part to achieve their ends. For instance, Monckton in *Cecilia* plays the part of the faithful trusted friend and adviser, a position of power which he abuses; Lionel, in *Camilla*, hovers between affectionate son and brother and criminal, in his near-autistic detachment and self-engrossment. Mrs. Berlinton's eventual ruin, had not fate intervened (or, more precisely, the machinations of Burney's plot), is easily predicated when we see Bellamy's villainous treatment of Eugenia. Eugenia, whose idealism and nobility of mind are often stressed by Burney, is easily duped by the false Bellamy, who wears the mask of the man of sensibility in order to capture the heiress. He stages a performance as the patient and heartbroken lover for the benefit of Eugenia's maid, knowing full well that she will describe his guise to Eugenia. Eugenia's reaction is pity: "what must not have been his despair when such was his sensibility? tears in a man! - tears, too, that could not be restrained even till his messenger was out of sight! - how touching! - " (II:316). Burney slyly inserts the words "could not be restrained even till his messenger was out of sight." This clause bears two messages: one indicates to the reader, who suspects that neither Bellamy's tears nor his sensibilities are genuine, that his performance is merely part of his strategy; the other shows the manipulation of Eugenia's feelings. Bellamy contrives to make her feel both obligated to him and guilty for his apparent suffering through his unrequited love for her.

Eugenia takes his tears at face value. She is an easy victim since she is idealistic by nature and her knowledge of life depends a good deal on the romantic literature she reads. She knows she is unattractive to men, but she believes his protestations of love, not realising he is aware she is Sir Hugh's heiress. Her education is quite different from Indiana's, who has been tried out as an educational Guinea-pig by Sir Hugh but quickly establishes her lack of interest in the scheme, her companion-governess insisting that study will mar her beauty and therefore her marketability. Eugenia on the other hand who is already scarred and crippled, finds solace in the education that Indiana spurns. Eugenia's education has been scholarly and classically based; her chosen reading is not novels, but poetry and tales of heroism and nobility, as the narrator drily puts it, in a phrase that almost anticipates Wilde: "not the common adoption of a circulating library" (II:315).

The emphasis on reading, on literature, as a shaping force on the imagination is an important aspect of *Camilla*. Like his sister, Mrs. Berlinton, Melmond is, too, influenced by his reading habits. He is in thrall to the fair Indiana, to whom he imputes sensibilities which are all in his own mind. As he says to Lionel when describing Indiana: "she is all I ever read of! all I ever conceived! she is beauty in its very essence! she is elegance, delicacy, and sensibility personified!" (*Camilla* I:103). His reading tastes are particularly significant in the context of this passage. We see in this description of Indiana that Melmond imagines he can see in her several traits which Burney herself often associates with sensibility: elegance, delicacy and beauty. Beauty she has indeed, so that the susceptible Melmond is beguiled into believing she has the rest. In Burney's

description of women of real sensibility these attributes recur, but they are bracketed with allusions to their benevolence, affection, animation, and other qualities which denote a warm, spontaneous human being. In her creative works, it is in her detailed description and development of character or, in the case of people of insensibility, *non*-development, that Burney modulates the meaning of the word "sensibility."

If sensibility is necessary for the full development of a truly human being, it is also seen by Burney as something which makes a character vulnerable. When writing of Evelina to Lady Howard, Mr. Villars insists that he does not wish to "wound her sensibility" (*Evelina* I:127), as quoted earlier. He wishes to protect her delicate sensibilities from public embarrassment and shame. In a different context, Mrs. Berlinton is *morally* at risk through her romantic sensibilities.

Of the many references to sensibility in *Camilla* one of the earliest is Melmond's of Indiana, quoted above, and an ironic use of the word during the scene when a supposed mad bull is threatening a walking party of which Melmond, Indiana, Edgar and Camilla are members. Edgar attempts to persuade the group to return to the rest of the party. The narrator comments drily: "but Melmond, in softer tones, spoke of fears, sensibility, and dangers; and Edgar soon found he was talking to the winds" (I:135).

In another passage of deliberately elevated language, the narrator mocks both Melmond *and* Indiana at the same time when Melmond addresses the object of his adoration. The reader is well aware that Indiana's sensibility is all in Melmond's mind so that she or he can share with the narrator the irony implicit in Melmond's

words: "The sensibility of your mind will plead for me - I read it in those heavenly eyes - they emit mercy in their beauty! they are as radiant with goodness as with loveliness! alas! I trespass - I blush and dare not hope your forgiveness" (I:141).

In the context of this passage, sensibility is associated with beauty, both physical and mental, and with the divine gift of mercy as the lover pleads his case in the appropriately conventional diction of romantic chivalry. The syntax echoes the emotional content of the language. Burney uses exclamation marks and broken sentences to show the speaker's emotional state. As George Saintsbury notes, and Janet Todd in her *Sensibility: An Introduction* develops this theme, in the novel of sensibility the "hero of a novel must always be in the heroics, the heroine in a continual state of palpitation. [...]. All the resources of typography - exclamations, points, dashes - have to be called in to express the generally disturbed state of things."¹⁰⁴ This is an example of form and content becoming literally synonymous. Commonly, the physical manifestations of sensibility are "palenesses, blushes, tears, sighs," and "the usual flood of tears" (Saintsbury 436). Burney parodies this technique in her depiction of Melmond in love. At this stage a young man with little experience of life, he is susceptible to beauty and not able to see beneath the surface. Later he learns to discriminate, but when we first meet him he is naive. He is, indeed, given the attributes of a *woman* of sensibility rather than those of the hero of a novel of sensibility. There are several similarities between him and his sister, Mrs. Berlinton: their literary

¹⁰⁴ George Saintsbury, *A History of the French Novel: (To the Close of the 19th Century)* Vol. 1 *From the Beginning to 1800*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1917) I:436.

proclivities, their lack of judgment of people, and their self-dramatisation.

Among other applications of the word sensibility in *Camilla* it occurs in the scene where Edgar, realising he loves Camilla, rushes to his tutor to ask his approval of his intentions toward her.

Marchmont notes that "Camilla seems most inartificially sweet"; the *seems* later becomes a more ominous qualification. Thinking that Marchmont has given unqualified approval of Camilla,

With a heart all expanded, and a face full of sensibility, Edgar now turned to him, and seizing involuntarily, his hand, which he eagerly shook, "You think her, then," - he cried, - but suddenly stopt, dropt his hand, coughed two or three times; and, taking out his pocket handkerchief, seemed tormented with a violent cold. (I:149)

Sensibility here is applied to Edgar's emotions and expressions, and is linked to his love for Camilla. Burney's description of his broken speech and the obvious attempt to hide his emotions denote his capacity for strong feelings but also his "manly" desire to hide them from his tutor.

Marchmont then proceeds to undercut his apparently approving words by suggesting that Camilla's "inartificial" sweetness be tested in order to save Edgar from choosing unwisely. By this Marchmont means that Edgar must protect his own interests by making sure his future wife will only *add* to his happiness. We are reminded of the pragmatic approach to marriage demonstrated by Robinson Crusoe when Defoe, in his novel published in 1719, has Crusoe write off his family in two sentences saying that "I married not either to my *disadvantage* or *dissatisfaction*, and had three

children, two sons and one daughter” (emphasis added).¹⁰⁵

Marchmont’s cynical views on women and marriage are encapsulated in the advice he gives Edgar, stressing the “inequality of her fortune”:

“She who has no fortune at all, owes you no more for your alliance, than she who has thousands; for you do not marry her because she has no fortune! you marry her because you think she has some endowment, mental or personal, which you conclude will conduce to your happiness; and she, on her part, accepts you, because she supposes you or your situation will contribute to her’s. The object may be different, but neither side is indebted to the other, since each has self, only, in contemplation; and thus, in fact, rich or poor, high or low, whatever be the previous distinction between the parties, on the hour of marriage they begin as equals. The obligation and the debt of gratitude can only commence when the knot is tied: self, then, may give way to sympathy; and whichever, from that moment, most considers the other, becomes immediately the creditor in the great account of life and happiness.”
(*Camilla* IV:671)

Burney couches Marchmont’s views on marriage in the language of commerce: of balance sheets and profit and loss, of “debt[s]” and “obligation[s],” of “creditor[s]” and accounts, in his coldly analytical and self-regarding view of the marriage contract. Marchmont seems to be Burney’s paradigm in the novel of the rational mind unmodulated or humanised by sensibility, as that attribute is presented in the exemplary characters in Burney’s novels.

Marchmont works on Edgar’s lack of faith in his own powers of engaging a woman’s affections (and we must remember that Edgar was orphaned as a boy). The result of this process of undermining Edgar’s confidence in Camilla is his suspicious watchfulness of everything that Camilla does or says. In one of the later scenes in

¹⁰⁵ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), ed. Angus Ross (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 298.

the novels Edgar has been influenced to such an extent by Marchmont that Mrs. Arlbury can say of him:

“I languish, I own, [...] to see that frozen youth worked up into a little sensibility. I have an instinctive aversion to those cold, haughty, drawing-back characters, who are made up of the egotism of looking out for something that is wholly devoted to them, and that has not a breath to breathe that is not a sigh for their perfections.” (III:483)

The first reference to sensibility as it applies to Edgar follows closely on a description of Camilla's sweetness and describes Edgar's sentiments toward her, the warmth of his feelings. The later example shows sensibility which has been repressed, so that Edgar is now characterised by egotism, coldness and unfriendliness, not one of which is an attribute of the man of sensibility. As Brissenden argues, in the eighteenth-century context of the word, love and virtue are linked to sensibility. He writes: “if the faculty of moral judgment is located in one's sensibility it must inevitably bear a very close relationship to one's sexual responsiveness: one's capacity for love and one's capacity for virtue both depend on the delicacy of one's sensibility” (Brissenden, *Virtue in Distress* 88).

Jean Hagstrum, in *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart*, discusses this aspect of sensibility and the capacity to love.¹⁰⁶ A correlation is made by Hagstrum between the rise of “affective individualism,” in Lawrence Stone's phrase quoted earlier, and a new “*mentalité*” with the emergence of the nuclear family and a stress on sexual compatibility between husband and wife (Hagstrum 1); that domestic affection which Thomson, in *The*

¹⁰⁶ Jean Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980).

Seasons, calls “perfect esteem enliven’d by desire” (Hagstrum 185).¹⁰⁷ Hagstrum writes:

The family was now based on the free choice of partner and on personal autonomy; it was bonded by strong ties of affection between the man and woman and between them and their immediate offspring. These all now lived together, separated often even from grandparents and other relatives - the new arrangement replacing the older and more diffuse organizations established for convenience and gain. Along with the spread of the conjugal family came a growing desire for privacy and sexual pleasure, a condition that contrasted sharply with antecedent periods when families were founded on political, social, and financial interests; when affection was severely limited; and when sex was regarded as a “sinful necessity justified only by the need to propagate the race.” This change from an austere - even a bleak and relatively loveless - personal landscape to one of greatly increased psychological grace, comfort, and affectionate mutuality explains “the warmth and autonomy of the eighteenth century.” (1-2).

Philippe Ariès, too, plots the growth of this “affective individualism” and links its effect upon families with changes in the treatment and education of children, and also with modifications in domestic architecture which increasingly, from medieval times to the industrial era, tended towards privacy and withdrawal from the larger society to the nuclear family unit.¹⁰⁸ Ariès describes the change from, perhaps at one level, a one roomed peasant cottage where all the family lived, or at a different social level a manor house with interconnecting rooms, affording little privacy, and opening from a central hall where family and dependants gathered socially or to dine, to houses of the early modern period where

¹⁰⁷ James Thomson, *The Seasons* (1726-30), ed. Henry D. Roberts (London: Routledge, 1939) “Spring” 1121.

¹⁰⁸ See Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (1960; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

family and servants had different quarters and rooms had precise purposes and were entered from corridors.

One might trace the change Hagstrum describes, which it is argued here is partly a result of the role of the cult of sensibility, from an "austere [...] bleak and relatively loveless" union to one of warmth and love through the two generations of Delviles in *Cecilia*. The parents' union was formed as a result of family interests, the second generation made their own choices on the basis of love and, in Cecilia's case, by sacrificing inherited wealth. Of course, in reality the woman has only the right of refusal or acceptance, but Burney neatly circumvents the prohibitions on woman's right of choice through the devices adopted in *Cecilia* and in *Camilla* discussed earlier.

In another example of Burney's use of the word "sensibility," in *Camilla* it is allied to dignity when applied to Camilla during the scene when Edgar surprises her and Sir Sedley alone. Sir Sedley is in the act of kissing her hand or, as Burney puts it more picturesquely: he "devoured it with kisses" (*Camilla* IV:559). To contemporary eyes this is a seemingly inoffensive act unless taken literally, but in the context of its period it signifies to a prospective husband that he should proceed with caution. Edgar believes the worst: that Camilla is a willing partner to the situation and the act. Camilla, who has been given no opportunity to explain, and who knows that appearances are against her, says to Edgar:

"I see," cried she, after a mortified pause; "you have lost your good opinion of me . . . I can only, therefore. . . ." She stopt, but his melancholy silence was a confirmation of her suggestion that offended her into more exertion, and, with sensibility raised into dignity, she added, "only hope your intended tour to the Continent may take place without delay!" (IV:575-6)

This is giving him an opportunity to extricate himself honourably from the engagement and to resume his plans to travel. In this passage, the fact that Edgar should think the worst of her offends Camilla's sensibilities; her pride is injured. Her inability to explain matters to him is bound up in this same pride and also with the necessity to keep Lionel's involvement in her affairs secret. In these circumstances, she reacts hastily to Edgar's suspicions. As discussed later, she also fears to continue in the engagement under an obligation to Edgar - she has been well tutored in "correct" female behaviour by her father.

Camilla's real reason for meeting Sir Sedley is to attempt once more to persuade him to stop writing to her and to make it plain that she cannot love him. In order to recover Edgar's trust, she gives him Sir Sedley's letters to her - an unwise correspondence started because of one of Lionel's mischievous, self-serving schemes. The jealous Edgar reads the letters wrongly: to be fair, he does not have the opportunity to see Camilla's replies and so only has one side of the history, and that from Sir Sedley's complacent point of view. The letters are couched in trivialising language: Sir Sedley adopts a high-flown form of address which parodies the romantic mode. They give the impression that Camilla has been conducting a coquettish affair with him. In contemplating the situation in which she has become embroiled, Camilla, who has taken the letters as expressions from the heart,

looked forward with nearly equal horror to clearing up a mistake that might embitter his [Sir Sedley's] future life, and to acknowledging to Edgar . . . the scrupulous, the scrutinising, the delicate Edgar . . . that such a mistake could have been formed. (IV:553)

Camilla finds that she need not have been concerned for Sir Sedley's feelings or his sensibilities. His pride only is involved. He extricates himself very neatly, if ungallantly, by implying that he was never serious in his intentions toward Camilla, rather than admit to a contest which he has lost to another man, and that man a mere commoner. If pride and prejudice are a fundamental preoccupation of Burney's earlier novel, *Cecilia*, they are also aspects of character considered in *Camilla* and other Burney novels.

Edgar's delicacy which Burney stresses in the previous quotation means he cannot force an explanation from Camilla. Ironically, this untrusting man wishes to trust :

Even when that knot was tied which would give to him all power, he sincerely meant to owe all her trust to willing communication. Should he now, then, make her deem him exacting, and tenacious of prerogative? no; it might shackle the freedom of her mind in their future intercourse. (IV:555)

Burney's acknowledgement of the situation for contemporary married women is encapsulated in that phrase, "all power." Edgar wishes not to abuse that power but hopes for an equal partnership. For Burney, the power of the husband is a prerogative more to be honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Camilla's delicacy is expressed in her unwillingness to allow Edgar to continue in an engagement when he no longer trusts her. She releases him, hoping, as she tells her sister and confidante, Eugenia, that

"if, after hearing all my imprudence, my precipitance, and want of judgment, he should voluntarily, when wholly set free, return to me . . . I will confess to him every feeling . . . and every failing of my heart! I will open to him my whole soul, and cast myself ever after upon his generosity and his goodness." (IV:583)

Camilla is again acting with “precipitance” and with “want of judgment” and by deciding on the provocative visit to Mrs. Berlington, of whom Edgar does not approve, she gives wrong signals to him. In both cases, delicacy and too much sensibility, a desire not to take advantage of the other, create and prolong misunderstandings between the lovers.

Sensibility is associated with female friendship in all the novels. In *Evelina* the friendship between Evelina and Maria Mirvan is carried on through letters when they are separated and in them Evelina reveals more of her feelings to her friend and peer than in those to her guardian, which are more circumspect. She is Evelina’s “second self” (*Evelina* I:122). In *Camilla*, the heroine’s closest friendship is with her sister, Eugenia. Lavinia is a more shadowy figure who emerges by the end of the novel as one who is not overcome by an excess of sensibility. In the description of the responses of Lavinia and Camilla to the news of Sir Hugh’s sudden illness, the narrator particularly stresses Camilla’s emotional reactions. The news is broken without any warning and in a quite bathetic as well as public manner. It comes completely unexpectedly whilst Camilla is attending a ludicrously bad performance of *Othello*, a significant choice of plays since Burney stresses Edgar’s jealousy in the novel.

The news of her uncle’s illness induces in Camilla a fainting fit: “the shock overpowered her, and she sunk nearly senseless into the arms of her sister” (II:325). Fainting and tears, the “marks” of sensibility, are provoked because of her affection for her uncle. The narrator pointedly describes the different reactions of Lavinia and Camilla on their journey home:

Camilla spoke not a word the first mile, which was spent in an hysteric sobbing: but, recovering a little afterwards, and sinking on the shoulder of her sister, "O, Lavinia!" she cried, "should we lose my Uncle - "

A shower of tears wetted the neck of Lavinia, who mingled with them her own, though less violently, from having less connection with Sir Hugh, and a sensibility less ungovernable. (*Camilla* II:325)

Here sensibility is equated with affection for a close family member. It is linked with Camilla's ability to love, but her surrender to her emotions is, as indicated in Burney's use of the qualifying word "ungovernable," considered less praiseworthy. Camilla's oversensibility is stressed by Burney's use of language, her reiteration of the adjective "less": "less violently," "less connection," "less ungovernable," when comparing Lavinia's reactions to Camilla's. Nevertheless, strong feelings are a prerequisite of the woman of sensibility, and it is Camilla, not Lavinia, who is the heroine of the novel; but these feelings must be governed, for the sake of the individual character and for the sake of those attached to him or her, a theme also stressed in *Sense and Sensibility*.

In Camilla's friendship with Mrs. Berlinton, Burney illustrates the role of female confidant which was a feature of the novel of sensibility. Mrs. Berlinton sends a letter to Camilla which "contained four sides of paper, closely yet elegantly written in the language of romantic sentiment." She writes:

"My soul pines to unburden the weight of its sorrows into thy sympathising bosom, my gentlest friend;" [...]. She then bewailed the time lost to soft communication and confidence, in their journey, from the presence of others; for though one was a brother she so truly loved, she found, notwithstanding the tenderness of his nature, he had the prejudices of a man upon man's prerogatives, and her woes called for soothing not

arguments; and the other, she briefly added, was but an accidental passenger. "Tis in thee only, O my beauteous friend! I would trust the sad murmurs of my irreversible and miserable destiny, of which I have learnt but this moment the cruel and desperate secret cause." (*Camilla* IV:622)

Mrs. Berlinton is a young woman who has been married off by her family to an older, wealthy man, and who now conducts a platonic affair with Bellamy. The narrator tells us that "[t]wo pages then ensued with this exclusive encomium, painting him [Bellamy] chief in every virtue, and master of every grace" (IV:622). Camilla replies in "language nearly as affectionate, though less inflated than her own" (IV:623). She has not succumbed, as her friend has, to the sort of sentimental, but, on one side at least, insincere, friendship mocked by Jane Austen in her picture of Isabella Thorpe and Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*. Though Catherine's hopes are for a genuine friendship with Isabella, Isabella's friendship proves to be entirely false and one-sided. For Isabella and for Mrs. Berlinton, such friends as Catherine and Camilla ultimately exist to provide foils for themselves and also to furnish the "other" to whom they can confide the drama of their lives, with themselves cast as the heroines.

One of Burney's clearest paradigms of disinterested sensibility comes in her description of the exemplary Lady Aurora, in *The Wanderer*, Juliet's friend and, unknown to the former, her half-sister:

Lady Aurora, who had just reached her sixteenth year, was now budding into life, with equal loveliness of mind and person. She was fair, but pale, with elegant features, a face perfectly oval, and soft expressive blue eyes, of which the "liquid lustre" spoke a heart that was the seat of sensibility; yet not of that weak romantic cast, formed by early and futile love-sick reading, either in novels or poems; but of compassionate feeling for woes which she did not suffer; and

of anxious solicitude to lessen distress by kind offices, and affliction by tender sympathy. (*The Wanderer* I:117)

In this description, Burney links the expression of the eyes to an expression of the heart - which is the "seat of sensibility." As so often in Burney's descriptive passages, eyes are "liquid" or "glisten" with tears or animation when a character's sensibility is being invoked. Lady Aurora's benevolence and "tender sympathy" are reflected in her appearance, which is shown to be also the reality. Burney stresses the practical application of the impulse to benevolent sympathy in her reference to Lady Aurora's "kind offices" to those who need help. When Selina suggests that Harleigh and Lady Aurora might marry, Juliet feels that "with active benevolence like his, with purity and sweetness like her's, what could be wanting?" (I:129). In the passage quoted above, too, Burney makes a very precise correlation between a certain type of literature and sensibility of a "weak romantic cast" which is nourished by "futile, love-sick reading."

Although musical and dramatic performances feature prominently in the novels and often have a bearing on the plots, references to the reading tastes of the principal characters in the novels are not commonly specific. Burney herself makes many literary allusions in her texts to drama - notably Shakespeare - and to poets of her own and earlier times.¹⁰⁹ In doing so, she makes the assumption that her readers will be sufficiently well-read to recognise her allusions.

¹⁰⁹ For details of Burney's reading see Austin Dobson *Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)*, 26-30; see also Joyce Hemlow *The History of Fanny Burney* 18-22; 46, and Joyce Hemlow "Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books"; see also notes to the Oxford University Press editions of Burney's novels listed in the bibliography for details of her allusions to literature.

In some of the references to her principal characters' reading habits, Cecilia makes an early purchase of "a library," and plans to devote much time to study when staying in London. The phrasing here suggests that Cecilia's reading will be of a serious nature. She is disappointed to find that Mrs. Harrel, her friend of school days when "books were their first amusement," is now given over to dissipation and society, "[d]ress, company, parties of pleasure and public places" (*Cecilia* I:32). Mortimer Delvile shares Cecilia's interest in books: "she found him manly, generous, open-hearted and amiable, fond of literature, delighting in knowledge, kind in his temper, and spirited in his actions" (*Cecilia* II:252). Eugenia, in *Camilla*, reads the classics and poems from the genre of the romantic and chivalrous - reading which does not prepare her for a world of fortune-hunters.

Lord Merton asks Evelina, who plans to remain at home instead of attending the assembly, "how in the world can you contrive to pass your time?"; Mrs. Selwyn answers for her: "In a manner that your Lordship will think very extraordinary, [...] for the young Lady reads" (*Evelina* III:275). In a more specific reference, on one occasion Evelina and Lord Orville are discovered reading *The New Bath Guide*, a humorous poem by Christopher Anstey published in 1766. Evelina writes to Villars: "When we read, he marks the passages most worthy to be noticed, draws out my sentiments, and favours me with his own" (III:296). Lady Aurora expresses the wish to share her home with Juliet in order that they may "read together, study [their] musick together" (*The Wanderer* I:136). Burney makes it clear that the study of literature of itself is by no means an evil. It is the type of "futile, love-sick reading," reading of a "weak romantic cast" which she deplores in her novels.

In *The Wanderer* the theme of female friendship emerges through the relationships between Juliet and her half-sister, Lady Aurora, and her friend Gabriella. Gabriella is described as “generous, noble, and dignified: exalted in her opinions, and full of sensibility” (*The Wanderer* IV:622). In this description of Gabriella, sensibility is coupled with words of high praise. We are first introduced to her in a reunion scene between the two women which takes place over the grave of Gabriella’s dead child. She, too, is a refugee from France. In this scene, which makes the most of the emotional possibilities of the situation in which Gabriella finds herself: an exile - weeping over her little boy who is buried on foreign soil - and amplifies that scene through Juliet’s horror at hearing her friend’s tale, Burney combines several of the potent myths sacred to the cult of sensibility: maternal love, the bond between parent and child, and friendship between those of like mind.

When Juliet/Ellis first discovers Gabriella at the churchyard she attempts to remove her from the graveside:

The fond embraces, and fast flowing tears of Ellis, evinced the keen sensibility with which she participated in the sorrows of this afflicted mother, whom she strove to draw away from the fatal spot; reiterating the most urgent enquiries upon every other subject, to attract her, if possible, to yet remaining, to living interests. But these efforts were utterly useless. (III:387-8)

Juliet finally prevails in her attempt to remove Gabriella, who “embraced, with pungent affliction, the sorrowing Juliet; [and] shed her last bitter tears over the grave of her lost darling” (III:402-3). Nobility, dignity, generosity are linked to sensibility in association with Gabriella, as are the “natural” bonds of humanity between mother and child, friend and friend. The mutual situation of the

friends, alone and displaced, mourning their separation from their loved ones, adds poignancy to their meeting.

Gabriella's husband is presented in a brief profile as a man lacking in sensibility:

Mr. *** was many years older than herself, haughty and austere, though brave and honourable; but so cold in his nature, that he was neither struck with her virtues nor her graces, save in considering them as appendages to their mutual rank; nor much moved even by the death of his little son, but from repining that he had lost the heir to his illustrious name. (IV:622)

In contrast to his wife, a woman of sensibility, the husband is devoid of human feelings, and views his family merely as an extension of his own being and his own pride. Burney, in her creation of characters such as Gabriella's husband, Mr. Delvile and Marchmont, constructs men who see women as "appendages," formed only to demonstrate to the world their own prestige or fulfil their wants. They are possessions acquired as they would acquire estates, valuable paintings or furniture, as reminders to their peers and to the world of their rank and power.

In its use in connection with Gabriella, sensibility is associated with humanity. Coldness, austerity and pride are the features of her husband's character which Burney uses to stress his inhumanity.

Burney further explores the association between sensibility and friendship in the connection between Juliet and her half-sister, Lady Aurora. This is a relationship which is known from the first by Juliet, when she hears the family name, but never suspected by Lady Aurora, who is drawn to Juliet, despite her apparently lowly social position, because of her beauty, her talents, and her sensibility. Lady Aurora and her brother, Lord Melbury, are both equally captivated

by Juliet. On their first introduction to her, Lady Aurora expresses her feelings to Mrs. Maple, her hostess: "what a sweet creature is this, Miss Ellis!"; her brother's opinion is: "Such talents and a sensibility so attractive [...] never met before!" (I:102). Although Juliet's position in the family is one that equates her with the servant class, Burney makes her half-brother and half-sister see through appearances to the intrinsic character beneath. Harleigh, who loves Juliet, demonstrates his own sensibility in his reaction to Lady Aurora's kind treatment:

The eyes of the stranger were not now the only ones that glistened. Harleigh could not see her thus benignly treated, or rather, as he conceived, thus restored to the treatment to which she had been accustomed, and which he believed her to merit, without feeling tears moisten his own. (I:105)

Though Burney's male characters are not so lachrymose as the hero of Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*, nevertheless her men of sensibility are capable of showing emotion through tears without losing their masculinity.

In a scene which parallels *Northanger Abbey* and Catherine Morland's humiliating banishment, like a servant who has been dismissed, Juliet too is disgraced when a guest in Mrs. Howel's house. Rumours of the dubious circumstances of her arrival in England, and doubts about the reasons for her assumed name pursue her, and Mrs. Howel, who suspects her of being an adventuress bent on ingratiating herself with her niece and nephew, Lady Aurora and Lord Melbury, dismisses her and forbids her to contact them again. Juliet's reaction to the humiliation is clear when she says she has been "banished from [Lady Aurora's] society, and banished as a criminal!" (III:552).

In an earlier scene, the narrator moralises on the difference between real kindness and benevolence inspired by sensibility and that which is assumed for the sake of convention when describing Juliet's reaction to Mrs. Howel's hasty and cruel actions:

the experience of Ellis had not yet taught her, how distinct is the politeness of manner, formed by the habits of high life, to that which springs spontaneously from benevolence of mind. The first, the product of studied combinations, is laid aside, like whatever is factitious, where there is no object for acting a part: the second, the child of sympathy, instructs us how to treat others, by suggesting the treatment we desire for ourselves; and this, as its feelings are personal, though its exertions are external, demands no effort, waits no call, and is never failingly at hand. (I:134)

Here Burney draws attention to the dichotomy which exists between acting a part, and real benevolence and sympathy. Like Charles Hickman when he argues that our passions and affections are the impulse to good actions "for till they begin to move, our Reason is but like a Chariot when the Wheels are off, that is never like to perform the Journey," Burney locates the mainspring and impulse for good actions, and for benevolence in particular, with feeling rather than with reason.¹¹⁰ However, Hickman also argues that passion must be controlled: or it will "get the upper-hand of Us, [and] out-run our reason. 'Tis unruly of it self, and therefore our business is to temper it, and keep it in; to manage it with Bitt and Bridle, lest it fall upon us" (270). Reason may be necessary to guide and control the impulse, but it depends upon the Christian concept of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This necessitates a view of "others" as like oneself.

¹¹⁰ Charles Hickman, *Fourteen Sermons* (London: By James Orme, for William Haws, 1700) 272.

Mrs. Howel's view of Juliet is conditioned by how society sees her. When doubt is thrown on her social standing, on the existence of a family, friends, protectors who might substantiate her claims to be treated as a "fellow" human being, Mrs. Howel asks herself: "With all her accomplishments, all her elegance, was she, at last, but a dependant? Might she be smiled or frowned upon at will? And had she herself admitted into her house, upon equal terms, a person of such a description?" (*The Wanderer* I:121). Lady Aurora's feelings, on the other hand, impel her to say to Juliet, when she discovers her isolated situation: "if I were my own mistress - with what delight I should supplicate you to live with me entirely! to let us share between us all that we possess; to read together, study our musick together, and never, never to part!" (I:136). A shared interest in music and literature are shown to be bonds between these two women of like sentiments.

In Mrs. Ireton, a woman who uses her power over people to abuse them, a character who it has been suggested was inspired by both Mrs. Schwellenburg, Burney's task-mistress at court, and her step-mother, the second Mrs. Burney, we meet a fictional character whom Burney uses to demonstrate many of the ills of an insensitive society. Mrs. Ireton becomes a moral target for Burney in making her point about the lack of humanity in the treatment of those who depend for their livelihood upon the rich, and especially the circumstances of women in this position.

In her attack upon Mrs. Ireton Burney focusses on three particular victims of Mrs. Ireton's abuse: her West Indian slave, her near-slave the nursery-maid, and Juliet in her role of companion, like governess, an ambiguous position half-way between family-

member and servant, respected by neither. Through Juliet's experiences in Mrs. Ireton's household Burney illustrates the treatment of "the humble companion" who was "always helped last" (*The Wanderer* III:492). Juliet is half-starved at Mrs. Ireton's richly laden board because her wants are ignored by both the mistress and the servants who wait at table. These are all pictures of oppression which reflect the prejudices and social abuses of the time. In showing Mrs Ireton's treatment of her West Indian slave and of her "companion" Burney anticipates arguments of later feminists by equating the position of the dependent white female as similar to that of a male who is black and enslaved. Lower still in the human hierarchical scale will rank the female who is black. As Ellen Moers points out, the themes of women writers have often dealt with the oppressed:

Chartists in England, millhands in Yorkshire, revolutionaries on the Continent, patriots in Italy, Catholics and Jews and atheists and foreigners - all victims of prejudice and oppression found champions among women writers, but no race of mankind was so widely and commonly assigned to angry women as the slave.¹¹¹

Women writers perhaps saw some parallels between these disadvantaged groups and the disenfranchised position of women generally. Moers refers particularly to the Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Spencer, too, in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, notes that in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko*: "the narrator's femininity is especially important because the similarities between the slave's and the woman's positions allow her her sympathetic insight into the hero's feelings at the same time as she creates a full

¹¹¹ Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: W.H. Allen, 1977) 15.

sense of the difference of his race and culture.”¹¹² The “difference” between black and white and the hierarchical patterns inherent in these gaps parallel the “difference” between male and female in these novels written from a woman’s perspective.

Mrs. Ireton’s first introduction to the reader occurs when it is suggested she replace a domestic left behind in France by employing a mysterious, dark-skinned stranger - Juliet in disguise - who is fleeing both revolutionary France and a monstrous husband:

“you don’t mean, I presume, to recommend this vagabond to be about my person? I should presume not; I should presume you don’t mean that? Not but that I should be very sensible to such a mark of distinction. I hope Mr Harleigh does not doubt that? I hope he does not suspect I should want a proper sensibility to such an honour?” (I:29)

Mrs. Ireton’s heavy irony is a mode adopted throughout the novel when she is reminding people of what is her due. Her cruelty is made clear by her sarcastic tongue and her use of threats. Burney’s own use of the word sensibility in connection with such a character is, of course, ironic.

In a later scene which demonstrates clearly the inhumanity of Mrs. Ireton, Burney encapsulates many of the abuses of her time. In the scene where Juliet is to begin her role as companion, Mrs. Ireton “was all impatience to display, to a new dependent, her fortune, her power, and her magnificence” (III:477). Mrs. Ireton holds tyrannous court over a mercer who awaits her precise orders, a nursery maid incessantly engaged in clearing up after “two almost equally indulged and spoilt animals” - Mrs. Ireton’s lapdog and a young boy, her nephew - and the West-Indian negro slave, Mrs. Ireton’s “favourite,

¹¹² Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) 51.

because most submissive servant" (III:479). An orphan child from a charity school, whose education there is being paid for, in theory, by Mrs. Ireton in her role of benevolent patron (perhaps hoping her *protégée* will, when a little older, provide cheap labour), waits in fear and trembling to deliver a message for the eighth time from her governess to the effect that the fees are long overdue. After tongue-lashing each in turn in a general way, in one of Burney's most penetrating and satirical scenes which confirms Doody's, and incidentally Sheridan's, assessment of her dramatic ability and brilliant handling of dialogue, Mrs. Ireton turns the full force of her ire on the maid who,

now, tired of wiping up splash after splash, and rubbing out spot after spot; finding her work always renewed by the mischievous little boy, was sullenly walking to the other end of the room.

"O, you're departing too, are you?" said Mrs. Ireton; "and pray who dismissed you? whose commands have you for going? Inform me, I beg, who it is that is so kind as to take the trouble off my hands, of ordering my servants? I ought at least to make them my humble acknowledgements. There's nothing so frightful as ingratitude."

The maid, not comprehending this irony, grumblingly answered, that she had wiped up the grease and the slops till her arms ached; for the little boy made more dirt and nastiness than the cur himself.

"The boy? - The cur? - What's all this?" cried Mrs Ireton; "who, and what, is the woman talking of? The boy? Has the boy no name? - The cur? Have you no more respect for your lady's lap dog? - Grease too? - Nastiness! - you turn me sick! I am ready to faint! What horrible images you present to me! Had nobody any salts? any lavender-water? How unfortunate it is to have such nerves, such sensations, when one lives with such mere speaking machines!"

She then cast around her eyes, with a look of silent, but pathetic appeal to the sensibility of all who were within sight, against this unheard of indignity; but her speech was soon restored, from mingled wrath and surprise, upon perceiving her favourite young negro nearly suffocating with stifled laughter, though thrusting both his knuckles into his capacious mouth, to prevent its loud explosion. (III:481-2)

“Poor Mungo’s” joy is short-lived. Mrs. Ireton threatens to ship him back to the West Indies with orders that he be, as she puts it to Mungo, “striped till you jump, and that you may jump, - you little black imp! - between every stripe!” (III:482). This sentence is reduced to bread and water for a fortnight, because, of course, Mrs. Ireton has no intention of really dispensing with his services, which are useful to her both as cheap labour and as a ready source of entertainment in her sadistic moods. Also, Mrs. Ireton’s claim to be fashionable in this age of colonisation demands she keep a young negro slave in her court.

As one can see, in this caricature Burney shows Mrs. Ireton’s cruelty to those under her protection and how she makes use of her “nerves” and her “sensibilities” in her war upon her underlings. Her sensibility does not extend to imagining another’s misfortunes or pain; it is invoked, together with the appurtenances of a display of sensibility - fainting and sickness - in this war of attrition. If, as Burney puts it: “the calls of self upon sensibility are unremitting, what must be the stock that will gift us, also, with supply sufficient for our fellow-creatures?” (III:478). In order to treat those who are dependent upon her in this inhuman manner, Mrs. Ireton, as many of her class, must think of those less fortunately placed fellow-creatures as sub-human, incapable of feelings or sensibilities.

Keith Thomas in his *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* draws a parallel between the harsh treatment of animals and of people thought of as inferior.¹¹³ He plots the development of a more humane attitude to animals through the discussion of their capacity for feelings, so that from brutes that have no claim to moral consideration they become “fellow beasts,” “fellow mortals,” or “fellow creatures” and, finally, “companions,” “friends” and “brothers.”

This change in attitude is closely connected with the rise of a new ethos, the emphasis on sensibility. Semantic changes, too, such as those involved in the naming of animals as “fellow creatures,” for instance, had much to do with changing existing ideas and behaviour in this respect, especially toward domestic animals. Previously, Thomas argues, “The ethic of human domination removed animals from the sphere of human concern” (44). Religious beliefs which taught that the world was anthropocentric and that everything in it was created for man and subservient to him were undermined by the scientific discoveries made by astronomers, botanists and zoologists during the eighteenth century. As early as 1738, Thomas reports, observations of cliff strata made by Thomas Story, a Cumbrian, led him to believe that the earth was much older than the time laid down in the Holy Scriptures and that many things had existed prior to man and had become extinct (Thomas 168). Charles Lyell, in the early nineteenth century, using fossil evidence, confirmed this view and completed the explosion of the anthropocentric theory.

¹¹³ Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane Penguin, 1983).

The earlier view of animals as existing for man's service extended to certain segments of society:

Once perceived as beasts, people were liable to be treated accordingly. The ethic of human domination removed animals from the sphere of human concern. But it also legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition. In the colonies, slavery, with its markets, its brandings and its constant labour, was one way of dealing with men thought to be beastlike. (Thomas 44)

If men can be thought of as beastlike, their treatment as such can be rationalised. Men who have only animal feelings and needs can have no human sensibilities to offend. Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, is concerned that a child should be taught to treat animals humanely. Specifically she suggests that Addison's account of ant life should be described to a child so that she will be "careful not to tread on [an ant], lest she should distress the whole community."¹¹⁴ Wollstonecraft suggests that ignorance is at the root of much cruelty, and that education will lead to more sympathy and empathy with fellow creatures.

Thomas also discusses the attitude to women, who, because of their child-bearing role which equated them with beasts, were also seen as nearer the animal state - like infants - and quotes Jane Austen's comment on her own sex as "'poor animals,' worn out with annual childbearing".¹¹⁵ An hierarchical division is implicit in this view of men, women, infants and beasts in descending order. "Most beastlike of all," says Thomas, "were those on the margins of society: the mad, who seemed to have been taken over by the wild beast

¹¹⁴ Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters with Reflections on Female Conduct in The More Important Duties of Life* (1787) (Clifton, N.J.: Augustus M. Kelley, 1972): 143 (hereinafter referred to as *Education*).

¹¹⁵ Jane Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. R.W. Chapman (2nd ed., Oxford, 1952), 488; qtd. Thomas, 43.

within" (44). Burney, in her handling of the scenes when Cecilia is thought to be mad and is given straw, since the woman who houses her holds the common assumption that mad people, like animals, prefer straw, confirms Thomas's argument. Henry Mackenzie, in *The Man of Feeling*, draws a harrowing picture of the treatment of the mad during Harley's visit to Bedlam, where miserable inmates, chained and dehumanized, are exposed to public gaze like animals in a zoo (XX:73-80). Gray tells us that a pleasant afternoon might be spent by the fashionable "taunting the lunatics in Bedlam" (224).¹¹⁶

In *The Wanderer*, Burney seems to be using Mrs. Ireton and her ménage as a metaphor for the inhumanity, the insensibility to others, she too finds prevalent in her time. Her picture of the treatment of the West Indian slave is a fictionalised version on a small scale of what was happening on a large scale amongst her compatriots. This was the time when liberal humanists such as her contemporary Charles Wilberforce (1755-1833) were fighting to abolish slavery. As Butler writes of the novels of the period: "Humanitarian feeling for the real-life underdog is a strong vein [in fiction] from the 1760s to the 1790s, often echoing real-life campaigns for reform" (*Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* 31). Doody's evaluation of Burney as a writer more Dickensian than Austenite was based partly on her view of Burney as a brilliant creator of bizarre and eccentric characters, but also on her ability to use these characters and their obsessions as a metonym for the ills

¹¹⁶ See also Christopher Hibbert, *The English: A Social History 1066-1945* (London: Paladin/Grafton, 1988) 430-1.

she saw in society, as Dickens did later. Burney's Christian beliefs underpin her criticism of society, as does her woman's sensibility.

Through Mrs. Ireton's insensibility in her treatment of Juliet, engaged as her companion, Burney develops the theme of oppression. She has already established Juliet as a refined, talented young woman of real sensibility: an artist, musician and actress; she can thus expose both the plight of an educated woman seeking worthwhile employment *and* the cruelty of society. As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 8 on *The Wanderer*, this is an important phase in Juliet's trials during her attempts as an unprotected woman of her time to achieve self-sufficiency. Burney anticipates Charlotte Brontë in her pictures of women of genteel birth forced to support themselves. In *The Wanderer*, Juliet's situation as companion, like Jane Eyre's as governess, and also of course Jane Fairfax's worst expectations in Austen's *Emma*, fixes her as a dependant, living on the margins of society and of the household in which she works.¹¹⁷ Burney stresses this through use of imagery when Juliet, like Jane Eyre, is often described as retiring to a corner of a room, effacing herself when company is present - always on the fringes of life, constantly overlooked or ignored. Mrs. Ireton more directly underlines the position of a companion when she tells Ellis/Juliet to: "stand at the window if you will. You won't be in the way, I believe; and I shall want you presently" (*The Wanderer* III:493).

Besides spoken language through dialogue or commentary, Burney uses body language to enlarge her picture of the effects of

¹¹⁷ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Jane Jack and Margaret Smith, The Clarendon Edition of the Novels of The Brontës, gen. ed. Ian and Jane Jack (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1969).

Jane Austen, *Emma* (1816), introd. G.B. Stern (London: Collins, 1953).

sensibility. Tears, fainting, blushing, pallor, breathlessness, facial expressions are all indicators of true, unfeigned sensibility or emotions too strong for words. Their significance is in the message they convey, which may be at odds with the spoken word. In a society which does not allow women to voice their true feelings, that insists on their passivity and their role as "she who must please man," as Burney demonstrates through the attitudes of men such as Captain Mirvan, Sir Robert Floyer and Lord Merton, these involuntary signs are often the only positive indications of a woman's motives or desires. As the worldly Mrs. Arlbery, who has learnt to interpret body language, says to Camilla: "It is not speech, my dear Miss Tyrold, that makes detections: It only proclaims them" (*Camilla* III:454). At one point in the novel Camilla is shocked to find that she has betrayed her feelings for Edgar even to the gossiping servants in her own home (*Camilla* III:350). In *The Wanderer* Harleigh reads Juliet through the physical manifestations which display her sensibility - he does not need to have her speak:

"Those eyes that so often glisten with the most touching sensibility, - those cheeks that so beautifully mantle with the varying dyes of quick transition of sentiment, - that mouth, which so expressively plays in harmony with every word, - nay, every thought, - all, all announce a heart where every virtue is seconded and softened by every feeling! - a mind alive to the quickest sensations, yet invigorated with the ablest understanding! a soul of angelic purity! -" (*The Wanderer* IV:595-6)

That Burney was aware of the connection between sensibility and sensuality is clear from Mrs. Arlbery's words to Camilla, who is visiting a health spa in an attempt to overcome low spirits after a disappointment in love, when she discovers her in tears:

“Ah! my dear,” cried she, taking her hand, “I am afraid this old friend of yours [Edgar] does not much contribute to make Tunbridge Wells salubrious to you!”

Camilla, affecting not to understand her, said she had never been in better health.

“Of mind, do you mean, or body?” cried Mrs. Arlbery, laughing [...]. (*Camilla* III:454)

A further example of Burney’s use of body language to indicate emotions which cannot be expressed, is an illuminating scene where Camilla confesses her indiscretion in receiving letters from Sir Sedley Clarendel. Burney has Edgar reacting by biting his nails, as he looks down, away from Camilla’s eyes. His unconscious actions clearly indicate the violence of his feelings towards Sir Sedley, expressed in actions directed towards himself and suggestive of self-mutilation, rather than open attack on the object of his animosity. In many instances in the novels, the heroines are silenced by prohibitions, by social propriety, by interruptions when they are about to explain their actions. Here, body language is often the only indicator of truth, though sometimes a blush can be misconstrued as guilt rather than embarrassment. Also, the lack of insight or the psychological conflicts within the hero himself can lead him to misunderstand body signals. Burney explores these contradictions in all her novels.

In *The Wanderer*, Juliet is inhibited from speech and explanation by the need to protect the Bishop and to escape pursuit by her husband. She assumes a disguise which confuses those she comes amongst, and initially is mute. Her appearance is all that is available to others for identification. Not only can she not provide herself with a background: family, place, connections, but she must

also hide her name. When Lady Aurora learns of their connection, she asks:

“Ah why [...] did you not speak? why not indulge the impulse of nature, and of kindness? Your talents, your acquirements, your manners, won, instantly, all our admiration; enchanted, bewitched us; but how wide were we from thinking, at that first moment, that we had any tie to a mutual regard with the accomplished Miss Ellis!” (*The Wanderer* V:819)

In this scene when Juliet and Lady Aurora are united as sisters, tears of sensibility are much in evidence:

Juliet could only shed tears, though tears so delicious, that it was luxury to shed them. Lady Aurora would have kissed them from her cheeks; but her own mingled with them so copiously, that it was not possible; and though the smiles of expressive joy that brightened each countenance, shewed their sensibility to be but fulness of happiness, the meeting, the acknowledgment, with the throbbing recollection of all that was passed, so touched each gentle heart, that they could but weep and embrace, embrace and weep, alternately. (V:818)

Both Juliet and Lady Aurora find words inadequate to express their happiness. Burney shows that language can bear only so much of human experience when sensibilities are deeply involved.

Burney recognises that aesthetics underpin the concept of sensibility in her age, influenced as it was by the ideas of Locke, Burke and Shaftesbury. The fully developed human being must be responsive to and capable of appreciating the good and the beautiful. This response and appreciation is dependent upon their sensibility. This is demonstrated in several ways in the novels. In *Cecilia* as well as in *Camilla*, and in *The Wanderer*, as will be discussed later, sensibility is invoked in relation to aesthetics. In several episodes in Burney's novels theatrical and concert performances of music and drama are scenes which she uses to signify a character's sensibility

or lack of it. This occurs in *Evelina* and in *Cecilia* when the heroines visit a theatre and are shocked by the inattention of the sophisticated city audiences who come to be seen rather than to hear. On one such occasion *Evelina* writes to Mr. Villars from London: "There was an exceeding good concert, but too much talking to hear it well. Indeed I am quite astonished to find how little music is attended to in silence; for though every body seems to admire, hardly any body listens" (*Evelina* I:105). If some go to public places just to be seen, "Insensibles" such as Captain Mirvan, on the other hand, see no value in the products of civilisation. After a visit to the opera in company with Captain Mirvan, *Evelina* writes to Mr. Villars: "I was very glad I did not sit next the Captain, for he could not bear the music, or singers, and was extremely gross in his observations on both" (*Evelina* I:38-9).

In *Cecilia* the narrator describes a performance of the opera *Artaserse* in which one of Burney's own favourite singers, Pacchierotti, is supposed to be singing.¹¹⁸ Fact and fiction blend here in a description of the power of music on a person of sensibility:

[*Cecilia*] found herself by nothing so deeply impressed, as by the plaintive and beautiful simplicity with which Pacchierotti uttered the affecting repetition of *sono innocente!* his voice, always either sweet or impassioned, delivered those words in a tone of softness, pathos, and sensibility, that struck her with a sensation not more new than delightful.

But though she was, perhaps, the only person thus astonished, she was by no means the only one enraptured; [...]. (*Cecilia* I:65)

Not only is the singer endowed with sensibility, the ability to interpret and convey the aesthetic experience of the poetry and the

¹¹⁸ *ED* I, lxxiv-lxxv, lxxxvii; see 64n *Cecilia*.

music, so that his performance reaches heights of drama which affect the responsive Cecilia, but the benevolent-minded Albany is shown to be equally responsive to the music and the tale it unfolds:

during the songs of Pacchierotti he sighed so deeply that Cecilia, struck by his uncommon sensibility to the power of music, involuntarily watched him, whenever her mind was sufficiently at liberty to attend to any emotions but its own. (I:65)

The narrator discusses the need for training to fully appreciate the art of the performer, suggesting that aesthetics are to some extent learned and conditioned, as Henry Tilney implies in his lecture on perspective from the point of view of an artist to Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* (*Northanger Abbey* 91-2). The viewer or listener must be taught how and what to see or hear. However, Cecilia is shown to have a sufficiently refined sensibility that her “natural love of music in some measure supplied the place of cultivation, and what she could neither explain nor understand, she could feel and enjoy” (I:64-5). Albany too, through experience, has become receptive to the emotions expressed in the music. In describing Albany’s response to Pacchierotti’s reiteration of the phrase “*sono innocente!*” Burney perhaps suggests that a chord is struck in Albany’s conscience which reminds him of the young woman whom he had left and who was later seduced by his friend.

Training and perspective are also invoked in an episode in *Camilla* where the narrator discusses the connection between aesthetics, education, emotions and the physiology of the viewer in the appreciation of landscape. As in the Stonehenge scene in *The Wanderer*, discussed in a later chapter, the state of mind of the observer is extremely relevant to their appreciation of the beauties

of nature, as is their sensibility or otherwise to stimuli. Camilla is disturbed in her mind because she has been compromised by Sir Sedley Clarendel in Edgar's eyes. She finds she cannot enter into the enjoyment of the scenes around her as she travels through Hampshire:

The journey, though in itself short and pleasant, proved to Camilla long and wearisome; the beauties of the prospect were acknowledged by her eye, but her mind, dead to pleasure, refused to give them their merited effect. To the charms of nature she could not be blind; her fervent imagination, and the lessons of her youth, combined to do them justice; but she thought not of them at this moment; hill, vale, or plain, were uninteresting, however beautiful; it was Edgar she looked for; Edgar, who thus coldly had suffered her to depart [...]. A fine country, and diversified views, may soften even the keenest affliction of decided misfortune, and tranquillise the most gloomy sadness into resignation and composure; but suspense rejects the gentle palliative; 'tis an absorbent of the faculties that suffers them to see, hear, and feel only its own perplexity; and the finer the fibres of the sensibility on which it seizes, the more exclusive is its despotism; [...]. (*Camilla* IV:605)

Camilla is equipped with a "fervent imagination," and has been taught in the "lessons of her youth" how to admire a beautiful prospect, but her preoccupation with thoughts of Edgar stands between her and the enjoyment of the countryside before her. The narrator philosophises on the healing effects of nature on one resigned to inevitable sorrow, but suggests that a state of unhappiness combined with uncertainty leaves the mind at the mercy of "its own perplexity." As with Cheyne, for Burney sensibility is conveyed through the body's fibres, and the "finer the fibres" the more highly wrought the subject. As will be seen, Cecilia, too, though more self-controlled than Camilla, suffers through the "finer [...] fibres of [her] sensibility."

In *The Wanderer*, the narrator is at pains to stress Juliet's proficiency in many of the arts: music and sketching, an appreciation of literature, skill in dramatic art, and also in the decorative arts which help her to earn her living. All of Burney's heroines demonstrate their response to the aesthetic aspects of life, as do her heroes. During Juliet's flight through the West country of England she examines rural life and finds that, though surrounded by natural beauty, those living in the farming community do not appreciate their surroundings because inured to it and because their life is bounded by hard work. Their lives are limited, and there is no room there for beauty or for conversation:

What, to these, was the pleasure of situation? Juliet saw, with concern, that all which, to herself, would have solaced a similar way of life, to them was null. Accustomed from their infancy to beautiful scenery, they looked at it as a thing of course, without pleasure or admiration; because without that which fixes all worldly acceptance of happiness, - comparison. (*The Wanderer* IV:697-698)

Burney recognises that the ability to make such comparisons depends upon the experience of other situations, ways of life, some knowledge of civilisation, and upon a critical faculty.

In Burney's novels words associated with "sensibility" are "insensible," "insensibly," "sense," "senses," "senseless," "sensible," and "sensibly." Some examples of Burney's use of these terms are given in Appendix B. It will be noted, for instance, that "sensible" is used by her in several ways. Of these, one usage is to mean to be aware of, or convinced, or persuaded - and there are many examples of this application listed in Appendix B; another is to describe one who is, in the *OED* definition of the word (IV.14.a): "[e]ndowed with good sense; intelligent, reasonable, judicious." Used in the latter sense it was, in Johnson's opinion a vulgarity, though many contemporary writers used

the word in this way.¹¹⁹ To Dr. Johnson “sensible” was synonymous with “sensitive” - used of one whose senses were sensitive to stimuli.

In an example from *Cecilia* in which “sensible” signifies “aware,” the narrator writes “ere she was sensible the first week was past, the second was departed for ever” (*Cecilia* II:241). An example of “sensible” as used by Burney in the context of being reasonable, judicious or wise occurs in *Cecilia* when the narrator gives us Cecilia’s opinion of Lord Ernolf: “She found him sensible and well bred” (*Cecilia* II:311). Evelina, in the novel of that name, finds Lord Orville’s conversation “sensible and spirited” and she writes to Mr. Villars that when Mrs. Mirvan intervened in a dispute between her husband and M. Du Bois: “This sensible remonstrance had the desired effect” (*Evelina* I:30; I:119). Used in the modern sense, to denote a person of practical or common sense, Mr. Dennel says to Mrs. Mittin: “Well, now you speak like the sensible woman I took you for” (*Camilla* III:449). Mr. Dennel, who is very aware, or sensible, of the value of money, is congratulating Mrs. Mittin on her financial acumen. Burney uses the term ironically in this and other instances where she is satirising the mean or avaricious characters in her novels, those who think of nothing but the accumulation and retention of money.

“Sensible” can also signify that one is fully alive, as Harleigh employs it in his philosophical discussions with Elinor on the possibility of an after-life when he quotes Shakespeare in speaking of “this sensible, warm being” (*The Wanderer* V:783.)

¹¹⁹ Susie I. Tucker, *Protean Shape: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Vocabulary and Usage* (London: Athlone, 1967) 250.

“Insensible” is used as the negative of “sensible,” for example: “If you think me insensible to the honour I receive” (*The Wanderer* II:205); or to mean lacking in feeling: “Harleigh no longer is utterly insensible!” (*The Wanderer* II:362). It can also be used as Johnson defines it, for instance, as in the case where Belfield’s responses to physical pain are described: “To the pain of his wound he became insensible, from the superior pain of this unexpected miscarriage” (*Cecilia* II:219). Belfield’s sensitivity makes him more sensible of mental anguish than physical pain.

“Sense” is used by Burney with similar connotations to “sensible,” indicating one possessing knowledge and judgment. In *Evelina* Lord Orville is described as having “excellent sense and refined good-breeding” (*Evelina* III:283) and again he has “good sense” (III:377) and is “a man of sense and of feeling” (I:116). In the last example, sense and feeling are presented as separate qualities, though Burney shows in her novels that both must go together in the truly “sensible” person - one who is responsive to others. The word “sense” is also used to denote understanding or awareness: for instance when Cecilia asks herself: “What separation, what sorrow, what possible calamity can hang upon my mind with such heaviness, as the sense of committing voluntary evil?” (*Cecilia* IV:577), a phrase which relates to Cecilia’s conscience. Again, in *The Wanderer*, Juliet assures Harleigh: “it would not be easy to me, indeed, to say - unfriended, unsupported, nameless as I am! - how high a sense I feel of your generous judgment” (*The Wanderer* II:347). In *Camilla*, Mrs. Tyrold’s “sense of duty impelled her [...] never to murmur” or disobey her husband (*Camilla* I:13).

The word "sense" is often qualified by "good" or "common" in Burney's usage. She writes of Juliet when Mrs. Howel banishes her from her home: "All chance of security hung upon the exertion of good sense, and the right use of reason" (*The Wanderer* I:130). In *Cecilia* Dr. Lyster's advice is accepted philosophically by Cecilia when he recommends that she forget Mortimer. She "had still the candour and good sense to see that there was reason in what he urged," though she ruefully recognises his ability, like that of many people, to trivialise the misfortunes of others (*Cecilia* IV:695). Examples of the use of "common sense" occur in several of the novels. Mrs. Arlbery, in *Camilla*, laments that "to hear a little plain common sense is so rare, it strikes one more than wit" (*Camilla* III:451). Belfield confesses to Cecilia that in his pursuit of the ideal life he was "bewitched, [...] infatuated! common sense was estranged by the seduction of a chimera" (*Cecilia* V:882). Except when used ironically, "common sense" and "good sense" are used by Burney as yardsticks in measuring the rationality of her characters.

"Senseless" is usually employed in its literal sense meaning without sense - unconscious, or witless - as in this example from *Camilla*: "The breath of Camilla instantly stopt, and senseless, lifeless, she sunk upon the floor" (*Camilla* V:823). All of Burney's heroines react as the heroine of a novel of sensibility should at one time or another by fainting into unconsciousness, a convention which is, of course, parodied in Austen's "Love and Friendship." In *Camilla*, Mr. Tyrold points a moral to Eugenia and Camilla when he suggests they throw "a shilling to the senseless little crew" to prove his point about the fickleness of popularity and the stupidity of a mob (*Camilla* II:305). Elinor uses the word "senseless" to mean "foolish," "without

sense,” when she calls religious beliefs “senseless legends” (*The Wanderer* V:783). Again, in *The Wanderer*, Harleigh invokes the cessation when we are asleep of the operation of the senses by which we know the world; we become “unintelligent and senseless, though still breathing clay” (*The Wanderer* V:789).

The opposite of “sensitivity,” “insensitivity,” is most often used to describe one lacking in feeling for others as when Mr. Villars writes of Evelina’s father: “he is a stranger to all parental feelings, and has, with a savage insensitivity, forbore to enquire even into the existence of this sweet orphan” (*Evelina* I:125). In *The Wanderer*, Harleigh is the object of scorn when he has the “insensitivity to resist love so heroic” as Elinor’s (*The Wanderer* II:371). “Insensitivity” can also imply one lacking in appreciation of beauty, as when Mrs. Tyrold takes comfort from Edgar’s imperviousness to Indiana’s attractions. The narrator writes: “This insensitivity to beauty the most exquisite wanted no advocate with Mrs. Tyrold” (*Camilla* II:230). Edgar looks for beauty that is more than skin-deep. Melmond is not so perspicacious and falls victim to Indiana’s charms: “load me with every other reproach, rather than this dreadful charge of insensitivity to all that is most lovely, most perfect upon earth!” he cries to his beloved (*Camilla* V:719).

In her fictions Burney explores two types of sensitivity, genuine and assumed, self-centred and selfless, destructive and constructive; two approaches to female friendship, supportive and self-centred, sisterly and competitive; two kinds of marriage, one grounded in respect and affection and concern for offspring, the other manipulative, oppressive, authoritarian and, ultimately, misogynistic. Her fictions, as well as her more factual journals and

letters, are permeated with ambiguities and tensions, dichotomies and paradoxes. These aspects of her writings will be the focus of the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5

EVELINA

Perhaps because of its first-person narrative mode which denies the author the opportunity to interpose comment, there are few explicit references to the word "sensibility" in this first work compared to the later novels. Two occurrences have been identified and these were examined in Chapter 4, but although the word itself occurs rarely in this novel, the ideas behind the concept of sensibility are as important as in the later novels. The sensibility or lack of sensibility of characters in *Evelina* is a prime element in this "Cinderella" story and many of Evelina's problems are caused by the insensibility and insensitivity of others to her ambiguous social situation. These problems relating to the perception others have of Evelina will therefore be the principal concern of this chapter.

In examining the examples of the references to sensibility as the word is used literally in *Evelina*, Villars' comments in the first example are prophetic of Sir Clement Willoughby's and Lord Merton's designs upon Evelina. Villars' reference to "too much sensibility" (I:18) is not, in this context, a derogatory comment: he refers to her quick responses to those around her and to the world, to her intuitive powers, indispensable attributes of the man or woman of sensibility. In the second application of the word, Villars hesitates to "wound her sensibility" when it is suggested that Evelina's claim to legitimacy be pressed through the courts (I:127). The phrase

suggests the almost physical pain Evelina might feel through her public humiliation and on her mother's behalf. The sensibilities Mr. Villars refers to in this instance are those bound up with Evelina's ambiguous position in society, her feelings of rejection by her father and his failure to clear her mother's reputation, and her empathy for her mother. A legal suit would bring all these matters which Mr. Villars has been at pains to keep private into the open. Madame Duval's insensibility to her grand-daughter's feelings in the event of such a public exposure is implicit in the violent prosecution of her plan to bring such a law suit against Sir John Belmont. On the other hand, Burney establishes Villars as a man of sensibility through his understanding of his ward's feelings.

Villars is presented as a man of sensibility in his benevolent protection of and affection for Evelina and her mother: daughter and grand-daughter of his one-time pupil and unrelated to him by ties of blood. His desire to save Evelina from humiliation is clear from the stance he adopts against Duval's objective:

Never can I consent to have this dear and timid girl brought forward to the notice of the world by such a method; a method which will subject her to all the impertinence of curiosity, the sneers of conjecture, and the stings of ridicule. And for what? - the attainment of wealth, which she does not want, and the gratification of vanity, which she does not feel. - A child to appear against a father! - no, Madam, old and infirm as I am, I would even yet sooner convey her myself to some remote part of the world, though I were sure of dying in the expedition. (I:128)

Besides wishing to protect Evelina's feelings, Villars is horrified at the idea of a child publicly attacking its natural father - one of the sacrosanct relationships in the novel of sensibility. Interestingly, it is women who see the importance to Evelina of her father's open

recognition of his daughter, understanding the social implications for Evelina. Mrs. Duval attempts too crudely to urge Evelina's case; Mrs. Selwyn manages the physical reunion of father and daughter; but it is her mother's letter from the grave, and Evelina's physical resemblance to her mother that speak most persuasively for her.

Despite the relative infrequency of overt reference to the word "sensibility," that Evelina is a woman of sensibility and that the novel concerns itself with the necessity for this quality in those who make up an ideal society are clearly demonstrated through Burney's juxtapositioning of those who have this quality against those who do not. Captain Mirvan consistently demonstrates insensibility towards other people's feelings; Mr. Villars speaks of the "savage insensibility" of Sir John Belmont in his treatment of his wife and his daughter (I:125). At this stage, he does not realise that Evelina's father has been imposed upon, and that Belmont is not aware that the child he has brought up as his own is in fact *not* his daughter. Belmont's neglect of his real daughter is "not the effect of insensibility or unkindness, but of imposition and error" (III:375).

Orville, on the other hand, except during the period when the forged letter casts doubt on his character, is described by Villars, whose judgment is the moral yardstick of the novel, as "a man of sense and of feeling," as mentioned earlier (I:116). Sense here, or "good sense," is not in conflict with or in opposition to sensibility, but works in association with this aspect of Orville's nature. In this description of Orville, Villars shows that he is a man of "proper" sensibility: his feelings inform his mind, and vice versa; he combines intelligence with right feelings. When Lord Orville's reputation with Evelina and Villars is under a cloud because of Sir

Clement's interference with her letter to Orville, Evelina writes to Miss Mirvan lamenting her loss of confidence in Orville:

[...] I could have entrusted him with every thought of my heart, had he deigned to wish my confidence; so steady did I think his honour; so *feminine* his delicacy, and so amiable his nature! I have a thousand times imagined that the whole study of his life, and whole purport of his reflections, tended solely to the good and happiness of others: - but I will talk, - write, - think of him no more! (II:261)

Delicacy and sensibility are closely allied in Burney's writings.

Evelina writes regretfully of the man she thought she had known before she was disillusioned. In describing Orville's delicacy as "feminine," she stresses his refined sensitivity to others and clearly does not intend to disapprove of him as unmasculine. Taken in context, the phrase is a compliment to his sensibility.

In the episode of the forged letter, the epistolary method cleverly tests the reader's powers of discrimination: if Evelina's and Villars' reactions to the forged letter should appear prudish, then the reader is not sufficiently "sensible." As discussed earlier, in Burney's use of the word "sensible" it most often means "aware" or "conscious of." The whole thrust of Burney's work is toward educating her reader toward a "proper sensibility" and an understanding of what the right basis of relations between the sexes ought to be. In treating Evelina as he does in the forged letter, Sir Clement denies her the rationality which Burney claims for women and makes of her merely a sexual object. Until she learns the truth, Evelina supposes it is Lord Orville who is responsible for treating her as a "nobody."

Burney's first published novel is in the form made popular by Richardson. Her use of the epistolary form in *Evelina* has the advantage of offering the reader a sense of close empathy with the

fictional heroine. A different perspective is introduced through letters from Villars in which he can give his interpretation of events and his impressions of characters and their motives, including Evelina's, when writing to her or to Lady Howard.

Since letter-writing and journal and diary writing had always been an acceptable pastime for the "proper lady," perhaps her only form of self-expression, the epistolary novel was particularly suited as a medium for women writers in the early eighteenth century. Its technique provides the opportunity for the reader to identify closely with the concerns of the central character who writes "to the moment," to empathise with the character's joy or suffering, and to probe the inner workings of the mind (*Clarissa* Letter 224, I:721). It thus lends itself to the exploration of the psychology of the individual and of the individual's relationships with society, important areas of inquiry in the eighteenth century.

It is perhaps no accident that the novel grew up in a period when the climate of thought was influenced by such preoccupations. Burney pursues this empirical exploration of the self and the world in *Evelina*, but her perspective is widened by allowing what Edward Bloom describes as a "double narrative vision" when she sets Evelina's ingenuous and apparently spontaneous reactions to the world around her against the considered, careful, measured language of Villars' replies (Introduction to *Evelina* xix). A third narrative vision might be inferred from the correspondence with Maria Mirvan in which she is more open about her feelings for Lord Orville. Villars, like the reader, may quickly understand how much is not said openly by Evelina in her letters to him and how much her happiness in London depends upon Lord Orville's presence, but this

knowledge is acquired by "reading between the lines" rather than accepting at face value the message Evelina believes she is sending. Although we have no letters from Maria Mirvan, her role and her attitude are signified by Evelina's replies.

The third-person mode of narration is adopted by Burney for her subsequent novels which, for one reason or another, appear more heavily moralistic. As mentioned earlier, some writers suggest that the moralising and sermonising in the later novels is a consequence of the influence of Dr. Burney and Mr. Crisp - Burney's mentors. Another problem which faced her after her identity was revealed, subsequent to the anonymous publication of *Evelina*, was accountability. As a woman writer in a period when women writers were viewed either as suspect or with condescension, especially if they wrote novels, Burney may well have felt it imperative to stress the serious aspects of her work, as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

In *Evelina*, the novel started in her youth and published when she was still a young woman, concentrating as it does on the responses to life of its young heroine, the moralising evolves through the lively dramatic scenes which are a feature of the novel and which are recreated through the pen of the heroine. It is perhaps not surprising that Sheridan should urge the young Burney to turn her talents to producing dramatic works. Her excellent memory for dialogue, idiom and tone of voice, amounting to almost total recall, the years of journal and letter-writing, the observation of "characters in action" are all grist to the mill in constructing her first published novel.

Whether writing in the first- or third-person mode, Burney explores certain themes throughout her works. These are first

mooted in *Evelina* and developed more fully and seriously in later novels. It may well be that the novel which perished in the flames when Burney burnt her early work at the age of fifteen, the story of Evelina's mother, Caroline Evelyn Belmont, raised themes investigated in the published novels. Certainly, the situation of the heroine, a wife who, in not being publicly acknowledged by her husband, is reduced to a "nobody" before the law, eventually literally annihilated, and who gives birth to a child whose legitimacy is dependent upon the father's word, has many of the possibilities of a novel of sensibility which explores woman's condition. Mr. Villars' recapitulation to Lady Howard of the circumstances of Caroline Evelyn's life - the attempt by her mother to force her into an endogamous marriage which would keep her inheritance within the family, her ill-advised "escape" through marriage to a rake, her neglect by that husband and her dependence on Mr. Villars' support, financial and emotional - all suggest some of the themes pursued in the later works.

As Jane Spencer discusses in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, the cult of sensibility and sentimentalism introduced "a new wave of sympathy for the seduced woman" in the 1760s (122). Pity for a betrayed woman was a feature of some of the novels but, Spencer feels, whereas in the novels of Manley and Haywood it was the heroine who might be seduced, in the novels of sensibility, she is always a marginal character. The heroine remains pure. Richardson managed to manipulate his plot of *Clarissa* so that his heroine is violated but remains pure and undefiled because she was insensible at the time, so that the loss of virginity becomes an involuntary act, her *will* was in no way involved; it is generally accepted that she

does, however, will herself to die after the event. Austen's plots, like Burney's, centre upon a chaste heroine. Her stories-within-the-story of seduced women act as a warning to the heroines and indicate the treachery of men.

In *Evelina*, Burney similarly uses such stories as sub-plots which act as warnings but demand pity. Evelina's mother is placed in this position by her father's denying the legality of their marriage. McCartney's mother is betrayed by Evelina's father and must live a retired life, banished by her family. In *The Wanderer*, Lord Granville is unable to disclose his marriage to the daughter of an impoverished neighbour because of his father's grander plans for him. His first wife, Juliet's mother, dies early, and leaves her daughter to be brought up by the grandmother in France. On Granville's death, Juliet is still excluded as a legitimate member of the family because of their pride and the mercenary motives of Lord Denmeath.

A further complication of the plot of *Evelina* is that McCartney thinks he has come close to committing incest when he falls in love with his supposed half-sister, Polly Green. He is, of course, not really her brother. Again, in *The Wanderer*, the young Lord Melbury woos Juliet as his prospective mistress before he discovers she is his half-sister. Burney's flirtation with the idea of incest is perhaps an appreciation of what could be the case for children brought into the world as a result of the behaviour of rakes such as Sir John Belmont and men under the influence of their acquisitive and proud fathers, such as the elder Lord Melbury. Burney sees that men such as are portrayed in the fictional characters Belmont and Richardson's

Lovelace, the archetypal eighteenth-century rake, sow seeds which have repercussions on the next generation in more ways than one.

Evelina, like the succeeding novels, contains aspects of the novel of sensibility with its emphasis on what Brissenden calls the “stock sentimental figures, themes and situations” which abound in such novels (*Virtue in Distress* 5). However, the typical scenes of reunited parent and child, which are treated in the appropriately sentimental manner in *Evelina*, the privileging of the parent/child or guardian/child relationship, the susceptibility of the hero and heroine, and the emphasis on the emotions and feelings and on benevolence, are balanced by the “comic” scenes, as well as by the inherent common sense of a heroine who gradually acquires experience and a voice. The phrase “common sense” is used here to indicate the capacity to understand and learn from experience.

Burney often alternates scenes of pathos with those of bathos or violence, whereas the novels of the period which were overtly influenced by the cult of sensibility were consistently pitched at a romantic or pathetic level. An exception to this general rule is, of course, Lawrence Sterne. Although in a letter to his daughter he writes that *A Sentimental Journey* is meant: “to teach us to love the world and our fellow creatures better than we do - so it runs most upon those gentle passions and affections, which aid so much to it” and, to a young woman of his acquaintance, that the novel will “make you cry as much as ever it made me laugh,” nevertheless, as Alvarez writes: “It is Sterne’s particular strength as a comic writer that no matter how whole-heartedly he pursues high feeling, unredeemed

reality keeps breaking in.”¹²⁰ Bathos is a tool which Sterne applies to wrench the emotional responses of his reader as, for instance, in the juxtaposing of scenes of sentiment with those of absurdity and anticlimax.

In Burney’s case, in the satirical scenes as well as in the scenes of cruelty in *Evelina* she can demonstrate the insensibility and misogyny which is endemic in society as compared to Evelina’s and Lord Orville’s sensibility. The latter are shocked by these displays of inhumanity, such as betting on a race between two old women procured for the purpose, the mortification of Lovel, and, when Captain Mirvan almost strips her naked, the degradation and humiliation of Madame Duval. Orville’s non-interference in the race between the old women has been commented upon by critics who see his objections as based on his distaste of gambling (e.g., Epstein 114; Straub 50). One of the gamblers, too, is soon to be his sister’s husband, and Orville may be dubious about Lord Merton’s custodianship of her wealth once they are married and it becomes his property. However, his suggestion for a more humane proposal to settle the bet by the protagonists bringing “the worthiest object with whom to share” the winnings suggests that he accepts the fact that they will gamble, but hopes that at least it may aid some worthy charity (III:292). His response to Evelina when she applauds him for his suggestion is: “[...] I shall think myself very fortunate if I escape the wit of Mr. Coverley in a lampoon! yet I spoke openly, because I do not wish to conceal that I am no friend to gaming” (III:296).

¹²⁰ Lawrence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), ed. Graham Petrie, introd. A. Alvarez (London: Penguin Classics, 1987) 11; 11; 13.

Evelina is less ambiguous in her response to the proposed race.

She writes:

the two poor old women made their appearance. Though they seemed very healthy for their time of life, they yet looked so weak, so infirm, so feeble, that I could feel no sensation but that of pity at the sight. However, this was not the general sense of the company, for they no sooner came forward, than they were greeted with a laugh from every beholder, Lord Orville excepted, who looked very grave during the whole transaction. Doubtless he must be greatly discontented at the dissipated conduct and extravagance, of a man with whom he is, soon, to be so nearly connected. (III:311)

When one of the women falls and Coverley brutally swears at her “with unmanly rage and seemed scarce able to refrain even from striking her;” Evelina is shocked. She comments that “Lord Orville was thoughtful, and walked by himself” (III:312).

In the scene at the end of the novel when Lovel is confronted by his “twin-brother,” the monkey, Orville acts unambiguously. He flings the animal from the room, demonstrating his own sympathy with Lovel, whom Evelina feels has been punished out of all proportion to his sins; also, in rejecting the monkey, symbol of brute, uncivilised man, Orville signifies his rejection of the irrationality and animal instincts he finds in the men around him. It is through examples such as the chauvinistic Captain Mirvan in his running duel with Madame Duval and Lovel, or in fact anyone who is not English or does not think exactly as he does, that Burney portrays the intolerance, illiberality, lack of harmony, the inhumanity and the disorder which infects her society generally.

Rose Marie Cutting draws attention to the "cruelty which pervades Fanny Burney's fictional world."¹²¹ The eighteenth century was, of course, to our complacent eyes, in many ways a cruel, uncaring world, despite the fact that it was this century which saw the foundation of many charity hospitals and foundling hospitals, necessary repositories for the bastards and orphans generated by the sorts of men on whom the fictional Sir Clement Willoughby is modelled.¹²² Cutting sees this emphasis on cruelty in Burney's novels as "a manifestation of feminine sensibility" and adds: "she was, after all, describing a world in which women had little power" (520).

Captain Mirvan's overt harassment of Madame Duval is only a more obvious example of the violence and misogyny which Burney illustrates through the attitudes to women of many of her male characters in the novels. Because Madame Duval is a vulgar and unsympathetic character, an "ungovernable woman" in Villar's self-revealing phrase, the cruelty of Captain Mirvan's behaviour may be glossed over (II:163). Nevertheless, his treatment of the woman who is his guest and Evelina's grandmother defies all the standards of hospitality and good breeding which his mother-in-law and wife uphold. Their inability to influence him for the better is a comment Burney makes on the power men wield over women: in Captain Mirvan's case, over his mother-in law, Lady Howard, over his wife, his daughter and the women who are his guests. Evelina's judgment of him is that he is "surly, vulgar, and disagreeable" and she is "amazed" that Mrs. Mirvan "would marry him" (I:38). The myth of a

¹²¹ Rose Marie Cutting, "Defiant Women: The Growth of Feminism in Fanny Burney's Novels," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 17.3 (1977): 519-30, 520.

¹²² See Gray, 225; Hibbert, 395-6.

happy domestic life at Howard Grove propagated by Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan before the Captain's return to shore after seven years at sea is quickly exploded by the reality of his disturbing and disruptive presence.

However, although Burney creates a crude, and sometimes cruel, character in this misanthrope, because of his active life at sea which often removes him from polite society Mirvan can function in a Smollettian manner as a comic nemesis, or justice-taker, to expose the folly of men such as Lovel. Admiral Powel, a more kindly and less coarse man, but like Captain Mirvan following an active profession and standing outside the idle, polite society Burney satirises, performs the same function in *The Wanderer*. Burney allows Villars to approve of some of Mirvan's sentiments, though not of the man himself. Nevertheless, she makes it clear in the novel that she does not condone his methods.

In order to satirise the society with which she was familiar, Burney gives Evelina her own powers of observation and deduction, those powers demonstrated in her own journals and letters. Critics have made a parallel between the apparently naive Evelina and her creator, some even assuming that Burney was seventeen herself when she completed the novel; she was, of course, a teenager when she started *Evelina*, but in her mid-twenties when it was completed and published: a gestation period of about nine years.

From the outset Evelina displays a satirical vein which is demonstrated in her criticism of the mores and fashions of the society in which she finds herself. Her first impressions are invariably right: she recognises the vanity, arrogance, selfishness and lack of principle, or downright cruelty of men such as Lovel, Sir

Clement Willoughby, Smith and Captain Mirvan. What she learns in the novel is how to deal with them and the behaviour necessary to avoid danger from the predatory. In the final chapters of the novel, Evelina is able to analyse Sir Clement Willoughby's haughty letter in which he "explains" his reasons for appropriating Evelina's letter to Lord Orville and forging a reply. Evelina writes: "What a strange letter! how proud and how piqued does its writer appear!" (III:388). She sees that, for his "honour's" sake, Willoughby would risk a duel with Orville rather than confess misconduct. Evelina penetrates Sir Clement's rhetoric, just as Camilla does that of Sir Sedley Clarendon. Camilla recognises that Sir Sedley's withdrawal from the field of contention when he finds that he has a rival in Edgar is prompted by a desire to save face:

Piqued completely, and mortified to the quick, by the conviction which now broke in upon him of the superior ascendance of Mandlebert, he could not brook to have been thought in earnest when he saw he should not have been accepted, nor pardon his own vanity the affront it had brought upon his pride. (*Camilla* IV:560)

Both heroines learn to judge what lies behind the social mask.

Evelina may at first be ignorant of the dangers that lie in wait for a young woman who deviates from proscribed behaviour and strays from the beaten track and into dark, narrow alleys away from the chaperonage necessary at all times to prove her virtue, as Burney illustrates in a literal sense in the scenes at Ranelagh and Vauxhall Gardens, but in other ways she is shown to be perceptive. Her acuteness in observing the games people play is indicative of the clarity of vision of this seemingly naive heroine. An instance of Burney's technique is her examination through Evelina's eyes of the

way Mrs. Mirvan and Lady Howard deal with their misogynistic and crude husband and son-in-law. Mrs. Mirvan “never speaks to the Captain when he is out of humour” (II:153). Lady Howard finds it expedient to adopt a policy of passive withdrawal in order to avoid the confrontation which, it is clear from his encounters with the aggressive Madame Duval, will be both demeaning and futile. Where the uneducated and irrational Madame Duval, refusing to comply with the accepted norm in female behaviour, defies the equally irrational Mirvan, his mother-in-law has learnt to look the other way. Lady Howard and Mrs. Mirvan are silent and passive from necessity. Evelina comments in a letter to Mr. Villars:

I believe that Lady Howard [...] suspected some contrivance of the Captain, [...]: however, though she is not at all pleased with his frolick, yet she would not hazard the consequence of discovering his designs: her looks, her manner, and her character, made me draw this conclusion [...]. Indeed there seems to be a sort of tacit agreement between her and the Captain, that she should not appear to be acquainted with his schemes; by which means she at once avoids quarrels, and supports her dignity. (II:141-2)

Evelina’s disapproval of this stance is made clear when, after the Captain’s Tony Lumpkin-like joke at Madame Duval’s expense, she vows she will no longer remain passive in any future plot against her grandmother. “Had I imagined he would have been so violent [toward Madame Duval], I would have risked his anger in her defence much sooner,” she writes, after Captain Mirvan, posing as a highwayman, pulls Madame Duval from her coach, physically abuses her, throws her into a ditch and ties her feet to a tree (II:152). This scene is all the more terrifying to Madame Duval because, in order not to betray his identity, Mirvan does not speak a word. In other circumstances, Captain Mirvan’s inherent aptitude for physical

violence is made clear through the language he habitually adopts, which commonly contains threats of physical abuse, for instance, when he suggests discipline “with a cat o’ nine tails” for those men who do not conform to his idea of a “proper man” (*Evelina* I:108).

What makes that scene of oppression of the female most sinister is the silence of the attacker, who, like a phantom-rapist, does not wish to be identified. Mirvan is an officer in a navy which was at that time notoriously brutal in its treatment of its men: a self-perpetuating system which succeeded in brutalising the brutalised, or at least those that survived the often fatal floggings for trivial offences.¹²³ He is in the same mould as Jane Austen’s Mr. Price in *Mansfield Park*, a retired Lieutenant of Marines. When Price hears of his niece, Maria’s, defection with Mr. Crawford, his first reaction is a resort to the verbal violence which indicates an impulse to physical violence. If it were his daughter, he says, “[...] I’d give her the rope’s end as long as I could stand over her. A little flogging for man and woman, too, would be the best way of preventing such things” (*Mansfield Park* 357). His suggestion that Sir Thomas “may be too much of the courtier and fine gentleman to like his daughter the less” for her misdemeanour makes him brother to Captain Mirvan, who sees the gentlemanly behaviour of men of sensibility, those with sympathy for others, as weak, and wounding bluntness as synonymous with true manly behaviour (*Mansfield Park* 357). It is through these profiles of insensitive men that Burney makes her point to her reader.

123 See J.H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, The Pelican History of England: 7, ed. J.E. Morpurgo (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986) 200.

In a telling image of the loss of a woman's sense of identity, which depends to a great extent upon how the world *sees* her, Evelina describes to Mr. Villars the sight of her grandmother when she goes to her aid after Captain Mirvan's assault on her:

The ditch, happily, was almost quite dry, or she must have suffered still more seriously; yet, so forlorn, so miserable a figure, I never before saw. Her head-dress had fallen off; her linen was torn; her negligee had not a pin left in it; her petticoats she was obliged to hold on; and her shoes were perpetually slipping off. She was covered with dirt, weeds, and filth, and her face was really horrible, for the pomatum and powder from her head, and the dust from the road, were quite *pasted* on her skin by her tears, which, with her *rouge*, made so frightful a mixture, that she hardly looked human. (*Evelina* II:148)

The Captain has reduced Madame Duval to a thing - hardly human. He attacks her at her most vulnerable point: her vanity. Farcical "comic" scenes such as this one in *Evelina* may be compared to similar incidents in novels by other eighteenth-century writers, such as Fielding, Sterne, Smollett, and Goldsmith. In Burney's novels they are given another dimension, since they are also seen through the lens of Burney's heroes' and heroines' more sympathetic eyes. It is also argued that by engaging the sympathy of the reader in this manner she exposes the crude misogyny which lies behind the scenes, and attempts to alter the perceptions of her readers towards such attitudes.

Just as he partly strips Madame Duval in a literal sense, Mirvan strips his daughter and Evelina metaphorically when he demolishes the effect of the flattering words of a party of men at Ranelagh by reminding them that though they "may persuade [his Moll] that her pug-nose is all the fashion: and as to the other, why she's good white

and red, to be sure; but what of that? - I'll warrant she'll moulder away as fast as her neighbours" (I:112). An image of decay is conjured by this description of the ephemerality of beauty and the mortality of woman. In this reminder of the short period when women hold a modicum of power through their youth and beauty perhaps Burney is recalling Samuel Crisp's somewhat merciless words to her as a young girl:

this is your time. Years and wrinkles in their due season (perhaps attended with want of health and spirits) will succeed. You will then be no longer the same Fanny of 1778, feasted, caressed, admired, with all the soothing circumstances of your present situation. (DL Mr. Crisp to FB, November 6, 1778, I:138)

Crisp believes, as several of the men in *Evelina* do, that a woman is only of value when young and sexually attractive. After that, she is in the way. Croker's criticism of Burney in his review of *The Wanderer* seems to reflect current attitudes amongst some men.

Mirvan's blunt crude language is a reaction to the flowery, insincere, superficially chivalrous, but at the same time, more subtly belittling, language and manners adopted by some of the men toward young women. In the case of the aging Madame Duval, Mirvan sees as inappropriate her preoccupation with her appearance and her French way of travelling with a male companion, and would agree with Lord Merton's opinion on the expendability of older women (*Evelina* III:275). In the scenes where Mirvan opposes the fashionable Lovel and his set, Burney criticises both parties through the language she assigns them.

In contrast to Mirvan's open display of intolerance to all who do not conform to his ideas of the proper role and behaviour of

women, which is to be silent and subservient, and especially his intolerance of aggressive and vocal women, Burney shows the other side of the coin in her examination of the gap between the meaningless, quasi-chivalrous language of some of her male characters in their dealings with women, and contrasts this with their actions towards them. The gap between words and action and the hypocrisy which underlies it is demonstrated in a scene where Mrs. Selwyn suggests Lord Orville may receive a teasing from his peers for driving carefully with Evelina and herself. Her words are based on her knowledge of the spirit of competition amongst the young men who, like John Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey*, would risk their own, their passengers' and other people's lives to show their "bravery" and skill at driving. Lord Orville is shown to have no need of such exhibitions: his is a moral bravery which survives being labelled "as careful as an old woman," a derogatory title, of course, and proclaims him a man of integrity as well as a man of sensibility (III:288). He does not need to affirm his manhood by such competitions. When Villars learns that Orville has put an end to Lovel's vindictive persecution of Evelina by a personal approach to him during which he extracts Lovel's promise never again to harass her, he comments on Orville's independent sense of honour which puts his duty to protect women before male solidarity.

Villars also praises Orville's actions in a scene where Willoughby attempts to take advantage of Evelina's separation from her party at the opera which leaves her in a situation where she is alone and unprotected:

Lord Orville appears to be of a better order of beings. His spirited conduct to the meanly impertinent Lovel, and his

anxiety for you after the opera, prove him to be a man of sense and of feeling. Doubtless he thought there was much reason to tremble for your safety, while exposed to the power of Sir Clement; and he acted with a regard to real honour, that will always incline me to think well of him, in so immediately acquainting the Mirvan family with your situation. Many men of this age, from a false and pretended delicacy to a friend, would have quietly pursued their own affairs, and thought it more honourable to leave an unsuspecting young creature to the mercy of a libertine, than to risk his displeasure by taking measures for her security. (I:116)

Like Harleigh, in *The Wanderer*, who similarly risks masculine disapproval or derision to protect Juliet's honour, Orville personifies what Burney sees as truly manly behaviour. She also shows that she does not consider manliness inconsistent with sensibility.

Lord Merton, in contrast to Lord Orville, puts Lady Louisa at risk in order to rise to the challenge of Lovel in his new phaeton (III:280). Burney shows how some men who hold the reins are not inhibited from abusing their power by any concern for those under their protection. This could be construed as a comment on the patriarchal family structure with which Burney was familiar, where men metaphorically hold the reins. When Lady Louisa remonstrates with Merton, Burney shows very clearly the gap between words and actions in a scene which bodes ill for the happiness of the future wife. Lord Merton and Lady Louisa return to Mrs. Beaumont's house at Clifton Hill, Bristol Hotwell, after a drive in Merton's phaeton. He is still booted and has a whip in his hand. Lady Louisa complains to Mrs. Beaumont:

"My Lord drove so monstrous fast [...]. He frightened me out of my senses; I declare my head is quite giddy. Do you know, Ma'am, we have done nothing but quarrel all the morning? - You can't think how I've scolded; - have not I, my Lord?" and she smiled expressively at Lord Merton.

“You have been, as you always are,” said he, twisting his whip with his fingers, “all sweetness.” (III:280)

The juxtaposing of insincere chivalrous sentiments and sinister action has ominous overtones. Taken together with Merton's words later, when he finds himself alone with Evelina, whom he ignores when in company but harasses when they are alone, Burney subtly suggests that Merton is biding his time till her fortune is his own to show his wife who is the master:

“Why now [...] if you was not the cruellest little angel in the world, you would have helped me to some expedient: for you see how I am watched here; Lady Louisa's eyes are never off me. She gives me a charming foretaste of the pleasures of a wife! however, it won't last long.” (III:311)

Words and actions in the earlier scene are at total variance - the body language telling more of Merton's real feelings and intentions than his actual words. He is constrained by propriety, and the fact that he is not yet married to the heiress, to behave with an appearance of civility.

In illustrating the violence which lies behind the misogyny of many of the male characters in her novels, Julia Epstein sees Burney as writing as “a very woman.” Here she is referring to Hazlitt's criticism of Burney's writings in which he describes her as “a mere common observer of manners, - and also a very woman.” He goes on:

There is little other power in Miss Burney's novels, than that of immediate observation: her characters, whether of refinement or vulgarity, are equally superficial and confined. The whole is a question of form, whether that form is adhered to, or violated. It is the circumstance which takes away dignity and interest from her story and sentiments, and makes the one so teasing and tedious, and the other so insipid. The difficulties

in which she involves her heroines are indeed "Female Difficulties;" - they are difficulties created out of nothing.¹²⁴

Epstein argues:

how, after all, could she write otherwise? But as that phrase for Hazlitt designated fearfulness and reluctance, timidity and "punctilio," for me it designates Burney's tense yet intensely committed use of her literary voice to represent social violence in writing, to encode her rage in imaginative narrative, to invent, finally, a discourse of empowerment for women.
(230)

Epstein reads Burney from the point of view of twentieth-century feminist political literary interpretation. She recognises that each generation brings a different set of ideological tools with which to mine the work of past writers. Hazlitt, too, was circumscribed by his time, his gender and his social conditioning and, like many early critics, read from a different perspective and looked for different signs and judged by different criteria from contemporary critics. It is argued here that the "feminine sensibility" of many women writers since Burney has, in itself, opened up new ways of reading novels and analysing the social structures which make up the world of men and women.

Burney's portrayal of misogynistic men such as Captain Mirvan, who denies women the right to speak, and Lord Merton and Sir Clement Willoughby, who make assumptions about women which depend upon their circumstances rather than their integrity, suggests her interest in the role men of her day ascribed to women. If sensibility has much to do with perception, then it is argued that the perception of women by many of the men in the novels is shown to

¹²⁴ [William Hazlitt], Rev. of "*The Wanderer: or, Female Difficulties*. A Novel, by Madame D'Arblay," *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*: Nov. 1814 to Feb. 1815 Vol. XXIV, printed in Edinburgh by David Willison (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1815) XLVIII 320-38: 336; 337.

be prejudiced and debasing. Burney's description of the harassment of Evelina and the Misses Branghton by a party of drunken "gentlemen," in a scene, dense with symbolism, set in the Vauxhall Gardens when her companions lead Evelyn away from the main path into a dark alley, is not just a warning to women to be prudent and circumspect in their behaviour. It also demonstrates the arrogance of the young men who make such assumptions about women when unprotected by a man. They assume they are prostitutes, and treat them as such:

By the time we came near the end, a large party of gentlemen, apparently very riotous, and who were hallowing, leaning on one another, and laughing immoderately, seemed to rush suddenly from behind some trees, and, meeting us face to face, put their arms at their sides, and formed a kind of circle, that first stopped our proceeding, and then our retreating, for we were presently entirely inclosed. (*Evelina* II:195-6)

The young women are trapped in the encircling arms of the men.

Julia Epstein, discussing the theme of entrapment in Burney's novels, makes an interesting correlation between dancing and imprisonment, and the "disposal" of women (109-10). Burney's novels are full of images of enclosure, of entrapment - in a carriage at the mercy of an importunate suitor or a seducer; in circumstances which demand her silence; or literally held and restrained, as Cecilia is when she tries to reach her husband whom she thinks is about to be killed in a duel. Epstein perceptively notes that many of Burney's scenes of "terror" take place in "an elegant public gathering place, a setting of leisure and ease that in and of itself encloses fearful dangers for Burney's heroines" (88-9). Where Gothic literature often depends for its effects upon eerie settings, such as ancient castles, dark forests, against a background of

storms at night, Burney's scenes of terror and entrapment are those of everyday life: a dance-floor, a public garden, a room in an inn. The terror therefore becomes more chillingly realistic, and in a way more claustrophobic, because the circumstances are more domestic. Where escape from nightmare is possible by waking from the dream, escape from the "every-day" terror is not: a distinction a reader will make.

Evelina escapes from the group that is terrorising her at Vauxhall Gardens, only to fall prey to another, which includes Sir Clement Willoughby. Her assurances that she is "no actress," euphemism for the eighteenth-century prostitute, are ignored: her circumstances, alone and unprotected, are sufficiently damning. The masculine view is voiced by Mr. Branghton, Senior:

"The long alleys!" repeated Mr. Branghton, "and, pray, what had you to do in the long alleys? why, to be sure, you must all of you have had a mind to be affronted!" (II:200)

Evelina writes:

This speech was not more impertinent to me, than surprising to Sir Clement, who regarded all the party with evident astonishment. However, I told young Branghton that no time ought to be lost, for that his sisters might require his immediate protection.

"But how will they get it?" cried this brutal brother; "if they've a mind to behave in such a manner as that, they ought to protect themselves; and so they may for me." (200)

The uncouth and careless "young Branghton" is obviously as little concerned for his sisters' safety as he is for their reputations and, through those reputations, the family's as a whole. Such considerations as the latter were usually a powerful motive for insisting that the unmarried woman be chaperoned at all times in

order to demonstrate her respectability. It is noticeable that it is when Evelina is separated from her family and older friends that she becomes vulnerable to danger.

Evelina's ambiguous social position is reflected in her treatment by men such as Lord Merton and Sir Clement Willoughby. She sees herself as a "nobody," an "outcast,": "a child of bounty, - an orphan from infancy, - dependent, even for subsistence dependent, upon the kindness of compassion! - Rejected by my natural friends, - disowned for ever by my nearest relation [...]" (III:368). The sentiments behind Burney's depiction of the assumptions men make about women recur in a scene in *Camilla*. The Honourable Mrs. Berlinton, a woman of a romantic disposition and addicted to novels and poetry, is discovered reading under an oak tree, alone, in the park surrounding Knowle, the stately home that Camilla and her party are viewing. Lord Newford, who is of the party, rushes towards Mrs. Berlinton and frightens her away. This echoes an earlier scene where Lord Newford similarly harasses Mrs. Berlinton when she is out alone by moonlight reading a letter from Bellamy (*Camilla* III:388-9). For a woman of sensibility brought up on sentimental novels, such a setting would seem appropriate to her mood. Mrs. Arlbery drily asks Lord Newford to introduce her:

"[...] I hear you are very kind to her; and take much care to convince her of the ill effects and danger of the evening air."

"O hang it! O curse it!" cried his lordship; "why does a woman walk by moon-light?" (III:418)

There is a clear assumption here that the lady is asking to be "affronted." Burney has one of her exemplary characters, reply: "Why, rather, should man," asks Lord O'Lerney, "impede so natural a

recreation?" - giving an indication of the author's sentiments (*Camilla* III:418).

The restrictions on women's freedoms are a theme which recurs in all the novels. Both Evelina and Cecilia are concerned at the waste of time involved in the demands of society. Evelina writes to Mr. Villars: "As to my plan of writing every evening the adventures of the day, I find it impracticable; for the diversions here are so very late, that if I begin my letters after them, I could not go to bed at all" (*Evelina* I:28). Cecilia finds that her plans for rational conversation and study, and for the implementation of her benevolent schemes are constantly interrupted by the frivolous or tedious round of visiting arranged by her hostess in London. Margaret Anne Doody has shown in her analysis of Burney's comedy "The Witlings" (Berg MS. 126 pp.) that she was concerned here with satirising the apparent busy-ness of her characters which covered an actual "waste of time" (79).

In *Evelina*, Mrs. Selwyn, the prototype for the independent woman who occurs in all of Burney's novels and whose function is to expose male chauvinism, makes herself unpopular by mocking the idleness and frivolous pursuits, such as gambling or following the latest fashion, of men such as Lord Merton, a member of the ruling class, and Lovel, a foppish member of the Lower House. Mrs. Selwyn is resented because she does not conform to what the men feel should be the role of a woman. Sir Clement Willoughby speaks of "the unbounded licence of her tongue" and at Evelina's meaningful enquiry: "O Sir Clement, do *you* object to that?" he replies: "Yes, my sweet reproacher, in a *woman*, I do; in a *woman* I think it intolerable" (III:343). His comment shows that he puts bounds on

what women may utter, and like Lord Merton denies them strength of mind. The affected and languorous Lady Louisa Larpent, a self-styled “sad weak creature” who, like Lady Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, spends most of her time reclining on a sofa, offers no challenge to the men and is therefore approved by those who, as they put it, “have an insuperable aversion to strength, either of body or mind, in a female” (III:361). Lady Louisa is a young woman of fortune destined for Lord Merton who has gambled much of his own money away and plans to restore his finances through his wife’s.

Mrs. Selwyn, ignoring Dr. Gregory’s advice to his daughters to keep any learning they might have a “profound secret, especially from the men,” uses her wit as a stick to beat the men she despises.¹²⁵ Coverley and Lovel’s reaction bears out Dr. Gregory’s opinion that the men will look “with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts, and a cultivated understanding” (Gregory 31-2). Mrs. Selwyn demolishes Coverley and Lovel by suggesting they settle a bet by a competition based on a knowledge of the classics, an area of learning which was generally considered at that time as the male domain and was the key to university education. Mrs. Selwyn proposes that an ode from Horace be repeated from memory, ironically commenting to Coverley:

“Come, Gentlemen, [...] why do you hesitate? I am sure you cannot be afraid of a weak *woman*? Besides, if you should chance to be out, Mr. Lovel, I dare say, will have the goodness to assist you.” (III:290)

In the scene which follows, she strips Lovel of all pretensions and it becomes clear that this Member of Parliament has wasted his time at

¹²⁵ Dr. Gregory, *A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters*, by The Late Dr. Gregory of Edinburgh. A New Edition. (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1786) 31.

the university. Just as Burney shows other young men, for instance in *Camilla* and *Cecilia*, who have not used the opportunities given them but denied their sisters, in *Evelina*, she sets the pattern for an examination of the different treatment of men and women in their educational opportunities.

Burney shows through the action of her novels that women are denied a voice. Those who usurp the male privilege of deciding the topic and setting the boundaries of discussion are dismissed with a shrug of indifference. When Coverley and Lord Merton refuse to indulge Mrs. Selwyn's love of raillery, they excuse themselves from argument:

“O fie, my Lord,” cried Mrs. Selwyn, “a senator of the nation! a member of the noblest parliament in the world! - and yet neglect the art of oratory?”

“Why, faith, my Lord,” said Mr. Lovel [addressing Lord Merton], “I think, in general, your House is not much addicted to study; we of the lower House have indubitably most application; and, if I did not speak before a superior power,” (bowing low to Lord Merton) “I should presume to add, we have likewise the most able speakers.” (III:361)

Mrs. Selwyn's ironical comment: “Mr. Lovel, [...] you deserve immortality for that discovery! But for this observation, and the confession of Lord Merton, I protest I should have supposed that a peer of the realm, and an able logician, were synonymous terms,” is met with Coverley's and Lord Merton's misogynistic:

“[...] I'd as soon see a woman chop wood, as hear her chop logic.”

“[...] for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good-nature; in everything else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!” (III:361)

Merton voices the opinion held by many men of his time and throughout history that "sense" - rationality, logic, debate - is a male prerogative and that women are incapable of reason. Inscribed in fiction, pagan and theological writings throughout European history is the fear of women's "irrationality." Their sphere is to serve men's needs and not encroach on their territory. It is for them to be, as Rousseau demands: beautiful, passive and subject to men. Women are to be tolerated only if they are pleasing to men and if they do not compete with them, a thesis developed in the later novels and particularly in *Camilla*.

The association of physical strength (chopping wood, traditionally a man's job) with mental strength (chopping logic, also a man's prerogative) is seen as a "natural" and inevitable combination. This argument suggesting that what is conditioned is in fact "natural" forms the basis for perpetuating the prejudice against equal education for the female which Mary Wollstonecraft addresses in her attack on Rousseau. She sees no correlation between physical and mental strength and will not accept it as an argument for denying women the opportunity to use their intellectual abilities to the full. The more general view of women was that silence was in that sex a virtue and, as the contemporary moralist Dr. Gregory advises women:

This modesty, which I think so essential in your sex, will naturally dispose you to be rather silent in company, especially in a large one [...]. One may take a share in conversation without uttering a syllable. The expression in the countenance shews it, and this never escapes an observing eye. (28)

Dr. Gregory constructs women as passive objects created merely to be viewed by the "observing eye" of men rather than as participating subjects. In pursuing his ideas on how men "read" women without the necessity of women explaining themselves, he further argues that:

When a girl ceases to blush, she has lost the most powerful charm of beauty. That extreme sensibility which it indicates, may be a weakness and incumbrance in our sex, as I have too often felt; but in yours it is peculiarly engaging.
(Gregory 26-27)

Gregory's misgivings about sensibility in the male sex are not echoed in Burney's novels, except as she presents ungoverned sensibility. Her exemplary men all demonstrate their feelings through their facial expressions, though they may attempt to control their reactions.

Burney gives Selwyn the last word in the exchange with the men:

"It has always been agreed," said Mrs. Selwyn, looking round her with the utmost contempt, "that no man ought to be connected with a woman whose understanding is superior to his own. Now I very much fear, that to accommodate all this good company, according to such a rule, would be utterly impracticable, unless we should chuse subjects from Swift's hospital of idiots." (*Evelina* III:361-2)

In her letter to Mr. Villars, *Evelina* voices her disapproval of Mrs. Selwyn's outspokenness, and notes what enemies it makes her; nevertheless, the point is made by Burney through Selwyn and the comments are left on record. Like other "defiant women" who play a subsidiary role in the novels and who speak in protest at the treatment of women, Mrs. Selwyn's criticisms are not invalidated by her role of "improper lady." It is her manner and her assumption of

the masculine prerogative of speech which is criticised rather than what she says. Sir Clement's and Lord Merton's disapproval of her is expressed in such a way as to add credence to her complaints.

Commenting on Burney's recognition of how men exercise hegemony over language, deciding who shall speak and how, Doody stresses the fact that language defines identity:

Language, to use Lacanian terms, is imposed by "the Other," and "the Other" defines the self before the self is formed. Women are indeed defined by the Other, for the other sex creates all the laws, economic arrangements, and social connections which give or withhold status. Evelina's mother, not able to *prove* she was married, was in some sense not married. Evelina is a bastard as long as her father denies her legitimacy. Once Lord Orville says she is "a poor weak girl," that is what she signifies to Sir Clement. Evelina has to begin to understand these distressing circumstances [...]. (45)

Burney shows how Sir Clement imposes the language of chivalry upon Evelina in his encounters with her. He insists on this mode in order to manipulate Evelina and to put the onus on her for his "suffering," demanding her pity. In the same way, Sir Sedley, in *Camilla*, uses a similar technique with Camilla in the games he plays with language. As discussed earlier, Edgar too is enmeshed in these games when he misreads Sir Sedley's letters to Camilla. Gina Campbell has noted the ambiguity of the language of courtly love. She sees that it:

accommodates a wide range of relationships, from platonic admiration, through married love, to adultery, and [...] is therefore inherently ambiguous [...].

By insistently using the language of courtly love and responding to Evelina as though she too were using it, Willoughby seeks to pervert Evelina's own moral language.¹²⁶

This entanglement of Evelina in the language and games of courtly love is accompanied by physical entrapment: by Sir Clement pursuing her, by refusing to let go her hand, by trapping her on her own in a carriage, in a room, in an arbour.

Evelina gradually achieves a voice, and learns how to say no without infringing social conventions and expectations of women. In the early scenes at the assemblies she offends Lovel and Sir Clement by her unequivocal assumption of the right of refusal by a woman, and her resentment of the apparent right of men to choose, and their arrogance in flaunting that right. Later in the novel she learns what can and cannot be achieved without losing status as a "proper lady." Trapped by Sir Clement once more and forced to listen to his "hopes" she says:

"Suffer me, Sir, [...] to make use of this occasion to put a final conclusion to such expressions. I entreat you never again to address me in a language so flighty, and so unwelcome. You have already given me great uneasiness; and I must frankly assure you, that if you do not desire to banish me from wherever you are, you will adopt a very different style and conduct in future." (III:344)

Sir Clement's designs upon her are made clear enough when he confesses them to Orville:

"My intentions," cried he, "I will frankly own, are hardly known to myself. I think Miss Anville the loveliest of her sex, and, were I a *marrying man*, she, of all the women I have seen, I would fix upon for a wife: but I believe that not even the philosophy of your Lordship would recommend to me a connection of that sort, with a girl of obscure birth, whose only

¹²⁶ Gina Campbell, "How to Read Like a Gentleman: Burney's Instructions to her Critics in *Evelina*," *ELH* 57.3 Fall (1990): 557-83, 572-3.

dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency.” (III:347)

Ironically, it is Orville the “cold, inanimate, phlegmatic” Orville, in Sir Clement’s words, who overlooks all these disadvantages to offer marriage to Evelina *before* he knows of her connection with Sir John Belmont (III:358). Just as in *Pride and Prejudice* Darcy’s feelings overcome his sense of Elizabeth Bennet’s social inferiority, though his tact does not extend to hiding the struggle from her, Lord Orville’s feelings take precedence over other considerations. He freely admits that he had intended “making more minute enquiries into [Evelina’s] family and connections, and particularly concerning *those people* he saw with [her] at Marybone” (III:389), Evelina’s vulgar, bourgeois relations and the women of dubious reputation, before making his declaration, but then he learns of Evelina’s imminent departure from Clifton. The news “divesting him of prudence, left him nothing but love” (III:389). Though in Sir Clement’s case Evelina moralises on the “*meanness and rashness* [to which] the passions lead, when reason and self-denial do not oppose them!” she overlooks Orville’s lack of prudence when *his* passions are roused (III:388). The effect of her personal beauty and charm on *his* sensibility overcomes other considerations, and Evelina is amazed “that he could honour with his choice a girl who seemed so infinitely, in *every* respect, beneath his alliance” (III:389).

As a counterpoint to Burney’s negative portraits of arrogant men who in one way or another relegate women to an inferior position, Lord Orville is presented as the truly gentle man whose behaviour is the same to all: polite and sensitive. Burney constructs Orville as a man of sensibility, capable of feeling, with “a capacity for

refined emotion,” and “sensible” in the Lockean sense: sensitive and knowledgeable. Evelina compares Clement Willoughby to Orville:

I could not but remark the striking difference of *his* attention, and that of Lord Orville: the latter has such gentleness of manners, such delicacy of conduct, and an air so respectful, that, when he flatters most, he never distresses, and when he most confers honour, appears to receive it! The former *obtrudes* his attention, and *forces* mine; it is so pointed, that it always confuses me, and so public, that it attracts general notice. Indeed I have sometimes thought that he would rather *wish*, than dislike to have his partiality for me known, as he takes great care to prevent my being spoken to by any body but himself. (III:330)

Just as Evelina resents Willoughby's appropriation of her, she also resists Smith's. Evelina is conscious from the first that she is viewed by the fashionable world as a “nobody” - Lovel's word for her. Her precarious position as a daughter who is not acknowledged by her father makes her particularly sensitive to her treatment by others. It is the man, father or husband, who gives the woman her name and therefore her status in society, as Mrs. Arlbery, in *Camilla*, recognises (*Camilla* V:779). Evelina is even more chagrined by her situation with the Holborn set, whom she despises, and who embarrass her. Association with them, she feels, puts her in a false position with those she knew in former, more elevated, society. Evelina may appear a snob, but she realises that, against a man like Sir Clement Willoughby, a woman's social status is her only protection. As Lord Orville tells Willoughby, in what might be construed as a veiled threat, when he learns the latter's designs on Evelina:

“This young lady, though she seems alone, and, in some measure, unprotected, is not entirely without friends; she has been extremely well educated, and accustomed to good

company; she has a natural love of virtue, and a mind that might adorn *any* station, however exalted: is such a young lady, Sir Clement, a proper object to trifle with? - for your principles, excuse me, Sir, are well known." (III:346)

Despite his flattery of Evelina, Willoughby is a rake in the tradition of Richardson's Lovelace. Like Lord Merton and Evelina's own father in youth, he views women as creatures intended for his own comfort, who can be used and disposed of. Burney plots the dangers which await a young woman of her time, when reputation was all, in the careers of women such as Evelina, Cecilia, and Eugenia in *Camilla*. Though he poses less threat to Evelina than the subtle, experienced Sir Clement Willoughby, the pretensions of Smith, a gentleman manqué, draw forth a strong protest from her: "Indeed, the extreme vanity of this man makes me exert a spirit which I did not, till now, know that I possessed: but I cannot endure that he should think me at his disposal" (II:225).

Although Evelina is by now in love with Orville and can see no error in him, he undoubtedly has faults of arrogance and suspiciousness, though his lack of trust is not to be compared to Edgar Mandlebert's in *Camilla*. However, Evelina does, at the end of the novel, remind Orville that his first opinion of her was hardly flattering when he referred to her as "*a poor, weak, ignorant girl*" (III:347), "*ignorant or mischievous!*" (I:36) when she did not respond to his efforts to amuse her at her first public ball. Where Jane Austen has Elizabeth Bennet herself overhear Darcy's disparaging remarks about her as being "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt [him]" (*Pride and Prejudice* 22), a judgment which is made on appearances only, Burney uses the device of having a friend

overhear a conversation to her heroine's disadvantage: in this case Maria Mirvan of Evelina.

In a scene months later which balances this Mrs. Sedley overhears Lord Orville retract his words in conversation with Sir Clement and describe her instead as,

“informed, sensible, and intelligent. She is not, indeed, like most modern young ladies, to be known in half an hour; her modest worth, and fearful excellence, require both time and encouragement to shew themselves. She does not, beautiful as she is, seize the soul by surprise, but, with more dangerous fascination, she steals it almost imperceptibly.” (III:347)

Evelina, by whom the earlier judgment has obviously not been forgotten, writes to Villars, “I have made him confess how ill he thought of me, upon my foolish giddiness at Mrs. Stanley's ball; but he flatters me with assurances, that every succeeding time he saw me, I appeared to something less and less disadvantage” (III:389). From almost mute and tongue-tied shyness when she first appears in society, Evelina's rhetorical skills are honed by the end of the novel so that she is capable of refined manipulation of men.

Cutting points out that Evelina's satirical powers are displayed only to close friends: she does not commit the solecism of Mrs. Selwyn, discussed earlier in this chapter, who is feared and hated because she publicly voices her contempt for the men around her (528). Whilst Evelina assumes the role of a demure young woman, she is privately making her own judgments on those around her, judgments which are expressed by her in the letters Burney contrives for her.

Evelina's sense of being a “nobody,” dependent upon Villars' charity and generosity, is used by Burney as a metaphor for the

precarious position of woman in society.¹²⁷ In the much-quoted introduction to her journal, begun in 1768, addressed to “Nobody,” Burney asks: “but why, permit me to ask, must a *female* be made Nobody?” She answers her own question with another, in the form of a pun: “Ah! my dear, what were this world good for, *were* Nobody a female?” (*EJL* I, 27 March, 1768: 2).

Until she is publicly accepted by Sir John Belmont, even though she quickly exchanges that name for “Orville,” Evelina lacks legitimacy and a place in society. The scene of reconciliation between father and daughter is one fraught with all the elements that make the novel of sensibility so deliberately affecting. Both in this scene and the later meeting between Evelina and her father, tears flow and sensibilities are rent. The recognition scene, when Belmont sees “the image of [his] long-lost Caroline” apparently before him again, appearing, to his guilty mind, to be returning in retribution, is peppered with exclamation marks and dashes, signifying emotion too great for rational speech. Evelina herself does not speak, except to scream before she sinks to the floor at his feet. She describes the scene later in her letter to Mr. Villars:

Affected beyond measure, I half arose, and embraced his knees, while yet on my own.

“Yes, yes,” cried he, looking earnestly in my face, “I see, I see thou art her child! she lives - she breathes - she is present to my view! - O God, that she indeed lived! - Go, child, go,”

¹²⁷ Bridget Hill’s excerpt from Defoe’s *Moll Flanders* (1721) bears on this question of the importance to women of finding a husband, and thereby a place in society, and the fact that for the men it was a “buyer’s market”:

“... the market is against our sex just now; and if a young woman have beauty, birth, breeding, wit, sense, manners, modesty, and all these to an extreme, yet if she have not money, she’s nobody, she had as good want them all, for nothing but money now recommends a woman; the men play the game all into their own hands.” (Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* 12; qtd. in Hill, *Eighteenth-Century Women*, 81.

added he, wildly starting, and pushing me from him, "take her away, Madam, - I cannot bear to look at her!" And then breaking hastily from me, he rushed out of the room.

Speechless, motionless myself, I attempted not to stop him: but Mrs. Selwyn, hastening after him, caught hold of his arm. "Leave me, Madam," cried he, with quickness, "and take care of the poor child; - bid her not to think me unkind, - tell her I would at this moment plunge a dagger in my heart to serve her, - but she has set my brain on fire, and I can see her no more!" Then, with violence almost frantic, he ran up stairs. (III:372-3)

In the later scene of reunion when Belmont meets his now acknowledged daughter, Burney has Evelina's mother speak for her from the grave through the medium of a letter written before she died.

Like the true heroine of sensibility, Evelina feels for the "unfortunate girl" who unknowingly has been passed off as Belmont's daughter: "how hard is her fate!" writes Evelina, "I shall always consider her as my sister" (III:376). Polly Green has now become the "nobody" and Evelina empathises with her feelings. Female friendships and sisterly affection is a theme which recurs in all the novels.

At the beginning of the novel, Evelina is an orphan dependent upon her guardian, Mr. Villars. When it ends, she finds a family and a home: a legal father, a grandmother, vulgar and insensitive, but nevertheless a blood relative, cousins, a husband, a sister-in-law, a half-brother and a "nobody" whom she adopts as her sister. In her penultimate letter to Mr. Villars, Evelina signs herself "for the first - and probably the last time" as Evelina Belmont (III:404). Villars himself is still the man above all whom she must "most love and honour," "the Parent [her] heart acknowledges" (III:350). In a letter

to Villars, she attempts to engage his good opinion of Orville, whom Villars only knows through Evelina's narrative-letters, by comparing the younger man to the older: "His present sweetness, politeness, and diffidence, seem to promise in future the same benevolence, dignity, and goodness" as her guardian possesses (I:72). Benevolence and sensibility go together for Burney's heroines. As a woman of sensibility, Evelina looks for those same attributes in the people she would have around her.

An emphasis on the importance of names exists for each of the heroines of Burney's novels. Even Camilla, the loved and acknowledged legitimate daughter of the Tyrols, finds it necessary, at the end of the novel, to hide her name for fear of shaming them and imagines she has been cast off by her mother, thus being made metaphorically orphaned and illegitimate. Evelina, whose legitimacy depends upon her father's acknowledging her right to his name, faces problems of identity: at one point, she is uncertain who she is. When writing to Sir Clement Willoughby, she confides to Villars: "Not knowing by what name to sign, I was obliged to send it without any" (III:389). A blank, constituting silence, is imposed upon her, just as it is on Camilla when she holds a pen that will not write (*Camilla* V:875). Amy Pawl makes the interesting point that Burney in her novels is exploring a wider aspect of naming than the labelling and exchange of women as property in the usual sense. She suggests that:

Being "owned," far from turning Evelina into a commodity whose personhood is denied, is actually what allows her to become a person. If she were not constantly acknowledged by others, Burney fears, she might not exist. Disowning, after all, is what killed Evelina's mother. Denied her rightful title (Lady

Belmont), she literally ceased to exist. Evelina encounters a threat of this kind at Clifton, where the snobbish residents and visitors are inclined to ignore her.¹²⁸

This interpretation might throw some light on Burney's own ambivalent attitude toward, on the one hand, being acknowledged as an author which would prove undeniably that she was a "somebody" and, on the other hand, preserving her "snugness," Burney's word for privacy and anonymity.

At the end of the novel when Evelina is known to be Belmont's daughter and is to become the wife of Lord Orville she is "recognised" as existing by the people who previously ignored her. Juliet, in *The Wanderer*, is in a similar position to Evelina because she too is the "helpless offspring of an unacknowledged union" (*The Wanderer* V:869). As Epstein points out: "Names in a Burney novel both bestow and withhold identity; they are absolute signs for the slipperiness of female selfhood and the conflicted play of female dependence and autonomy in a culture that infantilized its women" (96).

In describing Evelina's and Juliet's responses to this ambiguous status, Burney not only shows the suffering of the children resulting from these unions, but also illustrates the obscurity, the "outcast" situation of those dependent upon masculine acceptance for their very existence in society. Through these individual cases, she may, too, be making a more general protest at the social mores which demand that women submit to a code of behaviour, a prescribed role, in order to be accepted into a society ordered by men for their own advantage.

¹²⁸ Amy Pawl, "'And What Other Name May I Claim?': Names and Their Owners in Frances Burney's *Evelina*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* Special *Evelina* Issue: 3.4 July (1991): 283-99, 286.

It is argued too that Burney attempts to alter men's perception of women as irrational creatures through her depiction of women in her novels. Through her exemplary characters, male and female, she makes the point that sensibility is more than merely a fashionable adjunct, particularly appropriate to women. In its benevolent and sympathetic aspects it is necessary to all. The more finely honed one's sensibilities, the more truly human one is.

CHAPTER 6

CECILIA

Cecilia contains many references to the word "sensibility" as can be seen from Appendix A. Some of the more pertinent of these will be discussed and analysed in this chapter. The word is often used in conjunction with descriptions of Cecilia and occasionally of Mortimer Delvile. Its opposite, "insensibility," can refer to absolute unconsciousness, for instance when Cecilia "sunk suddenly into a state of such utter insensibility, that she appeared unconscious even of her existence; and but that she breathed, she might already have passed for being dead" (*Cecilia* V:911). At the other end of the scale it can refer to coldness, selfishness and lack of feeling for others.

In *Cecilia* sensibility is firmly linked with benevolence, as it was generally in the philosophical discussions of sensibility at the time. The heroine's wealth gives her the opportunity to follow Shaftesbury's ideal for the happiness of the individual achieved through acts of charity to the less fortunate in society. Burney shows how the greed of others stands in the way of Cecilia's idealistic plans. In the discussion which follows, the gradual disempowerment of Cecilia is shown as her plans are wrecked, both by her associates and through her love for a man who cannot give up his name for her sake, so that, under the terms of her uncle's will, she loses her inheritance on her marriage.

The mood of *Cecilia: or, Memoirs of an Heiress* is much more subdued than the youthfully conceived *Evelina*. In creating her woman of sensibility an heiress, with apparent independence of fortune and choices in life, Burney is able to show how illusory this independence in fact is. She is also able to show the disillusionment and suffering implicit in Cecilia's situation with more poignancy than had she been a "Cinderella" figure, like *Evelina*: a poor girl searching for legitimacy and a place in society. At the end of the novel, Cecilia is shown stripped of everything, including her identity and her dignity; her fall is the more devastating because of her high expectations.

When we are first introduced to Cecilia, Burney stresses her intelligence and her sensibility. She is an attractive young woman brought up in a sheltered manner in the country. Unlike her friend Priscilla, she has not been corrupted by city life and careless associates. Her sensibility, her "capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; [and] readiness to feel compassion for suffering and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art" - including music - expresses itself in her intuitive response to others, in her aspirations to the good and the beautiful: her desire for a way of life and an immediate society which combines intelligence with sensibility. When Cecilia briefly comes into her inheritance and initiates the ideal life which she has always envisaged, a system which combines liberality with reason, Burney's narrator ironically comments that:

The plan she had early formed at Mrs. Harrel's she now studied daily to put in practice; but that part by which the useless or frivolous were to be excluded her house, she found could only

be supported by driving from her half her acquaintance.
(V:792)

Cecilia's sensibility also impels her to act benevolently toward her less fortunate fellows. In accordance with eighteenth-century philosophy, Cecilia's is a practical benevolence aimed at helping those she sees as deserving cases. Burney shows that it is often women who suffer most and most need help. Mrs. Hill, in *Cecilia*, a widow with a family to support, waits in vain for payment for work done by her husband. As she poignantly explains to Cecilia, "a widow, madam, is always hard to be righted" (I:86). Society offers her no help: it comes at the individual level from Cecilia. In *Camilla* too we have a case of women supporting women in the heroine's relationship with the prisoner's wife, and her help for the Higdens which repays itself when Peggy Higden comes to Camilla's aid in her illness and isolation. Dame Fairfield, in *The Wanderer*, whose husband, an "incorrigible" poacher, has "paid the dread earthly penalty of his crimes," is assisted to a better life because of her kindness and support of Juliet when the latter is alone and desperate (V:871).

The narrator's description of Cecilia emphasises her mental as well as her physical attributes:

her form was elegant, her heart was liberal; her countenance announced the intelligence of her mind, her complexion varied with every emotion of her soul, and her eyes, the heralds of her speech, now beamed with understanding and now glistened with sensibility. (I:6)

Here sensibility denotes Cecilia's warmth of feeling, but it is closely linked in this passage to her understanding. It is interesting to note the verbs and adjectives which cluster around the word sensibility as used by Burney. "Glistening," meaning shining with a sparkling light,

gives a vivid impression of brightness and life and carries with it a hint of tears - the tears of sympathy. To Burney, the eyes are capable of communicating emotions, they speak the inner feelings of her characters.

The sensibility with which Cecilia is endowed is controlled sensibility, a sensibility that suggests the capacity to love, and which is allied to true charity. There is no suggestion here, as there is with the heroine of her next novel, *Camilla*, that there is any dangerous over-indulgence of her sensibility. On the contrary, Cecilia's rationality is stressed throughout until the final near-Gothic scenes when she breaks down under the stress of her circumstances. Even when she finds herself becoming attached to Mortimer Delvile she analyses her feelings and, though finding more and more to approve in him and more and more sympathy between their minds, that necessary prerequisite which Burney herself insists upon as the basis for marriage, prudence prevails.¹²⁹ Burney stresses this fact when she writes of Cecilia:

Yet, as she was not of that inflammable nature which is always ready to take fire, as her passions were under the controul of her reason, and she suffered not her affections to triumph over her principles, she started at her danger the moment she perceived it, and instantly determined to give no weak encouragement to a prepossession which neither time nor intimacy had justified. She denied herself the deluding satisfaction of dwelling upon the supposition of his worth, was unusually assiduous to occupy all her time, that her heart might have less leisure for imagination; and had she found that his character degenerated from the promise of his appearance, the well regulated purity of her mind would soon have enabled her to have driven him wholly from her thoughts. (II:251)

¹²⁹ Fanny Burney, *Fanny Burney: Selected Letters and Journals*, ed. Joyce Hemlow (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 2 August, 1793, 28.

Burney's idiosyncratic syntax in the use of the negative which is placed after the verb in "she suffered not her affections to triumph over her principles" emphasises the positive will involved in this battle of mind over emotions. Just as Austen, later, appears to endorse Elinor's control of her emotions in *Sense and Sensibility*, so Burney does of Cecilia in this novel published in 1782.

Jean H. Hagstrum reminds us when writing of Richardson's women of sensibility - the precursors to Burney's:

The truth of the matter is that to be a woman of modern refined sensibility in Richardson's world was to *combine* the amorous and the angelical (just as the word "sentiment" combined judgment and emotion), both sides being equally beautiful and each side interacting with the other. Both mind and body had to be satisfied, [...]. (201)

A study of Burney's novels confirms that she is in the Richardson tradition in creating women who combine the "amorous" with the "angelical." Cecilia, like Clarissa, is capable of sensuality. Perhaps Cecilia's descent into fever and near-madness can be read, like Marianne's in *Sense and Sensibility*, as an hysterical manifestation of this aspect of her personality. Nevertheless, she cannot succumb to love where her discriminating taste and mind are not satisfied in the object or circumstances of that love.

Cecilia's battle with her feelings is described when, having given up all hope of union with Delvile because of his parents' opposition, she begins her new life on her inherited estate; she is described as endeavouring to overcome those feelings by attempting to forget the past and taking up her new responsibilities.

And this, though a work of pain and difficulty, was not impracticable; her sensibility, indeed, was keen, and she had suffered from it the utmost torture; but her feelings were not

more powerful than her understanding was strong, and her fortitude was equal to her trials. (V:790)

Burney stresses that her heroine has her feelings under the control of her understanding. Though she suffers because of her acute sensibilities - and her capacity to love is linked to her sensibility - she is able to face the reality of her situation and to attempt to overcome her sense of loss

At the beginning of the novel Cecilia seems to have everything to make her happy, not only a literal as well as a metaphorical "place in society," the estate which she will inherit from her uncle, but even, apparently, "places" with her guardians during her minority. It is only later that she finds she has no choice but to remain with Harrel until his dramatic death. Burney makes clear in the scene toward the end of the novel, when Henrietta Belfield discovers Cecilia near to death and apparently mad, that the gap between Cecilia's prospects at twenty and the reality at twenty-one is wide indeed. Henrietta's words emphasise this gap:

"Oh I shall break my heart," she cried, "to see her in this condition! Is this the so happy Miss Beverley, that I thought every body born to give joy to? the Miss Beverley that seemed queen of the whole world! yet so good and so gentle, so kind to the meanest person! excusing every body's faults but her own, and telling them how they might mend, and trying to make them as good as herself! - Oh, who would know her! who would know her! what have they done to you, my beloved Miss Beverley? how have they altered and disfigured you in this wicked and barbarous manner?" (V:913-4)

In this reversal of fortunes scene, Burney shows Cecilia reduced to the extremities of suffering, a woman of intelligence and sensibility who has been driven to "utter insensibility" (V:907) in its most literal sense as a result of her fever and delirium. When she recovers from the fever she is still "insensible, but perfectly quiet;

she seemed to distinguish nothing, and neither spoke nor moved” (V:912); she is an almost inanimate object, a near-corpse, reminiscent of the fate of the girl in Albany’s tale. This “lovely young creature” as Dr. Lyster describes Cecilia, whose “understanding, for her years and sex, [is] unequalled” (V:910), is now unable to recognise anybody, and seems to be without identity. She has been advertised by Mrs. Wyers as one might a lost parcel. Stripped of her “place,” which is defined by her wealth and her standing with men of position, she becomes that “nobody” that haunts Burney in her journal, as it does through all her novels in which she explores the place of women in society. When Albany discovers Cecilia in the house of Mrs. Wyers, he hardly recognises her and asks “is *This* Cecilia!” (V:902).

Margaret Anne Doody, stressing the theme of the unsympathetic treatment of women in Burney’s society which she uncovers in the writer’s novels, compares Cecilia’s mute, wasted figure with the similarly anorexic, mute figure of the woman ill-treated by Albany who confronts him as his nemesis. One of Doody’s aims in this comparison is to demonstrate how the women become caricatures of what men wish for in women: docility, slenderness, and silence: “The girl’s strange conduct at the end seems not simple penance, but a subtle revenge, as she caricatures what men seem to want of women - anorexia, silence, a decorous forgettability here turned into the macabre unforgettable” (129). One might also compare this image with the eponymous heroine of Burney’s *Camilla*, reduced at the end of that novel to near-death and delirium and, in her dreams, unable even to make her pen inscribe a mark on the

page so that she becomes metaphorically dumb. There is also of course a parallel in the fate of Richardson's *Clarissa*.

Burney presents a picture throughout the novel *Cecilia* of the gradual disintegration of the hopeful young heroine and of her ambitions for a good life in every sense of the word. She shows how Cecilia, a woman of refined sensibility, is thwarted in her generous impulses by "insensibles" such as Harrel and Delvile, Senior, and the mean-minded Briggs.

In the anagnorisis scene at Cecilia's sick-bed Burney has Mr. Delvile see himself as author of Cecilia's woes. Up until this moment of truth, he has lived down to the pun in his name.¹³⁰ "His pride, his pomp, his ancient name," that name which Cecilia called on constantly during her fever, "were now sunk in his estimation; and while he considered himself the destroyer of this unhappy young creature, he would have sacrificed them all to have called himself her protector" (V:912). But although Mr. and Mrs. Delvile are largely responsible for Cecilia's situation, the misunderstandings between herself and Mortimer Delvile as a result of her sympathy for Belfield, which Mortimer mistakes for love, and her alarm at the idea of being the occasion for the duel between Sir Robert Floyer and Belfield are also contributing causes. Also Harrel's use of Cecilia to screen himself from his creditors and to pay his debts causes her much harm, and Monckton's plots make mischief to the end when, from his knowledge of her financial affairs as her trusted adviser, he lies to Mr. Delvile and discredits her with him.

However the two main causes of her harassment and suffering lie in the fact that she is a wealthy heiress, spoil for fortune-hunters

¹³⁰ I am indebted to Michael Tolley for this illumination of Burney's games with names.

like Sir Robert Floyer, Harrel and Monckton, and also in the terms of her uncle's will. It was to show the harm which can be caused by such codicils, Burney says, that was her prime motive in writing *Cecilia*. Annie Raine Ellis tells us: "She wished to express her dislike of what, with an unconscious Hellenism, she called 'these *name-compelling* wills.'"¹³¹ Annie Raine Ellis goes on to say: "She had told us, in telling Mr. Crisp, that 'the conflict-scene between mother and son' [Mrs. Delvile and Mortimer] was the point in her book to which all previous lines tended, the chapter for which all the rest were written" (Preface *Cecilia* I:vii-viii). It is in this chapter that we see the effects on Mrs. Delvile of the repressive life she has been forced to live throughout her loveless marriage, and the price she has paid for the family name and "honour" in both alienating her son and destroying her own health through first suppressing and then giving vent to her passions, so that she suffers an apoplectic fit.

On her uncle's death, Cecilia finds herself a wealthy heiress who must seemingly only endure her minority for less than a year in order to satisfy her ambitions. These ambitions, we learn, are to use her "wealth" to pursue a rational life with companions of like mind, and to indulge her natural impulse toward benevolence and sympathy for her fellow human beings. It is ironical that Cecilia's first opportunity to implement this desire to act as benefactress comes as a result of the callousness and dishonesty of the guardian to whom she is first entrusted. She is shocked by Harrel's insolence and ill treatment of his debtors. Just as all Burney's exemplary characters must be capable of feeling for others, her false or selfish

¹³¹ Frances Burney, *Cecilia: or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), ed. and preface Annie Raine Ellis, 2 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1904) Preface I:vii.

characters lack sensibility. Sensibility is firmly located in a moral context when Cecilia deplors Harrel's "strange, [...] cruel insensibility" in suffering "a wretched family to starve, from an obstinate determination to assert that they can live!" (I:76). At this point Cecilia does not realise that Harrel is actually embarrassed for money. Since he is determined not to curtail his style of living, he gives the impression of being a man of wealth - not one who is close to bankruptcy and hoping to restore his fortunes through Cecilia's.

Harrel's neglect of the Hills and Cecilia's championing of them are used by Burney to present Cecilia with an opportunity to demonstrate her sympathy and sensibilities, as well as to open her eyes, and the reader's, to the conditions of the poor, and especially widows and children, in that careless society. Learning from Mrs Hill that Harrel's flippant response to the death of Billy is the pragmatic comment "so much the better, there's one the less of you," Cecilia is faced with:

a new view of life; that a young man could appear so gay and happy, yet be guilty of such injustice and inhumanity, that he could take pride in works which not even money had made his own, and live with undiminished splendor, when his credit itself began to fail, seemed to her incongruities so irrational, that hitherto she had supposed them impossible. (I:85)

Burney's attitude to Harrel appears to be similar to that of the middle-class Richardson to Lovelace: disapproval of a member of the high-living and thoughtless upper classes. Cecilia emphasises the irrationality of Harrel's behaviour. His ultimate ruin is the effect of attempting to retain a position in society which reason should have told him he could no longer afford. Harrel is compared to Belfield and his sister, Henrietta, son and daughter of a tradesman, both too

proud to accept easily gifts from their richer friends. Cecilia must overcome Henrietta's embarrassment before she will accept money even when she is near starvation. Belfield denies himself a surgeon because he cannot pay for one.

Burney uses the eccentric Albany as a mouthpiece for her attack on the uncharitable in *Cecilia*, just as she uses Giles Arbe in *The Wanderer*. Albany attempts to expiate the death of the girl he was to marry by acting as the conscience of the wealthy and seeking out those who need help. He berates those who will not help and accuses them of "exulting; even in inhumanity!" He demands: "think you, in cold and hunger, they lose those feelings which even in voluptuous prosperity from time to time disturb you?" (*Cecilia* V:750). In this use of the word, sensibility denotes the capacity to feel pain and Albany reminds his audience of their common humanity with others less fortunate. His appeals to Cecilia receive a more sympathetic response than from other listeners.

One of the objects of Cecilia's benevolent impulses is Belfield, himself a "man of sensibility" but too much pride. He is oversensitive because of his origins. Through his mother's influence he has been educated as a "gentleman" in the hope of raising the family in the social scale. At the university he makes friends with young men from a different background to his own, becomes expensive in his tastes and disinclined to return to the family business on his father's death. With the business gone, his health deteriorating because of a wound that will not heal, no prospects of what he considers suitable employment, he withdraws from the world. As Mortimer Delvile explains to Cecilia:

“his spirit is broken, and he is heartless and hopeless, scarce condescending to accept relief, from the bitter remembrance that he expected preferment. Time, however, will blunt this acute sensibility, and reflection will make him blush at this unreasonable delicacy.” (II:303)

In Belfield's history, Burney demonstrates the effects of too much sensibility.

In a scene which points up the discrepancy between Cecilia's earlier hopes of using her inheritance for benevolent purposes for those such as the Belfields, and the reality which now faces her, and which also gently satirises her young heroine, Burney describes her early ambitions before they have been disappointed by the actuality of London society in general and the Harrel ménage in particular. Contemplating her future life as the owner of ten thousand pounds from her father and an estate bringing in three thousand pounds a year from her uncle (and it is interesting that Burney is as precise about the details of her characters' economic resources as is Austen, and probably for the same reason: because she knows how vital they can be and how they underlie women's dependency), Cecilia anxiously lays her plans:

not without trembling did she then look forward to the claims which the splendid income she was soon to possess would call upon her to discharge. A strong sense of DUTY, a fervent desire to ACT RIGHT, were the ruling characteristics of her mind: her affluence she therefore considered as a debt contracted with the poor, and her independence, as a tie upon her liberality to pay it with interest.

Many and various, then, soothing to her spirit and grateful to her sensibility, were the scenes which her fancy delineated; now she supported an orphan, now softened the sorrows of a widow, now snatched from iniquity the feeble trembler at poverty, and now rescued from shame the proud struggler with disgrace. The prospect at once exalted her hopes, and enraptured her imagination; she regarded herself

as an agent of Charity, and already in idea anticipated the rewards of a good and faithful delegate: so animating are the designs of disinterested benevolence! so pure is the bliss of intellectual philanthropy! (I:55-6)

Here the word sensibility is associated with scenes of benevolence in Cecilia's daydreams for the future. Burney's ironical comment regarding the "bliss of intellectual philanthropy," the pleasures of anticipated charity versus the practicalities involved in actually parting with money, shows her slightly mocking, but affectionate, view of her moral young heroine. Cecilia's view of herself as an "agent of Charity" through which means she anticipates rewards in the afterlife would seem to contradict the phrase "disinterested benevolence." Shaftesbury argues that, to be pure, moral motivation must have no reward of any kind as its end. He writes:

97. If [...] there be a Belief or Conception of a DEITY, who is consider'd only as *powerful* over his Creature, and enforcing Obedience to his *absolute Will* by particular Rewards and Punishments; and if on this account, thro Hope merely of *Reward*, or Fear of *Punishment*, the Creature be incited to do the Good he hates, or restrain'd from doing the Ill to which he is not otherwise in the least degree averse; there is in this Case (as has been already shewn) no Virtue or Goodness whatsoever. (I:iii:3:33)

However, Burney shows that Cecilia's instinctive response to witnessing others' misfortune is a wish to alleviate that pain, and there is nowhere any suggestion that she is "incited" by fear to do good or restrained from doing ill in opposition to her wishes. Her impulse is toward benevolence.

Burney stresses the irony of Cecilia's crushed hopes when she has her angrily face the facts that she is unable to do all she would like to do for the Hills and that her debts are mainly incurred because of Harrel's luxurious tastes and his gambling. Cecilia's

idealistic dreams of doing good in the world have been frustrated by Harrel through means of moral blackmail, and she is offended by the use he has made of her. She contemplates the wreck of her fortune after Harrel has manoeuvred her into the hands of the money lenders:

She had now parted with 8050*l.* to Mr. Harrel, without any security when or how it was to be paid; and that ardour of benevolence which taught her to value her riches merely as they enabled her to do good and generous actions, was here of no avail to console or reward her, for her gift was compelled, and its receiver was all but detested. "How much better," cried she, "would this have been bestowed upon the amiable Miss Belfield! or upon her noble-minded, though proud-spirited brother! and how much less a sum would have made the virtuous and industrious Hills easy and happy for life! but here, to become the tool of the extravagance I abhor! to be made responsible for the luxury I condemn! to be liberal in opposition to my principles, and lavish in defiance of my judgment! - Oh that my much-deceived uncle had better known to what dangerous hands he committed me! and that my weak and unhappy friend had met with a worthier protector of her virtue and safety!" (II:271-2)

Burney shows how Harrel sees Cecilia's money as his to appropriate, just as Monckton and Briggs do. Cecilia has committed nearly all of the ten thousand pounds which her father left her and which she considers "peculiarly [her] own" to her various charitable works, to her small library (and it is interesting to note that Cecilia's first personal expenditure is on books) and, most of all, to Harrel (II:181). Harrel is angry when Cecilia gives three guineas to Albany for a charitable cause. The man who is careless of the effects of his depredation of her fortune and resents having her money used for any purpose other than to help him in his financial difficulties, criticises her, saying: "Indeed, Miss Beverley, you must be more

discreet in future, you will else be ruined before you know where you are" (I:130). Cecilia responds:

"to-day you recommend economy to me; yesterday I with difficulty forbore recommending it to you."

"Nay" answered he, "that was quite another matter; expence incurred in the common way of man's living is quite another thing to an extortion of this sort."

"It is another thing indeed," said she, "but I know not that it is therefore a better." (I:130)

Cecilia ponders on the different views of economy by the dissipated and the charitable and it is not long after this that Harrel himself subjects her to actual extortion when he threatens suicide unless she promises to provide him with a large amount of money to meet a compelling debt.

Like Bellamy in *Camilla*, Harrel uses moral blackmail in his selfish and grasping designs on the heiress; also, like Eugenia, the heiress in *Camilla*, and Juliet in *The Wanderer*, Cecilia abides by her oath even though, as Monckton reminds her, it has been forced. Cecilia, like Eugenia, puts her honour and her word before the letter of the law. Male and female concepts of honour are compared in Burney's novels and the gap between them explored; for instance, those ideas of male honour which require "debts of honour," gambling debts, to be paid before those due to the sick and starving; those which require the satisfaction of a supposed slight or offence by the spilling of blood in a duel. It is a duel which precipitates many of Cecilia's embarrassments and the misunderstandings between herself and Mortimer. It is a duel which makes it necessary for Mortimer to leave England and thus leave Cecilia unprotected. It is a duel and its possible result in the death of Belfield or Mortimer

which drives Cecilia to near-madness. "Virtue" in eighteenth-century men often carries with it the need for violence and is usually concerned with action in the world. For women, more passive though perhaps harder, virtues of abstinence, abnegation, fortitude and resistance are required; virtues that require internal, moral rather than external, physical strength. Burney deals with various aspects of the demands and assaults on women of her time through her novels and calls into question many of the conventional ideas of manhood.

In the carefully plotted story of Cecilia's entrance into the world we find, in retrospect, that Harrel has laid his plans from the beginning, before she even arrived at his house. Though her uncle's will left it to "her own choice [...] to settle her residence" among her three guardians, it is Harrel who "interfered to remove her" from her benevolent friend, Mrs. Charlton. "Reluctantly she complied," accompanying Harrel to London (I:6). In fact, before Cecilia even arrives in London she has been sold off by Harrel to Sir Robert Floyer like a piece of property. Cecilia is used as collateral security against Harrel's debts to Sir Robert. Harrel is to make Cecilia available and Sir Robert will do the rest, though wooing will be no part of his plans. To Monckton's "why you are not, in general, much given to say civil things," Sir Robert replies: "O hang it, who ever dreams of complimenting the women now? that's all at an end." When Monckton, who is anxious to discourage Sir Robert's attentions to Cecilia, suggests that she is proud, he replies:

"[...] there's very pretty picking in 3000*l.* per annum! one would not think much of a little incumbrance upon such an estate."

“[...] though, after all, I don’t know but I may be off; she’ll take a confounded deal of time and trouble.” (I:136)

Sir Robert’s attitude to women is encapsulated in his crude comments on Lady Margaret, a wealthy woman who has committed the error of living too long. When asked if he was ever at Monckton’s house he replies:

“what should I go for? - to see an old woman with never a tooth in her head sitting at the top of the table! Faith I’d go an hundred miles a day for a month never to see such a sight again.”

“[...] an old woman [...] is a person who has no sense of decency; if once she takes to living, the devil himself can’t get rid of her.” (I:80)

Sir Robert, who has by his own admission been waiting for years for his own aunt to die, is convinced that “those tough old cats last for ever” (I:80). He is in the tradition of other Burney misogynists such as the arrogant, insensitive Lord Merton and Captain Mirvan in *Evelina*. Through such portraits, Burney appeals to the sensibilities of her readers in recognising their selfishness and contempt for women. It is also through such characterisations that she makes a contrast with her pictures of men of sensibility.

Cecilia finds that she is controlled by men and is powerless. The codicil to her uncle’s will seems to put an end to her hopes for marriage to the man she loves; what she considered peculiarly her own is, like the rest of her estate, mortgaged to one acquisitive man or another, be he Harrel, Sir Robert or Monckton, who also looks on her property as peculiarly his own. Hobson, a minor character in the novel but one who is used by Burney to express bigoted views on many subjects, comments that it is a pity women possess money at all, “the fault is all in the law, for making no proviso against their

having money in their own hands”; this is only a crude exposition of what many of the other men think (*Cecilia* V:883). This was the period which saw the consolidation of male privilege through the laws embodied in William Blackstone’s commentaries. By making the husband and wife one person Blackstone effected her “legal disappearance,” in Ruth Bernard Yeazell’s words.¹³² In Burney’s, she becomes a “nobody.” Blackstone argues that what appears to be a disability is in fact intended for the woman’s “protection and benefit”: “So great a favourite is the female sex of the laws of England” (Yeazell 18).

William Blackstone writes: “These are the chief legal effects of marriage during the coverture; upon which we may observe, that even the disabilities, which the wife lies under, are for the most part intended for her protection and benefit.”¹³³ Susan Staves differs with Blackstone in her interpretation of this “benefit.” From her analysis of the history of married women’s property in England she argues instead that to examine this legal history is to uncover “deeper patriarchal structures”:

A principal feature of these deeper patriarchal structures was that women functioned to transmit wealth from one generation of men to the next generation of men. Patriarchy, I take it, is a form of social organization in which fathers appear as political and legal actors, acting publicly for themselves and as representatives of the women and children subordinated to them and dependent upon them in families. In the property regimes of patriarchy, descent and inheritance are reckoned in the male line; women function as procreators and transmitters of inheritance from male to male.¹³⁴

¹³² Ruth Bernard Yeazell, “A Favourite of the Laws,” rev. of *Married Women’s Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* by Susan Staves, *London Review of Books* 13.11, 13 June (1991): 18-19, 18.

¹³³ J.W. Ehrlich, *Ehrlich’s Blackstone* (San Carlos, Calif.: Nourse Publishing, 1959) 86.

¹³⁴ Staves, Susan, *Married Women’s Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard UP 1990) 4.

These laws of inheritance are of course the root cause of Clarissa's dilemma when her grandfather's will upsets the practice by which money passes from male to male and her father and brother attempt to re-impose these "deeper patriarchal structures." They also control Cecilia's choices: it is her uncle's will and the elder Mr. Delvile's desire to continue his family name which stand between her and her choice of husband.

Monckton, who has already married an elderly heiress for her money and waits impatiently for her death, not only mentally appropriates Cecilia's property but also her self to his own future ownership. The narrator, in describing Monckton's "interest" in Cecilia, uses commercial metaphors to describe his relationships with her: words such as "usury," "interest" and "property." He regards her as an "object" (I:9). He "sedulously watched her from her earliest years," as one might watch an investment which grew with time; "he had long looked upon her as his future property; as such he had indulged his admiration, and as such he had already appropriated her estate" (I:9). Describing Monckton's cultivation of Cecilia's goodwill, the narrator again uses commercial metaphors when she says: "Pleasure given in society, like money lent in usury, returns with interest to those who dispense it" (I:9). It is to protect his interests that he is so anxious to keep her from other men who might have designs upon her and be more eligible because, unlike himself at present, they are unmarried. It is this which is the motivation for all of his plots and manoeuvres, especially those that keep her from the Delviles.

Cecilia's uncle controls her actions from the grave through his will and through his choice of unsuitable and unsympathetic

guardians. This power is an arm of the patriarchal law which, as Burney shows in each of her novels, affects all women. It also reaches out to control sons, as in the case of Mortimer Delvile. Doody reminds us that not only is Cecilia subject to the pride and prejudice of the Delviles when they refuse to allow him to exchange his ancient name for Beverley, but she is also subject to her uncle's pride when he insists that his name be perpetuated through the last remaining member of the family - Cecilia (135).

The later novel, *Camilla*, is one which is centrally preoccupied with education and, for this reason, the young people are shown from childhood to adulthood so that the product of various types of education may be judged. *Cecilia*, on the other hand, deals with a young woman who is already formed in character and education: "formed and educated to grace a noble" family (IV:560). She must, like Jane Austen's heroines, learn how to judge and how to choose her companions in life. Mr. and Mrs. Delvile must also learn to readjust their priorities and put aside their pride.

One of the many ironies in *Cecilia* is that Burney has Monckton, the arch villain and plotter, advise Cecilia to judge carefully: "judge nobody from appearances; form no friendship rashly; take time to look about you" (I:18). It seems that throughout the novel Cecilia, with the exception of her mistake in making Priscilla her friend when they were children at school, a judgment which is rapidly reassessed when she meets her as a spoilt and foolish woman of fashion in London, is perfectly able to evaluate with accuracy and maturity all the people whom she meets, *except* the subtle Monckton. Burney gives several reasons for her friendship with Mrs. Charlton and Mrs. Harrel:

Greatly their superior in understanding and intelligence, had the candidates for her favour been more numerous, the election had not fallen upon either of them. But she became known to both before discrimination made her difficult, and when her enlightened mind discerned their deficiencies, they had already an interest in her affections, which made her see them with lenity: and though sometimes, perhaps, conscious she should not have chosen them from many, she adhered to them with sincerity, and would have changed them for none. (IV:713)

Cecilia's sensibility, her feeling for others and her apprehension of what is due to them, make her cling loyally to her old friends such as Priscilla Harrel, Mrs. Charlton and Monckton. She does not learn until the final scenes of the novel that it is Monckton, the hypocritical schemer, of whom she should most beware. Like Mr. Elliot in *Persuasion*, he wears a mask which has become second nature to him and which deceives Cecilia and all the world.

Burney, like Austen, emphasises the need for young women to make the choice of their life partner with care, if given the opportunity to choose. The power vested in men over their women is demonstrated in various portraits of marriages in Burney's novels. In *Cecilia* through Mrs. Delvile's history she shows the restrictions placed on women as regards their choices in life. Women of sensibility, in particular, for whom love and respect is necessary to their domestic happiness, must especially beware of choosing wrongly. Austen pursues this point when, in *Pride and Prejudice*, she sets Charlotte Lucas's ability to make the pragmatic best of her marriage to Collins, against Elizabeth, a woman of finer sensibilities and greater discrimination, who cannot even contemplate marriage to a man whom she does not respect. Charlotte Lucas sees her only choice in life that between spinsterhood and continuing a dependant

in her father's home while he still lived, or accepting her only offer of an "establishment" which would provide status, security and a family of her own.

Mary Wollstonecraft, in deploring the lack of opportunity for worthwhile employment which faced women of her generation, looks particularly at the plight of these undowered spinsters who, if they are not entirely "devoid of delicacy, [...] must frequently remain single" (*Education* 69). Lacking the ability to find respectable work, discriminating women of sensibility would seem to have extremely limited choices. Wollstonecraft enumerates the difficulties faced by women left well, or "at least fashionably educated," but without fortune (*Education* 69). One chapter in particular in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* is devoted to describing the difficulties faced by such women:

Few are the modes of earning a subsistence, and those very humiliating. Perhaps to be an humble companion to some rich old cousin, or what is still worse, to live with strangers, who are so intolerably tyrannical, that none of their own relations can bear to live with them, though they should even expect a fortune in reversion. It is impossible to enumerate the many hours of anguish such a person must spend. Above the servants, yet considered by them as a spy, and ever reminded of her inferiority when in conversation with the superiors. (69-70)

Wollstonecraft's analysis of the life of a teacher or governess in the eighteenth century is no more appealing, and she remarks that the "few trades which are left, are now gradually falling into the hands of the men, and certainly they are not very respectable" (*Education* 73). Both Burney and Austen explore these limited options for women through their fictional works, Burney by way of characters such as Juliet in *The Wanderer*, Austen by an examination of the

fates of Charlotte Lucas and Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and through Jane Fairfax's expectations of life as a governess in *Emma*.

That other option for women, marriage, is examined by Burney in *Cecilia*. The results of a marriage arranged for family convenience and against the woman's wishes are demonstrated through the experiences of Mrs. Delvile, a discriminating woman of sensibility, who has become embittered after years of disappointment in her husband: "These men [...] can never comprehend the pain of a delicate female mind" (I:159). Mrs. Delvile:

had been married to Mr. Delvile by her relations, without any consultation of her heart or her will. Her strong mind disdained useless complaints, yet her discontent, however private, was deep. Ardent in her disposition, and naturally violent in her passions, her feelings were extremely acute, and to curb them by reason and principle had been the chief and hard study of her life. The effort had calmed, though it had not made her happy. To love Mr. Delvile she felt was impossible; proud without merit, and imperious without capacity, she saw with bitterness the inferiority of his faculties, and she found in his temper no qualities to endear or attract: yet she respected his birth and his family, of which her own was a branch, and whatever was her misery from the connection, she steadily behaved to him with the strictest propriety. (III:461)

Burney carefully builds up a picture of a woman whose feelings are strong and who is naturally passionate, a fact which will be demonstrated later in the novel when she suffers an apoplectic fit after her son defies her. Her pride in her family name becomes an obsession because she has had to sacrifice so much to it. Apart from her son, whom "she rather idolised than loved" (III:462) - and even *he* is subsidiary to this obsession - pride is the sole consolation of her marriage, yoked as she is to a foolish man. It becomes a motivating

force in her life. Denied domestic happiness with her husband, presumably a victim of her parents' will, she is horrified that all she has invested in her otherwise sterile married life may be tossed aside by her son in his desire for a marriage based on love and respect but for which the sacred family name must be sacrificed. Even though she recognises Cecilia's merit and has made her her friend, bound together as they are by similar tastes, intelligence and refined sensibilities, she will not allow her only son to give up his name and make her sacrifice purposeless. In her determination, she is not even above the moral blackmail of Mortimer and of Cecilia. It is only at the end of the novel, when her sensibilities towards her son are re-awakened and she realises the suffering she has imposed on him, that she relents and in fact defies her husband.

Mrs. Delvile is reinstated as a sympathetic character at the end of the novel and the point is made for which the book was written: that the desire of men to perpetuate their names through their heirs by linking property with name is intrinsically wrong. In pursuing this theme, Burney challenges other aspects of the patriarchal principle. Just as the entailment of property to a male heir is of significance in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, as is the favouring of the eldest son in *Mansfield Park*, Burney explores the effects on women of these patriarchal laws of the eighteenth century and also their effects on the heirs themselves, for instance, Harrel and Mortimer Delvile.

Burney's interest in the naming process extends throughout all her novels. In *Cecilia*, of course, naming is a prime theme. The importance to the Delvile family of the continuance of their name is

crucial to the plot. This is ironically underlined in the scene where Cecilia, driven to madness, fails to recognise her husband:

“Why, why,” cried Cecilia, with a look of perplexity and impatience, “will you not tell me your name, and where you come from?”

“Do you not know me?” said he, struck with new horror; “or do you only mean to kill me by the question?”

“Do you bring me any message from Mr. Monckton?”

“From Mr. Monckton? - no; - but he lives and will recover.”

“I thought you had been Mr. Monckton yourself.”

“Too cruel, yet justly cruel Cecilia! - is then Delvile utterly renounced? - the guilty, the unhappy Delvile! - is he cast off for ever? have you driven him wholly from your heart? do you deny him even a place in your remembrance?”

“Is your name, then, Delvile?”

“O what is it you mean! is it me or my name you thus disown?”

“’Tis a name,” cried she, sitting up, “I well remember to have heard, and once I loved it, and three times I called upon it in the dead of night. And when I was cold and wretched, I cherished it; and when I was abandoned and left alone, I repeated it and sung to it.” (V:906-7)

In her madness, Cecilia speaks of the name as though it were a lost child. Burney makes the point here that child and name are linked as vehicles of the continuity of the patriarchal family structure.

In *Evelina*, the heroine is engaged in a search for her real name; the “nobody” (I:35), Evelina, longs for acknowledgement by her legitimate father and the right to his name. In *The Wanderer*, Juliet must accept many pseudonyms - she is many names, and many things, to many people - before she can openly acknowledge her identity. Her father had held the key to her name and status;

subsequently, on his death, his brother-in-law has this power and denies her. In *Camilla*, the heroine's frantic, nightmarish and lonely search for somewhere to stay at the end of the novel is linked to what Camilla thinks of as her rejection by her parents. At the inn where she finds refuge she is anxious not to be known by name and will not use the name of her uncle, Sir Hugh Tyrold, as a means of obtaining credit. Her sense of guilt and shame is bound up with what she feels she has done to her father and her uncle and the discredit she feels she has brought to their name.

All Burney's novels except *The Wanderer* have the first name of their heroine as part of their title, and all these names, and that which Juliet in *The Wanderer* herself adopts, "Ellis," as well as the name of the feminist, Elinor, and Juliet's friend Gabriella, contain some reference to "elle" or "ella" - woman.¹³⁵ The letters "elle" appear as anagrams or approximations of the word in the names Evelina, whose name derives from Eve and is doubly connected with "elle" through its anagrammatic surname, Anville; in Cecilia; Camilla; Ellis; Elinor Joddrel, and Gabriella, Juliet's adopted sister. Burney's choice of names signifies that each heroine stands in this respect for all women: "elle" or Eve. They act both as an integral function of the plot and as "signs for the slipperiness of female selfhood" (Epstein 96).

Just as Burney, in her journals, constructs her own identity, one which may be at odds with that by which others see her, her heroines endeavour to enforce their own visions of themselves, their own sense of who or what they are. These visions may be at variance with how they are viewed by others who may wish to

¹³⁵ See Doody, *Frances Burney* 40.

appropriate them to other roles. This problem of self-definition is especially relevant in *The Wanderer*, where the heroine is in a particularly ambiguous position and is obliged to adopt many disguises and an assumed name.

In considering the emphasis Burney puts on names and the naming process, it is significant that in *Cecilia* Albany's girl is never given a name. To Albany she is an inanimate object when he first loves her: "the fairest flower," "this fair blossom" (IV:705), metaphors which connect her with the natural world, and he clings to her "loved corpse" (IV:708) when she is dead. As a young student he appropriates her to himself, and when he is called home to the West Indies, sets his "friend" to spy on her and see that she remains faithful to him. It is ironically the friend who seduces her, but it is Albany who ruins her when he will not forgive her. The double sexual standards applying at the time to men and women are suggested by Burney in this story within the story where Albany, during his time in the West Indies, "revelled in licentiousness and vice [...] till a fever, incurred by [his] own intemperance, first gave [him] time to think" (IV:705). In self-righteous words, he describes his return home from the West Indies:

"[...] I came faithfully and honourably to make her my wife: - her own faith and honour, though sullied, were not extinguished, for she instantly acknowledged the fatal tale of her undoing!" (IV:706)

Only passive virtues, using the term as defined earlier, are expected of the eighteenth-century woman; her honour is tested through her chastity and faithfulness, virtues which stress negative action, rather than the positive action open to men. Albany's response to the girl's plea for forgiveness is physical and verbal abuse. Like many such

“poor and unprotected” country girls of the period, prey to rakes such as those Richardson uses as a model for Lovelace in *Clarissa*, once seduced and abandoned, she has little option but the city streets. In *The Wanderer*, Burney gives a graphic account of the difficulties even a woman of some culture and education has in finding respectable work and resisting assaults upon her chastity. Any young woman not under the protection of another man, either father, brother, husband or lover, is assumed to be fair game.

In *Camilla*, too, Burney looks at the situation of women who are dependent upon men and who infringe the rules laid down for their behaviour as wives or prospective wives. Dr. Marchmont, whose disappointment in his attempts to find a wife “framed for [his] peculiar felicity” leaves him embittered and suspicious toward all women, but he does not stoop to such a violent reaction as Albany’s when placed in a similar position (*Camilla* IV:642). Marchmont found that all he had gained with his first wife was “her lifeless, soulless, inanimate frame,” an image resonant of Albany’s dead girl, and with his second, when he finds her close to disgrace, he considers the “necessity of casting her off for ever” (IV:643; 644), an action which would have pleased that other fictional churchman, Mr. Collins.

Harrel’s marriage is another instance of a husband who has unrealistic expectations of his wife, who proves to be a silly woman. He physically and verbally abuses her, and forces her to surrender to him her settlement so that he may gamble it away in a desperate and foolish attempt to retrieve his fortunes. Priscilla Harrel, because she is superficial, weak-minded and weak in character, although frightened of her husband and helpless when left to her own resources, is easily reassured when she finds someone else to

support her: first, Cecilia, then her own brother, and eventually, another husband. Life with her brother, on whom she becomes financially dependent, and with Henrietta lacks appeal as both mourn their lost loves in Cecilia and Delvile. She became:

wearied by their melancholy, and sick of retirement, [and] took the earliest opportunity that was offered her of changing her situation; she married very soon a man of fortune in the neighbourhood, and, quickly forgetting all the past, thoughtlessly began the world again, with new hopes, new connections, - new equipages, and new engagements! (V:940)

Unlike Cecilia, she has never thought for herself or made any attempt at self-dependence. She is shown to be dependent on her husband and, later on, others because of her own lack of desire, opportunity or training to support herself. She is unfortunate enough to marry a man who gambles away her fortune, as well as his own, in his efforts to keep up his position in society. In the character of Mrs. Harrel, as in that of Indiana in *Camilla*, Burney makes a similar point to Wollstonecraft when the latter deplors the lack of proper education for women so that they will be more capable of self-dependence, a major theme of *The Wanderer*. Burney, however, goes further than this in *Cecilia* and demonstrates through Mrs. Harrel's history the powerlessness of women in the hands of unscrupulous husbands.

For Cecilia, name and inheritance are closely linked. Before she may attain some sort of domestic happiness, she must become dependent upon her husband economically and must sacrifice her name for his. Mortimer will be mortified if he must assume the name of Beverley. He fears that if he takes his wife's name it will result in his feminization. It is this fear which his mother uses to

persuade him not to marry Cecilia, at least under the conditions of her uncle's will.

The social mores of the time assume that it is natural for a woman to adopt her husband's name and perpetuate it through their children; no question arises as to whether this results in a diminishment of the woman's personality or sense of identity, her image of herself. This image of self is already at one remove from the object itself. It becomes further distanced with the change of family name and of functional name: from daughter, sister to wife, mother. As Patricia Meyer Spacks argues: "Characters in fiction exist as objects of someone else's imagination" (20). Burney shows how the "real" Cecilia is distanced yet further by being made "the object of someone else's imagination" in the scenes where Sir Robert will not talk with Cecilia but simply stands and stares. The narrator ironically describes Sir Robert's assumption at the Opera that Cecilia's face, in comparison with what was happening on stage, was: "better worth his notice, and equally destined for his amusement" (*Cecilia* I:135). Cecilia becomes uncomfortable not only because of his rudeness but because she resents the assault on her sense of self. Cecilia's desire for an independent self demonstrates her need to insist on her own identity, a need which, in itself, attests to an uncertainty. She is aware of others' perception of her, that she is viewed as an object: a sexual object, or a piece of property; that there is a gap between the Cecilia she thinks herself to be and the one whom others see. Both Cecilia and Evelina might, like their creator, ask: "why must a female be made Nobody?" (*EJL* I, 27 March 1768, 2). Evelina resists the idea that she is a "nobody"; Cecilia the idea that she is an object.

In discussing the relationship between fiction and autobiography, Spacks refers to contemporary eighteenth-century philosophical ideas regarding identity: "by Hume's reasoning the idea of selfhood itself exists only in the imagination, although it is based on the testimony of memory" (4). "[M]emory alone," argues Hume, "acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions" - the succession of perceptions which to Hume make up our only claim to personal identity (*Treatise* I:iv:6:309). He then proceeds to question the reliability of memory. One of the major themes of *Camilla* is the uncertainty of Edgar Mandlebert (another of Burney's male watchers) about the real nature of the heroine: the unknowability of a character, fictional or otherwise, is implicit in Burney's writing, as is to be expected of a woman who throughout nearly eighty years was impelled to construct herself, or a vision of herself, through the pages of her diary and journals and her letters.

It is assumed that Mrs. Delvile has not changed her name on marriage; we are told she is related to Mr. Delvile and is as proud and prejudiced in favour of the family and its name as is her husband. She remains an independent woman, literally remarkable in her time. Her son makes a point of commenting on this aspect of her character, that she chooses for herself even if this is contrary to her husband's opinion: "She has always maintained [...] an independent mind, always judged for herself, and refused all other arbitration" (V:819). In her original arguments against her son's marriage to Cecilia before her change of heart and mind, Mrs. Delvile stresses the shame which will follow, a shame which she and her husband certainly will feel if Mortimer pursues the marriage which

would "blot his name from the injured stock whence he sprung"

(IV:673):

"Heavens!" still continued she, disregarding his entreaty, "what in the universe can pay you for that first moment of indignity! Think of it well ere you proceed, and anticipate your sensations, lest the shock should wholly overcome you. How will the blood of your wronged ancestors rise into your guilty cheeks, and how will your heart throb with secret shame and reproach, when wished joy upon your marriage by the name of *Mr. Beverley!*"

Delvile, stung to the soul, attempted not any answer, but walked about the room in the utmost disorder of mind.

(IV:677)

Delvile has been brought up to revere his name and his ancestors and to see himself as the olive branch which perpetuates this tradition. He is, as Lady Honoria shrewdly sees, a "puppet" manipulated by his parents with their devotion to family prestige, so that he and Cecilia feel the full weight of the will of all the Delviles back to antiquity (*Cecilia* III:484; III:515).

Burney, like Austen, ends her novels with the hero and heroine starting life within a nucleus of favoured people, usually those who are not lacking in sensibility. In the time-honoured tradition of a fictional work, as a character in one of Oscar Wilde's plays would cynically remark, "the good [end] happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means" (*The Importance of Being Earnest* Act II, ll. 341, ll.8-9); or, in some cases, those who are not good must endure each other, notably Maria Rushworth and Mrs. Norris in *Mansfield Park*. The last few pages of *Cecilia* see the pairing-off of the deserving, the isolation or expulsion of the undeserving. As the story ends, Cecilia has "learnt the error of profusion, even in charity and beneficence" but, nevertheless, within the limits of her income

after her marriage, she continues to give "to herself all her former benevolent pleasure" (V:939). Benevolence is shown to be an indispensable part of Burney's heroine's character.

Discussing the status of the novel in the eighteenth century and its uses, D.D. Devlin, in *The Novels and Journals of Fanny Burney*, notes in writing of Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft:

If Hannah More had read the *Vindication* she would have found in it a powerful defence of marriage and less "medicated venom" than she expected and feared. Both women wrote; and to write anything was for women a kind of defiance. Both were deliberately writing for women; both said similar things, made similar assumptions and set out to challenge and change current ideas on the education (or lack of education) of women. The political radical and the political conservative shared a common feminism.

They both distrusted the novel and neither used the word to describe their fiction; but both saw that fiction could teach the dangers (for a young woman) of an uncontrolled sensibility and of being, in Mary Wollstonecraft's phrase "too much under the influence of an ardent imagination to adhere to common rules."¹³⁶

To these two eighteenth-century writers who explored the role of woman in society and the influences which made her what she was, as well as the effects on women of that eighteenth-century preoccupation, sensibility, should be added a third: Frances Burney.

¹³⁶ D.D. Devlin, *The Novels and Journals of Fanny Burney* (London: Macmillan, 1987) 70.

CHAPTER 7

CAMILLA

In this, Burney's third published novel, sensibility is often seen in the light of current ideas on the education of women. If the problems that middle-class women of the period face in earning their own living respectably is an important aspect of *The Wanderer*, education is a major theme in *Camilla*. These two problems are linked, of course, since it is only through education that women can become independent and free from victimisation. Not only is the proper education of females considered in *Camilla* but also that of males.

The importance of the eighteenth-century preoccupation with sensibility and the effects of the cult of sensibility which emerged in the second half of the century are an intrinsic element in Burney's analysis of education in *Camilla*. Like Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen, she views the *cult* of sensibility propagated through the novels of sensibility of the period with great misgivings. It may be for this reason that she insisted that *Camilla* was a "work" and not a novel. She resisted the label "novel" because of the associations adhering to the genre: those of a supposed lack of seriousness, the ambivalent attitude which existed generally toward fiction as such, and what was thought of as the novel's bad influence on women readers. Her intention in writing *Camilla* and her anxiety to avoid

contamination are clearly stated in a letter to her father. The work was to be “*sketches of Characters and morals, put in action, not a Romance*” (to Dr. Burney, *JL*, III 18 June, 1795, L. 171). In dedicating *Camilla* to Queen Charlotte she names it a “little Work.” As Edward and Lillian Bloom write in their Introduction to *Camilla*: “the ‘work’ was to delineate the conflict between youth and age, between the vacillation of innocence and the purposefulness of mature conduct” (Introduction to *Camilla* x). The moral purpose of the work is implicit in this description. However, as is discussed later in this chapter, it is not only the young in *Camilla* who must learn wisdom. Some of the older characters must learn the importance of a feeling heart.

Many of the applications of the word “sensibility” describe Camilla, Eugenia, Mrs. Berlington and, in a negative sense, Indiana. The novel presents Camilla’s problems as being often the result of mischievous interference by her brother Lionel; as Burney puts it, her difficulties were all “so closely interwoven in the affairs and ill conduct of her brother” (IV:543). Nevertheless, Dr. Marchmont and Miss Margland’s interference, as well as Edgar’s cautious and suspicious nature, also play their part in the complications that surround her. However, the emphasis in the novel is on the need for Camilla to learn to control her excessive sensibility: her unconsidered, impetuous and emotional reactions to circumstances; for instance to Miss Margland’s accusation that she is trying to come between Indiana and Edgar, and her attempt to protect her parents from knowledge of her brother’s misdemeanours. In Camilla’s case, sensibility denotes a feeling heart, sometimes, as her mother reminds her at the end of the novel, a *too*-feeling heart when she exhorts her

“to conquer this impetuous sensibility, which already, in its effects, has nearly broken all our hearts” (V:882).

Sensibility is also associated with Camilla’s benevolent feelings and also her excessive sensitivity to the “proper” behaviour of a woman of her time. She takes very much to heart her father’s admonition (quoted earlier in Chapter 4) to: “Risk not, my dear girl, to others, those outward marks of sensibility which, to common or unfeeling observers, seem but the effect of an unbecoming remissness in the self-command which should dignify every female who would do herself honour” (III:348). When Miss Margland spitefully reports that Edgar Mandlebert intends going abroad and thinks no more of Camilla than he does of Indiana:

Camilla felt half killed by this answer; and presently quitting the room, ran out into the garden, and to a walk far from the house, before she had power to breathe, or recollection to be aware of the sensibility she was betraying.

She then as hastily went back, secretly resolving never more to think of him, and to shew both to himself and to the world, by every means in her power, her perfect indifference. (II:273)

In her efforts to show her “indifference,” she only succeeds in appearing pert and ungrateful to Edgar.

Burney stresses the role of imagination in its effects on a woman of too heightened sensibility such as Camilla when she speaks of her “at the mercy of wayward Sensibility” when sensibility becomes self-reflexive and introspective instead of being directed outwards in an endeavour to understand and help others (IV:680). After a tearful scene when Edgar proposes to her, she is described as “now offering up to Heaven the thanksgiving of her artless rapture, now dissolving in the soft tears of the tenderest sensibility, according

to the quick changing impulses of her natural and lively, yet feeling and susceptible character" (IV:546-7). Camilla's vulnerability is stressed in this description of her volatile emotions.

As will be discussed later, the education of the principal female characters in the novel is diverse, and the results of these different types of education are clearly put forward in the action of the novel. So, too, for the men, including Sir Hugh who, though kindly, is irrational, illogical and under-educated. As a boy, he had no capacity for learning, and, unlike his younger brother who must be fitted for a profession, for him there was no apparent necessity, since he inherits his father's estates. Kristina Straub sees Sir Hugh's partiality for his niece Camilla in particular in Lacanian psychoanalytical terms. His position as squire has allowed him to pursue his "passion for field sports" (*Camilla* I:9) until a fall from his horse ruins his health and he is denied this "manly" pastime:

the father fetishizes the daughter in order to fill the gap left by his own castration; in more common discourse, Camilla supplies a lack that is occasioned by Sir Hugh's lost access to masculine pursuits. Whichever terms one uses to describe this action in the novel, it suggests a socially and economically grounded male authority figure who solaces his own sense of lack by objectifying the young female who falls, by social and familial convention, under his rule. (Straub 211)

In substantiation of this plot of symbolic castration, it is relevant that when Camilla is indulged by her uncle on her tenth birthday, Burney has her and Sir Hugh change roles. Camilla donned her uncle's wig, whilst Sir Hugh she "metamorphosed [...] into a female" and "put a rattle into his hand" (I:18). Sir Hugh, who is given to impetuous and abortive plans, constitutes in the novel a figure of power whom the author subverts into a figure of fun. His boredom

and frustration when he is deprived of his usual active, masculine pastimes and is consequently thrown onto his own resources, and his subsequent experiments in education through his nieces and nephews, have considerable bearing on the plot of *Camilla*.

The status of sensibility is also closely linked with education. It is an aspect of the education of Miss Melmond, later to become Mrs. Berlinton, and her brother, the idealistic and romantic Melmond, who is used by Burney as an example of a "man of sensibility." He must learn to judge by merit rather than from shallow external attributes. In his development from suitor to Indiana to become someone who shows he is "conscious of [Eugenia's] worth" (*Camilla* V:912), Burney makes her moral point, but also indicates the dangers of unregulated sensibility in men as well as in women. Misled by his own sensibility and susceptibility to beauty, Melmond is nearly committed for life to a stupid, vain woman, taught by Miss Margland to value her beauty above all else, and to use it in her bid for a good establishment.

In her indictment of sensibility in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, published in 1792, Wollstonecraft attacks this aspect of women's "education" which is aimed at producing women pleasing and flattering to men, rather than at helping them to become rational and independent creatures.

In short, women, in general, as well as the rich of both sexes, have acquired all the follies and vices of civilization, and missed the useful fruit. It is not necessary for me always to premise, that I speak of the condition of the whole sex, leaving exceptions out of the question. Their senses are inflamed, and their understanding neglected, consequently they become the prey of their senses, delicately termed sensibility, and are blown about by every momentary gust of feeling. (*Vindication* 151-2)

As can be seen, in this example of the effects of sensibility on women of her period, Wollstonecraft interprets it as a euphemism for the gratification of the senses. Women are made the object of homage by men - “[e]xalted by their inferiority” if they make pleasure the business of their life and do not compete with them (145). Burney demonstrates a similar situation in her depiction of Lady Louisa Larrent in *Evelina* and perhaps, too, Mrs. Berlinton in *Camilla*.

Wollstonecraft blames the character and behaviour of dependent women on their social conditioning. Where she sees sensibility as a trap which locks women of her period into a restrictive mode of being, modern feminists argue that the demands on women to behave in certain ways considered “ladylike” are also inhibiting and intended to make women pliant, dependent and silent subjects. In *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters with Reflections on Female Conduct in the More Important Duties of Life*, published in 1787, Wollstonecraft castigates writers who give a “wrong account of the human passions, and the various accidents of life,” a cause of “affectation of young women.” She goes on: “Sensibility is described and praised, and the effects of it represented in a way so different from nature, that those who imitate it must make themselves very ridiculous” (*Education* 50). In her reference to “nature,” Wollstonecraft is here making a distinction between true sensibility, based in an intuitive response to people, to art, literature and the natural world, and artificial sensibility assumed for effect. She complains that women are made slaves to their senses “because it is by their sensibility that they obtain present power” (*Vindication* 153).

It is not suggested that Burney's novel, written in 1796, owes anything directly to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, or *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*. As Spacks reminds us, there is "no evidence she read Mary Wollstonecraft" (183), though her one apparent allusion to Wollstonecraft, a satirical one, occurring when she refers in her *Journal* to "the rights of cats and dogs and mice" (*JL*, IX: 305), suggests that she at least knew of the existence of *Vindication*.¹³⁷ However, it will be argued that *Camilla* forms part of the contemporary discourse on the question of female education and its relationship to the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility.

Wollstonecraft makes many analogies between the eighteenth-century man's expectations of a wife and that of the pasha for his harem. Similarly, Burney uses master and slave metaphors in discussing the relationship of husband and wife. When Mrs. Tyrold and her husband speak of Edgar Mandlebert's possible marriage to Indiana, Burney has Mrs. Tyrold describe Indiana as "a beautiful doll, uninterested in his feelings, unmoved by his excellencies, and incapable of comprehending him if he speaks either of business or literature!" (II:221). As his surrogate mother, she feels she knows his real desires: "Neither a mistress nor a slave can make him happy; a companion is what he requires; and for that, in a very few months,

¹³⁷ Burney may, of course, have been referring to Thomas Taylor's parody on Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Rights of Brutes*, published in 1792, but the wording of her diary entry makes this unlikely:

[...] according to the maxims & manners of the day, which uphold not alone the Rights of Man, & the Rights of Woman, but the Rights of Children - & will, ere long, in all probability, include the Rights of Cats, Dogs, & Mice - & c in so much, that Fish, Meat & Cheese, will soon be regarded as common property, to whoever can first give them a claw. (*JL* IX 20 January, 1817, 305)

how vainly his secret soul may sigh, and *think of our Camilla!*”
(II:221).

Indiana is the product of ignorant teaching aimed at the acquisition of feminine “accomplishments” which will secure her, and incidentally her companion-governess, a good establishment. Miss Margland’s theory of education for young ladies is enunciated when Sir Hugh proposes to have Indiana taught Latin by Dr. Orkborne:

“Consider, Sir,” she cried, “what an obstacle it will prove to her making her way in the great world, when she comes to be of a proper age for thinking of an establishment. What gentleman will you ever find that will bear with a learned wife? except some mere downright fogrum, that no young lady of fashion could endure.”

She then spoke of the danger of injuring her [Indiana’s] beauty by study; and ran over all the qualifications really necessary for a young lady to attain, which consisted simply of an enumeration of all she had herself attempted; a little music, a little drawing, and a little dancing; which should all, she added, be but slightly pursued, to distinguish a lady of fashion from an artist. (I:46)

This condescending attitude to artists is explored in Juliet’s experiences with patronising patronesses in *The Wanderer*. It is interesting that among the insults Eugenia must bear on the subject of her deformity is the suggestion that this might have been caused by her studious habits. Burney suggests that Miss Margland is not alone in her opinion; that it was a common one to believe that learning for ladies was unhealthy. Austen gives an ironic description of the education of women of her day through Harriet Smith’s “very indifferent education” at Mrs. Goddard’s school “where girls might be sent to be out of the way, and scramble themselves into a little

education, without any danger of coming back prodigies" (*Emma* 62; 31).

Burney shows that Miss Margland aims at capitalising on Indiana's looks and marketing her for marriage and an establishment, one that Miss Margland can share. The improvement of Indiana's mind is no part of this plan. Because Indiana is beautiful, Miss Margland is certain she can attract a wealthy husband, one who will see only Indiana's youth and beauty and will not look further to mind and character. Indiana's accomplishments are demonstrated in scenes in *Camilla* when she is attempting to attract the attention of a potential admirer. They include flattering a man's sense of superiority by a display of timidity, as in the incident discussed later of the supposed mad bull, and attempting to show a finely honed aesthetic taste in the scene when Indiana and Camilla visit the prisoner's family in the hut which Edgar has provided for their shelter. This latter scene merely demonstrates Indiana's insensitivity and insensibility to the feelings of the cottagers.

Indiana has little conversation and less information. Burney's contempt for the accomplishments of the "beautiful doll" (*Camilla* II:221) is evident in a reference to her musical abilities, a sphere in which real sensibility could be made manifest, if it existed. Describing an evening of tedium spent by some of the principal characters in the novel, the narrator wryly writes: "The evening was passed in spiritless conversation, or in listening to the piano-forte, upon which Indiana, with the utmost difficulty, played some very easy lessons" (II:178).¹³⁸ Indiana is taught to look beautiful and be

¹³⁸ This scathing criticism comes from the sister of a woman whose performance on just such an instrument was praised by Haydn, and who was surrounded by musicians of the first calibre (*SLJ* xiii).

admired for her beauty - the flattering eye of the observer is the mirror for her sense of self.

Wollstonecraft relates the preoccupation of middle-class women with their appearance, with dress and adornment and their emphasis on acquiring an "establishment" to their conditioning and to the conditions of their life. Lacking the education which their brothers took for granted and which might have equipped them to earn their own living, denied the resources of a wider field of knowledge and confined to the acquirement of accomplishments thought proper to a woman, she sees such women as trivial and trivialised. It will be argued that in *Camilla*, Burney demonstrates in fictional terms many of these ideas on education which were debated at that time.

Burney herself might seem to be insulated from the problems Wollstonecraft discusses and which are raised in this chapter and in Chapter 2. Her work was admired by Dr. Johnson, she was a welcome member of Mrs. Thrale's cultural circle and familiar with the "Blue Stockings." As Dale Spender puts it, "she could have occupied a prominent place in the set of intellectual and literary women who comprised the blue stockings" but preferred to be a "fringe-dweller" (Spender 274). Frances Burney was also a member of a lively musical and literary family. Yet running counter to this strand of intellectual fulfilment is an awareness of those expectations of a woman's role which led to Burney's anxiety of authorship discussed earlier. Her revered "Daddy" Crisp expressed the patronising opinion that the two hundred and fifty pounds paid for the novel *Cecilia* (the publishers issued two thousand copies) was "a pretty Spill" for merely "scribbling the Inventions of her own Brain - only putting

down in black and white whatever comes into her own head, without labour drawing singly from her own Fountain, she need not want money" (*Burford Papers*, pp. 74-81; *ED*, I. lxxiv, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 148). When we remember the physical and mental strain under which Burney worked to complete *Cecilia* in order to "prevent [her father's] displeasure or cold looks," Crisp's words seems shallow and ill-judged (A.L.S. (Barrett) from FB to SB, Dec. 1781, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 147).

Mr. Crisp emphasised a woman's dependent position in the world when he wrote to Burney about her refusal of Mr. Barlow's proposal of marriage:

look around You, Fany - look at yr Aunts - *Fanny Burney* wont always be what she is now! [i.e., young, attractive and therefore marriageable]. Mrs Hamilton once had an Offer of £3000 a year, or near it - a parcel of young giggling Girls laugh'd her out of it - the man forsooth, was not quite smart enough, tho' otherwise estimable - Oh, Fany this is not a marrying Age, without a handsome Fortune! - [...]. Suppose You to lose yr father - take in all chances. Consider the situation of an unprotected, unprovided Woman - (*EJL* II, Letter Mr. Crisp to FB, 8 May, 1775)

There are two messages encoded in this letter. First, the idea that a woman is only valued when she is young and attractive, an assumption Burney echoes, with some irony, through the words of Lord Merton in *Evelina* when he says: "I don't know what the devil a woman lives for after thirty: she is only in other folks [sic] way" (*Evelina* III:275). Her depiction of Lord Merton makes it clear what she herself thinks of this arrogant assumption. Second, Crisp reminds Burney that economic power is usually in the hands of the male. This insistence on how women must depend upon men to support them is reinforced by Dr. Burney's opinion that "A man

without family attachments is an awkward & isolated beast; but a woman without a mate is still more insignificant & helpless" (A.L.S. (BM) from CB to Arthur Young, 21 Sept. 1791, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 196). It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman of no fortune must be in want of a husband.

Though Burney, like Austen, was herself a professional woman, she does not write of heroines who are authors. She remains, instead, within the tradition of the novel form which ends with the conventional romantic marriage, if the novel is a comedy. She refused one offer of a "suitable marriage" because her own sensibilities, like Elizabeth Bennet's, would not allow marriage to a man she did not love or respect, however convenient it might have been for her family and for her own future welfare. As mentioned earlier, she did not marry until she was in her forties. Even then, she was obliged, uncharacteristically but firmly, to go against her father's wishes. Dr. Burney could not approve her marriage to a penniless Frenchman, a Constitutionalist, and moreover, a Catholic. Because of her husband's circumstances as an emigré whose estates were confiscated by the State, it was necessary for Burney to write to support herself and her husband and, later, their child.

Like her sisters she was educated at home. When they were taken to France to learn the language, Frances was left behind because it was thought she would not benefit from the opportunity. As a child, surprisingly, when one thinks of her profession and the vast collection of her journals and letters, and of her compulsion to write, she was slow to learn to read. It has been suggested by Kathryn Kris that she was dyslexic as a child, though Julia Epstein takes issue with this idea and feels her slowness to learn is more

likely to reflect her status as middle child and the loss of her mother, so that she was to some extent neglected.¹³⁹ Against Epstein's theory is the fact that her mother did not die until Burney was ten years old, and that Mrs. Burney had earlier rejected the suggestion of a neighbour that the "little dunce" should receive "the chastening ordinances of Solomon" because of slowness in reading, saying that she was "not uneasy about her!"¹⁴⁰

Burney eventually improved to the extent that she taught herself French. Later, her lessons in Latin with Dr. Johnson were discontinued by her father who, according to Mrs. Thrale, thought "Latin was too Masculine for Misses."¹⁴¹ As Hemlow comments, this may have been biased reporting on Mrs. Thrale's part, because Dr. Burney seemed in general to have been very liberal in his views on his daughters' education and was "sympathetic to the *bas bleus*" (*History*, 265). However, in a footnote to this, Hemlow also quotes Burney's remark: "My father himself likes and approves all accomplishments for women better than the dead languages" (*Diary*, iv.223; *History*, 265). It is perhaps significant that the judgment attributed to Dr. Burney re-emerges in *Camilla* through the responses of Clermont Lynmere to Eugenia's classical education. This may be evidence of resentment from an otherwise dutiful and loving daughter who can use her writing as a subversive method of protest against the options available to women in a male-dominated society.

¹³⁹ Kathryn Kris, "A 70-Year Follow-up of a Childhood Learning Disability: The Case of Fanny Burney" *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 38 (1983): 637-52; Epstein 23. The Oxford University Press editions of Burney's novels give 27th September, 1762 as the date of Esther Sleepe Burney's death in their "Chronology of Frances Burney," (*Evelina*, 1982, *Camilla*, 1983, *Cecilia* 1988, *The Wanderer*, 1991). Dobson gives the date as 28th September 1761 (Dobson 8).

¹⁴⁰ Frances Burney. *Memoirs of Doctor Burney arranged from his own Manuscripts, from Family Papers, and from Personal Recollections*. By His Daughter, Madame D'Arblay, 3 vols. (London: Edward Moxon, 1832) II:123-4.

¹⁴¹ Hester Lynch Thrale, *Thraliana* i. 502; qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 265.

Epstein, indeed, insists that *Evelina* is a "feminist novel of education" and that later Burney:

became much more adept at writing a feminist ideological critique as her art matured and her voice gained narrative and political confidence. But already in 1778, she displayed her talent at quiet insurrection against a world that required women to submit to authority beyond their control and to suppress their most fundamental desires. (Epstein 95)

In *Camilla*, through the fates of Camilla, Eugenia, Mrs. Berlinton, Indiana and her governess, Miss Margland, Burney analyses the expectations of women, how they react to these expectations, and different modes of female education. These vary from Indiana's, where her mind and understanding are neglected but, because of her personal beauty, she is groomed in the expectation that she will make a "good" marriage, to the opposite example of Eugenia, crippled and scarred, but given the classical education usually reserved for males, an education which makes her unacceptable as a wife to the man for whom she has been intended by her uncle.

In the case of Indiana, her "education" is a direct result of Miss Margland's status as a single woman of no means. As a woman of good family, reduced to poverty through her father's gaming debts, there are few choices open to Miss Margland in order not to lose caste. She must either teach or become a companion to another woman in better circumstances. A relative of Sir Hugh, Miss Margland is taken into his household and provided with protection and the nominal position of Indiana's governess. Indiana's future is bound up with Miss Margland's who is concerned when Indiana is to marry a mere Ensign and wishes to be reassured by the sight of his Irish rent-rolls. Her ambition is for Indiana to make a brilliant

marriage and reside in London, where Miss Margland, as her companion, will have access to the high society she craves. She makes herself necessary to Indiana, as Mrs. Norris does to Maria Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, by her flattery and partisanship in a household of women. She teaches Indiana that a display of maidenly timidity is one way to a man's heart, as the incident of the bull in the field, enraged by the trickster Lionel, demonstrates. When the bull appears to be about to give chase to the walking party: "Miss Margland screamed, and hid her face with her hands. Indiana, taught by her lessons to nourish every fear as becoming, shrieked still louder, and ran swiftly away, deaf to all that Edgar, who attended her, could urge" (I:132). Burney makes a pointed comparison between Indiana's reaction and Camilla's:

Camilla, the least frightened, because the most enured to such sounds, from the habits and the instruction of her rural life and education, adhered firmly to Sir Hugh, who began blessing himself with some alarm; but whom Dr. Marchmont re-assured, by saying the gate was secured, and too high for the bull to leap, even supposing it a vicious animal. (I:132)

The rational behaviour of Dr. Marchmont and Camilla compared to Indiana's and Miss Margland's is one aspect of this scene which Burney uses to make her point about behaviour and education. Another is the equation of Camilla with the natural rural world and Indiana with artificiality. Here Burney uses the paradigm of country versus city which is, of course, commonly invoked in literature to signify naturalness versus sophistication (in its sense of "adulterated; not pure or genuine"); health versus sickness; moral rectitude versus perversion.

Indiana's education stresses the accomplishments thought proper for a woman who will, it is hoped, make a brilliant marriage and lead society - one of Wollstonecraft's "short-lived queens" (*Vindication* 145). Eugenia, on the other hand, because she cannot be offered to a man who values physical beauty, receives the classical education Sir Hugh has not himself been capable of acquiring. She is groomed as prospective wife for his supposedly academically brilliant nephew whom Sir Hugh hopes she will be capable of meeting on an intellectual level. In the event, Clermont Lynmere rejects Eugenia because of her appearance and because he does not want a wife who will "make [him] look like a dunce in [his] own house" (IV:579). His main concern about his wife's credentials is that she should be capable of providing him with a good dinner (IV:579). As Joyce Hemlow, writing in 1958, points out, quoting Mr. Tyrold's words from his sermon to his daughter: "Madame d'Arblay observed truly (and not only for her own time): 'the proper education of a female, either for use or for happiness, is still to seek, still a problem beyond human solution'" (*History*, 264; *Camilla* III:357).

Eugenia is a woman of sensibility but too little knowledge of the world. Her education is described as "secluded and studious" (III:370). Her tutor, a Casaubon-like character, a dry pedant who is completely engrossed in self and in his "great work," as the narrator ironically describes it - the "Key to All Mythologies" as Doody, quoting George Eliot, puts it (248)¹⁴² - and whom Burney lampoons mercilessly, is equally ignorant of the world's ways. With such influences, Eugenia is no match for the subtle Bellamy. The narrator makes a point of commenting on Eugenia's credulity (III:370), and

¹⁴² George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871-2), introd. W.J. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) 111.

she is hopelessly duped by the fortune-hunter who is adept at putting her under an apparent obligation to him, exploiting her gratitude, and her sympathetic and romantic feelings.

The vulnerability of women and their ignorance of what marriage may mean when a woman becomes the property of the man she marries are themes which pervade Burney's novels. At the age of sixteen, Burney herself deplored the loss of liberty that marriage brings with it: "O «{heavens}»! how short a time does it take to put an eternal end to a Woman's liberty!" she writes (*EJL*, I:17, July 20, 1768).¹⁴³ In *Camilla*, we are shown a picture of a foolish young woman of fourteen who, to escape from what she feels are the restrictions of life with her father, accepts an offer of marriage, thinking this will give her freedom. As the worldly-wise Mrs. Arlbery comments:

"Poor simple girl!" [...]. "Mr. Lissin, who is a country squire of Northwick, will soon teach her another lesson, than that of ordering her carriage just at dinner time! The poor child took it into her head that, because, upon marrying, she might say, 'my house,' 'my coach,' and 'my servants,' instead of 'my papa's;' and ring her bell for [whom]* she pleased, and give her own orders, that she was to arrive at complete liberty and independence, and that her husband had merely to give her his name, and lodge in the same dwelling: and she will regard him soon, as a tyrant and a brute, for not letting her play all day long the part of a wild school girl, just come home for the holidays." (*Camilla* V:783)

The school girl, who has not yet learnt her lessons, plays truant from her responsibilities and is dragged home by her new husband.

Mrs. Lissin, who as Miss Dannel has brought a substantial dowry to the marriage, finds that this gives her no rights thereafter.

¹⁴³ « » indicates matter overscored by Madame d'Arblay but recovered. { } indicates uncertain reading.

* [editor's brackets].

She is an ignorant, uneducated girl, who must learn the responsibilities and limitations of her future life. She learns to repent marrying and regret the liberty she had enjoyed in her father's home, finding marriage more restricting of liberty than her position as daughter. The narrator comments:

in fine, her violent desire for this state of freedom, ended in conceiving it a state of bondage; she found *her own house* the house of which she must take the charge; being *her own mistress*, having the burthen of superintending a whole family, and being *married*, becoming the property of another, to whom she made over a legal right to treat her just as he pleased. And as she had chosen neither for character, nor for disposition, neither from sympathy nor respect, she found it hard to submit where she meant to become independent, and difficult to take the cares where she had made no provision for the solaces of domestic life. (*Camilla* V:910)

In this portrait of a motherless girl who chose foolishly and too soon, and who is quite unprepared for the realities of marriage, Burney recognises that "to submit" to a husband is a necessity. She points the moral and the need for women to exercise caution in their choice of a partner who will not abuse his position and his right under patriarchal law to be a master, rather than a husband and partner.

It is this kind of delicate balancing trick that Burney investigates in marriages such as that of the Tyrols in *Camilla*, marriages built on mutual respect. In a revealing episode where Mrs. Tyrold yields, against her better judgment, to her husband's decision to allow Camilla to live with his brother, the narrator emphasises the control required by a woman of Mrs. Tyrold's will-power to submit to her husband's will: "Mrs. Tyrold now yielded; she never resisted a remonstrance of her husband; and as her sense of duty impelled her also never to murmur, she retired to her own

room, to conceal with how ill a grace she complied" (I:13). The narrator continues, more ominously:

Had this lady been united to a man whom she despised, she would yet have obeyed him, and as scrupulously, though not as happily, as she obeyed her honoured partner. She considered the vow taken at the altar to her husband, as a voluntary vestal would have held one taken to her Maker; and no dissent in opinion exculpated, in her mind, the least deviation from his will.

[...].

Mr. Tyrold, whose whole soul was deeply affected by her excellencies, gratefully felt his power, and religiously studied not to abuse it: he respected what he owed to her conscience, he tenderly returned what he was indebted to her affection. To render her virtues conducive to her happiness, to soften her duties by the highest sense of their merit, were the first and most sacred objects of his solicitude in life. (*Camilla* I:13-14)

Burney shows how a woman's happiness in marriage where the husband is all-powerful depends finally upon his generosity of mind, upon his sensibilities, his understanding of her feelings. Mrs. Tyrold's ability to submit depends upon her sense of duty. Her willingness to do so depends upon her affection and respect for her husband.

Camilla's education has been planned by her clergyman father and her mother to emphasise simplicity and stoicism. Whatever other mistakes they make they do not consider a mercenary marriage for her. Burney shows through Mrs. Berlinton's dissipated life and through Mrs. Delvile's bleak experience, the results of such arranged, loveless marriages. But, with no dowry to attract a husband, or inheritance to support herself, Camilla's future is uncertain. During one of Mr. Tyrold's sermons to his daughter, he

explains the motives behind the educational system adopted in regard to his daughters:

Your mother and myself, mutually deliberating upon the uncertainty of the female fate, determined to educate our girls with as much simplicity as is compatible with instruction, as much docility for various life as may accord with invariable principles, and as much accommodation with the world at large, as may combine with a just distinction of selected society. We hoped, thus, should your lots be elevated, to secure you from either exulting arrogance, or bashful insignificance; or should they, as is more probable, be lowly, to instil into your understandings and characters such a portion of intellectual vigour as should make you enter into an humbler scene without debasement, helplessness, or repining. (III:357)

It is perhaps significant that Burney has Mr. Tyrold stress the uncertainty of the female fate, an admission of the few options open to women other than marriage.

Ironically, though Camilla's unmarried and childless uncle is rich and titled, her father, the younger brother, is an impoverished clergyman with a large family. Therefore her means are not equal to the demands of the London society in which she moves whilst a guest of Mrs. Arlbery. Straub argues that Camilla succumbs to "middle-class notions of femininity." She writes: "Camilla's foolishness in incurring debts is never the result of mere vanity, but rather a by-product of her thoughtless immersion in the social roles that her society encourages young women to play" (Straub 192). In fact, Camilla is often unwillingly enmeshed in debts for clothing and "external adornment" through the offices of Mrs. Mittin who, misled by Camilla's trouble-making brother, believes her to be rich. Lionel Tyrold misrepresents Camilla to Mrs. Mitton and others as her rich uncle's heiress. He is a thoughtless liar, like John Thorpe in *Northanger Abbey* who makes mischief when he tells General Tilney

that Catherine Morland is heiress to Mr. and Mrs. Allen. Lionel, a man of insensibility - a Loki-like character, incorrigibly addicted to "jokes" - is in fact also responsible for Eugenia's pursuit by Bellamy which leads to her forced marriage when he spreads the rumour at the first dance she attends that she is her uncle's heiress. Bellamy's advances date from this period.

Burney demonstrates clearly Camilla's ambivalence towards the necessity as she sees it to appear suitably dressed, her susceptibility to the idea that men judge women by appearances and her realisation that such preoccupations are trivial. In a scene where Camilla views the ball-gown acquired through Mrs. Mittin's connections with trade her fluctuating hopes and fears are analysed. This dress places her in even greater debt through the machinations of Mrs. Mittin who supposes she has in Camilla a rich patroness whom she can fleece. To Camilla, the gown is meant to be her passport to the ball where all the misunderstandings with Edgar can be cleared away:

[...] Camilla saw her bed completely covered with her new ball dress.

This sight was, at first, an aggravation of her agony, by appearing to her as superfluous as it was expensive: but wherever hope could find an aperture to creep in at, it was sure of a welcome from Camilla. Edgar was undoubtedly invited to the ball; why should he not be there? he had taken leave of her, indeed, and he certainly proposed going abroad; but could a mere meeting once more, be so repugnant as not to be endured[?]

The answer to this question was favourable to her wishes, for by her wishes it was framed: and the next play of her fertile and quick reviving imagination, described the meeting that would ensue, the accidents that would bring them

into the same set, the circumstances that would draw them again into conversation, and the sincerity with which she would do justice to her unalterable esteem, by assuring him how injurious to it were his surmises that she thought him rigorous, austere, or in any single instance to blame. (V:710)

In this passage Burney stresses Camilla's imagination and fantasy, products of too much sensibility. This particular Cinderella does not get the chance to meet her Prince Charming at the ball. In the aftermath to the ball which had promised so much, Camilla comes to *her* moment of truth when faced with reality:

“Would Edgar,” thought she, “wait the event of a meeting at a ball to decide his conduct? Had he not every title to claim a conference with me, if he had the smallest inclination? Rejected as he calls himself, I had not pretended to demand our separation from any doubts, any displeasure of my own. From the moment he suffered me to quit, without reclamation, the roof under which I had proposed our parting, I ought to have seen it was but his own desire, perhaps design, I was executing. And all the reluctance he seemed to feel, which so weakly I attributed to regard, was but the expiring sensibility of the last moment of intercourse. Not with murmurs, he says, he will quit me - nor with murmurs will I now resign him! - with blessings, he says, he leaves me - O Edgar! mayest thou too be blest! The erring and unequal Camilla deserved thee not!”
(V:721)

Burney demonstrates that through experience Camilla must learn prudence. However, she shows her capable of rational analysis of her own behaviour. In this passage Camilla equates the word sensibility with what she herself interprets as Edgar's feelings of nostalgia for a love now passed. Camilla interprets Edgar's “reluctance” as a result of memories of sensations he had once felt.

Mrs. Berlinton is self-educated through “ill selected novels and romances” and romantic poetry: a fatal combination, it seems (*Camilla* III:487). In a meeting with Camilla Mrs. Berlinton's

romantic and sentimental propensities are described and their influence on Camilla:

They did not speak of Tunbridge, of public places, nor diversions; their themes, all chosen by the stranger, were friendship, confidence, and sensibility, which she illustrated and enlivened by quotations from favourite poets, aptly introduced and feelingly recited; yet always uttered with a sigh, and an air of tender melancholy. Camilla was now in a state so depressed, that, notwithstanding her native vivacity, she fell as imperceptibly into the plaintive style of her new acquaintance, who seemed habitually pensive, as if sympathy rather than accident had brought them together. (III:393)

In describing Mrs. Berlinton's choice of literature to illustrate her concept of "sensibility" Burney emphasises Mrs. Berlinton's dramatisation of her own situation; her sensibility is introverted rather than directed outwards towards others. Sensibility renders Mrs. Berlinton passive. She infects Camilla with her own morbid self-pity. This is one of the negative effects of sensibility against which Wollstonecraft argues in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* when she urges women to exert their reason and their will to live full and active lives.

Mrs. Berlinton, like her brother, Melmond, is seduced by literature. The ever-zealous Edgar Mandlebert, Camilla's "monitor-lover," watches her in order to assess her influence on Camilla. He finds that "[s]he possessed all that was most softly attractive, most bewitchingly beautiful, and most irresistibly captivating, in mind, person, and manners" (*Camilla* III:487). More ominously, the narrator goes on to describe her nature and upbringing:

But to all that was thus most fascinating to others, she joined unhappily all that was most dangerous for herself; an heart the most susceptible, sentiments the most romantic, and an imagination the most exalted. She had been an orphan from

earliest years, and left, with an only brother, to the care of a fanatical maiden aunt, who had taught her nothing but her faith and her prayers, without one single lesson upon good works, or the smallest instruction upon the practical use of her theoretical piety. All that ever varied these studies were some common and ill selected novels and romances, which a young lady in the neighbourhood privately lent her to read; till her brother, upon his first vacation from the University, brought her the works of the Poets. These also, it was only in secret she could enjoy; but, to her juvenile fancy, and irregularly principled mind, that did not render them more tasteless. Whatever was most beautifully picturesque in poetry, she saw verified in the charming landscapes presented to her view in the part of Wales she inhabited; whatever was most noble or tender in romance, she felt promptly in her heart, and conceived to be general; and whatever was enthusiastic in theology, formed the whole of her idea and her belief with respect to religion.

Brought up thus, to think all things the most unusual and extraordinary, were merely common and of course; she was romantic without consciousness, and excentric [sic] without intention. Nothing steady or rational had been instilled into her mind by others; and she was too young, and too fanciful to have formed her own principles with any depth of reflection, or study of propriety. (III:487-8)

In this description of Mrs. Berlinton the narrator stresses her susceptible heart, her highly wrought imagination and her romantic tendencies. The wording of the passage implies that these are all dangerous attributes in Burney's judgment tending to divorce Mrs. Berlinton from "reality." Her religious "enthusiasm" is also seen as dangerous to Burney, for whom the Protestant emphasis on practical good works is the preferred Christian ethic.

Like Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*, Mrs. Berlinton responds to the picturesque in art and nature which makes its appeal to the emotions. That lack of rationality in Mrs. Berlinton, together with her unregulated sensibilities, leads her close to disaster through her association with Bellamy. She is easily deceived by him and by

herself that their relationship is a platonic one, until at the end of the novel, she comes close to betraying Eugenia and being herself betrayed by Bellamy. The description of her redemption at the end of the novel, when she gives up her corrupt, fashionable life, is phrased in somewhat ambivalent terms:

repulsed from passion, and sickened of dissipation, though too illiberally instructed for cheerful and rational piety, she was happily snatched from utter ruin by protecting, though eccentric enthusiasm. (V:911-2)

Burney, from her own conventional religious standpoint, suggests that Mrs. Berlinton remains irrational and eccentric in finding comfort in Evangelicalism, though at least it removes her from worldly dangers.

As well as female education, we are given models of masculine education and the resultant products: from Edgar, whose judgment is warped by the effects of his misogynistic tutor who, having had his own expectations of a wife disappointed, judges from his own particular experience rather than from the general; to Lionel, provided with the education which his sisters, all but Eugenia, lack and who nevertheless is a wastrel and a trouble-maker - it is because of him that Mrs. Tyrold is absent from home during Camilla's trials; to Melmond, "a man of sensibility" - a romantic. Clermont Lynmere, an ignorant, ill-mannered gourmand, is contrasted with the upright Henry Westwyn, educated in the same manner.

Whilst the three girls are educated at home (even Eugenia who lives with her Uncle and is provided with tutors), Lionel Tyrold, the girls' brother is, of course, educated at university where he runs up debts which embarrass his father and which lead him to blackmail one rich Uncle and dun another. He is also responsible for initiating

Camilla's financial problems by imposing on her love and concern for her parents in another kind of blackmail: moral blackmail. In order to protect her parents from the full knowledge of Lionel's debts Camilla is persuaded to remain silent about his misdemeanours and to give him the little money she has which is meant to equip her for her time in London. It is this original selfish act on Lionel's part which sets up the train of borrowings and indebtedness which, together with the debts he must settle on Lionel's own direct account, lead eventually to Mr. Tyrold's imprisonment and Camilla's self-blame.

Burney shows the victimisation of sisters by brothers and the preference shown to sons in *Cecilia*, as well as in *Camilla*, in the subplot of Henrietta Belfield and her brother. In *Cecilia*, Burney compares male and female education through the experiences of Henrietta and her sisters. Her mother's hopes of her son raising the family through education and the contacts he would make at university were at the expense of her daughters' education and future prospects. Henrietta explains to Cecilia her sense of injustice at her mother's partiality:

[...] I, and all my sisters, have been the sufferers the whole time: and while we were kept backward, that he might be brought forward, while we were denied comforts, that he might have luxuries, how could we help seeing the evil of so much vanity, [...]? (*Cecilia* II:247)

In *The Wanderer*, Burney demonstrates the treatment of women by their brothers and husbands in the portrait of the farmer and his sons in the New Forest where Juliet stays for a time. Juliet is shocked to see the boys "domineering over their sisters, and mocking

their mother" (*The Wanderer* IV:697). The farmer himself, because woman could:

neither plough the field, nor mow the corn, he considered [her] as every way an inferiour being: and, like the savages of uncivilised nature, he would scarcely have allowed a female a place at his board, but for the mitigation given to his contempt, from regarding her as the mother of man. (IV:696)

Burney demonstrates that misogyny is alive and well in the country, just as it is in the city.

Burney herself takes an ironical view of the sanguine contemporary views on education when she comments on the difference between Henry Westwyn and Clermont Lynmere. She finds in Henry Westwyn:

as marked a contrast with Clermont Lynmere, to annul all Hypothesis of Education, as Lord O'Lerney, cool, rational, and penetrating, opposed to Macdersey, wild, eccentric, and vehement, offered against all that is National. Brought up under the same tutor, the same masters, and at the same university, with equal care, equal expence, equal opportunities of every kind, Clermont turned out conceited, voluptuous, and shallow; Henry modest, full of feeling, and stored with intelligence. (V:909)

Henry's character is perhaps explained by the expectations of his father, who hides his pleasure in his son's accomplishments and courage under an assumed severity. Sir Hugh, on the other hand, who has adopted his orphaned nephew, Clermont Lynmere, has left him to his own devices and failed to inform him of the fact that he has been disinherited in favour of Eugenia. Because of false expectations, therefore, Lynmere has run up bills to a total of one thousand pounds, and his university years are misspent. Where Mr. Tyrold, aware that his daughters' futures were uncertain, had educated them with this fact in mind, Sir Hugh, never noted for

intelligence or forethought and, as discussed earlier, not given the same education as his younger brother, has left Clermont in ignorance in more ways than one. Whether she read Wollstonecraft or not, Burney's pictures of the results of parental educational systems have a certain affinity with Wollstonecraft's somewhat caustic comment on Locke's system of education: "To be able to follow Mr. Locke's system (and this may be said of almost all treatises on education) the parents must have subdued their own passions, which is not often the case in any considerable degree" (*Education* 11-12).

In her pictures of young men who have the advantage of a university education and who waste their opportunities and accumulate debts for their elders to settle, Burney gives us no very sanguine view of the effects of privileging the male offspring. Whether, like Virginia Woolf after her, she resented the exclusion of women from the bastions of education is not known. She does not openly argue against the status quo, but her novels do make clear the different expectations and treatment of sons and daughters and, in this way, she may subversively be making her point.

Melmond was a colleague of Lionel's at Oxford. In her analysis of the man of *too* much sensibility, Burney demonstrates the way in which Melmond constructs a false picture of Indiana which satisfies his own romantic desires, fed on literature, rather than the reality of Indiana. Burney describes a somewhat one-sided exchange between Melmond and Indiana:

"O fairest," he cried, "fairest and most beautiful of all created beings! Can I resist - no! this one, one effusion - the first and the last! The sensibility of your mind will plead for me - I read it in those heavenly eyes - they emit mercy in their beauty!"

they are as radiant with goodness as with loveliness! alas! I trespass - I blush and dare not hope your forgiveness."

He stopt, terrified at his own presumption; but the looks of Indiana were never more beautiful, and never less formidable. A milder doom, therefore, seemed suddenly to burst upon his view. Elated and enraptured, he vehemently exclaimed: "Oh, were my lot not irrevocably miserable! were the smallest ray of light to beam upon my despondence!" -

Indiana still spoke not a word, but she withdrew not her smiles; and the enraptured student, lifted into the highest bliss by the permission even of a doubt, walked on, transported, by her side, too happy in suspence to wish an explanation. (I:141-2)

Melmond's diction, which is stilted, artificial and exclamatory in style, emphasises his bookishness. This language of sensibility is punctuated by the narrator's ironic comments. Like Marianne Dashwood in some of her judgments, he is unrealistic and judges by external appearances. He does not really see Indiana, but only a projection of his imagination, a product of his romantic reading. When Melmond supposes Indiana demonstrates an "excess of her sensibility" when she learns Eugenia has been abducted and married to Bellamy, the narrator wryly comments:

It seems the peculiar province of the lover, to transfuse all that he himself most prizes, and thinks praise-worthy, into the breast of his chosen object; nor is he more blind to the defects with which she may abound, than prodigal in gifts of virtues which exist but in his own admiration. (V:801)

Burney foregrounds Melmond's potential as a model of the man of sensibility in the scene where he makes his first appearance in the novel. He is discovered by the young party whilst reading aloud to himself, with great feeling and dramatic gestures, Thomson's very

popular and affecting poem, *The Seasons* (*Camilla* I:99-100).¹⁴⁴ Melmond later demonstrates the truth of Anne Elliot's remarks that: "it was the misfortune of poetry to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly" (*Persuasion* 267).

Indiana's "sensibility" is in the eye of the beholder. It is an attribute Melmond would expect to find in a woman who could inspire his devotion. It is the witty and pragmatic Mrs. Arlbery who sums up the characters of Melmond and his sister: "I know the Melmonds well. They are all half crazy, romantic, love-lorn, studious, and sentimental. One of them was in Hampshire this summer, but so immensely 'melancholy and gentleman-like,' that I never took him into my society" (III:418).

Burney, anticipating the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman*, shows us her heroine's progress from child to adult. In the final pages of the novel, she achieves the marriage which is to give her her place and role in society. Burney contrasts Camilla with Indiana, the woman of insensibility, and with Mrs. Berlinton, a woman of dangerous sensibilities whose judgment is not sufficiently mature to help her distinguish fiction from reality, that warning sounded by Wollstonecraft in her *Thoughts on the Education of a Daughter*.

Camilla's generous responses to the world around her, as well as her impetuosity - an aspect of her character and of her name - are

¹⁴⁴ Edith Birkhead tells us: "In the middle of the Eighteenth Century, as poetry showed signs of quickened emotions, it began to reach a wider circle of readers. A taste for introspective verse was an almost invariable accompaniment of sensibility. Every heroine possessed a copy of Thomson's *Seasons*, and the story of Lavinia in *Autumn* was found deeply affecting" (Birkhead 101).

demonstrated in two scenes, the first where a group of people which includes Camilla and Indiana visit a poor family housed temporarily in her Uncle's barn:

Camilla, leading the way, with a fleetness¹⁴⁵ that mocked all equality, ran into the barn, and saw the whole party, according to their several powers, enjoying themselves. The poor man, stretched upon straw, was resting his aching limbs; his wife, by his side, was giving nourishment to her baby; and the other child, a little boy of three years old, was jumping and turning head over heels, with the true glee of unspoilt nature, superior to poverty and distress.

To the gay heart of Camilla whatever was sportive was attractive; she flew to the little fellow, whose skin was clean and bright, in the midst of his rags and wretchedness, and, making herself his play-mate, bid the woman finish feeding her child, told the man to repose himself undisturbed, and began dancing with the little boy, not less delighted than himself at the festive exercise.

Miss Margland cast up her hands and eyes as she entered, and poured forth a warm remonstrance against so demeaning a condescension: but Camilla, in whose composition pride had no share, though spirit was a principal ingredient, danced on unheeding, to the equal amaze and enchantment of the poor man and woman, at the honour done to their little son.

Edgar came in last; he had given his arm to Eugenia, who was always in the rear if unassisted. Miss Margland appealed to him upon the impropriety of the behaviour of Camilla, adding, "If I had had the bringing up a young lady who could so degrade herself, I protest I should blush to shew my face: but you cannot, I am sure, fail remarking the difference of Miss Lynmere's conduct."

Edgar attended with an air of complacency, which he thought due to the situation of Miss Margland in the family, yet kept his eyes fixt upon Camilla, with an expression that, to the

¹⁴⁵ Edward and Lillian Bloom, in the notes to their edition of *Camilla*, give the source of Camilla's name as Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, II. 372-3 and Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid*, vii. 1100-03. See: *Camilla*, 8n1. The reference for the classical Camilla, associated with fleetness, is *Aeneid*, 7. 803. II. 539-828.

least discernment, would have evinced his utmost approbation of her innocent gaiety: but Miss Margland was amongst that numerous tribe, who, content as well as occupied with making observations upon others, have neither the power, nor thought, of developing those that are returned upon themselves.

(I:110-11)

Edgar shows he is sensitive to Miss Margland's position as a person reduced through no fault of her own to becoming dependent on a relative. Like Mr. Knightley in Jane Austen's *Emma* in his treatment of Miss Bates and her mother, examples of women whose circumstances and therefore status have altered for the worse, Edgar too is courteous to one who has known better days, but his approbation of Camilla's behaviour is clear from the text.

In the second scene, Camilla's intrinsic sensibility (demonstrated in her warm response to others and her benevolent feelings) is compared with Indiana's selfish insensibility in a visit to the family after they have been re-housed in a cottage provided by Edgar. The family has been redeemed from the fate of those who fail in that harsh society through Camilla's charitable instincts and her interest with her more powerful friends. As Camilla says to Edgar: "It is your happy fate [...] to act all that my father so often plans and wishes, but which his income will not allow him to execute" (I:151).

Indiana's mindless and thoughtless comments on her surroundings show her lack of sensitivity to the feelings of their hosts. She is preoccupied in demonstrating her own sensitivity to her surroundings, her own taste and refinement. Like Wollstonecraft's "weak woman of fashion" who boasted of "her exquisite sensibility" and who "thought a distinguishing taste and puny appetite the height of all human perfection"

(Wollstonecraft, *Vindication* 130), Indiana's self-absorption insulates her from knowledge of the offence she gives:

“Dear! Crockery ware! how ugly! - Lord, what little mean chairs! - Is that your best gown, good woman? - Dear, what an ugly pattern! - Well, I would not wear such a thing to save my life! - Have you got nothing better than this for a floor-cloth? - Only look at those curtains! Did you ever see such frights? - Lord! do you eat off these platters? I am sure I could sooner die! I should not mind starving half as much!” (I:151)

The last comment, to a family whose breadwinner had been imprisoned and threatened with hanging or transportation for stealing a leg of mutton to feed his starving family, demonstrates Indiana's insensitivity. Camilla, on the other hand, who has been “brought up by her admirable parents never to pass distress without inquiry, nor to refuse giving at all, because she could give but little” (I:83), greets the family as friends:

no sooner had she crossed the threshold, than she recognised, in a woman who was curtsying low to receive her, and whom Indiana had passed without observing, the wife of the poor prisoner for whom she had interceded with Mandelbert.

“How I rejoice to see you!” cried she, “and to see you here! and how much better you look! and how comfortable you seem! I hope you are now all well?” (I:150)

And again, when it was necessary to leave, Camilla:

would not depart without looking over the cottage, where everything she saw excited a sensation of pleasure. “How neat is this! How tidy that!” were her continual exclamations; “How bright you have rubbed your saucepans! How clean every thing is all round! How soon you will all get well in this healthy and comfortable little dwelling!” (I:151-2)

Camilla empathises with the family and sees them as fellow human beings; Indiana, self-centred as ever, can see only a hovel in which

she has no opportunity to shine. As they leave the cottage, Edgar says to Camilla:

“Ah! who is like you! so lively - yet so feeling!”

Struck and penetrated, she made no answer: Alas! she thought, I fear he is not quite satisfied with Indiana! (I:152)

Camilla's spontaneous gesture of charity, the result of her sensibility and recognition of the distress of fellow beings, causes her some embarrassment when the money she gives the prisoner's wife at their first meeting is needed later to honour a debt for a raffle to which she is committed. Her financial position is further complicated by her support of the Higden family who have been assured by Miss Mittin that they are making their application to a wealthy heiress. As is usual with Camilla, her problems are brought on through circumstances beyond her control. In all of her novels Burney makes her heroines' fates conditional upon society's demands on them. Edgar pays her debt and she wins the lottery; the prize is a locket. At the end of the novel the locket becomes the key to Camilla's discovery and rescue from near-death by Edgar, and is used by the author as a symbol of Camilla's constancy and her loving heart.

Burney argues that precipitate acts of charity such as Camilla's may lead to problems for the donor and be self-defeating, but with Edgar's practical help and economic advantages and his rational plan for long-term support of the family through providing a home and work, a plan which perhaps would have had Bertrand Russell's approval, the relief of the casualties of society is achieved. As Edward and Lillian Bloom point out, this practical philanthropy for *deserving* cases is consistent with eighteenth-century ideas where “charity became a ‘moral virtue’ rather than an ‘amiable instinct’”

(Bloom, ed. *Camilla* 152n1). In *Evelina* Lady Howard suggests to Villars that: "To despise riches, may, indeed, be philosophic, but to dispense them worthily, must surely be more beneficial to mankind" (I:124). By "worthily" is presumably meant what would be considered by Lady Howard and Villars a worthy cause.

Dr. Marchmont, in *Camilla*, encapsulates the rational eighteenth-century view of charity: "to give money without inquiry, or further aid, to those who have adopted bad practices, is, to them, but temptation, and to society an injury; but to give them both the counsel and the means to pursue a right course, is, to them, perhaps, salvation, and to the community, the greatest service" (I:152). The liberal Sir Hugh expresses his philanthropic views with less cogency and conciseness when he learns of the plight of the prisoner and his family:

"[...] God forbid, I should turn hard-hearted, because of their wanting a leg of mutton, in preference to being starved; though they might have no great right to it, according to the forms of law; which, however, is not much impediment to the calls of nature, when a man sees a butcher's stall well covered, and has got nothing within him, except his own poor craving appetite; which is a thing I always take into consideration; though, God forbid, I should protect a thief, no man's property being another's, whether he's poor or rich."

He then gave Camilla three guineas to deliver to them from himself, to set them a little a-going in an honest way, that they might not, he said, repent leaving off bad actions. (I:109-10)

Sir Hugh, who always sees both sides of every question, becomes enmeshed, as he usually does, in his own logic.

Though Burney argues that "Precaution is not natural to youth" (Introduction *Camilla* x), on the other hand, some of her older

characters too demonstrate a lack of precaution or forethought. Sir Hugh, a “man of sensibility” but muddled thinking, refuses, like Sir Walter Eliot but for different reasons, to cut his staff or sell his horses in order to retrench in time of financial difficulties brought on by the extravagances of his two nephews. His motives are kindly but in the long run futile. He cannot bring himself to do what his younger brother does when in a similar position: temporarily prune his household. Burney sees as self-indulgent the tendency to act on the “first impulse, which is commonly pleasant because kind. To be just requires more reflexion; to have foresight, demands more experience.”¹⁴⁶ She seems to subscribe to the philosophy of her age when, in summing up the fate of the main protagonists of the novel, the narrator tells us:

The prisoner and his wife, now worthy established cottagers, were the first, at the entrance of Beech Park, to welcome the bride and bridegroom; and little Peggy Higden was sent for immediately, and placed, with extremest kindness, where she might rise in use and in profit. (V:911)

The emphasis on worth and use in describing the results of charity emphasise its profit and loss aspects. It is not simply that virtue will be its own reward, but charity is only to be encouraged in rewarding cases. It is argued that through the marriage of Camilla’s sensibility which she learns to control, allied to Edgar’s economic power, once he has learned to trust, Burney creates a situation where benevolence and rationality can go together.

Although Camilla is guilty at times of “ungovernable” sensibility, such as she exhibits in her reaction to the news of her

¹⁴⁶ See Introduction to *Camilla* xn2. Excerpt from portfolio of fifty-nine scraps of paper containing suggestions for dialogue, etc. for *Camilla* in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library.

Uncle's sudden and serious illness, it is this very sensibility to which Edgar responds. Just as in *Mansfield Park* Henry Crawford recognises Fanny Price's feeling heart in her affection for her brother, William, a "legitimate love" which she *may* express, Edgar is spurred by the sight of Camilla's love and concern for her Uncle: "Edgar had never yet beheld her in a light so resplendent - What a heart, thought he, is here! what feelings, what tenderness, what animation! - O, what a heart! - were it possible to touch it!" (II:326). The sentiments might also be compared with an earlier example from *Twelfth Night*, expressed in more erotic terms by Orsino, when he learns that Olivia has vowed to mourn her dead brother for seven years:

O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love when the rich golden shaft
Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
That live in her. (I.i.11. 32-36)

The novel's plot often demands that Edgar's sensibilities, his appreciation of and response to Camilla, are undercut by the doubt instilled in him by Dr. Marchmont and by his own cautious, suspicious nature. He is unaware that Camilla is in love with him, since she must hide this for the very reason that Mary Astell earlier put forward when she wrote: "Modesty [requires] that a Woman should not love before Marriage, but only make choice of one whom she can love hereafter; She has none but innocent affections, being easily able to fix them where Duty requires."¹⁴⁷ Many of the problems which separate Camilla from Edgar are caused by the necessity for her to hide her feelings. Edgar thinks Camilla cold

¹⁴⁷ Mary Astell, *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest*, 4th ed. 1701; (rpt. New York: Source Books P, 1970) 35.

towards him and at times suspects her of being a coquette when she tries to prove her lack of interest in the man she thinks betrothed to another. Challenged by her father as to the reasons for her obvious sadness when she realises she loves Edgar but sees no future in that love, Camilla “felt wholly overcome by the deeply distressing confusion, with which wounded pride and unaffected virgin modesty impress a youthful female, in the idea of being suspected of a misplaced, or an unrequited partiality” (III:344).

Impressing on her her duty to himself and that awesome mother whom Camilla both loves and fears, and whose good opinion is so important to her, he says:

“You will never, I am certain, forget the noble mother whom you are bound to revere in imitating, nor the affectionate father whom your ingenuousness renders the most indulgent of your friends. Dry up your tears then, my Camilla, and command your best strength to conceal for ever their source, and, most especially . . . from its cause” [Edgar].

He then embraced, and left her.

“Yes, my dearest father,” cried she, as she shut the door, “most perfect and most lenient of human beings! yes, I will obey your dictates; I will hide till I can conquer this weak emotion, and no one shall ever know, and Edgar least of all, that a daughter of yours has a feeling she ought to disguise!” (III:345)

It is significant that these thoughts are spoken when her father is gone. Just as other heroines are silenced, or circumstances make it difficult for them to speak openly, Camilla, too, is many times inhibited from expressing her true feelings. In this particular scene with her father, the narrator describes this dilemma: “Speech and truth were always one with Camilla; who, as she could not in this instance declare what were her feelings, remained mute and

confounded” (III:343). It is, of course, often a narrative device to prolong the final denouement of a tale by imposing difficulties and misunderstandings on the principal characters. However, in so often making the demands of society the impediment to the heroines’ explanations of self and feelings, it may be that Burney is voicing her own protest at the restraints and constraints imposed on women and on women writers. Burney creates a sense of claustrophobia in some of these scenes where women’s pleas are ignored or silenced. One instance is when Camilla, sick and alone, in delirium tries to write in the “Records of Eternity” but “her pen made no mark! She looked upon the page, when she thought she had finished, . . . but the paper was blank!” (V:875-76).¹⁴⁸ A similar feeling of panic and frustration is achieved in the scene where Cecilia attempts to reach Mortimer Delvile to stop his meeting with Belfield and is trapped by a crowd who will not release her.

Muriel Masfield, in *Women Novelists from Fanny Burney to George Eliot*, suggests that Frances Burney’s study of the effects of “that admired eighteenth-century quality *sensibility*” in her novel, *Camilla*, prepared the way for Jane Austen’s attack on the cult of sensibility (34). Masfield is among those who see Burney as “one source of inspiration” to Jane Austen (34). Burney very likely did more than merely provide the title for one of Austen’s novels in the closing pages of *Cecilia*.

Both authors explore in their novels the different aspects of sensibility. In *Sense and Sensibility*, of course, Austen contrasts a character whose sensibility is under the control of reason with one who prides herself on uninhibited sensibility, and who is convinced

¹⁴⁸See Epstein 19-23 for an analysis of the significance of this scene.

that those who do not show emotions do not feel them. Austen's Marianne must learn not only to control her own sensibilities but give credit to those of her sister, who masks her personal unhappiness because of her feelings for what is due to her family. Elinor, like Camilla, realises that sensibility is very much bound up with a concern for the sensibility of one's "dearest friends" (*Sense and Sensibility* 244). Marianne is ignorant of this. Elinor's sensibility extends outwards to an appreciation and understanding of the pleasures and pains of others. The central theme in *Sense and Sensibility*, a title which underlines the ambiguity inherent in the concepts of "sense" and "sensibility," is not that the quality of sensibility is wrong in itself or that it is in direct opposition to sense. In fact, as has been argued earlier, to some extent the meanings of the two words blur in dictionary definitions. It is rather that as Austen constructs Marianne's character, her sensibility, her ability to respond to beauty, her romanticism, are not balanced or mediated by that judgment which comes from experience and deliberation. Through Marianne, Austen shows that self-indulgence and self-pity are destructive of self and one's relationships with one's immediate society. In Austen's philosophy, of course, as argued earlier, the smaller community stands as a metonym for society as a whole.

Burney's attitude to sensibility similarly stresses that this quality must be present, but must always be controlled. Writing to her sister and describing a young woman whom she hopes her beloved, but somewhat feckless, son might marry, she describes her as having "sound sense, good principles, & governed though strong sensibility" (2 A.L. (Berg) from FBA to CFBF, 8 July, 1835, 17 Feb. 1837; A.L.S. (Barrett), 12 Oct. 1835, qtd. in Hemlow *History*, 477).

This was the Mary Ann Smith who did not, in fact, marry Alexander d'Arblay, but lived with and cared for Madame d'Arblay herself during the last few years of the writer's long life.

In Burney's treatment of sensibility in *Camilla* she explores its effects on characters who are perfectible and those who are not capable of improvement. Camilla herself exemplifies "real" sensibility. The most obvious comparable figures are Indiana Lynmere, the "beautiful doll," and Mrs. Berlinton (*Camilla* II:221). The former is a woman who affects the trappings of sensibility but who is, in fact, a woman of insensibility; the latter is a woman of sensibility, but of the dangerous and self-indulgent kind. Camilla has the ability to learn from experience and to temper sensibility with the faculty of reason; her opposite, Indiana, and her alter ego, Mrs. Berlinton, are fixed and static characters incapable of the introspection which is essential to self-awareness, and, hence, development. Through the character of Indiana, Burney makes a number of points about contemporary female education, and about the effects of romantic love and a susceptibility to female beauty on a man of sensibility. In her delineation of the character of Mrs. Berlinton and in fashioning her experiences, Burney shows us the dangerous propensities for females of the cult of sensibility, linked as it is in her novels to the effects of literature on life. Both Mrs. Berlinton and her brother, Melmond, who is seduced by Indiana's beauty, exemplify the bad effects of romantic literature on the impressionable young who lack the judgment to make a distinction between literature and life. Melmond is almost yoked for life to a foolish woman whose better parts exist only in his imagination. His

sister, more vulnerable still, having been married in her teens to a rich old man, is nearly ruined by the devious Bellamy.

Like Austen, Burney constructs characters who are capable of growth through a process of learning - of self-knowledge. In Austen's novels, for instance, her heroines, Elizabeth Bennet, Emma Woodhouse and Catherine Morland, undergo this process, though older people rarely change. In *Persuasion*, it is the hero who must learn through experience and comparison the true value of Anne Elliot, as events in the narrative demonstrate for Wentworth her superior qualities; but even this exemplary heroine goes through a process of adjustment to circumstances which strengthens her stoical character. On the whole, these heroines confront their pride, their prejudices, their arrogance and their errors of judgment in a moment or moments of anagnorises. These moments come to them in periods of solitary contemplation when, in a similar examination of self and motives to that testified in the diaries devout Protestant women of the seventeenth century were encouraged to keep, they discover their flaws of character. One such scene is when Elizabeth Bennet discovers that "[t]ill this moment, I never knew myself" (*Pride and Prejudice* 194). She finds that she is guilty of the sin of which she had accused Darcy: the sin of pride - pride in her own acumen, pride in her ability to read people. Emma goes through a similar humbling experience.

It is significant that it is the heroine, an exemplary female in the making, who goes through this process, rather than any of the subsidiary female characters. It is Emma Woodhouse, not Jane Fairfax; Elizabeth Bennet, not Jane Bennet, who are seen to be most worthy of "becoming" heroines through their responses to the

circumstances of their existence, day by day. Jane Bennet and Jane Fairfax remain static throughout the novels. Their circumstances change, but their characters do not. Likewise, in Burney's novels the perfectibility of the heroine is taken for granted. Camilla has faults of impetuosity and imprudence, but she is capable of learning control and retaining her many virtues. Indiana, on the other hand, like Lydia Bennet and Mrs. Bennet, lacks the ability to apply introspection and therefore remains fixed forever and morally irredeemable. Burney's insistence on the moral imperative to reflect on the ideas which come from experience via our sensations is consistent with Locke's thesis, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Locke Bk II:i:2).

Though the subtitle of the novel is "A Picture of Youth," and Burney's moral aim to show the dangers of impetuosity in the young and a too-heightened sensibility, as well she shows us faulty adults and the results of insensibility. Had Edgar Mandlebert trusted his own judgment more and his tutor's less the story would have been considerably shortened. The "aged" must be educated in humanity, as Mrs. Delvile is in *Cecilia*. Virtuous Camilla's parents might be, her mother is described, indeed, rather ominously, as possessing "rigid virtues" (I:9), but like Sir Thomas Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, that novel which also deals with education - of the young and of the adults, they are too intimidating or distant in their manner to gain their children's confidence. Dr. Marchmont, too, must acknowledge the "injustice, [the] narrowness, and [the] arrogance" of his own judgment of Camilla (V:913).

Speaking for those who feel, perhaps, more strongly than they reason, for the impulsive who do not always consider the

ramifications of their actions, Camilla says at one point to her by-no-means perfect monitor-lover, Edgar:

“we are not always completely wrong, even when wide from being right. I have not been culpable of quite so much folly as not to feel what I have owed to your good offices; nor am I now guilty of the injustice to blame their being withdrawn. You do surely what is wisest, though not - perhaps - what is kindest.” (III:382-3)

Here, perhaps, Camilla speaks for her “maker” in arguing that, although “good sense,” or judgment, must be allied to sensibility, sensibility is an indispensable quality in the truly human being. In this context sensibility is the quality evinced in the character of Camilla: an intuitive response to others and a feeling and benevolent heart. Eventually, Camilla learns to govern her strong sensibility.

CHAPTER 8

THE WANDERER

There are forty-three references to the word "sensibility" listed in Appendix A as occurring in *The Wanderer*. It is usually used in a positive sense, but there are occasional negative or ironical implications. Besides direct references to the word there are many scenes in which the effects of sensibility are manifested.

The ideas associated with sensibility particularly cluster around descriptions of, or scenes which involve, Juliet and Harleigh, Juliet and her half-sister, Lady Aurora, and those between Juliet and her "adopted" sister, Gabriella. As applied to Juliet, the word is used to stress her elegant and cultivated taste, her charm, her response to others, her delicacy, her sufferings, and her ability to be deeply moved (I:80; I:105; I:117; II:312-3; III:387-8; III:512; III:554; IV:595). Her sensibilities are also to the fore when she is embarrassed, shocked, or offended; tears, blushing or near-fainting are the signs of her mental disturbance when she momentarily loses control of her emotions. Blushing, which is a common manifestation of sensibility in the fiction of the period, can be the result either of fear of betraying partiality, or consciousness of guilt, or the belief that others might suspect guilt even when it does not exist.

The situation which Burney describes is one where a woman may not, without giving credence to the idea, challenge a slur on her reputation. This is a "catch-22" situation in which Juliet finds herself

on several occasions as a result of Ireton's machinations. When Mrs. Ireton accuses her of deliberately trapping Ireton in the summer house, when in fact the opposite is the truth, Juliet "would not, however, deign to make a vindication, lest she should seem to acknowledge it possible that she might be thought culpable;" (III:550). Elsewhere Juliet suggests that to take notice of "calumniating" reports is to confirm them: "For with however just a pride wronged innocence may disdain injurious aspersions, female fame, like the wife of Caesar, ought never to be suspected" (III:477).

As mentioned earlier, the word can be applied ironically in connection with Mrs. Ireton (I:29; III:481). It can be used positively in descriptions of exemplary characters in the novel. Elinor uses it to denote the ability to love and to discriminate when she asks Harleigh, "Why, for so many centuries, has man, alone, been supposed to possess, not only force and power for action and defence, but even all the rights of taste; all the fine sensibilities which impel our happiest sympathies, in the choice of our life's partners?" (I:177). Harleigh himself sees sensibility as a "fatal" charm when Juliet, persuaded that she cannot tell him she is already married, rejects his proposal: "O why this fatal sensibility, that captivates while it destroys? that gives fascination even to repulse?" he asks (II:205). Juliet's sensitivity to his feelings, and her gratitude for his benevolent interest in her concerns makes it impossible for her to seem wholly "insensible to the honour" (II:205). Her behaviour is thoroughly confusing to Harleigh who can only suppose she is motivated by the forced promise given to Elinor that she will never marry Harleigh, but suspects that also some other mystery remains. In the letter he writes to Juliet on his departure from Mrs. Maple's

house he speaks of submitting to an “undefined, and what appears to be unnecessary evil” in leaving Juliet, but he fears that to remain would be “to awaken a sensibility that electrifies every hope, only to inflict, with the greater severity, the shock that strikes me back to mystery and despondence” (II:206; II:207). Harleigh’s description of his feelings demonstrates that to be possessed of acutely perceptive sensibilities is to experience both joy and suffering.

Sensibility is a word which is associated with all the exemplary characters in the novel, and it is invoked when feelings and emotions are elevated. It is often defined by its opposite “insensibility,” found in those lacking sensibility, and it is also used in a literal sense to indicate that a person is *insensible*, i.e. asleep, unconscious or dead. In the discussion between Harleigh and Elinor centering on the immortality or otherwise of the soul, Harleigh draws a parallel between sleep and death in his argument for the existence of the soul: in both conditions a lack of consciousness of everything outside of the body is induced. Elinor denies the analogy, reminding Harleigh that whilst we are asleep we still breathe: “we are capable, therefore, of being restored to all our sensibilities, by a single touch, by a single start” (V:788). Whilst we are still asleep or when we are dead, we are insensible.

Again, when Juliet, shocked and numbed by her confrontation with her husband, is taken to Wilton by Sir Jaspur, her “nearly morbid insensibility” makes it impossible for her to respond to the beauties of the House and its art collection (V:760):

Not as Juliet she followed; Juliet whose soul was delightedly “awake to tender strokes of art,” whether in painting, music, or poetry; who never saw excellence without emotion; and whose skill and taste would have heightened her

pleasure into rapture, her approbation into enthusiasm, in viewing the delicious assemblage of painting, statuary, antiques, natural curiosities, and artificial rarities, of Wilton; - not as Juliet, she followed; but as one to whom every thing was indifferent; whose discernment was gone, whose eyes were dimmed, whose powers of perception were asleep, and whose spirit of enjoyment was annihilated. (V:759-60)

In showing the reverse side of the coin, Juliet's insensibility whilst in a state of shock, Burney here describes her heroine's usual response to "the beautiful." Juliet has both the skill and the taste with which to judge and appreciate the examples of form, harmony, artistry and beauty which fill Wilton, and which are descriptive of the House itself, but her usually acute sensibilities are now deadened by shock. In an earlier scene Juliet is forced to leave London when Riley and her husband arrive in pursuit of her. She reaches Romsey Abbey and the narrator describes Juliet's response to the "beautiful Gothic structure" (V:663). She is at first unable to see the building properly "from the misery and pre-occupation of her mind." However, after a while, Juliet "whose mind was always open to excellence, even when most incapable of receiving any species of pleasure" was able at least to appreciate the splendour of the ancient building, though not with her usual sensibility to the beautiful. Her sensibilities are blunted by "terror and agitation" (V:663).

The word "sensibility" is used to denote responses to kindness, to offence or to affection. Burney makes a graceful acknowledgement of the kindness of her real-life friends at Norbury Park by making them the benefactors of the fictional Gabriella when she must return to London to nurse her sick husband. As Burney puts it, it was the "assistance of the angelic beings already hinted at, whose delicacy, whose feeling, whose respect for misfortune, made

their beneficence as balsamic to sensibility, as it was salutary to want" (III:403). The tact and consideration of the givers made it impossible for Gabriella's sensibilities to be offended by receiving financial help.

Though it may be justly felt at times, offended sensibility must be controlled, Burney argues, in the interests of common sense and safety. She stresses this in the scene where Mrs. Ireton has mortified Juliet to such an extent by her sarcasm and by emphasising her position as "humble companion" that Juliet retires to the room she has been given to use. Mrs. Ireton has made it clear on another occasion that it is *not* Juliet's room:

Not, however, with triumph did she return to her own. The justice of the sensibility which urged her retreat, could not obviate its imprudence, or avert its consequences. She was wholly without friends, without money, without protection, without succour; and the horror of a licentious pursuit, and the mischiefs menaced by calumniating ill wishers, still made a lonely residence as unsafe as when her first terror drove her to acquiesce in the proposition of Elinor. Yet, though she could not exult, she could not repent: how desire, how even support a situation so sordid? a situation not only distressing, but oppressive; not merely cruel, but degrading. (III:488)

Here, Juliet's state of mind is clearly described and the advantages and disadvantages of remaining under Mrs. Ireton's "protection" weighed one against the other in this internal debate. On this occasion sensibility wins over sense and Juliet is preparing for departure when Mrs. Ireton sends for her. Far from wishing to lose Juliet, Mrs. Ireton ignores the scene which brought on Juliet's resentment and attempts to placate her:

Juliet, not absolutely softened, yet somewhat appeased, again hesitated. A road seemed open, by some exertion of spirit, for obtaining better treatment; and however ungenial to

her feelings was a character whose humours submitted to no restraint, save to ensure their own lengthened indulgence, still, in appearing more contemptible, it became less tremendous. (III:489)

The narrator continues:

subduing her resentment, and submitting, with the best grace in her power, to the business of her office, she cheerfully proposed reading; complied with the first request that was made her to play upon the piano-forte and the harp; and even, to sing; though, not so promptly; for her voice and sensibility were less ductile than her manners. But she determined to leave nothing untried, that could prove, that it was not more easy to stimulate her pride by indignity, than to animate her desire to oblige by mild usage. (III:490)

Juliet is hopeful that she can avoid being a “sycophant” or a “parasite,” as she is called by others, if a balance can be achieved between service and servility. Unfortunately, her philosophy is not shared by Mrs. Ireton, and the “better treatment” does not last long.

Some of the many references to the word “sensibility” in *The Wanderer* have been examined in Chapter 4 where the connotations Burney assigns to this somewhat ambiguous word have been analysed. This chapter will look more closely at the role of sensibility in the novel. Just as it is an important aspect of all the other novels, the theme of sensibility and its effect on character and circumstance can be plotted in *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*. In her final novel, published when she was sixty-two, Burney explores the predicament of a woman, Juliet/Ellis, washed up on the shores of England, a “female Robinson Crusoe” (V:873), isolated from her family and friends and dependent on her ingenuity and her talents to support her. She must suppress her identity and her whereabouts for her own security and that of her benefactor who is a hostage in the hands of a nameless villain who has forcibly married

Juliet for mercenary reasons and whose power comes from his position as a member of the regime responsible for the Terror in France. Epstein has recognised the Gothic element in Burney's last novel, commenting that Juliet's husband is an "unnamed character who appears as a dark, maniacal, Gothic figure of terror" (176). His namelessness is an interesting aspect of the persona Burney creates for him and can be contrasted with the namelessness of Burney's heroines. They are nameless and powerless; he is nameless, faceless and all-powerful: perhaps personifying patriarchal power. After Juliet escapes him, he puts a price on her head and vows she will go to the guillotine when captured.

Burney makes Juliet a classic example of "virtue in distress" by setting her tale in the period of the "Terror" in the aftermath of the French Revolution, and in having her heroine pursued by a man who not only personifies political power but also, since she views him as her husband, legal power - albeit perverted legal power.

Although set in the "dire reign of the terrific Robespierre" and beginning in France, the story soon shifts to England, Juliet's dead parents' birthplace, and the country where her only relatives still live (I:11). She arrives, as she says,

"without name, without fortune, without friends! no parents to receive me, no protector to counsel me; unacknowledged by my family, - unknown even to the children of my father! - Oh! bitter, bitter were my feelings! - Yet when I considered that no action of my life had offended society, or forfeited my rights to benevolence, I felt my courage revive, for I trusted in Providence." (*The Wanderer* V:749)

Like the earlier *Robinson Crusoe*, Juliet also puts her faith in a provident God.

In common with other Burney heroines, Juliet searches for a name and a place in society, but her situation is particularly vulnerable as she must remain in obscurity to preserve her own life and her guardian's. Like Evelina, Juliet is the "helpless offspring of an unacknowledged union" (*The Wanderer* V:869). Her mother's secret marriage to her father was not acknowledged by him because of his father's more grandiose plans for his son. A marriage which would advantage the family as a whole had been envisaged for him. After the deaths of Juliet's mother and, later, her father, her legitimacy depends upon her father's brother-in-law. He is brother to the deceased second wife and therefore has a vested interest in retaining the whole estate for his *own* niece and nephew, his wards. He refuses to accept Juliet's story and attempts to buy her off. Juliet's situation from the start as innocent victim is one that makes demands on the sensibilities of the reader.

Some of the themes that can be traced in *The Wanderer* are displacement, isolation, restrictions on female behaviour, the dependent position of women, education and working conditions for women in the period, all set against a background which shows the effects of war and revolution. Juliet's closest friend and her family are, like Juliet, living precariously in exile in England.

The Wanderer, a novel about self-dependence, is Burney's most feminist novel with its emphasis on the circumstances of woman's life, though the term "feminist" is perhaps an anachronism in the context of Burney's age. The novel explores the lack of opportunity for women to support themselves in a world ordered by men. "[H]ow long," Juliet cries at one point, "must we mingle with the world, ere we learn how to live in it! Must we demand no help from the

understandings of others, unless we submit to renounce all use of our own?" (III:456). Juliet is made well aware that "a dearth of useful resources, was a principal cause, in adversity, of FEMALE DIFFICULTIES" (IV:693; author's emphasis). Rose Marie Cutting, in "Defiant Women: The Growth of Feminism in Fanny Burney's Novels," argues that "*The Wanderer* supplies a remarkably full picture of the economic bondage of women" (Cutting 529). As Simons puts it in her chapter on *The Wanderer* in *Fanny Burney*:

Juliet's exclusion from any definable social role makes her into a classic outcast and as she wanders through the country in search of employment and a home, she is given opportunity to observe and analyse different life styles and to discover the numerous dangers that both urban and rural life conceal.¹⁴⁹

Using the talents acquired by a girl of her class and period, but always circumscribed by what a "proper" woman may or may not do, Juliet attempts self-sufficiency. Burney shows, too, how Juliet's own sensibility, her sensitivity to her position in society and the expectations Harleigh and others have of her, inhibit her forays into the professional and business world. *The Wanderer* shows clearly that Juliet subscribes to those expectations, but that in seeking to conform to the role of a woman of sensibility, with its adjuncts delicacy and modesty, she is hampered in her gallant efforts to earn her own living. She tries to set herself up as music teacher, but is not paid for her services; sews in a haberdashery and then a milliner's workshop, but is harassed by men; contemplates becoming a governess, the "final solution" for a gentlewoman in extremities, and takes a job as companion to Mrs. Ireton. Her experiences in this capacity allow Burney to demonstrate the mistreatment of women by

¹⁴⁹ Judy Simons, *Fanny Burney, Women Writers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987) 99.

women. Mrs. Ireton, a widow, has economic power in her hands, and Burney explores how such power can corrupt women as well as men. Mrs. Ireton lacks self-knowledge, benevolence, and any real sensitivity to what is due to other human beings. In other contexts, Burney explores female friendship and mutual support.

From Sir Jaspar's description of Mrs. Ireton as a young woman, Juliet learns that she had earlier exercised another sort of power as a beautiful woman. He tells her:

“this pale, withered, stiff, meagre hag, so odious, so tyrannical, so irascible, but a few years, - in my calculation! - but a few years since, - had all the enchantment of blithe, blooming loveliness! You, who see her only in her decline, can never believe it; but she was eminently fair, gay, and charming! [...].

“Her story [...] already envelopes the memoirs of a Beauty, in her four stages of existence. During childhood, indulged in every wish; admired where she should have been chidden, caressed where she should have been corrected; coaxed into pettishness, and spoilt into tyranny. In youth, adored, followed, and applauded till, involuntarily, rather than vainly, she believed herself a goddess. In maturity, - ah! there's the test of sense and temper in the waning beauty! - in maturity, shocked and amazed to see herself supplanted by the rising bloomers; to find that she might be forgotten, or left out, if not assiduous herself to come forward; [...].” (III:542)

In his reference to “the rising bloomers,” as discussed later, Sir Jaspar thinks of women as flowers to be picked, enjoyed and discarded.

What was wit in Mrs. Ireton's youth degenerates in age from “pent-up resentment” (III:543) into savage tormenting of those in her power. Sir Jaspar, whose own age and infirmity, and his unrealistic pretensions toward a young woman, are satirised by Burney, describes what happens to women treated as objects - beautiful things for the amusement and delectation of others - who are prized only for these attributes, and left, when their beauty and

youth is gone, with no inner resources. Except for the fact that Mrs. Ireton's youthful wit has turned to bitter sarcasm and that Indiana has no wit at all, Mrs. Ireton's present presages Indiana Lynmere's future.

Margaret Drabble, in her Introduction to the Pandora edition of *The Wanderer*, pays tribute to Burney's narrative power which "keeps us guessing at her dénouement through five volumes" (*The Wanderer* Introd. vii). However, Drabble argues that the "excessive decorum and excessive sensibility of Juliet seem at times a strained development of Burney's more robust though equally beleaguered early heroines" (*The Wanderer*, Introd. ix). She agrees with Hazlitt's verdict that the "Female Difficulties" of the subtitle of the novel, a phrase which recurs at critical moments in the plot, are in fact "created out of nothing" (ix). Drabble interprets the "female difficulties" Burney portrays as "the innumerable obstacles which any young unprotected, poor woman encounters when she tries to earn her own living honourably and preserve her independence" (xi). Drabble does not take proper account of the period in which Burney wrote: "any young [...] woman" in the twentieth century is not "any young woman" of the eighteenth, especially one who has, somewhat melodramatically, "a price on her head." A further point which should be stressed is that Juliet is more talented than most women. However, Drabble does go on to say: "The lives of working girls are portrayed with sympathy and some sharpness" (xi).

Susan Staves, on the other hand, suggests that the difficulties Burney explores are by no means trivial.¹⁵⁰ She writes:

¹⁵⁰ Susan Staves, "Evelina; or, Female Difficulties," *Fanny Burney's Evelina*, *Modern Critical Interpretations*, ed. and introd. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1988) 13.

Hazlitt's complaint that Fanny Burney centers on the question of whether forms are adhered to or infringed upon is fair enough as a description, but the forms themselves are by no means trivial; they have the gravest implications for the women characters. (Staves 22)

As already discussed in Chapter 2, the fragile status of an unmarried woman which depends so much upon her not only *being* chaste, but also upon her being *seen* by others as chaste is emphasized in both Burney's and Austen's novels. Mr. Villars, in *Evelina*, shows he understands this fact when he says: "nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman: it is, at once, the most beautiful and most brittle of all human things" (*Evelina* II:164). Once lost, it is gone forever, ruining the woman's chances of family life or a "proper" place in society.

In her argument with those who trivialise women's "difficulties" of the time in which Burney wrote, Staves also stresses the physical assaults on Burney's heroines, such as *Evelina*, who in several episodes is held against her will by men. When she is trapped by Sir Clement Willoughby in his coach she is both embarrassed and frightened, not knowing his intentions and not wishing to commit the social solecism of assuming what is perhaps not intended. One might compare Emma Woodhouse "trapped" in a coach with Mr. Elton, whose "impertinence" is dealt with in a forthright and conclusive manner. *Evelina* is no wealthy, poised Miss Woodhouse who knows her place in society and in the scheme of things. *Evelina* is a young woman who is aware of her precarious hold on respectability, brought up in a protected, rural environment by a man of retired habits, and appearing for the first time in public in the fashionable world. She is not equipped to deal with the situation, and embarrassment is added to fear. Another example of

female entrapment occurs in the powerful scene where Evelina is surrounded by drunken “gentlemen” in the Gardens, who assume she is “an actress.”

Other instances of physical restraints or attempts at such upon Burney’s heroines are Sir Lyell Sycamore’s plan to abduct Juliet in *The Wanderer* and Harrel’s to trap Cecilia into marriage to Sir Robert Floyer. Ironically, it is Monckton, the arch manipulator, who explains to Cecilia how women may be compromised:

“So many of your sex have been subdued by perseverance, and so many have been conquered by boldness, that he [Harrel] supposed when he united two such powerful besiegers in the person of a baronet, he should vanquish all obstacles. By assuring you that the world thought the marriage already settled, he hoped to surprise you into believing there was no help for it, and by the suddenness and vehemence of the attack, to frighten and hurry you into compliance. His own wife, he knew, might have been managed thus with ease, and so, probably, might his sister, and his mother, and his cousin, for in love matters, or what are so called, women in general are readily duped. He discerned not the superiority of your understanding to tricks so shallow and impertinent, nor the firmness of your mind in maintaining its own independence.”
(*Cecilia* III:370)

Monckton’s own methods are far more deep and devious than Harrel’s “shallow and impertinent” tricks. As one can see from the passage quoted, they include flattery in the form of an appreciation of Cecilia’s undoubted intelligence. Most powerful of all of these scenes of entrapment is the symbolic scene at a ball, when Monckton, wearing the costume of a harlequin, literally traps Cecilia and places her under his dominion.

There are many such instances in *The Wanderer* of scenes that evoke a sense of female bondage. One of the most telling, perhaps, because subtle and carrying a suggestion of metaphorical rape, is one

where the ancient Sir Jaspar pins Juliet's dress down with his crutch so that she is trapped and in his power. Resorting to the conceit of "his fairies," whom Sir Jaspar invokes to excuse his flirtatious forays on Juliet,

[...] Sir Jaspar, fastening her gown to the grass by his two crutches, laughingly said, "Which will you resist most stoutly? your own cruelty, or the kindness of my little fairy friends? who, at this moment, with a thousand active gambols, are pinning, gluing, plaistering, in sylphick mosaic-work, your robe between the ground and my sticks; so that you cannot tear it away without leaving me, at least, some little memorial that I have had the happiness of seeing you!"

Forced either to struggle or to remain in her place, she sat still [...]. (III:546)

Sir Jaspar's threat implies that if she struggles to escape, his crutch will pierce her skirt.¹⁵¹ Many of these assaults are made possible because the heroine is temporarily unprotected. By showing Juliet silent and still, Burney demonstrates how women are offered a place in patriarchal society at the price of self-expression and autonomy.

It is Juliet's reputation and the assault on her sensibilities which preoccupy her in *her* difficult position. She must support herself, since the money which was meant to sustain her in retirement whilst she waited for news from France was stolen on her journey over the Channel. She is forced into "self-dependence" and is also put into the position of accepting money from the very source she would least choose - from Harleigh. This compromises her in her own eyes, as it would also do in others' were it known. She must

¹⁵¹See Doody *Frances Burney* 346-7 for an interesting analysis of the symbolism of this episode and her correlation of the crutch with the old man's impotent attempt at rape. Milton's presentation of the disguised *Comus* uses similar phallic symbolism. John Milton, *Comus* (1637) (Menston, England: Scholar Press, 1968). Note, too, Burney's allusion to Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* in Sir Jaspar's reference here and elsewhere in the novel to his "fairy friends," his sylphs and elves. Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714), ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Methuen, 1981).

choose her occupation with circumspection and tread equally carefully in her relationships with others and in not betraying her whereabouts, as well as avoiding offending against the standards of social decorum required of a woman of her class and time. It is for this reason that she must not compromise her reputation by taking professional work on the stage. Burney, whose own father was respected amongst the intelligentsia of London society as a musicologist, was well aware of the nuances of social life and how he carefully maintained his "genteel" status rather than be seen merely as a music teacher whose services might be bought, like a piece of meat. Through Juliet's experiences as teacher, Burney explores these distinctions and the snobbery of aristocratic society. Constantly misunderstood and misconstrued in her actions, Juliet is terrified of jeopardising her future standing as a gentlewoman when she may finally be free to return to her family and friends. It is argued that far from being trivial, the "Female Difficulties" Burney exposes in her novels are in fact of prime importance to a woman of her time.

Juliet's quest for self-dependence is hampered by these considerations, as well as by the callous self-interest of those who profess to help her. Miss Arbe looks for personal glory in taking the talented Juliet under her "protection." She looks on Juliet as a source of free music lessons for herself, and because of her influence with the families whose daughters Juliet hopes to give lessons in the harp, the latter cannot afford to offend her "patroness." When Juliet is anxious to speak on her financial difficulties with Miss Arbe, she manipulates Juliet into continuing her lessons under cover of supposedly running through some music together, and arbitrarily refuses to listen to Juliet's requests for an explanation regarding the

money from Lady Aurora intended for her use which Miss Arbe has appropriated. She has time for her own interests, but not for Juliet's. She is the "vain, superficial, unprotecting patroness" of Juliet (II:319), the arbitrary Miss Arbe, who "shrewd, adroit, and vigilant, never lost an opportunity to serve herself, while seeming to serve others" (II:315). It is Miss Arbe who commits Juliet to a public performance and allows her name to be publicised. Even though it is not her real name, this is both an embarrassment and a danger to Ellis/Juliet.

Juliet has been manoeuvred into giving the concert by Miss Arbe, who has incurred unnecessary debts on Juliet's behalf, debts that Juliet must herself pay. Miss Arbe has also confiscated money Lady Aurora sent to her intended for Juliet, whose financial position is made even more difficult because her pupils will not pay for their music lessons. Through Juliet's experiences, Burney exposes the insensitivity, amounting to harsh cruelty, of the upper classes who accept goods and services and either delay or refuse just payment for these. As in *Cecilia*, Burney's "iron pen" is used to expose such selfishness and immorality.

In *The Wanderer*, Giles Arbe is the mouthpiece for Burney's social criticism. Arbe is portrayed as a childish eccentric who sees facts in simplistic terms. As Juliet wonders at one point, "Can the same person [...] be so innocent, yet so mischievous? so fraught with solid notions of right, yet so shallow in judgment, and knowledge of the world?" (II:333). However, it is through him that Burney cuts through the rationalisation of those who surround Juliet to show the immorality of their acts.

Giles Arbe's insistence on the need to settle debts incurred causes trouble for Juliet, on whom he first directs his moralistic

assault. His tactless exposure of the fact that she possesses money and yet does not pay *her* bills, discovered when he absent-mindedly opens one of her letters, and his outspokenness about her affairs cause her problems. Later he learns the one hundred pounds is, as she puts it, being held for a friend. The friend is, of course, Harleigh who has given Juliet the money, but she feels she cannot use it because of his proposal of marriage. Had he been merely a friend and an older man, this proscription would not exist; but in the circumstances, and in the light of contemporary demands of propriety placed upon women, to accept it would have placed her under an awkward obligation to him.

Her interpretation of the situation is borne out when Harleigh does discover she has used some of his money to relieve her difficulties:

At these words, which could leave no doubt upon the mind of Harleigh, that the money in question was his own; and that that money, so often refused, had finally been employed in the payment of her debts, Ellis involuntarily, irresistibly, but most fearfully, stole a hasty glance at him; with a transient hope that they might have escaped his attention; but the hope died in its birth: the words, in their fullest meaning, had reached him, and the sensation which they produced filled her with poignant shame. A joy beamed in his countenance that irradiated every feature; a joy that flushed him into an excess of rapture, of which the consciousness seemed to abash himself; and his eyes bent instantly to the ground. But their checked vivacity checked not the feelings which illumined them, nor the alarm which they excited, when Ellis, urged by affright to snatch a second look, saw the brilliancy with which they had at first sought her own, terminate in a sensibility more touching; saw that they glistened with a tender pleasure, which, to her alarmed imagination, represented the potent and dangerous inferences that enchanted his mind, at a discovery that he had thus

essentially succoured her; and that she had accepted, at last, however secretly, his succour. (II:354)

Without betraying the Bishop, Juliet cannot tell Harleigh why she is not able to accept his proposal, that in fact she is already married, and she realises that the obligation, in *his* mind, binds them closer together and gives him new hope. Though he tries to hide them, Harleigh's swiftly changing emotions are displayed through his expressions. Juliet, who reads his countenance, notes his touching sensibility as he finds she has made use of his money.

Juliet explains to Giles Arbe that she is unable to pay the tradesmen's bills incurred on her behalf by Miss Arbe because her pupils will not pay her. He then turns his verbal guns on them. In a scene which embarrasses Juliet as much as her debtors, he publicly harangues them about the necessity to pay for what they get:

“what right have we to be fed, and covered, and seated, at other folks” [sic] cost? What title to gormandize over the butcher's fat joints, and the baker's quartern loaves, if they who furnish them are left to gnaw bones, and live upon crumbs? We ought all of us to be ashamed of being warmed, and dized in silks and satins, if the poor weavers, who fabricate them, and all their wives and babies, are shivering in tatters; and to toss and tumble ourselves about, on couches and arm-chairs, if the poor carpenters, and upholsterers, and joiners, who have had all the labour of constructing them, can't find a seat for their weary limbs!” (II:324)

The relationship between producers and users is a major theme of *The Wanderer* demonstrated through Juliet's experiences, as it is too of *Cecilia* through Burney's examination of the world of commerce between the different classes and through Cecilia's experiences with her guardians and with the money-lenders. Though accepting the logic of Arbe's argument in connection with the production of material goods, his audience rejects the idea of applying it to “luxury”

occupations. Miss Bydel argues that one should put those in educational or artistic callings, such as musicians and painters, in a different category:

“for if singing and dancing, and making images, are ever so pretty, one should not pay folks who follow such light callings, as one pays people that are useful.” (II:324)

Arbe promptly responds:

“Luxury? do you suppose, because such sights, and such sounds, and such flattery, are luxuries to you, they are luxuries to those who produce them? [...]. No! all he [the artist/craftsman] does is pain and toil to himself; learnt with labour, and exhibited with difficulty. The better he performs, the harder he has worked. All the ease, and all the luxury are yours, Mrs Maple, and yours, Miss Bydel, and yours, ladies all, that are the lookers on! [...].” (II:325)

Through Giles Arbe, Burney makes her appeal for a proper respect and reward for the labour involved in acquiring skills which enhance life aesthetically, rather than materially and tangibly.

In a scene between Harleigh and Juliet, when Harleigh attempts to dissuade her from performing at the public concert in a professional capacity, Burney makes clear the fine line that lies between private performance at home and selling one's talents on the open market. As Harleigh reminds Juliet in his appeal to her not to take the step which will brand her as a professional, only by retaining an amateur status can propriety be maintained: “your accomplishments should be reserved for the resources of your leisure, and the happiness of your friends, at your own time, and your own choice” (II:338). Harleigh, who is in love with Juliet, and does not realise she has been married secretly and against her will, still hopes he will eventually win her.

Despite her repeated avoidance or refusal of his proposals, he tells her he finds it “impossible utterly to renounce all distant hope of clearer prospects. - How, then, can I quietly submit to see you enter into a career of public life, subversive - perhaps - to me, of even any eventual amelioration?” (II:337). The prospect of her performing in public would jeopardise her social standing and would sabotage his plans. He knows his family would never thereafter accept her, and he argues on these grounds:

“Suffer me [...] to add a few words, in explanation of what else may seem presumption, or impertinence: I have hinted that this plan might cloud my dearest hopes; imagine not, thence, that my prejudices upon this subject are invincible: no! but I have Relations who have never deserved to forfeit my consideration; - and these - not won, like me, by the previous knowledge of your virtues. - ”

“[...]. For these Relations, then, permit me to plead. It is true, I am independent: my actions are under no controul; but there are ties from which we are never emancipated; ties which cling to our nature, and which, though voluntary, are imperious, and cannot be broken or relinquished, without self-reproach; ties formed by the equitable laws of fellow-feeling; which bind us to our family, which unite us with our friends; and which, by our own expectations, teach us what is due to our connexions. [...]”

“How just,” cried Ellis, trying to force a smile, “yet how useless is this reasoning! I cannot combat sentiments in which I concur; yet I can change nothing in a plan to which they must have no reference! I am sorry to appear ungrateful, where I am only steady; but I have nothing new to say; and must entreat you to dispense with fruitless repetitions.” (II:338-9)

Burney shows, as in *Cecilia*, that a son's choice of a wife is circumscribed by his family's and society's demands. She also demonstrates Juliet's accord with Harleigh's sentiments, and stresses the fact that she is acting against her own feelings of propriety and

delicacy in agreeing to perform on a stage, but in her difficult situation she cannot let him suppose that his expectations will influence her decisions. Burney demonstrates Juliet's understanding and her sensibility with regard to the nuances of their relationship.

In a letter he later writes to Juliet, Harleigh now appeals to her feelings for her *own* family and her "own ideas of personal propriety," reproaching her for "deviating, alone and unsupported as you appear, from the long-beaten track of female timidity" (II:343). Juliet interprets this appeal to "female timidity" as referring to her "delicacy":

Ah! she cried, delicacy is what he means, though he possesses too much himself to mark more strongly his opinion that I swerve from it! And in that shall I be wanting? - And what he thinks - he, the most liberal of men! - will surely be thought by all whose esteem, whose regard I most covet! - How dreadfully am I involved! in what misery of helplessness! - What is woman, - with the most upright designs, the most rigid circumspection, - what is woman unprotected? She is pronounced upon only from outward semblance: - and, indeed, what other criterion has the world? Can it read the heart?
(II:344)

Juliet voices the predicament of an economically powerless woman of her time who, without influence, and in order to exist in society, requires its protection and must conform, at least in "outward semblance," to contemporary notions of decorum. Like Camilla, she finds she can be misread as a result of preconceptions and prejudices. Harleigh uses some of the same arguments as Tyrold in *Camilla* in reminding Juliet of the expectations men have of an eighteenth-century "lady" - expectations which inhibit her choices in life.

Burney has placed Juliet in the situation of being forced into self-sufficiency if she is not to live on charity. Through Juliet she demonstrates the reality of the loneliness and alienation implicit in "earning one's own living" for a woman of her time. She shows the "female difficulties" of a woman who is without resources and who is inhibited from using her many talents professionally to support herself for fear of offending the demands of "female delicacy." This "female delicacy" is one aspect of the eighteenth-century concept of sensibility as applied to women. Burney demonstrates the ambiguous elements in sensibility and shows that it has its negative aspects, especially for women.

The author has deliberately given Juliet above-average ability in many of the accomplishments meant to enhance a woman's aesthetic and domestic charms - she plays the harp, acts well, sings, draws, dances with "grace [...] elegance and [...] modesty" (I:84), has a flair for fashion, and demonstrates her skill with the needle. Through the narrator's ironical comment, when Juliet makes herself useful with her needle, that "Mrs. Maple was of the opinion, that every woman ought to live with a needle and thread in her hand," Burney is perhaps, somewhat bitterly, remembering her step-mother's embargo on creative writing and her emphasis on sewing as a more feminine occupation (*The Wanderer* I:78; *ED* 17 July, 1768, I:15).

We are assured by other characters in the novel and by the narrator's comments that Juliet is a witty and elegant conversationalist, especially on matters demonstrating taste, such as literature, music and the theatre, though we do not have much direct evidence of this. In fact, Juliet is more often than not "speechless,"

either from resentment of rudeness, or because she cannot betray her secret, or because she is not given the opportunity to speak. Scenes with Elinor, Miss Arbe and Miss Bydel are particularly illuminating on this latter point. The longest passage of direct speech by Juliet is when she at last tells her story to Sir Jaspar (V:738-53). Sir Jaspar makes several references to her wit, though this probably means that she satisfies his demands for a pretty woman to look at, who is also a good listener. Even her handwriting is noted and admired by Harleigh, and places her as an educated woman. All these accomplishments are part of the traditional female education, but intended for domestic use, not for a career, as Harleigh's plea to Juliet makes clear. Burney demonstrates the paradox implicit in female education: it is not meant to provide access to economic independence. Women are meant to be the "angels in the house," providing relaxation and comfort for others.¹⁵² Juliet's sensibility is stressed in her responses to music and her performances in private theatricals. Her sensibility is also awake to the dangers of branding herself a professional and thus becoming *déclassé*. As an aristocrat, Juliet could not afford to do as Elinor urges her: sell her talents on the public stage. Class and gender intersect in Burney's portrait of life in contemporary England in *The Wanderer*. In this, Burney's last novel, her canvass is widened to take in a broader view of prevailing social mores.

In a passage which emphasises the difficulties which Juliet faces, she replies to Elinor's suggestion that she go on the stage - a dubious profession for a female at that time, despite the social

¹⁵² Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House and The Victories of Love*, introd. Alice Meynell (London: Routledge, 1905). Virginia Woolf quotes Coventry Patmore when she refers to "angels in the house" in her "Professions for Women," *Collected Essays*, 4 vols. (London: Hogarth P, 1966) II:285.

success of some notable actresses who commanded respect both on and off the stage:

“Much as I am enchanted with the art, I am not going to profess it! On the contrary, I think it so replete with dangers and improprieties, however happily they may sometimes be combatted by fortitude and integrity, that, when a young female, not forced by peculiar circumstances, or impelled by resistless genius, exhibits herself a willing candidate for public applause; - she must have, I own, other notions, or other nerves, than mine!” (III:398-9)

Juliet refers to the dangers and improprieties she sees as implicit in a public career for a woman. Added to this is her dubiousness concerning a woman soliciting “public applause,” a seat of much ambivalence to Burney as a published writer. In a phrase which anticipates the words of Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*,¹⁵³ Elinor cries:

“Ellis, Ellis! you only fear to alarm, or offend the men - who would keep us from every office, but making puddings and pies for their own precious palates! - Oh woman! poor, subdued woman! thou art as dependant, mentally, upon the arbitrary customs of man, as man is, corporally, upon the established laws of his country!” (III:399)

Elinor, whose attempted suicide has caused the much-dreaded concert to be aborted, asks her what her plan for the future might be:

Juliet answered, that her choice was small, and that her means were almost null: but when she lamented the severe DIFFICULTIES of a FEMALE, who, without fortune or protection, had her way to make in the world, Elinor, with strong derision, called out, “Debility and folly! Put aside your prejudices, and forget that you are a dawdling woman, to remember that you

¹⁵³ Brontë has *Jane Eyre* chafing under the restraints imposed on women of her time:

“it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex” (*Jane Eyre* I:XII:133).

are an active human being, and your FEMALE DIFFICULTIES will vanish into the vapour of which they are formed. Misery has taught me to conquer mine! and I am now as ready to defy the world, as the world can be ready to hold me up to ridicule. To make people wise, you must make them indifferent; to give them courage, you must make them desperate. 'Tis then, only, that we throw aside affectation and hypocrisy, and act from impulse." (III:397: author's emphasis.)

Absorbed in her own obsession for Harleigh and her plan to commit suicide for his sake as publicly and as dramatically as possible, Elinor forgets that as a wealthy, independent woman, "independent alike in person, fortune, and [as she believes] mind" (II:196), she has far more choices, as well as mobility, than Juliet, having servants, horses, houses at her disposal. In one section of the novel, Juliet is reduced to travelling alone in the New Forest, disguised as a working-class woman, but still, because of her solitary, unprotected state, considered the "natural prey" of any passing man (III:428): "she had severely experienced how little fitted to the female character, to female safety, and female propriety, was this hazardous plan of lonely wandering" (IV:671). Burney paints a picture of the world as a jungle for the unprotected female. It is Elinor, cocooned in a carriage drawn by her own servant, who fortuitously rescues the unprotected Juliet from a "fate worse than death" when Sir Lionel plans to abduct her. Elinor ignores the economic basis for woman's subjection to "the arbitrary customs of man," since she is not subject to these economic restrictions herself. Juliet learns, from bitter experience, far more about the realities of woman's condition than Elinor ever can.

When, after several abortive attempts to earn her living, Juliet is chided by Elinor with the words: "Nay, 'twas your own choice, you

know, to live in a garret, and hem pocket-handkerchiefs," Juliet replies feelingly:

"Choice, Madam! Alas! deprived of all but personal resource, I fixed upon a mode of life that promised me, at least, my mental freedom. I was not then aware how imaginary is the independence, that hangs for support upon the uncertain fruits of daily exertions! Independent, indeed, such situations may be deemed from the oppressions of power, or the tyrannies of caprice and ill humour; but the difficulty of obtaining employment, the irregularity of pay, the dread of want, - ah! what is freedom but a name, for those who have not an hour at command from the subjection of fearful penury and distress?" (III:473-4)

Elinor speaks fluently and persuasively for a more liberal attitude to women and argues cogently against the oppressions of statutes and institutions that render women "insignificant" and condemn them as "weaker vessels in intellect, because, inferior in bodily strength and stature," phrases which bear a close affinity to Mary Wollstonecraft's arguments (*The Wanderer* III:399; *Vindication* 124; 173-5; 182-3). Burney has Elinor recognise the way in which women are constructed as inferior beings through the opinions disseminated in men's laws, writings and teachings so that what is in fact socially instilled into women as their function in society becomes accepted as the natural state: that women are born inferior to men. However, though Elinor argues strongly for the emancipation of women, Burney makes her *less* free than Juliet since she is in thrall to Harleigh, and all her actions are directed toward obtaining his love, or at least his attention. In contrast, Juliet, though forcibly married, has taken steps to escape what would be an annihilation of the self, and struggles against her growing love for Harleigh in order to maintain her self-esteem and mental and

emotional autonomy. Juliet's self-control is shown to be more liberating than is Elinor's self-centred obsession with Harleigh which dictates her every thought and action.

Elinor's love for Harleigh provides a further complication of the plot in that she sees Juliet/Ellis as a rival. As will be discussed later, this causes many of Juliet's problems; for instance, the exposure of Juliet's dubious background at Mrs Maple's dinner-party, when Elinor's coldness and suspicious looks toward Juliet first alert the hostess to the dangers of harbouring an unknown. Elinor's natural generosity and benevolence, which are stressed in the novel, are inhibited because of jealousy. Female friendship and support are not possible between the two because of this rivalry, as Elinor sees it, for the man's affections.

Instead of pining away from unrequited love, in the traditional manner ascribed to the expendable woman or the female victim, Elinor plans a violent and public suicide which she hopes will cast her in an heroic, Wertherian, role as one who dies a victim of spurned love. Her aggressive instincts, turned against herself, confirm her as an "improper woman," in contrast to Evelina and Juliet's mothers who "romantically" die young after giving birth to the heroines, and who thereafter can have no place or immediate function in the tales other than to provide an added poignancy to the novels and to their daughters' stories. However, their sufferings, their memory, and the clearing of their reputations are important motives for establishing the legitimacy of their daughters - the legal status of the mothers is intimately connected with that of the daughters. As well, they provide examples of what happens to

women who are denied their proper place in society by men and who are therefore reduced to "nobodies."

In many novels written by women in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the absence of mothers is a significant element in the narrative. This is noticeable in Austen, where the heroines' dead or incompetent mothers are replaced by other female guides, each older than the heroine. In Burney's case, *Evelina*, *Camilla*, and *Cecilia* all have surrogate mothers who launch them on the world in the absence, either permanently or temporarily, of their own mothers. The relationship between heroine and older guide is, like the motherless Burney's friendship with her patroness, Mrs. Thrale, less emotionally intense than that between mother and heroine, as we see, for instance, by comparison when *Camilla* is shown in scenes with her mother before and after the latter's visit to Europe. Juliet alone must depend on her own resources, despite the close friendship with Gabriella. In *Evelina*, although her dead mother speaks for her through her letter to Lord Belmont, the plot depends upon the absence of the mother, an absence or gap which in some ways increases her importance.¹⁵⁴ In *Camilla*, Edgar invokes *Camilla's* absent mother as a guide in her choice of friends when he advises her to avoid the danger of intimacy with Mrs. Berlinton and says: "Fly, fly from it, my dear Miss *Camilla*! . . . as if the voice of your mother were calling out to caution you!" a phrase which finds an echo in *Jane Eyre*, when, at a critical stage in her life, Jane hears

¹⁵⁴ For an interesting discussion of the function of the "absent mother" in fiction of the period see Susan Peck MacDonald "Jane Austen and the Tradition of the Absent Mother," Chapter 6 in *The Lost Tradition: Mothers and Daughters in Literature*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson and E.M. Broner (New York: Frederick Ungar 1980) 58-69. MacDonald, too, notes the parallel between Burney's *Camilla* and Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in the appeal to a dead mother 67-8.

the voice of her dead mother in her dreams advising her to flee Rochester (*Camilla* III:476; *Jane Eyre* III:I:407).

In *The Wanderer* Burney continues her exploration of the real identity of woman, irrespective of what she is called. This, the last of her novels, is concerned most particularly with the namelessness of woman, a theme broached in the other novels, but a major consideration in her final novel. It is argued that Burney deliberately manipulates the reader's sensibilities, their feelings of pity for and empathy with the heroine, by stressing Juliet's namelessness, homelessness and lack of position in the world.

Camilla is to some extent a novel about the unknowability of a person, particularly women, who are brought up to be silent and to hide their real feelings and opinions. In *The Wanderer*, Burney explores the reaction of various members and segments of society to a woman who appears to have no place in society. To emphasise Juliet's ambiguous situation she first appears disguised, her head bound in bandages, a patch over one eye, her skin coloured dark, her clothes of the poorest. Elinor, who judges by external appearances, supposes her to be a housemaid. Mr. Ireton sees her first as "a black insect" (I:27), an object of contempt; later, when she is "metamorphosed" into a beautiful butterfly, he wishes to capture her, impale her, and add her to his collection. He sees her as an object to master. To Sir Jaspar, Juliet is "a rose planted in snow" (III:444) compared to Flora, who is "a blooming little wild rose-bud" (III:443), a common species, to be plucked and thrown away; Sir Lyell describes Juliet as "a thing of alabaster" (III:444). When women reject men's advances, they are stigmatized as cold. Elinor, like Sir Jaspar and Sir Lyell, uses frigid images when she describes Juliet as

“icy Ellis” (III:477), “a composition of ice, of snow, of marble” (III:475). Harleigh, established early as a man of sensibility, benevolent and discerning, recognises Juliet, despite her “skin” and her “garb,” as a fellow human being and offers both sympathy and practical assistance.

The names that are applied to Juliet are many and varied, and tell the reader more about those who do the naming than the named. Burney refers to her heroine as a “female Robinson Crusoe” (V:873); to herself Juliet is the self-named “helpless Wanderer” (II:204). She is labelled variously a “nothing above a house-maid” (I:17); a “tattered dulcinea” (I:13); a “black insect” (I:27); she is an “adventurer” to several characters in the novel (I:33); an “angel” to Harleigh (II:343); a “sweet creature” to Lady Aurora and a woman of “talents and [...] sensibility” to Lord Melbury (I:102); to others, a “chimera” (I:181), the “itinerant Incognita” (II:208), a “dangerous pauper” (II:198), a “toad-eater” (III:521), a “stroller” and a “vagabond” (I:101), a “swindler” (IV:673), an “impostor” (I:28; IV:673), a “female fortune-hunter” (I:30), a “mere nothing” (II:258) and, more neutrally, “the stranger” (I:17). In a brilliant dramatic scene, which evokes aspects of Alice’s surrealistic, dream-like transformations in her adventures in Wonderland, Mrs. Ireton taunts Juliet with the various stages of her metamorphosis from “black insect” to beauty:

“You have been bruised and beaten; and dirty and clean; and ragged and whole; and wounded and healed; and a European and a Creole, in less than a week. I suppose, next, you will dwindle into a dwarf; and then, perhaps, find some surprising contrivance to shoot up into a giantess. There is nothing that can be too much to expect from so great an adept in metamorphoses.” (I:46)

Juliet herself at one stage admits she hardly knows herself who or *what* she is (IV:673). In one scene in the novel she is, like Cecilia, advertised as if she were an article of lost property.

It is not for some time that we learn the name of the heroine. She cannot name herself and will not stoop to a lie. She has been advised by her guardians in France to “[s]eek, then, unnamed and unknown, during this dread interval of separation, to reside with some worthy and happy family” (I:125). She hopes that the Howel establishment will prove such a haven, but is obliged to find another “home.” The name “Ellis” is thrust upon her as a result of a confusion when a letter arrives for her addressed to “L.S.” It is a prearranged code for communication from her friends in France but, because of a misunderstanding, Miss Bydel calls her by the name of “Mrs. Elles” (I:81), later amended to “Miss Ellis” (I:83). Burney’s habit of naming her heroines with some reference to “elle” is here carried to its final conclusion by naming her last heroine simply “Ellis” - “Elle is” - as Doody reminds us: woman is or woman lives (40-1).¹⁵⁵ Doody also has noted that Emily Brontë used the apparently androgynous pseudonym “Ellis” to disguise her sex when entering the professional world (Introduction, *The Wanderer*, xvi).

In her naming of the heroine of *The Wanderer*, Burney strips Juliet down to ultimate woman, with no name, no family, no place, friendless, isolated, “a helpless Wanderer” (II:204), an “itinerant Incognita” (II:208), “the stranger” as Burney refers to her, alienated from her own country and from society. At one stage, when she is desperately fleeing from her husband, she ask herself:

¹⁵⁵ Epstein invokes the “existential semiology of the name Ellis” when discussing Burney’s naming of her heroine (Epstein 177).

What a life [...] is this that I lead! How tremendous, and how degrading! Is it possible that even what I fly can be more dreadful?

This question restored her fortitude. Ah yes! ah yes! she cried, all passing evil is preferable to such a termination!"
(V:724)

Ellis/Juliet is an innocent Eve wandering friendless in a bleak world. She seems to exist in a vacuum, with nothing but her talents to support her.

Like Evelina, Juliet is nameless until given legal existence by her family, her maternal uncle and her father's brother-in-law. Interestingly, it is in fact her *maternal* uncle who eventually provides the key to her identity. He holds a copy of the codicil to Juliet's father's legal will. Juliet, the self-named "unknown Wanderer," is, like Tess in Hardy's novel published in 1891, "the sport of insult and misfortune" (*The Wanderer* IV:617), sinking ever further in the social scale as she attempts to escape her fate.¹⁵⁶ She is hunted down and, like the heroine of the later novel, finds herself at last amongst the Druidic relics of Stonehenge - a setting which carries connotations of mystery, human sacrifice and Gothic horror.

The eerie setting to Burney's Stonehenge scene provides the background to Juliet's sense of isolation and alienation:

Struck with solemn wonder, Juliet for some time wandered amidst these massy ruins, grand and awful, though terrific rather than attractive. Mounting, then, upon a fragment of the pile, she saw that the view all around was in perfect local harmony with the wild edifice, or rather remains of an edifice, into which she had pierced. She discerned, to a vast extent, a boundless plain, that, like the ocean, seemed to have no term but the horizon; but which, also like the ocean, looked as desert as it was unlimited. Here and there flew a

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman*, ed. Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press 1983).

bustard, or a wheatear; all else seemed unpeopled air, and uncultivated waste.

In a state of mind so utterly deplorable as that of Juliet, this grand, uncouth monument of ancient days had a certain sad, indefinable attraction, more congenial to her distress, than all the polish, taste, and delicacy of modern skill. The beauties of Wilton seemed appendages of luxury, as well as of refinement; and appeared to require not only sentiment, but happiness for their complete enjoyment: while the nearly savage, however wonderful work of antiquity, in which she was now rambling; placed in this abandoned spot, far from the intercourse, or even view of mankind, with no prospect but of heath and sky; blunted, for the moment, her sensibility, by removing her wide from all the objects with which it was in contact; and insensibly calmed her spirits; though not by dissipating her reverie. (V:765-6)

This powerful scene is permeated with the ideas which lie behind the Romantics' view of "the Sublime": an awe-inspiring, menacing landscape, stretched like a desert as far as the eye could see, the site of a stand of huge, ancient rocks of symbolic importance to some remote and, to Juliet, part-savage race. Here Juliet's state of mind finds some echo in the landscape and situation. Her perspective alters and her highly wrought emotions are calmed by her feelings of harmony with the ancient, mysterious land. A sharp contrast is made between her reaction to Wilton, with its relics of a cultivated civilisation to which, in her state of shock, Juliet cannot respond, and her feelings on the barren Plains of Wiltshire. Juliet is, in a sense, mentally transported by the sublime experience of Stonehenge. She sees herself, her desolate situation, her fears and sorrows as part of the whole before her and momentarily surrenders self to this legendary, pagan place, associated as it is with human sacrifice.

Epstein, commenting on the themes of metamorphosis and fragmentation in *The Wanderer*, suggests that the Stonehenge sequence “parallels the ‘madness’ scenes that occur just before the denouements of *Cecilia* and *Camilla* ” (186). She suggests that in this scene “[t]he sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque merge” and move Juliet to ““meditation even to madness”” (180).¹⁵⁷ Doody, too, recognises the scene as of symbolic importance and sees its “strange imagery” working to the same end as Camilla’s dream. She argues that in general “*The Wanderer* (1814), with its inset narratives, its mystery and fragmentation (indicated in the Stonehenge sequence), is a unique Romantic novel, drawing upon the feminist and Gothic traditions” (3). Doody draws attention to the title of the novel and its parallel in the common figure of the solitary wanderer which recurs in Romantic literature (Introduction *The Wanderer* vii). The theme of exile is also relevant in arguing this link with Romanticism, and one must remember that Burney herself lived in exile in France for some years whilst that country and her native land were at war.

Simons also has noted the Romantic elements in *The Wanderer* and suggests that in this, Burney’s last novel:

her native land takes on the stamp of a foreign country, a country where bigotry, insularity and callousness are seen as the salient national characteristics. No longer are the upper social echelons of the British bourgeoisie presented as glamorous or even attractive havens for young women to aspire to. Juliet Granville, the Wanderer of the title, is no naive maiden, desperate for entry into a world of comforting stability in the style of *Evelina* and *Camilla*. Like *Cecilia*, she is deprived of her rightful inheritance, but she is also concerned much

¹⁵⁷ See *The Wanderer*, ed. Doody, Mack and Sabor, 766n1, which supplies the reference to *Othello* II.i.305-6 for “practise upon his peace and quiet, / Even to madness.”

more crudely with the mechanics of sheer survival. In the grim critique of English mores which follows, Burney has lost interest in satirising particular moral failings [...]. Instead she mounts a vicious attack on the pettiness, cruelty, complacency and fundamental intolerance of which that community is composed. No wonder reviewers found the book disconcerting [...]. (*Fanny Burney* 98)

Although I do not find that Burney's attack on pettiness and cruelty was "vicious" as Simons puts it, such was not Burney's style, there is no doubt that her bleak view of English society in *Cecilia* as well as in *The Wanderer* demonstrates her moral vision. Satire and comedy are the weapons she uses to expose prejudice, insularity and selfishness. As a moralist, she was in the tradition of Pope, Dryden and her admired Dr. Johnson. However, as with the more percipient Augustan writers, mere rationalism was not allowed to dominate her perception of the need to feel for and to understand people and their motives. Burney's intelligence, her acute observation of social mores and her lively imagination, pervade all of her writings, whether journals, letters, plays, or novels.

Rose Marie Cutting, in remarking on the Romantic aspects of Burney's last novel, suggests that any criticism that it was "out of touch with the new century" was wrong, and that the novel in fact was "in touch with the romantic movement with its stress on the individual's conflict with society" (528). As Bugnot states, in an article on *The Wanderer* which attempts to correct some of the past unfavourable readings of this, Burney's last novel, it contains the echo of new ideas, a variety of scenes and a picture of customs and morals.¹⁵⁸ He agrees with Hemlow that a prime feature of

¹⁵⁸ "[L']écho des idées nouvelles, variété dans les scènes et dans le peinture des moeurs -, [...]." S. Bugnot, "The Wanderer, de Fanny Burney: Essai de Réhabilitation," *Etudes Anglaises Grande-Bretagne Etats-Unis* 15.3 (1962): 225-32, 232.

Burney's work is her rendering of the human condition, and feels that *The Wanderer* is a more interesting novel than *Camilla*, written with humour and characters who live.

Like Tess, Juliet is isolated, homeless, searching for "self-sufficiency" but trapped by society's views of women and their roles. Both are hunted by representatives of patriarchal authority, in Juliet's case, by a man who symbolises all that is worst in marriage for women: exploitation, cruelty, and dominance. She must suppress both her maiden name and her married name whilst she is relentlessly pursued by her husband, who has forced her into marriage, using his politically acquired power to hold Juliet's guardian as hostage. He marries her to claim as her husband the money her English family offers her as an inducement to drop her claim to being the legitimate elder daughter of the deceased Lord Granville. Not until the final pages does she acquire her rightful name, the Honourable Juliet Granville, and, like Evelina, it is only to relinquish it on marriage. Thus Burney uses the metaphor of the naming process in her novels to emphasise the lack of legal status of a woman of her society; she is a "nobody" unless she is accredited by a male. In *The Wanderer*, Juliet must accept many pseudonyms before she can openly acknowledge her identity. Her father had held the key to her name and status; on his death, his brother-in-law has this power and denies her.

Juliet does indeed see the world from a different point of view when she attempts to support herself in a bleak world which does not welcome women in this role. In this novel, published in 1814, Burney explores through the experiences of Juliet and Gabriella, the world of the seamstress: long hours of tedious and wearying labour,

for little reward, tiring to the eyes, and confined to small back rooms and attics, and, through Juliet's work for Mrs. Hart, Burney investigates labour relations, exploitation and piece-work in workshops in the early industrial period. As Doody remarks of *The Wanderer*: "More fully than any other writer of her time, even a radical like Wollstonecraft, Burney examines the sheer *drudgery* involved in such labor. The novel's working scenes are a credit to Burney's imagination, as well as to her heart and her moral sense" (355). Her picture of bourgeois society and economic negotiations between the classes is penetrating in all of her novels.

In *The Wanderer*, Juliet observes the "insolent, vain, unfeeling buyer, [and] the subtle, plausible, over-reaching seller" during her work as a milliner (III:428). She and her co-workers are placed on view in Miss Matson's shop as they work, and loungers, amongst them officers based at Brighthelmstone, come to stare at the new "French milliner," a phrase with salacious overtones (III:429-30). Her experiences on a farm show her women at work in that milieu, and she lives with the poor of the New Forest who are driven to poaching in the King's domain. Her travels take her from France to Dover, on the South coast of England, and in England from London to Lewes, in Sussex, and thence to Brighthelmstone, now Brighton, a fashionable resort at the time; to Bagshot, to Salisbury, to the New Forest, to Wilton, a house and garden representing order and civilization; and to Stonehenge, synonymous with the unknown, the mystical and mysterious pagan "collective unconscious." One of the last scenes takes place at the port of Torbay, where Juliet prepares to leave for France to sacrifice herself for her guardian's sake. At one point in her travels, when she is forced to leave the haven of a

position she thought would bring security and contentment to find work elsewhere, Burney evokes Milton's Eve with the words: "She had the world to begin again; a new pursuit to fix upon; new recommendations to solicit; and a new dwelling to seek" (III:456).

While Juliet's experiences epitomise practical "female difficulties," on the theoretical side, the wealthy feminist, Elinor Joddrel, thought to be partly inspired by Mary Wollstonecraft, voices the injustice felt at the treatment of women. Some critics see Juliet and Elinor as constituting two sides to woman - Elinor as Juliet's alter ego.¹⁵⁹ Elinor's atheism and her approval of the egalitarian principles that lie behind the French Revolution are criticised in the novel. Nevertheless, Burney herself writes in her Journal that at the first sign of oppression she felt the "*democrate*" in her rise to the surface and, apropos of her heroine, Juliet, the narrator comments in *The Wanderer*: "In minds of strong sensibility, arrogance rouses resentment more quickly even than injury" (III:512).¹⁶⁰

Burney appears to have sympathy for Elinor's point of view. Despite her exhibitionism, which becomes somewhat tiresome, Elinor's protests against women's subjugation remain valid. Burney offers no refutation to her impassioned plea for the "Right of woman, if endowed with senses, to make use of them" (I:176). Questioning woman's prescribed role, she demands of Harleigh:

"Can you ask, can you expect, can you wish to doom half your species to so degraded a state? to look down upon the wife, who is meant for the companion of your existence; and upon

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, Epstein 186; Simons, *Fanny Burney* 113 where she refers to Juliet and Elinor as "two sides of the feminist coin" - the one working publicly and futilely to "smash the mould of male imposed patterns," the other adopting more subtle and slower methods, working "as undercover agent[s] to dismantle the fiction of male superiority and [...] replace it with an alternative [...]."

¹⁶⁰ Burney writes: "[...] I feel always *democrate* where I think Power abused, - whether by the Great or the Little" (Letter 11 To Mrs. Phillips and Mrs. Locke, November, 1791, *JL* I:89).

the mother, of whose nature you must so largely partake; as upon mere sleepy, slavish, uninteresting automatons?" (I:176-7)

The sentiments in Elinor's various outbursts bear a marked affinity to Wollstonecraft's arguments in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, and though as a "proper woman" Burney cannot openly appear to subscribe to them, in her novels she illustrates the dilemma in which women are placed. As already discussed in the chapter on *Camilla*, Burney, like Wollstonecraft, uses master and slave metaphors in discussing the relationship of husband and wife.

Burney's casting of Elinor in the role of "Lady Wronghead" (I:70) in the play *The Provoked Husband* is part of her ironical subtext. Elinor's nobility is several times stressed in the novel, but her thoughtlessness toward Juliet - for instance in not remembering to give her the much-needed money left for her by the Admiral when she first arrived in England - her jealousy of Harleigh's interest in Juliet, come between her and her more benevolent feelings. Burney looks at unbridled romanticism through its effects on Elinor. Elinor's uncritical acceptance of the aims of the French Revolution is played out against the narrative's depiction of the reality of revolution through the situation of émigrés such as Gabriella and her family; Juliet; her guardian, the Bishop; and her friend the Marchioness, Gabriella's mother.

Just as Elinor is, unlike Juliet, unaware of the realities of life for a dependent or a working woman, so she is portrayed as eccentric and unrealistic in her political beliefs. Her "false hopes" (V:872) on a personal level in connection with Harleigh are to be shattered. Burney suggests that her passionate vision of a new society free of the shackles of religion and traditional modes of thought were also to

be disappointed by the effects of the turmoil across the Channel. Whilst not engaging directly in political commentary, Burney demonstrates in human terms the cost of political upheaval. When, at the end of the novel, Elinor is partially tamed and converted she cries:

“Alas! alas! [...] must Elinor too, - must even Elinor! - like the element to which, with the common herd, she owes, chiefly, her support, find, - with that herd! - her own level? - find that she has strayed from the beaten road, only to discover that all others are pathless!” (V:873)

Elinor’s self-centredness and arrogance are so obvious in this passage in which she sees herself as separate from “the common herd,” that her democratic speeches elsewhere come to seem empty rhetoric.

Burney herself commented in her Dedication of the novel to Doctor Burney that “political topics” were not within her sphere (*The Wanderer* 5). She stressed that her novel would not attempt to give “fresh food for national animosity” (4). One of her themes is a call for tolerance and understanding between “the country of [her] birth” - England - and her “adoptive country” (5; 6). In the tract entitled “Brief Reflections relative to the Emigrant French Clergy,” written in 1793, Burney appealed for help for exiled members of the French clergy.¹⁶¹ She wrote in support not only of Frenchmen at a time when England was at war with France but also of Frenchmen who were Roman Catholics in a Protestant country. Whilst her tract was directed mainly toward “female beneficence,” she appealed also to men, arguing that “charity [...] is a virtue as manly as it is gentle; it is christian, in one word, and ought therefore to be universal” (7).

¹⁶¹ Frances Burney. “Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy: Earnestly Submitted to the Humane Consideration of the Ladies of Great Britain.” By the Author of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* (London: T. Davison, for Thomas Cadell, 1793.) Rpt. *The Augustan Reprint Society*, introd. Claudia L. Johnson, (Los Angeles: U. Calif., 1990): William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, Publication No. 262.

Although she had no wish to inflame relations between the two countries, nevertheless Burney could not disregard what was happening in the world around her. Simons comments on Burney's sensitive observation of the "large-scale movements and shifts in thought" taking place in Europe as she wrote her last novel. As Simons puts it:

An acute understanding of the impact of history pervades *The Wanderer* and is in part responsible for its tone of formality and alienation. Burney was after all writing in the middle of a war and her own situation with her Anglo-French sympathies was dangerously fragile. (*Fanny Burney* 99)

Through characters such as the rustic, John Bullish Gooch and Stubbs she shows the ignorance and prejudice of her compatriots, and through Admiral Powel she demonstrates a more liberal attitude, which is patriotic without being chauvinistic. The Admiral, whose sympathy and benevolence toward the "stranger" from France in the opening chapters of the novel have established him as a man of some sensibility and understanding, is shown as a mixture of prejudices tempered by experience when he says:

"[...] I have had the experience of what it is to be in a strange land; and, moreover, a prisoner: in which time I came to an agreement with myself - a person over whom I keep a pretty tight hand! because why? If I don't the devil will! So I came, I say, to an agreement with myself, to remember all the ill-usage I then met with, as a memento to forbear exciting in others, those black passions which sundry unhandsome tricks excited, in those days, in myself." (I:35)

The Admiral's own experiences allow him to empathise with foreigners and see them as human beings, like himself.

His attitude to women is a qualified chivalry, depending upon whether the woman who needs his protection is deemed worthy or

otherwise. The Admiral does not know into which category to place Juliet when he first meets her in disguise but, nevertheless, he offers his help:

“do you think [...] I have so little Christian charity, as not to know that you may be a very good sort of woman in the main, for all some flaunty coxcomb may have played the scoundrel, and left you to the wide world, after teaching you to go so awry, that he knows the world will forsake you too?” (I:37)

The Admiral recognises the double standards obtaining at that time, and that it is the woman who will be punished rather than the man, though he be a “flaunty coxcomb” and a “scoundrel.” On another occasion, the Admiral has been expressing his doubts about Juliet’s virtue, and argues from a commonly held idea that: “one ought [not] to expect perfection; for a woman is but a woman; which a man, as her native superiour, ought always to keep in mind” (V:831). In view of Burney’s comments on contemporary ideas about woman, “but why, permit me to ask, must a *female* be made Nobody?” (EJL, II, Mar 27, 1768: 2), she treats the Admiral’s prejudices with some irony and amusement, but allows his native kindness and fairness to win through these prejudices when he says to Ambroise:

“I am afraid she thinks me rather unmannerly. And the truth is, I don’t know that I have been over and above polite: which I take shame to myself for, I give you my word; for I am always devilish bad company with myself when I have misbehaved to a female; because why? She has no means to right herself.” (V:831-2)

From the same premise, he argues: “A lady [...] must have liberty to say whatever she pleases, a man’s tongue being as much tied as his hands, not to annoy the weaker vessel” (I:25). The bluff Admiral is in a different category from Burney’s misogynists. At the end of the novel Burney discloses the fact that he stands in *locum*

parentis to Juliet and therefore, of course, his role throughout the novel, as is usual in a novel of sensibility, is privileged by the author. However Burney uses the character of the Admiral to show the powerlessness of women to defend themselves and their dependence upon men's better feelings in a world which sees women as objects to be used or abused. A woman's rights seem to depend upon the individual conscience of the man who has power over her. Paternalistic protection, which trivialises the female, exists for the woman; the sword and the law for men. If Burney does not overtly suggest radical changes in woman's status, she does, through her novels, expose prejudices against women. The tensions which exist between men and women and some of the reasons for these tensions in the power of the one and the lack of power of the other are also explored, and through her characters Burney provides exemplary and cautionary examples of the need for benevolence, sensitivity and sensibility, given the status quo. The Admiral is presented as a basically good and benevolent man, but the victim of inculcated male prejudices about women.

When Julia is reinstated in society, it is notable that she and Harleigh create a new society, a society within a society, which is closer to the ideals of sensibility than that to which Juliet has been exposed during her "difficulties." Excluded are those who have been shown unworthy through their selfishness, snobbishness and lack of benevolence. Included are those who have assisted Juliet or shown their potential for inclusion in the "confraternity." In setting up this ideal community whose nucleus is the "happy Hall," Burney comments:

No one to whom Juliet had ever owed any good office, was by her forgotten, or by Harleigh neglected. They visited, with gifts and praise, every cottage in which the Wanderer had been harboured; and Harleigh bought of the young woodcutters, at a high price, their dog Dash; [who had saved Juliet from harassment by the woodcutters themselves and] who became his new master's inseparable companion in his garden, fields, and rides.

But Riley, whose spirit of tormenting, springing from bilious ill humour, operated in producing pain and mischief like the most confirmed malevolence; Ireton, whose unmeaning pursuits, futile changes, and careless insolence, were every where productive of disorder, save in his own unfeeling breast; and Selina, who, in presence of a higher or richer acquaintance, ventured not to bestow even a smile upon the person whom, in her closet, she treated, trusted, and caressed as her bosom friend; these, were excluded from the happy Hall, as persons of minds uncongenial to confidence; that basis of peace and cordiality in social intercourse.

But while, for these, simple non-admission was deemed a sufficient mark of disapprobation, the Admiral himself, when apprized of the adventures of his niece, insisted upon being the messenger of positive exile to three ladies, whom he nominated the three Furies; Mrs Howel, Mrs Ireton, and Mrs Maple; that he might give them, he said, a hint, as it behoved a good Christian to do, for their future amendment, of the reasons of their exclusion. All mankind, he affirmed, would behave better, if the good were not as cowardly as the bad are audacious. (V:872)

Admiral Powel, stern in defence of his niece, finds, with Oscar Wilde's Gwendolen, in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, that on some occasions "it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure" (*The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act III, 364, ll.1-2).

Burney's interest in the naming process, and her exploration of the position of woman as "nobody" are demonstrated through Juliet's experiences. In a dramatic scene, in which she has been harried

unmercifully by Mrs. Ireton, she proclaims her insistence on her own sense of selfhood when she replies to Mrs. Ireton's sarcastic reminder of her servile position: "permit me to enquire who told you to go?": "A person, Madam, who has not the honour to be known to you, - myself!" (*The Wanderer* III:526). Through the assault on Juliet's sensibilities, Burney appeals to her readers' sensibilities, and exposes the treatment of women in a patriarchal society when they are not protected by men: fathers, brothers, guardians, husbands, or by the power of money inherited through men.

Burney's novels, with their emphasis on the naming principle, all affirm the importance of naming to a sense of self. In another context, but one that can usefully be applied to these novels, Jeannette King and Pam Morris write:

Ways of reading texts reflect ways of reading the world, and, as Derrida has shown, most of our readings rest, ultimately, upon a metaphysics of presence. Behind very different critical methods, there lies the quest for an origin or intent, for some final authoritative meaning. Such essentialist readings both mask and point to our desire for certainty - for the authority of some kind of Lacanian Father-Who-Names, and who can arrest the infinite deferral of the signifying chain. [...].

Women, no less than texts, have been subjected to a hermeneutic tradition which looks through the multiplicity of their actual beings to impose unitary meanings sealed with the authority of patriarchal knowledge and power to name. So women are "angels in the house," loving, self-sacrificing, and chaste as wives, mothers and daughters, or they are she-devils and Delilahs, dangerous, sexually enchanting, but always ultimately doomed. Read thus, solely in relation to male needs, the only approved images of self available to women reflect and sustain patriarchal ideology. In this way women, like

texts, are imprisoned within an alienating interpretation, closed off from movement and exploration.¹⁶²

Burney, too, stresses the power implicit in patriarchal ideology to perform this right or rite, especially in the case of women, who must conform to these “approved images” or be damned. Whilst Juliet/Ellis wanders, isolated and alienated, through the cities and countryside of a fictional early nineteenth-century England, she may exist for herself, but not as an essential being for those whose lives brush up against hers. Eventually, to attain a place in society, she must be enclosed within a text of man’s writing. She becomes a sister, a niece, a wife, and therefore, now she is established and “known” in relation to others, she becomes a proper person. Elinor’s fate is still unknown: she struggles against conformity but the end of the novel finds her speechless in both a literal and a metaphoric sense.

The Wanderer has been described as a “web of politics and the imagination” (Epstein 176). In *Frances Burney: The World of “Female Difficulties,”* Katharine Rogers gives her chapter on this particular novel the sub-title: “A Political Analysis of the World” (131). It is a “Romantic” novel in its use of the conventions of Romanticism: its isolated central character, the wanderer escaping public life and withdrawing to the countryside, the seeker after an ideal; and in its setting both in space and time. It describes an England under stress of changes, both in the city and the country, an aspect that Austen handles in several of her novels, and especially in *Sanditon*,¹⁶³ and it is kin to the ethos of the Romantic movement in

¹⁶² Jeanette King and Pam Morris, “On not Reading Between the Lines: Models of Reading in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’” *Studies in Short Fiction* 26.1 (1989): 23-32; 23.

¹⁶³ Jane Austen, *Lady Susan, The Watsons, Sanditon*, ed. and introd. Margaret Drabble (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974).

its reflection of some aspects of the industrial revolution, and the bleak picture it draws of woman's occupational choices. In all these examinations, Burney brings her woman's sensibilities and new ways of looking at society's structures to bear in addressing these problems and in attempting to call on the sensibilities of her readers to respond to her vision and her obvious desire for change.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Burney's novels span the development of the novel from Sensibility to Romanticism, with the publication of her first novel, *Evelina*, in 1778 and her last, *The Wanderer*, in 1814. As Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom comment in their introduction to the collection of essays entitled *From Sensibility to Romanticism* it was this transitional period which saw a "shift in sensibility" between two broadly defined literary periods: the age of Pope and that of Keats.¹⁶⁴

In the past, Burney's novels have most often been seen as "pictures of life and manners," or "conduct books." There has been little detailed mention of her in studies of the novels of sensibility of the period. This is surprising since sensibility was central to her novels. This thesis has attempted to rectify the omission through an analysis of her novels aimed at showing Burney's attitude to sensibility and how she demonstrates its influence on character and society. She shows that too much sensibility can inhibit women's development as rational creatures, able to manage their own lives. On the other hand, sensibility is seen to have a beneficial effect on society through its benevolent aspects. She also shows that sensibility has much to do with making people more sensitive to others'

¹⁶⁴ Frederick W. Hilles and Harold Bloom, *From Sensibility to Romanticism: Essays Presented to Frederick A. Pottle* (London: Oxford: Oxford UP, 1965) vii.

needs, and that it is linked to an appreciation of the beauty of art and nature and thereby the enrichment of life and humanity.

Several questions were raised at the beginning of this study of how the concept of sensibility functions in Burney's novels: the connotations of the word as used by Burney and questions as to her attitude to sensibility and how it relates to cultural ideas of her period, as well as how sensibility affects patterns of behaviour in the role ascribed to women of her own social class. These questions have been addressed in the thesis using the novels as primary evidence. It has been argued that sensibility was a word which was of seminal importance in the eighteenth century, when philosophers and writers were attempting to understand human beings and their relationship to society. Some aspects of the ideas that lay behind the cult of sensibility are as old as western philosophy itself. They certainly go back to the ancient Greeks and the well-known dichotomy between reason and the emotions, expressed in metaphorical terms in the figures of the Greek Gods Apollo and Dionysus. In placing Burney within the context of the dialogue which centred around the moral, philosophical and aesthetic aspects of sensibility, we find that she was very much concerned with these matters.

A close investigation of the novels discovers that sensibility, defined as intuition, feeling, perception, is not privileged over rationality, but that these two attributes must work together in the individual. Sensibility is indispensable to the truly human being in Burney's paradigm of an ideal community. Like Wollstonecraft and Austen she shows the negative and destructive effects of sensibility unmodulated by self-control and good judgment. Like Wollstonecraft, again, she shows how the cult of sensibility could

hamper women's development as rational, sensible members of the community. She demonstrates the negative effects through characters whose uncontrolled sensibility divorces them from reality and leads them astray. The effects of fantasy and imagination are explored through characters with too much sensibility, such as Mrs. Berlinton and, until she learns through hard experience, Camilla. She also shows that linking delicacy to sensibility, as it was applied to women's behaviour in the ethos of the eighteenth century, had a limiting effect on women, and narrowed their opportunities, both for self-expression and for pursuing a profession. On the positive side, she shows how women of sensibility, when enabled by the economic power of men of like mind, can act to improve the lot of those for whom they feel responsible, thus enriching society. Cecilia and Camilla are examples. Through characters who *lack* sensibility she also emphasises its positive aspects.

First, Burney makes an assumption that no reasonable, rational character can be without some measure of sensibility, and that it is an indispensable condition for a healthy society. She exhibits the harm generated by a sick society where insensibility, selfishness and insensitivity are rife. The ambivalence which existed in the eighteenth century toward the *cult* of sensibility is recognisable in Burney's writings, but nevertheless the attribute itself emerges as a necessary quality in the individual and in society. Burney ends her novels with the bringing together of a small community of people of like mind, for whom affection, benevolence, kindness and courtesy are the linchpins of that society. Although this community of men and women of sensibility is seen as in some ways withdrawing from society as a whole, nevertheless, it is made clear by Burney that

those who have responsibilities for others, such as the landowners with responsibility to their tenants, those with wealth who are able to assist others, by no means turn their back on society. We see that they use their wealth and influence to help the less fortunate, or those to whom they have a family or sympathetic tie. The rewarding of the deserving and, for instance, Evelina's desire to share her inheritance with her illegitimate brother and her adopted sister are all indications of the inter-dependence of one with another in society.

Secondly, Burney uses some of the conventions of the novel of sensibility to engage her readers' responses to the "female difficulties" which exist in the world she describes. These difficulties encompass the lack of suitable employment for women so that they may be independent; their harassment by men if they are not "protected" by another man in that patriarchal society. Burney also looks at the limitations placed on female behaviour because of expectations as to their "delicacy," an aspect of sensibility which was thought appropriate to women. Her exposure of the difficulties which this assumption presented to women make it clear that she recognised that current ideas on sensibility were gender-based. She does not, like Wollstonecraft, openly take issue with those who deny women reason and full humanity, but instead adopts persuasive literary means to make the same point whilst retaining her own status as a "proper" woman. At times, her use of the literary conventions common to the novel of sensibility verges perilously close to the sentimental, but for the most part they are applied in a powerful and moving way, making use of metaphor, setting, psychological insight, satire and comedy and other subtle techniques to reach her audience.

Each of the novels concludes with a marriage where the heroine achieves the man of *her* choice. Burney seems to be saying that, for the time being, there is no other answer to woman's place in the world except through marriage to the "right" partner. Like Mr. Tyrold, Burney perhaps subscribed to the belief that "the proper education of a female, either for use or for happiness, [was] still to seek, still a problem beyond human solution" (*Camilla* III:357), especially when woman's role in society was under investigation and many of her traditional occupations were being appropriated by men or by machines. The domestic sphere as wife and mother awaits all her heroines, though Burney herself did not marry until she was in her forties. She worked within the home as a professional woman (as amanuensis and secretary to Dr. Burney, as novelist, (private) journalist, playwright, and in a more public role serving the Queen at Court), not marrying until she met a man who matched her intellectually. Referring to her husband in her journal as her "dear Companion" she comments that, with his predilection for domestic life and good conversation, his love of literature, his "passion for reading & writing as marked as my own," he had "a Mind [...] formed to meet mine" (*SLJ*, 27-8). The importance placed by Burney on the choice of husband is stressed several times in her journals and letters, particularly when she writes of Mrs. Waddington "tied for life to an establishment! - oh Heavens! how preferable is *poverty!* Whether in the single or married State, with a Mind unshackled, and Friends dear to it!" (*SLJ* 20).

Although appearing on the surface to accept the conventional role for her heroines, Burney was paving the way for changes in attitudes to women through exposing some of their difficulties. The

tensions within her writing discussed above and the messages embodied in the subtexts of her novels must be taken into account before assuming that she was wholly accepting of a subsidiary role for women. She shows quite clearly that even if sensibility, the ability to feel and sympathise, is seen as a "feminine" mode and reason as a "masculine" one, although those terms denote attributes which may exist to some degree in everyone, nevertheless both sensibility and reason must coexist in equal partnership. In this call for balance and harmony Burney is very much the product of her century.

Building on the early work of Richardson's novels of sensibility and subsequent writers of the genre later in the century, who also used the novel form as a means of persuasion, Burney brings her own feminine sensibilities to bear in her novels when describing woman's condition. Women novelists inevitably brought new awareness and insights into the examination of society: to its structure, to roles, character and responses to life. Despite the need to conform to expectations of feminine behaviour, many managed to circumvent these restrictions and present their own fictional representations of life and their criticism of society. Their methods might differ, some openly challenging the masculine values enshrined in the literature of Western Civilization, influenced as it is by Greco-Judean-Christian stereotypes of women as irrational creatures who must be controlled. Others apparently conformed to, but in fact subverted, these values, demonstrating the split by their representations of heroines under stress as a result of society's expectations of them. By the act of writing, by taking up the pen, all women writers of the eighteenth century to some extent engaged in

a rebellion against established tradition where "the pen had been in men's hands."

As Elaine Showalter notes, prohibitions on women writers forced them:

to find innovative and covert ways to dramatize the inner life, and led to a fiction that was intense, compact, symbolic, and profound. There is Charlotte Brontë's extraordinary subversion of the Gothic in *Jane Eyre*, in which the mad wife locked in the attic symbolizes the passionate and sexual side of Jane's personality, an alter ego that her upbringing, her religion, and her society have commanded her to incarcerate.¹⁶⁵

Examples of such metaphorical writing are to be found in Burney's writing too, as has been discussed in the chapters on *Camilla* and *Cecilia* in particular. The sense of entrapment of heroines such as *Camilla* and *Cecilia* in their scenes of near madness is signified through their muteness, through dreams, delirium and disorientation expressive of a loss of identity.

One of the most important areas opened up by women writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was an examination of human relationships at the domestic level, of course from the female perspective, and the implications of that examination on a wider social scale. In the period when men generally privileged reason over the emotions, women writers sought to show the dangers of the lack of balance inherent in this stance. Their appeal was to both reason and the emotions. Their novels make a plea to the feeling heart. Writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft and Frances Burney argue rationally for a balance between reason and feeling and also plead that one half of the population not be privileged above the

¹⁶⁵ Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1977) 27-8.

other. In their fictional writings they do this by showing the position of women in their society, by appealing to the sympathy as well as the understanding of their readers. To do this, they had to adapt existing forms and language to suit their purposes. As Simons writes:

[Burney] was born into a world of unchallenged male supremacy, a world where women, if they spoke at all, spoke largely as they had been taught - with the voices of men. By the time she was old, a distinctively female voice had emerged, a voice that told repeatedly of suffering, silence and peremptory obedience to the will of others, a voice too that suggested strategies of survival. Burney contributed centrally to that voice and it was no accident that this transition coincided with the upsurge of the novel and its expanding hold in the minds of women, both as readers and practitioners. (*Fanny Burney* 17)

Lewes might advise women to write of "what they have really known, felt and suffered"¹⁶⁶ but, as Elaine Showalter suggests, there were first difficulties of form, medium and articulation to be overcome:

Feminine novelists had been deprived of the language and the consciousness for such an enterprise, and obviously their deprivation extended beyond Victoria's reign and into the twentieth century. The delicacy and verbal fastidiousness of Virginia Woolf is an extension of this feminized language. (27)

Experimentation with the Gothic mode by women writers, including Burney, also became a means of creating a powerful "feminine" language which was capable of expressing the experiences of women and at the same time subverting the hegemony of "masculine" language.

The narrator's "voice" is very much a presence throughout the last three novels. It is undoubtedly moralistic; it conforms, at least

¹⁶⁶ George Lewes, *Lady Novelists* 132; qtd. in Showalter 27.

on the surface, to the mores of the day as to woman's place in society, but the theme she chooses - a young woman's entrance into the world - allows her also to exhibit many of the wrongs of that world. She takes a strong stance against violence, verbal and physical, of men towards other men and to women; she argues the case for the lone woman who must support herself in a world made for men; she also shows the resentment of her heroines at the lack of power of women in the eyes of man-made laws: the fact that they are "nobody," merely an appendage to man. Her writings not only speak for these "nobodies" but also proclaim Burney herself a person in her own right.

It has been argued throughout this thesis that the "female difficulties" of each of Burney's heroines encapsulate the difficulties of all females of Burney's time. In confronting her own difficulties of authorship, and in presenting women's problems through the metaphor of the namelessness of her heroines and their entrapment within constricting conventions, Burney shows she is aware of the problems that faced women at large. Among these constricting conventions were the view men had of women as sensual creatures, and the pitfalls that, for women, became a part of the cult of sensibility. As discussed in the chapter on *Cecilia*, Blackstone's commentaries which codified patriarchal laws of inheritance led to the wife's "legal disappearance." The plots of several of Burney's novels hinge on this limiting restriction of women's lives.

It has also been argued that in her novels, particularly *Cecilia*, Burney demonstrates the disempowerment of women. *Cecilia* is unable to use her inheritance as she thinks proper because through legal proscription she is not free to do so and is under the control of

her male guardians. When she does reach the age of majority, she loses her inheritance because of the terms of her uncle's will and because her husband will not relinquish his name. Cecilia is subject to man-made laws. In Harrel's action in physically forcing Mrs. Harrel to give up her marriage settlement to pay his gambling debts Burney gives an example of a man regressing still further, to the law of the jungle where might is right.

Burney exposes the ingrained prejudices against the female sex which are reinforced in stereotypes of women in the literature of Western Civilisation, mostly written by men. These stereotypes and the narrow views on women which see them as trivial and created primarily for men's use and enjoyment are demonstrated out of the mouths of the misogynists in her novels. An example of these prejudices is voiced by Marchmont, when he says to Edgar:

"Ask me, my dear young friend, why the sun does not give night, and the moon day; then why women practise coquetry. Alas! my season for surprise has long been passed! They will rather trifle, even with those they despise, than be candid even with those they respect." (*Camilla* IV:571)

If young women are stigmatised as coquets and triflers by Marchmont, Sir Robert Floyer and Lord Merton make clear, as has been shown, the supernumerary status of older women who have outlived their usefulness or personal attractiveness. When studying all four of Burney's novels it is impossible to escape the evidence of her sensitivity to the theme of the devaluation of women. In her heroines' resistance to others' stereotyped conception of them, Burney also shows her awareness of the threat of fragmentation of identity which comes from the generalisation and dehumanisation inherent in ideas about women, especially those ideas held by men.

Her heroines all insist vigorously, even if internally, upon their own sense of a separate and individual identity. Each heroine proclaims her right to be seen as a "person," not a "nobody."

Many influences came to bear on Burney's particular vision of life. She lived from Georgian to early Victorian times, though her last novel was published the year Wordsworth published his poem *The Excursion*. The emphasis on the individual and the individual's private responsibility toward his or her conscience was an aspect of eighteenth-century liberal thought and of the novel of sensibility. *Clarissa* is a case in point, in its clash between Clarissa's family's demands upon her loyalty and her insistence on the right to live by her own Christian beliefs. This emphasis on the rights of the individual was a precursor to the ideas which were important to the Romantic movement, with its stress on the individual's sovereignty. The influence of Romanticism is recognised in Burney's last work of fiction, as has been discussed in the chapter on *The Wanderer*. In reflecting the upheavals of her times, she does not describe a battlefield, but she does show the effect on civilians of war, chaos and displacement. She also portrays the insularity and John Bullish attitudes of some Englishmen at this period. Conventional she may have been in her fear of doing wrong, but she shows she is aware of changing attitudes through her presentation of Elinor as a "new woman," and clearly demonstrates some sympathy for her protest.¹⁶⁷

By the time she wrote *The Wanderer*, Burney's version of English life had broadened from the fashionable cities and watering

¹⁶⁷ Burney's journal entry that "The fear of doing wrong has been always the leading principle of my internal guidance" is discussed in Spacks 160. It is considered by the present writer that, taking into account the context of this statement, when Burney speaks of "internal guidance" she refers to her conscience and her earnest desire to avoid moral and religious error, not to a fear of committing a social solecism (see: *JL X:877-8*).

places of *Evelina* and *Camilla* to take in the effect of the industrial revolution, with scenes in domestic "sweat-shops," as well as an examination of the rural poor in her *Rasselas*-like search for the ideal lifestyle. Her indictment of unthinking society is voiced through Giles Arbe and through the trials and humiliation of her heroine, who wanders homeless and nameless through an alien world.

As other women writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were to do, she brought a new interpretation and a new vision to the novel. It was not just in her representation of the inner world of the female that Burney set a pattern, a pattern that Austen for instance, was to follow. She brought her feminine experience and acute observation of individual men and women and of society's mores, and her intuitive feminine sensibilities to the novel, paving the way for subsequent women writers.

It is argued that she used the conventions of the novel of sensibility to appeal to her reader and to proselytise her point of view, and through her depiction of sensibility in her characters she aims to educate her readers in the more valuable aspects of the ideas which lay behind that eighteenth-century phenomenon: the cult of sensibility.

ABBREVIATIONS:

- DL* *Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay (1778-1840)* ed. Charlotte Barrett (1904).
- ED* *The Early Diary of Frances Burney 1768-1778* ed. Annie Raine Ellis.
- EJL* *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* ed. Lars E. Troide.
- JL* *Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame D'Arblay)* ed. Joyce Hemlow et. al.
- SLJ* *Selected Letters and Journals* ed. Joyce Hemlow

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APPENDIX A

List of occurrences of the words "sensibility" and "sensibilities" and Select List of the occurrences of the words "insensibility":

SENSIBILITY, SENSIBILITIES:	<u>Vol.</u>	<u>Pg.</u>	<u>Line(s)</u>
<i>Evelina:</i>			
this artless young creature, with too much beauty to escape notice, has too much sensibility to be indifferent to it; but she has too little wealth to be sought with propriety by men of the fashionable world.	I	18	33-36
most conducive to the happiness of my child, and least liable to wound her sensibility.	I	127	32-33
<i>Cecilia:</i>			
her eyes, the heralds of her speech, now beamed with understanding and now glistened with sensibility.	I	6	7-8
Their meeting was tender and affectionate; the sensibility of Cecilia's heart flowed from her eyes,	I	21	20-21
Many and various, then, soothing to her spirit and grateful to her sensibility, were the scenes which her fancy delineated;	I	55	34-35
his voice, always either sweet or impassioned, delivered those words in a tone of softness, pathos, and sensibility, that struck her with a sensation not more new than delightful.	I	65	11-14
he sighed so deeply that Cecilia, struck by his uncommon sensibility to the power of music, involuntarily watched him, whenever her mind was sufficiently at liberty to attend to any emotions but its own.	I	65	22-26
happy from believing she had revived in her some spark of sensibility,	II	192	29-30
and the voice of sensibility which had removed all her doubts, was no longer to be heard.	II	302	18-20
"Time, however, will blunt this acute sensibility,"	II	303	20
which shewed at least some sensibility of his situation,	III	346	34-35
calm her troubled spirit by participating in her sensibility.	III	352	29-30

“Miss Beverley, you have a thousand times too much sensibility for this mad-cap of a companion.”	III	496	35-36
“what, let me ask, have <i>I</i> done, that such infinite disgrace and depression should follow this little sensibility to a passion so fervent?”	IV	548 549	38-39) 1)
“I would not even wish to take advantage of your agitation in order to work upon your sensibility.”	IV	559	3-5
“and his generous sensibility to the weakness he has discovered, without any of the conviction to which he pretends, may have occasioned this proposal!”	IV	566 567	39) 1-2)
“all perfect in goodness and virtue; but it was virtue in its highest majesty, not, as now, blended with the softest sensibility.”	IV	572	12-14
“and of which the refinement, the sensibility of your mind, will render you but the more susceptible;”	IV	620	28-29
“Shew but to them,” cried he, “the smallest sensibility, shew but for me the most distant concern,”	IV	631	4-5
“Call not by so harsh a name,” answered Mrs. Delvile, “the keenness of a sensibility by which you have yourself alone been the sufferer.”	IV	648	21-23
Cecilia now saw that the wound his sensibility had received was too painful for argument, and too recent immediately to be healed.	IV	667	23-25
But Delvile, penetrated and tortured, yet delighted at this sensibility,	IV	677	28-29
she continued in the posture in which he had left her, quite without motion, and almost without sensibility.	IV	684	36-37
“think you these wretched outcasts have less sensibility than yourselves?”	V	750	16-17
her sensibility, indeed, was keen, and she had suffered from it the utmost torture; but her feelings were not more powerful than her understanding was strong,	V	790	9-11
Her sensibility now soon returned, though still attended with strangeness and a sensation of incredulity.	V	831	37-38
But these passionate exclamations restoring her sensibility, she burst into tears, which happily relieved her mind from the conflict with which it was labouring, and which, not thus effected, might have ended more fatally.	V	847	35-39
Cecilia then, extremely unwilling to shock a sensibility not more generous than jealous,	V	885	14-15

Her sleep was long and heavy; yet, when she awoke, her sensibility was evidently returned. V 919 25-26

Camilla:

“Do pray let me harangue them a little for you upon their inordinate want of sensibility.” I 65 31-33

“she is all I ever read of! all I ever conceived! she is beauty in its very essence! she is elegance, delicacy, and sensibility personified!” I 103 35-37

Edgar still pleaded that the baronet would expect them; but Melmond, in softer tones, spoke of fears, sensibility, and dangers; and Edgar soon found he was talking to the winds. I 135 27-29

“The sensibility of your mind will plead for me - I read it in those heavenly eyes - they emit mercy in their beauty! they are as radiant with goodness as with loveliness!” I 141 29-32

With a heart all expanded, and a face full of sensibility, Edgar now turned to him, I 149 16-17

“the deluder of her esteem commonly confides, for averting her reproach, to the very sensibility through which he has ensnared her good opinion.” II 233 18-20

“since your own want of personal sensibility to the horror of your conduct, will neither harden nor blind any human being besides yourself.” II 243 2-4

presently quitting the room, ran out into the garden, and to a walk far from the house, before she had power to breathe, or recollection to be aware of the sensibility she was betraying. II 273 24-27

She looked down, but her countenance was full of sensibility, II 298 8-10

“remember what Addison admirably says in one of the Spectators: ‘A too acute sensibility of personal defects, is one of the greatest weaknesses of self-love.[.]’” II 302 23-26

“what must not have been his despair when such was his sensibility? tears in a man!” II 316 7-8

and a sensibility less ungovernable. II 325 30

“Risk not, my dear girl, to others, those outward marks of sensibility which, to common or unfeeling observers, seem but the effect of an unbecoming remissness in the self-command which should dignify every female who would do herself honour.” III 348 7-11

That it should be felt unsought may be considered as a mark of discerning sensibility; but that it should be betrayed uncalled for, is commonly, however ungenerously, imagined

rather to indicate ungoverned passions, than refined selection.	III	361	12-15
She received their applause with sensibility,	III	373	19-20
The moon now shining full upon her face, Camilla saw seated on it youth, sensibility, and beauty.	III	389	23-24
their themes, all chosen by the stranger, were friendship, confidence, and sensibility,	III	393	13-14
his heart itself experienced something like an original feeling, unspoilt by the apathy of satiety, from the sensibility he had awakened in the young and lovely Camilla.	III	404	35-38
“We are at such prodigious expence of sensibility in public, for tales of sorrow told about pathetically, at a full board, that if we suffered much for our private concerns to boot, we must always meet one another with tears in our eyes.”	III	473	12-14
“I languish, I own,” cried she, “to see that frozen youth worked up into a little sensibility.”	III	483	23-24
An immediate sensibility to his own impertinence now succeeded in its vain display;	III	509	7-8
Roused at once from her sullen calm to the most agonising sensibility, every thing and every body, herself most of all, were forgotten in the sight of his danger;	IV	539	1-4
now dissolving in the soft tears of the tenderest sensibility, according to the quick changing impulses of her natural and lively, yet feeling and susceptible character.	IV	547	2-4
with sensibility raised into dignity,	IV	576	3-4
the finer the fibres of the sensibility on which it seizes, the more exclusive is its despotism;	IV	605	22-24
The sensibility of Lord Valhurst was not of sufficient magnitude to separate into two courses: the little he possessed was already occupied by his disappointment, in losing the beautiful prey he believed just falling into his hands, and he had no emotion, therefore, to bestow upon his young reprover.	IV	615	15-19
“If this refusal is the result of an offended sensibility, you cannot exert yourself too warmly in its consolation;”	IV	642	19-21
when Camilla, walking between the father and the son, with looks of softest sensibility, came into the room, he thought he had never seen her so lovely,	IV	650 651	39-40 1
But the ardour of her imagination, acted upon by every passing idea, shook her Judgment from its yet unsteady seat, and left her at the mercy of wayward Sensibility - that delicate, but irregular power, which now impels to all that is most disinterested			

for others, now forgets all mankind, to watch the pulsations of its own fancies.	IV	680	1-6
she thought him but enfeebled, as she was enfeebled herself, by a tender sensibility;	V	699	33-35
How is her delicacy perverted! what is become of her sensibility?	V	705	24-25
“And all the reluctance he seemed to feel, which so weakly I attributed to regard, was but the expiring sensibility of the last moment of intercourse.”	V	721	17-19
“Our sensibility for others is not always dormant, because not apparent. -”	V	758	34-35
If she fretted, he thought her all sensibility;	V	769	29-30
and conjured, while tears of terror started into his eyes, that she would moderate the excess of her sensibility.	V	801	5-7
Still the same dreadful vacuity superseded her sensibility,	V	819	22
She quietly replied she had never been present at them; but a look of sensibility with which her eyes dropt, spoke more than she intended,	V	822	1-3
wouldst thou load them with regret that they manifested any sensibility of thy errors?	V	872	37-38
and upon her hand had dropt a testimony of his sensibility,	V	878	30-31
“it is time to conquer this impetuous sensibility, which already, in its effects, has nearly broken all our hearts.”	V	882	14-16
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
may still hope to retain, - if she has ever possessed it, - the power of interesting the affections, while still awake to them herself, through the many much loved agents of sensibility, that still hold in their pristine energy her conjugal, maternal, fraternal, friendly, and, - dearest Sir! - her filial feelings.	Pref.	9	19-24
“I hope he does not suspect I should want a proper sensibility to such an honour?”	I	29	37-38
Her voice, from seeming feeble and monotonous, became clear and penetrating: it was varied, with the nicest discrimination, for the expression of every character, changing its modulation from tones of softest sensibility, to those of archest humour;	I	80	29-33
“Such talents and a sensibility so attractive,” said Lord Melbury, “never met before!”	I	102	7-8

Ellis, with charmed sensibility, involuntarily advanced to embrace her;	I	105	7-8
wiped, though she could not dry her eyes, and smiled, while they still glistened, with such grateful sensibility, yet beaming happiness,	I	113	32-34
she had peculiar attractions, from the excess of sensibility with which she received even the smallest attentions.	I	117	2-3
soft expressive blue eyes, of which the "liquid lustre" spoke a heart that was the seat of sensibility;	I	117	28-29
"I hope," he said, "your feelings, like those of most minds gifted with strong sensibility, have taken the pencil, in this portrait, from your cooler judgment?"	I	166	18-21
"have the goodness to let that same sensibility operate in terminating, in such a manner as may be least shocking to her, all view, and all thought, that I ever could, or ever can, entertain the most distant project of supplanting my brother."	I	166	24-27
"all the fine sensibilities which impel our happiest sympathies, in the choice of our life's partners?"	I	177	14-16
"for still my imagination would gift you, ultimately, with sensibility to my regard."	I	182	35-36
that a sensibility so powerful could spring only from too sudden a concussion of pleasure with surprise.	I	192	27-29
Suddenly now, as if self-alarmed, checking her sensibility,	II	204	31
"O why this fatal sensibility, that captivates while it destroys? that gives fascination even to repulse?"	II	205	18-20
"to awaken a sensibility that electrifies every hope,"	II	207	8
"Even Mrs. Howel was nearly as much captivated by her elegance and manners, as I was, and must ever remain, by her interesting qualities, and touching sensibility."	II II	312 313	38-39 1-2
The few, but precious words, that marked, in parting, a sensibility that he had vainly sought to excite while remaining, bounded to the heart of Harleigh;	II	350	2-4
saw the brilliancy with which they had at first sought her own, terminate in a sensibility more touching;	II	354	21-22
The fond embraces, and fast flowing tears of Ellis, evinced the keen sensibility with which she participated in the sorrows of this afflicted mother,	III III	387 388	26-27 1
whose delicacy, whose feeling, whose respect for misfortune, made their beneficence as balsamic to sensibility, as it was			

salutary to want,	III	403	3-5
made the wish of solid safety repress the disgusts of offended sensibility;	III	474	12-13
And where the calls of self upon sensibility are unremitting, what must be the stock that will gift us, also, with supply sufficient for our fellow-creatures?	III	478	33-36
She then cast around her eyes, with a look of silent, but pathetic appeal to the sensibility of all who were within sight,	III	481	35-36
The justice of the sensibility which urged her retreat, could not obviate its imprudence, or avert its consequences.	III	488	18-19
for her voice and sensibility were less ductile than her manners.	III	490	33-34
but the sameness of the offences soon robbed the mortifications of their poignancy; and apathy, in a short time, taking place of sensibility, she learnt to bear them if not with indifference, at least with its precursor contempt.	III	494	17-20
In minds of strong sensibility, arrogance rouses resentment more quickly even than injury;	III	512	31-32
all words seemed poor, heartless, unworthy to describe the sensibility of her soul,	III	554	17-18
and bowing her head with an expression of the most touching sensibility to her three young supporters,	III	561	15-17
casting a glance at Juliet, as he passed, expressive of his chagrin at this interruption, and full of sensibility and respect.	IV	569	38-39
“Can you regret having shewn a little feeling? - a trait of sensibility?”	IV	578	36-37
“Those eyes that so often glisten with the most touching sensibility,”	IV	595	37-38
Gabriella was generous, noble, and dignified: exalted in her opinions, and full of sensibility:	IV	622	24-25
from one who, so often! had awakened in her symptoms the most impressive of the most flattering sensibility! -	V	730	36-38
with so much vivacity of transport, and so much softness of sensibility for his kindness,	V	737	38-39
blunted, for the moment, her sensibility, by removing her wide from all the objects with which it was in contact;	V	766	7-8
“how can you wish to shorten the so short period of consciousness? to abridge the so brief moment of sensibility?”	V	783	28-30

“we are capable, therefore, of being restored to all our sensibilities, by a single touch,”	V	788	33-34
“nor to take advantage of the softness of your sensibility,”	V	801	9
from a sensibility that she would not seek to repress,	V	805	23
shewed their sensibility to be but fulness of happiness,	V	818	33-34
Suspension of sensibility could not, while there was life, be long allowed to Juliet; and the violence of her emotions, at its return, almost burst her bosom.	V V	855 856	39 1-2

SELECT LIST:

INSENSIBILITY:

Evelina:

	<u>Vol.</u>	<u>Pg.</u>	<u>Line(s)</u>
but he is a stranger to all parental feelings, and has, with a savage insensibility, forbore to enquire even into the existence of this sweet orphan,	I	125	33-35

the total neglect I thought I met with, was not the effect of insensibility or unkindness, but of imposition and error;	III	375	20-21
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Cecilia:

surprise for a few instants took place of insensibility, and with rather more spirit than she had yet shewn, she answered “Indeed I know nothing of the matter.”	I	39	6-8
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added an equal portion of insensibility that hardened him against all indignity.	I	48	23-25
--	---	----	-------

“Good heaven,” cried she to herself, “what strange, what cruel insensibility! to suffer a wretched family to starve, from an obstinate determination to assert that they can live!”	I	76	17-20
---	---	----	-------

who possessed that hard insensibility which obstinately pursues its own course, deaf to what is said, and indifferent to what is thought.	I	137	1-3
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Cecilia, though much disgusted by such a specimen of insensibility towards a man whom he pretended to call his friend,	I	143	23-25
--	---	-----	-------

such glaring injustice to his creditors, such utter insensibility to his friends, took from her all wish of assisting him,	II	175	22-24
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his anxiety, his insensibility to himself, were more than good breeding could claim, and seemed to spring from a motive less artificial.	II	294	17-19
--	----	-----	-------

The intrusion, however, of so large a party, seemed to threaten his insensibility with unavoidable disturbance;	III	403	12-13
“I will promise nothing, Sir,” said she, shocked at his callous insensibility;	III	418	30-31
“I perceive what I imagined the most rigid insensibility, was nobleness, was propriety, was true greatness of mind!”	IV	549	29-30
it resulted neither from insensibility to your delicacy, nor to my own duty;	IV	561	16-17
“you would not thus charge me with indifference, you would not suspect me of insensibility,”	IV	633	1-3
“and am relieved again at night by the same health-recruiting insensibility.”	IV	665	18-19
“awake from this dreadful insensibility! tell me at least you know me!”	V	847	28-29
Cecilia, with utter insensibility to what was passing,	V	907	26
sunk suddenly into a state of such utter insensibility, that she appeared unconscious even of her existence; and but that she breathed, she might already have passed for being dead.	V	911	14-17
<i>Camilla:</i>			
the meekness of her composition degenerated not into insensibility; it was open to all the feminine feelings of pity, of sympathy, and of tenderness.	II	223	9-11
This insensibility to beauty the most exquisite wanted no advocate with Mrs. Tyrold.	II	230	9-10
“If now I seem myself to fear it, it is not from moroseness, it is not from insensibility to its charm -”	II	267	34-36
Mr. Mandlebert, she said, had not only thought proper to acknowledge his utter insensibility to Miss Lynmere, but had declared his indifference for every woman under the sun,	II	271	36-39
She would forbear, she said, entering again upon the irksome subject of the insensibility of Mandlebert,	III	491	6-7
“Does the man live who would have the philosophy . . . insensibility I must rather style it - ever to resign, after once possessing, marks so distinguishing of esteem?”	IV	620	23-26
“Philosophy I have no right to speak of . . . but as to insensibility . . . who is the man that ever more can surprise me by its display?”	IV	620	29--30
“load me with every other reproach, rather than this dreadful			

charge of insensibility to all that is most lovely, most perfect upon earth!"	V	719	7-9
To her, all seemed the change not from doubt to security, but from love to insensibility.	V	813	15-16
<i>The Wanderer</i>			
she hung for comfort, as well as for assistance, upon her fellow-traveller, to whom she gave the interesting post of being the repository of all her complaints, whether against nature, for constructing her frame with such exquisite daintiness, or against fate, for it's total insensibility to the tenderness which that frame required.	I	42	23-28
"I have certainly," he answered, "long observed a growing insensibility;"	I	165	3-4
"that it is not to personal aversion, but to some previous regard, that I owe your insensibility!"	I	178	24-26
"Will not this objection have some weight, Sir, to lessen your censure of my seeming insensibility,"	II	304	7-9
"much scandalized that Mr. Harleigh should have the insensibility to resist love so heroic,"	II	371	20-21
It was by no means the fault of the Baronet, that this nearly morbid insensibility was not conquered, by the revivifying objects which surrounded her.	V	760	9-11
"Yet, in that state of periodical insensibility,"	V	788	23

APPENDIX B

Select list of occurrences of words related to “sensitivity” and “insensitivity”:
“insensible,” “insensibly,” “sense,” “senseless,” “senses,” “sensible,” “sensibly”:

INSENSIBLE:	<u>Vol.</u>	<u>Pg.</u>	<u>Line(s)</u>
<i>Evelina:</i>			
do not think me insensible of the honour which your Ladyship’s condescension confers upon us both;	I	16	12-13
“What an insensible!” continued he,	I	40	28
“I have so much languished myself, as to be absolutely insensible to all it had to offer.”	II	135	25-27
Dead to the world, and equally insensible to its pleasures or its pains, I long since bid adieu to all joy, and defiance to all sorrow, but what should spring from my Evelina,	III	307	28-30
“Yes, beautiful Insensible!”	III	342	25
“nor do I desire to appear insensible of the honour of your good opinion;”	III	379	22-23
she would but grasp at a shadow insensible to her touch.	III	405	10-11
<i>Cecilia:</i>			
She found her insensible to friendship,	I	32	35-36
she determined no longer to be the only one insensible to the blessings within her reach,	I	54	35-36
he was not insensible of her beauty,	I	59	14
“you will find me as inoffensive as the hue of the domino I wear; - and would I could add as insensible!”	I	116	21-23
To the pain of his wound he became insensible, from the superior pain of this unexpected miscarriage;	II	219	24-25
was at first insensible to his situation, from an apprehension that Cecilia had not wholly escaped;	II	288	38-39
“as the brother of my earliest friend, I can never be insensible to your welfare.”	III	376	23-24
Cecilia was far other than insensible to these representations:	III	421	4-5
she knew that the spirit with which she had left him, made him, at present, think her wholly insensible,	III	515	20-21

yet that Delvile's pride of heart should give way to his passion, that he should love her with so much fondness as to relinquish for her the ambitious schemes of his family, and even that darling name which so lately seemed annexed to his existence, were circumstances to which she was not insensible, and proofs of tenderness and regard which she had thought incompatible with the general spirit of his disposition.	IV	560	8-15
"to your merit they are far from insensible, and your fortune is just what they wish."	IV	573	23-24
"You are insensible to my misery and impenetrable to my entreaties;"	IV	630	25-27
"she seemed deaf, mute, insensible, her face unmoved, a settled despair fixed in her eyes,"	IV	707	31-33
was insensible to every thing but shew and dissipation.	IV	713	15
"Well, Sir," said Mrs. Belfield, wholly insensible of this ambiguous greatness,	V	780	1-2
She was wholly insensible, but perfectly quiet; she seemed to distinguish nothing, and neither spoke nor moved.	V	912	15-16
<i>Camilla:</i>			
she was not insensible to the fair future prospects of her children,	I	11	2-3
insensible to his counsel, he uttered oath upon oath,	I	76	13
"What divinity? insensible Tyrold! tasteless! adamantine!"	I	103	31
Indiana, by no means insensible to this language,	I	134	6
"she knows not his worth, she is insensible to his virtues!"	II	177	20-21
The chain of thinking which, from painting what he thought insensible in Indiana, led him to describe what he felt to be resistless in Camilla,	II	233	39-40
	II	234	1
she was far from insensible to the flattering kindness with which Mrs. Arlbery received and entertained her,	II	246	7-9
"she was born an idiot, and therefore, having never known brighter days, is insensible to her terrible state."	II	310	30-31
I do not desire her to be insensible to merit;	III	359	23
nor yet that the person thus elated has been insensible to flattery; but it has been a flattery to raise himself, not its exciter in his esteem.	III	360	23-25
"this is the grateful character who is to render you insensible to every body?"	III	512	35-36
Must I come, then, to Cleves, fair Insensible, but as a visitor to			

Mr. Lionel?	IV	529	26-27
and sought, with all her power, to regard him as Mrs. Arlbery had painted him, and to believe him, except in a few casual moments of caprice, insensible and hard of heart.	IV	541	5-8
“even if I had been insensible to her own claims upon every man of feeling.”	IV	618	29-30
No possible disturbance could make Camilla insensible to pleasure in the praise of her uncle,	IV	626	32-33
and far from insensible to the visible surprise and pleasure she excited in those who cast up their eyes at the hotel.	IV	631	15-16
Eugenia, insensible to this honour, looked only for Melmond;	IV	663	30
They were insensible to the night air, from the fever of their minds.	V	720	27-28
rendered insensible to all fatigue,	V	890	29
though insensible to the higher motive	V	909	10
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
All obeyed; and, with mingled hope and dread, insensible to the weather, and dauntless to the hazards of the sea,	I	12	20-21
“neither insolence nor ingratitude makes me insensible to her worth;”	I	166	4-5
she assumed sufficient self-command, to deliver the message of Elinor, with a look, and in a voice, that seemed insensible and unobservant of every other subject.	I	170	28-31
“if you think me insensible to the honour I receive from it, you do yet less justice to yourself than to me!”	II	205	7-9
so insensible to the distress of the person whom she affected to protect,	II	275	4-5
“or so insensible to the enchantment of talents, and the witchery of genius;”	II	338	8-10
“Harleigh no longer is utterly insensible! -”	II	362	4
rendered her insensible to his re-appearance.	II	375	36-37
“When may I become as insensible as Harleigh?”	II	377	11-12
“I had a secret presentiment that you would be insensible to the fluttering joys of your sister spinsters.”	III	435	26-28
“he may believe me insensible,”	IV	586	29
“Not that I am insensible to such a distinction; you won’t			

imagine me such an Hottentot, I hope, as to be insensible to so honourable a distinction!"	IV	608	27-30
since, to all but safety, distress and affright made her insensible.	IV	664	33-34
her troubled mind kept her body still insensible to weariness;	IV	684	3-4
while he is blind and insensible to his hardships.	IV	700	13-14
"I was insensible to all but my release;"	V	751	9-10

INSENSIBLY:

Evelina:

from that moment, my coldness and reserve insensibly wore away!	III	282	33-34
Almost insensibly, I find the constraint, the reserve, I have been wont to feel in his presence, wear away;	III	295	18-19
Almost insensibly have three days glided on since I wrote last,	III	296	10
A thousand occasional meetings could not have brought us to that degree of social freedom, which four days spent under the same roof have, insensibly, been productive of:	III	296	27-30
his conversation dissipated my uneasiness, and insensibly restored my serenity.	III	317	22-23

Cecilia:

"O Quit me not thus insensibly! - Cecilia!"	IV	632	25-26
Long accustomed to regard him as a safe and disinterested old friend, the respect with which, as a child, she had looked up to him, she had insensibly preserved when a woman.	V	836	14-17

Camilla:

she insensibly pressed nearer to the trunk of the tree, to afford more shelter to him from its branches	III	435	19-20
Insensibly, yet irresistibly, she now moved on towards the drawing-room.	V	852	16-17

The Wanderer:

some share of it now stole insensibly into her own bosom;	I	96	35-36
He no sooner perceived the touching melancholy which insensibly took place, in her countenance, of disgust and indignation, than forcibly affected, he struck his forehead,	I	142	6-8
first affections, soon reflected back their influence upon her own mind; which gradually strengthened, and insensibly revived.	III	394	17-19

Time, thus, might insensibly be gained,	IV	597	32-33
they now insensibly reached;	IV	605	3
Gabriella, having insensibly begun the tale,	IV	642	32-33
all personal fatigue was insensibly forgotten;	IV	675	38-39
she was falling insensibly into a gentle slumber;	IV	680	8
charmed by her good fellowship, were insensibly turned aside from their evil intentions;	IV:	690	20-21
for a few minutes, her eyes, from extreme fatigue, insensibly closed,	V	763	21-22
and insensibly calmed her spirits;	V	766	8-9
“you insensibly admit in nearly all things else!”	V	787	27-28

SENSE:

Evelina:

his anxiety for you after the opera, prove him to be a man of sense and of feeling.	I	116	5-7
Pardon the earnestness with which I write my sense of this affair;	I	124	31
“Why ay,” said the father, “there would be some sense in that; that would be making some use of a Lord’s acquaintance, for it would save us coach-hire.”	II	244	12-14
Lord Orville himself did not speak much, but the excellent sense and refined good-breeding which accompany every word he utters, give a <i>zest</i> to whatever he says.	III	283	10-12
awake to the sense of your danger,	III	309	20-21
However, this was not the general sense of the company,	III	311	25-26
“For my part, deuce take me if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!”	III	361	38-39
“No, my dear, you are mistaken, Lord Orville has too much good sense.”	III	377	36-37
to express, better than by words, the sense I have of your exalted benevolence,	III	387	7-8

Cecilia:

yet she had the good sense to determine against upbraiding her, well aware that if reproach has any power over indifference, it is only that of changing it into aversion.	I	33	2-5
--	---	----	-----

she had yet the spirit and good sense to determine upon making every effort in her power, to render her immediate way of life more useful and contented.	I	56	20-23
“But an old woman,” answered Sir Robert, “is a person who has no sense of decency; if once she takes to living, the devil himself can’t get rid of her.”	I	80	23-25
the dignity to which high birth and conscious superiority gave rise, was so judiciously regulated by good sense,	I	155	8-10
“I am persuaded Miss Beverley has too much sense to let my advice be thrown away upon her.”	I	157	14-15
“shews such <i>propriety of mind</i> as can only result from the union of good sense with virtue.”	III	425	36-37
“You speak, ma’am, like a lady of sense,” returned Mr. Hobson,	III	446	15
“I see you’re a lady of sense, and for that I honour you:”	III	447	33-34
“he has a thousand times more sense than his son,”	III	465	32
“What separation, what sorrow, what possible calamity can hang upon my mind with such heaviness, as the sense of committing voluntary evil?”	IV	577	27-30
The Captain, who wanted not courage, however deeply in vanity and affectation he had buried common sense,	IV	604	37-38
“I would not, therefore, idly rove from one great man to another, adding ill-will to disgrace, and pursuing hope in defiance of common sense;”	IV	661	27-29
had still the candour and good sense to see that there was reason in what he urged,	IV	695	14-16
till reflection, and her natural good sense,	V	834	20
“Truth is truth, whether one speaks it or not; and that, ma’am, I dare say, a young lady of your good sense knows as well as myself.”	V	879	3-6
“I was bewitched, I was infatuated! common sense was estranged by the seduction of a chimera;”	V	882	3-5
<i>Camilla:</i>			
Mrs. Tyrold now yielded; she never resisted a remonstrance of her husband; and as her sense of duty impelled her also never to murmur, she retired to her own room, to conceal with how ill a grace she complied.	I	13	36-39
to soften her duties by the highest sense of their merit,	I	14	18-19
“I trust your sense won’t fret about it, as it is only in the course			

of Nature;”	I	25	30-31
“but my dear Lavinia’s good sense will leave the room, without waiting for a hint.”	I	118	3-4
“You cannot but be sensible, ma’am,” resumed Miss Margland, “for sense is not what you want,”	II	166	27-28
“not doubting to bring him round by means of his own sense:”	II	175	23
“from the advantage of having more sense to guide you by!”	II	175	30-31
“he has every endowment nature can bestow, except common sense!”	II	264	6-7
There cannot, in nature, in theory, nor even in common sense,	III	358	3-4
You have champions with which to encounter them that cannot fail of success, . . . good sense and delicacy.	III	358	34-35
Good sense will shew you the power of self-conquest,	III	358	36
I have now endeavoured to point out the obligations which you may owe to good sense.	III	359	35-36
“what I did not expect from a woman of your sense.”	III	449	3
“Bless me,” cried Mrs. Arlbery, “who is that? to hear a little plain common sense is so rare, it strikes one more than wit.”	III	451	37-38
who, to want of feeling, added want of sense,	IV	615	20
“Delicacy,” said Dr. Marchmont, “though the quality the most amiable we can practise in the service of others, must not take place of common sense, and sound judgment, for ourselves.”	IV	645	19-21
she looked at the favourite of Edgar, in whose sweetness of countenance, good sense, delicacy, and propriety, she conceived herself reading every moment the causes of his approbation.	V	820	23-26
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
“Do, pray, Mr. Harleigh, tell me where you have been secreting your common sense?”	I	29	6-8
“We all think our own way the only one that has any common sense.”	I	29	19-20
A sense of ill treatment seemed to endue her with courage;	I	43	26-27
scarcely knew whether most to admire her good sense, her intelligent quickness, her elegant language, or the meaning eyes, and varied smiles which spoke before she spoke,	I	101	5-8
All chance of security hung upon the exertion of good sense, and the right use of reason, which imperiously demanded active courage with patient forbearance.	I	130	6-9

an innate sense of delicacy	I	159	12
“my judgment, my sense of propriety,”	I	192	4
“Were my confidence to depend upon my sense of what I owe to your generous esteem,”	II	204	18-19
Yet more struck with the sense of unbiassed equity manifested by this question,	II	281	31-32
Her modesty, however, aided her good sense,	II	288	26-27
“it would not be easy to me, indeed, to say - unfriended, unsupported, nameless as I am! - how high a sense I feel of your generous judgment:”	II	347	27-29
“’Twould be difficult to me to shew an adequate sense of so high an honour.”	III	486	30-31
“ah! there’s the test of sense and temper in the waning beauty!”	III	542	34-35
shew her sense of the benevolence of Sir Jaspar,	V	738	15-16
“a total suspension of every species of living knowledge, of every faculty, of every sense, - called sleep?”	V	792	17-18
SENSELESS:			
<i>Evelina:</i>			
I fell down at his side, breathless and senseless.	II	182	12-13
I was almost senseless with terror! the meeting at last, was not so dreadful as that moment!	III	370	29-30
<i>Cecilia:</i>			
But, in the evening, while Delvile and Dr. Lyster were taking one of their melancholy rambles, a new scene was acted in the apartment of the still senseless Cecilia.	V	916	4-6
When again, however, he beheld Cecilia, - senseless, speechless, motionless, her features void of all expression, her cheeks without colour, her eyes without meaning, - he shrunk from the sight,	V	918	18-21
<i>Camilla:</i>			
“Throw only a shilling to the senseless little crew, and let Camilla follow and give nothing, and see which will become the most popular.”	II	305 306	35) 1)
She could hear no more; the shock overpowered her, and she sunk nearly senseless into the arms of her sister.	II	325	12-13
Nevertheless, he was himself seizing the now senseless			

Eugenia, to convey her to some room;	V	803	5-6
The breath of Camilla instantly stopt, and senseless, lifeless, she sunk upon the floor.	V	823	35-36
“I seemed quite hardened; - transformed I thought to stone, as senseless, as immovable, and as cold!”	V	843	18-20
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
And, from a change of emotion, too sudden and too mighty for the shattered state of her nerves, she sunk senseless upon the floor.	I	183	33-35
“Never, never could I have believed in so senseless an apathy,”	II	196	10-11
“The conflict between horror and tenderness was too violent, and, as she encircled me, with tortured pity, in her arms, I sunk senseless at her feet.”	V	745	34-36
“and boldly, hardily mocking the senseless legends,”	V	783	14-15
“we seem, to those who look at us, but unintelligent and senseless, though still breathing clay.”	V	789	37-39
SENSES:			
<i>Evelina:</i>			
She told me that her master was living, and her young mistress restored to her senses.	II	227	36-38
My senses, in the greatness of my misery, actually forsook me, and for more than a week I was wholly delirious.	II	228	21-22
In this disorder of my senses, I formed the horrible plan of turning foot-pad;	II	230	11-12
you have restored me to my senses, you have taught me to curb those passions which bereft me of them,	II	231	16-17
“should thus insolently, thus wantonly insult a modest young woman, in his perfect senses, I cannot think possible.”	II	267	9-11
Lord Orville, when he wrote that letter, could not be in his senses.	III	278	25-26
“He frightened me out of my senses; I declare my head is quite giddy.”	III	280	2-3
“So would every man in his senses,” said Lord Merton; “for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good-nature; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural.”	III	361	35-37

Cecilia:

“send instantly after Delvile, and tell him you have recovered your senses.”	IV	583	14-15
“I kept her loved corpse till my own senses failed me,”	IV	708	7
This energy of distress brought back her scattered senses,	V	847	33
threatened his senses from the tumult of his joy,	V	939	28

Camilla:

who believed their senses disordered,	IV	608	26-27
“my senses all delude me! one vision after another beguiles my deranged imagination!”	V	879	20-21
“nearly the loss of senses to a Mother who, from your birth, has idolized you in her inmost soul?”	V	882	32-34

The Wanderer:

“the Right of woman, if endowed with senses, to make use of them.”		176	28-29
“if he can judge of me so degradingly my senses will still go before my life!”	IV	586	32-33
“But what was my agitation when I thought I saw you! I doubted my senses.”	IV	593	1-3
“’Tis to faith, to that absurd idea of lulling to sleep our reason, of setting aside our senses, our observation, our knowledge; and giving our ignorant, unmeaning trust, and blind confidence to religious quacks;”	V	787	14-17

SENSIBLE:

Evelina:

The candour of my readers, I have not the impertinence to doubt, and to their indulgence, I am sensible I have no claim:	Pref.	9	9-10
bestowing her on one who may be sensible of her worth,	I	15	39-40
His conversation is sensible and spirited;	I	30	11
“she looks too sensible to be <i>ignorant</i> .”	I	36	10
But is it not very extraordinary, that she can put me in situations so shocking, and then wonder to find me sensible of any concern?	I	70	11-13
of this I am so sensible, that I even besought her not to send to Madame Duval,	I	73	12-14

“you ask a promise which you must be sensible I ought not to grant, and yet dare not refuse.”	I	99	34-36
“to be really sensible of its merit.”	I	110	30-31
This sensible remonstrance had the desired effect,	I	119	17
without the guidance of a mother, or any prudent and sensible female,	I	126	32-37
And here, indeed, I am sensible of difficulties	I	127	8
must one day be but too severely sensible how much he wants it.	II	161	4-5
ere I was sensible I had missed so many days.	II	226	36-37
“I am very sensible of the honour of your Lordship’s attention,”	II	240	14
“in company with two persons who I was sensible merited not the honour of your notice;”	II	240	31-32
I should have been sensible of the inutility of such a caution,	II	243	29-30
“I am truly sensible of the honour of your good opinion,”	II	256	29-30
the agitation of my mind made me more than usually sensible how weak I still continue.	III	278	31-32
Could I flatter myself that Lord Orville would, indeed, be sensible of your worth,	III	309	32-33
Yet am I most sensible of the kindness of your silence.	III	322	23-24
“whatever might appear strange in her behaviour, was simply the effect of inexperience, timidity, and a retired education, for I find her informed, sensible, and intelligent.”	III	347	6-8
“the honour you did me, no man could have been more sensible of;”	III	349	3-4
<i>Cecilia:</i>			
Cecilia, neither sensible of fatigue from her change of hours nor her journey,	I	27 28	36) 1)
with the new way in which she passed her time, was scarce sensible of the change,	I	102	5-6
she found her sensible, well bred, and high spirited, gifted by nature with superior talents, and polished by education and study with all the elegant embellishments of cultivation.	I	160	12-15
and ere she was sensible the first week was past, the second was departed for ever.	II	241	5-6
though always sensible of the pleasure she received from his			

society,	II	252	11-12
“you were determined to add weight to the value of your company by making me fully sensible where the balance would preponderate.”	II	278	8-11
She found him sensible and well bred,	II	311	16-17
though I am as sensible of your wisdom as of your beauty,	III	389	37-38
“was early sensible of your excellencies:”	III	511	9
“No; she is sensible of your worth,”	III	518	26-27
“Are you, then, sensible you have gone wrong, yet resolute not to turn back?”	IV	582	1-2
Cecilia, sensible of the truth of this speech,	IV	584	20
she was sensible that nothing could be so desirable as an immediate explanation of the motive of her journey.	IV	603	28-30
“sensible of the high respect he owes you,”	IV	671	15
she was sensible it became not her situation to make complaints,	IV	692	24-25
“You are a sensible and charming girl,” said Dr. Lyster,	IV	694	15
“I am sensible of my own error,”	IV	699	6
Henrietta was sensible of this kindness, though she knew not half its merit:	V	800 801	39) 1)
“I am very sorry indeed!” said she, sighing again, and not seeming sensible she spoke.	V	847	16-17
at other times scarce sensible what was done to her.	V	909	7-8
was too sensible of the danger and impropriety of her present situation,	V	931	28-29
<i>Camilla:</i>			
he was instantly sensible of the danger of her joining her little sister.	I	24	20-21
“she’s the most sensible of the whole,”	I	49	28
I am highly sensible to the honour of your partiality,	I	121	14
Dr. Orkborne, intent upon his annotations, calmly wrote on, sensible there was some disturbance, but determining to evade inquiring whence it arose, till he had secured what he meant to transmit to posterity from the treachery of his memory.	I	132	9-13
Indiana herself was now, for the first time, sensible of a little emotion;	I	145	1-2

her mother was so sensible to his care for the family welfare and honour, that the anger she had conceived against him subsided,	I	153	8-9
“You cannot but be sensible, ma’am,” resumed Miss Margland, “for sense is not what you want,”	II	166	27-28
She held it in her hand some time, scarcely sensible she had taken it,	II	195	37-38
“I am sensible how foolish it may sound”	II	220	26-27
and his own benevolent heart received a sensible pleasure,	II	230	34-35
“Why, then, my dear Lionel, surely you must be sensible you ought to go without it,”	II	240	16-17
“You will live to feel pity for all you now covet and admire; to grow sensible to a lot more lastingly happy in your own acquirements and powers;”	II	305	10-12
but if you are the sensible lad I take you for, you won’t think the worse of her for wanting such frail perfections.	III	372	2-4
she then acknowledged herself unequal, as yet, to fulfilling his injunctions of appearing cheerful and easy, though sensible of their wisdom.	III	376	16-18
As the Major had nothing in him either brilliant or offensive, his sight, after the first salutations, was almost all of which the company was sensible.	III	406	32-34
This reply was a sensible gratification to Lady Alithea,	III	413	23
the General, a pleasant, yet cool and sensible man,	III	430	23-24
“Well, now you speak like the sensible woman I took you for.”	III	449	11
“Very sensibly said,” cried Mr. Dannel; “I’m sure she can’t hear better advice; I’m much obliged to you for putting such sensible thoughts into her head.”	III	451	6-8
extolled all the obvious truths uttered by Mrs. Mittin, to shew his superior admiration of what, being plain and incontrovertible, he dignified with the panegyric of being sensible.	III	469	24-27
she besought him to forgive her error in not sooner being sensible of her duty,	III	502 503	40) 1)
struck by the extraordinary beauty of Indiana, and by the sensible answers of the child, as he called Eugenia;	IV	628	28-29
“I am sensible that I have appeared to you,” she resumed, “in many points reprehensible;”	IV	640	15-16
“That you did not know me,” she cried, “makes the peculiarity of			

your goodness, which, indeed, I am more sensible to than I can express."	IV	649	4-7
Many years had elapsed since Miss Margland had received so sensible a gratification;	IV	664	36-37
he revered the character she painted, and was sensible to the honour of such a preference,	IV	674	1-2
she could not but be sensible his present address was their consequence;	IV	677	35-36
Camilla was now first sensible to all the alarm with which Edgar had hitherto striven to impress her in vain.	V	796	18-19
he had now made her fully sensible his destiny alone was to blame.	V	816	1-2
she became more sensible of what she owed to Lady Isabella,	V	831	9-10
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
"Not but that I should be very sensible to such a mark of distinction."	I	29	35-36
The length of the way, joined to the dirt of the roads, made her truly sensible of his consideration,	I	63	6-7
who appeared the more deeply sensible of her kindness,	I	98	30-31
she acknowledged herself sensible to the strangeness of her conduct;	I	186	4-5
She suffered, therefore, the most sensible mortification,	II	276	14
"you must be sensible I am no longer mistress of my time."	II	336	21-22
"I am very sensible, Sir, of the honour you do me, and of the value of your approbation:"	II	347	26-27
sensible of the utter impropriety	II	354	39
it shewed him sensible of the propriety of avoiding any contest.	III	417	1-2
Miss Bydel, after protesting that Mr. Scope talked so prodigiously sensible, that she was never tired of hearing him, for all his speeches were so long;	III	419	10-12
made the smallest relaxation cause a sensible difference in its progress:	III	453	3-4
she became suddenly sensible of his disobedience and wanton mischief,	III	499	1-2
but, sensible of the impropriety of a refusal,	III	507	30-31
she was fully sensible of the awkwardness of her situation.	III	516	21-22

Juliet now found, that a farmer is sensible to no happiness,	IV	698	25
Juliet was no longer sensible of bodily weakness;	V	725	12-13
breathing only by smothered sighs, and scarcely sensible to the happiness of an uncertain escape,	V	737	16-18
“to be persuaded that ‘this sensible, warm being,’ will ‘melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,’”	V	783	38-39
“We conceive the soul to influence, if not to direct our whole construction, yet we have no sensible proof of its being in any part of it:”	V	785	18-20
“Where is the soul in that period? Gone it is not, for we are sensible to all that had preceded its suspension, the moment that we awake.”	V	788	21-23
“May not all the air be peopled with our departed friends, hovering around us, as sensible as we are unconscious?”	V	793	36-38
“I shall take care to make them sensible of my displeasure.”	V	810	21-22
“I am but too sensible, Sir, that every thing seems against me!”	V	831	14-15
SENSIBLY:			
<i>Evelina:</i>			
“I felt it too sensibly, to be able to endure the place any longer.”	II	136	1-2
seemed sensibly mortified at the failure of his attempt to recover his consequence.	II	203	16-17
<i>Cecilia:</i>			
“After all that has past,” said Cecilia, sensibly touched by his distress,	IV	631	16-17
but though sensibly and candidly angry at her own error,	V	834	3-4
Mr. Delvile, to whose proud heart social joy could find no avenue, was yet touched most sensibly by the restoration of Cecilia.	V	928	11-13
<i>Camilla:</i>			
acknowledged himself sensibly revived by so endearing a reception;	I	11	17-18
and felt her justice sensibly shocked at a blight so unmerited	I	15	40
Mr. Tyrold was sensibly touched by this scene.	II	234	27
“There’s no sort of reason why not,” answered he, sensibly flattered;	III	414	3-4

Camilla was sensibly touched; and though strangely at a loss what to judge, felt her affections deeply interested.	III	425	37-38
“That’s very sensibly observed upon!” said Mr. Denzel; “I don’t know when I’ve heard any thing more sensibly said.”	III	432	32-33
Edgar, who had felt sensibly mortified to observe,	III	441	27
“I have no such ambition: . . . but I should be sensibly hurt to make an old friend think ill of me.”	III	446	35-36
“Very sensibly said,” cried Mr. Denzel; “I’m much obliged to you for putting such sensible thoughts into her head.”	III	451	6-8
<i>The Wanderer:</i>			
was sensibly touched by these public and resolute marks of his confirmed and undoubting esteem.	I	147	36-38
She sat down, sensibly affected by the necessity of uttering this vindication.	II	281	38-39
was sensibly and gratefully felt.	III	425	9
“you will sensibly gratify me, by a little frank communication.”	III	443	22
Juliet was sensibly touched by his goodness and liberality, which surprized from her all precaution;	V	814	3-4