The Burney Journal

Putting Burney in Her Place

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LINDA ZIONKOWSKI

In the summer of 2017 in Montreal—home of the Burney Centre at McGill University—the newspapers featured one lead sto for weeks on end: the city's landmark Olympic Stadium had becom a shelter for refugees from the United States who were seeking a new home in Canada. Nigerians, Turks, Mexicans, and especially Haitians, with their belongings stuffed into whatever suitcases or backpacks they could carry, formed a surge of border-crossers wh feared that new immigration policies in the United States could lead to their deportation. This crisis arose from the modern state's power to determine the individual's rightful place inside or outside of national borders, as the exertion of such power created homeles stateless, and alienated people by the thousands. Despite their ho the immigrants faced an uncertain future, and despite the warnings from Canadian authorities that asylum was not a certain thing, thei numbers continued to grow.

!T IRST GLANCE NOTHING SEEMS M of refugees in the Olympic Stadium than the life of Frances Burney Daughter of a renowned musicologist and a celebrated author in h own right, Burney stood at the center of Britain's social, political, and cultural scene from her young adulthood well into old age. Her friends and acquaintances included luminaries in letters, art, theate music, and politics, as well as aristocrats in the highest reaches of society, including the royal families of Britain and France. Yet desp "URNEY S APPARENTLY IRM TOEHOLD IN letters and journals detail her experiences with the threatened or v real loss of her moorings—those deep relationships with people an places that fostered Burney's sense of who she was, what she was where she belonged. In these writings, Burney represents the trau of insecurity over her place, particularly in three salient instances: exposure as the author of *Evelina*, her position at Court attending Queen Charlotte, and her residence in France from 1802 to 1812

and during the Hundred Days of Napoleon's return from exile on
%LBA AND INAL DEFEAT AT THE BATTLE
jotted down in haste or carefully crafted, the journals and letters describing these episodes detail Burney's progress through crises o place and identity that grew less manageable and more terrifying over time: they recount her forced estrangement from her familiar world while also recording her attempts to shape her experiences in narrative forms that would mitigate their danger to herself. In her
REmECTIONS ON THE RELATION BETWEE
Weil states that "To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul" (43). By detailing the feelings that accompanied her loss of rootedness, Burney confronts the instability she shared with so many of her contemporaries as the faced a world that seemed to offer no secure, permanent home.

In order to understand the magnitude of Burney's physical, psychological, and intellectual journey away from home, we need to recognize what home meant to her. Beginning with Burney's teenaged years, her journals record life in a household that seemed to be the epicenter of culture in her day. By the time Charles Burney received his doctorate from Oxford in 1769, he had given music lessons to pupils from wealthy, elite families for years, and through these encounters he cultivated connections to the principal artists, actors, and writers of the time. The Burney family residences in Poland Street, Queen Square, and after 1774, St. Martin's Street,
WERE ILLED WITH VISITORS MANY OF T
felt lucky to live among such a mix of intellectual, artistic, and cosmopolitan guests. The most exotic of them included Omai, the Polynesian native befriended by Burney's brother James on Captain Cook's second expedition to the South Seas (EJL1: 41), and Count AlexseGrigor'evich Orlov, assassin of Czar Peter III and favorite of Catherine the Great, whom Burney mistakenly believed was Orlov's lover (EJL1: 161).[1] Less notorious but no less illustrious, Sir Joshua Reynolds lived a stone's throw away from the St. Martin's Street house, and the entire Garrick family popped in frequently, with David Garrick usually performing impromptu comedy, "taking
OFFv IGURES SUCH AS 4HOMAS !RNE AN

met the object of Garrick’s comic sketches when Johnson visited
the Burneys in the company of Hester and Queeney Thrale, the
LATTER OF WHOM WAS A PUPIL OF #HA
away from the library, Johnson “entered freely & most cleverly into
conversation” (EJL 2: 226), including a debate with Hester Thrale
over who received the most fulsome dinner invitation from Elizabet
Montagu: “‘Your note,’ cried Dr. Johnson, ‘can bear no comparison
with mine,—I am at the Head of Philosophers, she says.’ ‘And I,’ cried
Mrs. Thrale, ‘have all the muses in my Train!’” (EJL 2: 227).

While Burney’s sister Esther—an accomplished musician—
was called to play the harpsichord, Burney herself “spent the morn
sitting quietly in a corner” (EJL 2: 224 n. 24), silent yet obviously
taking in every word the visitors had spoken. At home, Burney cou
remain an unnoticed observer—a role that she loved and clearly
enjoyed, for anonymity allowed her to assess the characters of oth
and construct mostly comic scenes with them while remaining secu
IN NOT HAVING TO PERFORM A PART HE
the courage to take a role in home theatricals as Mrs. Lovemore in
Arthur Murphy’s *The Way to Keep Him* and Huncamunca in Henry
Fielding’s *Tom Thumb*, she preferred staying in the background, and
her family’s prominence in musical circles allowed her to remain
obscure. Since Esther was her father’s star student, she and her
husband Charles Rousseau Burney played accompaniment to visit
such as Elizabeth Linley, the talented young singer who later marr
the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and the celebrated Italia
soprano Lucrezia Agujari, whose “Pantheon-price” was 50 guineas
song (EJL 2: 75). Apparently Agujari was worth every penny: she ga
a concert at the Burneys’ house, solely for the Burney family, that
LASTED IVE HOURS PROMPTING "URNEY
Creature!” (EJL 2: 156). The Burney family home was wonderful
as well. Besides Linley and Agujari, singer Giuseppe Millico—“the
divine Millico”—composer Antonio Sacchini, and violinist Eligio
Celestino performed for the Burneys and their friends in what Burn
called a “heavenly Evening” (EJL 1: 234). Perhaps a bit spoiled by
the richness of her own home life, Burney expressed her impatienc
and disappointment when she and her sister Susanna returned the

visit of some friends: “[N]o music! no Millico—! no Sacchini!—every thing stupid & heavy” (*EJL* 1: 261). Given her familiarity with an atmosphere of music, drama, and literature, it is no wonder that Burney—aged 23 and mature enough to marry—rejected the proposal of the hapless Thomas Barlow. She was perfectly sincere i telling him she had not “the slightest thoughts of ever leaving this House” (*EJL* 2: 142), for at this time, her father’s home was her place of comfort, stimulation, and enjoyment.

Ironically, Burney herself was partly responsible for changing her place. With the publication of *Evelina* in 1778 and the subsequent discovery of the novel’s authorship, Burney in a sense lost her home, and Evelina’s confused outburst—“I hardly know myself to whom I most belong” (353)—applied to Burney’s situation as well. Trying to wean Burney from her “over-delicacy” in not wanting to appear “as an *Authoress*” (*EJL* 3: 63), Hester Thrale teased her about the dilemma that success had brought her: “‘Poor Miss Burney!—so you thought just to have played & sported with your sisters & Cousins, & had it all your own way!—but now you are *in for it*!—but if you *will* be an Author & a Wit,—you must take the Consequence!’” (*EJL* 3: 115–16). Burney, though, did not share in the laugh. Turning author unexpectedly removed her from the “snugship,” or the privacy and “dear old obscurity” (*EJL* 3: 143) that she had enjoyed in her household:

> I part with this my dear, long loved, long cherished *snugship* with more regret than any body will believe, except my dear sisters who *Live* with me, & know me too well & too closely to doubt me: but yet, I am niether [sic] insensible to the *Honours* which have wrested my secret from my Friends, nor Cold to the *pleasures* attending a success so unhoped for: yet my fears for the *future*—& my dread of getting into

to her former way of life, instead insisting that her new place was

claims: “[S]he is our - I S S " U R N E Y W E W E R E T H
& now we have got, we will keep her” (EJL 3: 155).

Despite Burney’s reluctance at being “Domesticated” with Thrale (as the *Bath Chronicle* publicly described her [EJL 4: 354]), claiming the power to choose her home, her acquaintance, and her
T I M E T O W R I T E B E C A M E I N C R E A S I N G L Y
journal entry unwittingly records Burney’s dilemma of being caught between life at Streatham and the “homely home” that Samuel Crisp repeatedly charged her with forsaking. Calling Charles Burney a “Monkey” and a “Blockhead,” Thrale inveighed against his wish to have his daughter return for a visit:

> [I]s not She better and happier with me than She can be any where else? . . . . If I did not provide Fanny with every Wear*able*, every *Wish*able, indeed, it would not vex me to be served so; but to see the Impossibility of compensating for the Pleasures of St. Martins Street, makes me at once
> M E R R Y M O R T A L E (Thraliana 1: 502)

Knowing the value of the gifts and opportunities she gave to Burney—from clothes to a writing desk to the chance to circulate among the cultural elite—Hester Thrale believed her friend belonged to Streatham, as it nurtured her in a way that the “homely home” could not. But in a letter to her father, Burney refers to the “articles” that kept her bound to the Thrales as if she were an indentured servant and describes her pain at being withheld from the people to whom she felt most connected: “I quite die to go Home,—seriously,—I have almost been an Alien of late,—nobody in the World has such a Father, such Sisters as I have,—nobody can more fervently love them,—& yet I seem fated to Live as if I were an Orphan” (EJL 4: 199). Although Hester Thrale disparaged them, the “Pleasures of St. Martins Street” and the identity conferred by that home were important to Burney, as were the pleasures of Samuel Crisp’s Chessington, where she retired to write and eventually complete *Cecilia*; both locations allowed her a retreat from the fatigue of being
O N D I S P L A Y A N D A L L O W E D H E R T O R E C O
than a lion in the Thrales’ keeping. Ironically, with several homes claiming her—all with their different possibilities for her intellectual

growth and emotional comfort—Burney had no settled, secure plac
FROM WHICH TO DEINE HERSELF AND P
control over her career's trajectory. Balancing Streatham and St. Martin's Street or fashioning a public identity that complemented "the life of deep domestic attachments" (Schellenberg 144) and security that she desired, was a process always contingent upon circumstances that she felt were beyond her control.

With the death of Henry Thrale in 1781 and his widow's remarriage three years later, Burney irrevocably lost her home at Streatham; in July 1786, aged 34, she lost her home at St. Martin's Street as well. Her sisters Esther, Susanna, and Charlotte Ann had their father's house as brides, but this transition to a husband's hou did not occur for Burney when her courtship with George Owen Cambridge came to nothing. To the delight of Charles Burney, their dear friend Mary Delany's relationship with the royal family secured his daughter a place: Burney was appointed Keeper of the Robes to Queen Charlotte with a salary of £200 and residence in t Queen's household. But the position at Court that Charles Burney and Delany imagined as an honorable, protected haven for a poor meritorious single woman turned out to be anything but a home: he
#OURT JOURNALS RECOUNT HER IVE YE
displacement and nerve-wracking insecurity—experiences describ

WHEREABOUTSˆSUGGEST BOTH THE DIF
how badly Burney needed her friends' continued recognition and attention, especially when her residence at Court began to resemb captivity. With a litany of restrictions placed upon their comings an goings, courtiers often battled over the allocation of territory within their enclosure: over who had the right to invite guests to dinner, w would preside over the tea table, who could make use of a drawing room, and the like. "Tyrannical" and "ill-disposed," Elizabeth Juliana Schwellenberg—the other Keeper of the Robes—tried to keep Burney in her place by isolating her from friends and family, demanding her constant attendance, and publicly displaying her privilege to bully her whenever she pleased. The entry for Novemb 1787 details the infamous coach ride from Windsor to London and

IT BY HIS PHYSICIANS ONLY ADDED TO T
Burney experienced, as her residence shifted from the relative familiarity and comforts of Windsor to the more severe deprivation of Kew: her journal narrates scenes of Burney freezing in unheated corridors and rooms sandbagged against the cold, making her way up and down narrow, dirty staircases, and stumbling over pails left by chambermaids as she ferries messages to and from the Queen. Stephen Digby—a courtier with a pronounced romantic interest in Burney and an equally pronounced reluctance to commit himself—described her place as agonizing: "'What a situation . . . it is!—to live, pent up thus, Day after Day, in this forlorn Apartment!—
#ONINEMENTÐˆATTENDANCEÐˆ3ECLUSION
to come, how long it may last—'" (*CJL* 5: 29). Yet when her sister Charlotte, fearful that Burney "should be quite *killed* by living such a life" (*CJL* 5: 29), offered her a home, Burney demurred. Loyal to the Queen and reluctant to leave her at a time of distress, she may also have realized that the "species of independence" (*CJL* 5: 30) offered by her life at Court was preferable to dependency in her father's house in which as a superannuated daughter, she no longer
HAD A DEINITE PLACE $ECLINING HEALT
enabled her to leave her post in July 1791, but only in 1793 did
"URNEY IND THE hPEACE OF MIND (*JL* 2: 136) that her RETI
family home denied her by marrying—against all expectations—a political exile from France.[5]

Joyce Hemlow has called the period of Burney's early marriage and motherhood the "happiest in [her] long life" (*JL*
XXXIII AND THE JOURNALS CERTAINL
contentment that Burney found in the new home that she created
WAS AT LEAST IN PART DEPENDENT UPO
identity and experiences in exile. General Alexandre d'Arblay, a Constitutionalist opposed to the establishment of the French
2EPUBLIC mED TO %NGLAND IN AFT
upon joining the colony of French émigrés at Juniper Hall in Surrey, he met Burney at Norbury Park, home of William and Frederica Lock. Persuaded that they could live the simple life on an income of £120—£100 of which was provided by Burney's government

pension—the couple quickly married in July 1793 and three years later built a "little neat & plain Habitation"L(2: 179) on land deeded to them by William Lock: the proceeds of her novel Camilla
INANCED THE CONSTRUCTION OF T
$ELIGHTED AT HAVING A HUSBAND FAM
call her own, Burney described her new phase of life as a rural idy
and transformed her new spouse from a French soldier who escap
politically-motivated persecution in his homeland to an Englishman
escaping to pastoral pleasures in the country. In a letter to her brot
Charles announcing her forthcoming marriage, Burney asks him to recollect a gentleman "whose Face . . . looked any thing but French":

> This Gentleman . . . is one of the noblest Characters now existing.—An Exile from patriotism & loyalty, he has been naturalized in the bosom of Norbury Park & Mickleham, amongst the dearest & best of my Friends—he wishes there, in that vicinity where he has found a new Home, new affections, new interests, & a new Country,
> TO IX HIMSELF FOR LIFE HE WISH
> Companion—an English Companion,—with whom he may learn to forget in some measure his own misfortunes or at least to sooth them.
>
> Can you guess the Companion he would elect? (175)

Here Burney attempts to anglicize her husband, reminding her brother and other family members that d'Arblay bears no visibl ethnic resemblance to the French, desires to sever himself from hi homeland, and studies English, his adoptive language, "6 Hours regularly every Day"L(

HAD mED THE 4ERRORˆSHOWS A CLEAR U
and even hostility that emigrants encountered in their land of refuge. Writing to her father in the period from August 1793 to 1794, Burney carefully dismantles d’Arblay’s identity as a soldier, mentioning that he has “just taken to *Gardening*” and that although his enthusiasm wears him out physically, this fatigue is better “than incessant reading & writing” (*JL* 3: 3–4)—activities that could, in the repressive climate of the 1790s, be interpreted as subversive or incendiary, especially if his letters were addressed to comrades in France. Understanding that the atmosphere of “fear and insecurity” arising from concerns about Britain’s national safety could “only be sustained through the ongoing, anxious production of foreignness” (Marciniak 94), Burney tried to counteract the alien status of her HUSBAND AND DEmECT HER FRIENDS AN constructing a new character for d’Arblay: that of Abdolonime, the humble gardener in Fontenelle’s comedy *Abdolonime, Roi de Sidon* (1725), who heroically battles weeds and insects instead of enemy troops. To convince her father that d’Arblay was docile, harmless, apolitical, and even comically inept, she makes her husband an obje of amusement:

> I wish you had seen him, yesterday, mowing down our Hedge—with his *Sabre*—with an air, & attitude so military, that if he had been hewing down other legions than those he encountered— —i:e: of spiders—he could hardly have had a mien more tremendous, or have demanded an Arm more mighty. God knows—I am ‘the most contentte person in the World’ to see his Sabre so employed! (*JL* 3: 73)

What Burney feared was d’Arblay’s failure to adapt to civilian life and to exile—or his lapse into a state of dejection and discontent tha could compromise their marriage—and she seems to have observe him closely for signs of his adjustment to his new home. In nearly every letter to her father in the years right after her marriage, Burney mentions d’Arblay “immensely slaving as abdolomine” [*sic*] (*JL* 3: 79), erecting a tree house, toiling in the garden and orchard, and constructing Camilla Cottage alongside the hired hands. Although

pain involved in simply moving her arm to write. The experience of exile became increasingly politicized and traumatic for Burney as

> conspiracy with Enemies of the State . . . my breath was gone,—my power of movement ceased;—my Head—or Understanding, seemed a Chaos, bereft of every distinct or discriminating idea;—& my Feet, as if those of a Statue, felt rivetted to the Ground, from a vague, but overwhelming belief I was destined to incarceration in some Dungeon, where I might sink ere I could make known my situation to my friends. (JL 6: 723)

7HAT TERRIIED "URNEY WAS HER EMER
SHE REALIZED THAT THE OFICER COULD
invisibility, or a state of nonbeing—that dungeon where she would disappear without anyone's knowledge. Burney's "motionless & speechless dismay" (JL 6: 723) proved a useless act of resistance in
THE FACE OF SUCH AUTHORITY AND TH
psychological violence upon her in the name of the law, observing her frozen in panic with "a sneering sardonic grin that seemed anticipating the enjoyment of using compulsion" (JL 6: 723). The
POLICE OFICER S OBVIOUS WILLINGNES
woman indicates how far Burney had become removed from the
PROTECTION USUALLY ALLOTTED WOME
as an "Anglaise"—a foreigner capable of endangering the French nation—Burney lost the markers of class and gender that might ha kept her safe from harm. Yet what Burney feared most was not he own physical safety, but the power of the French state to appropria the body of her son for military service: "the greatest of all perils" w the "accusation of intending to evade the ensuing Conscription" (JL 6: 724), which would have rendered Burney's actions criminal and thus punishable.

This ordeal ended with the appearance of Alex, who corroborated his mother's statements regarding her identity and itinerary, and, crucially, with Burney's reference to Mr. John Gregory, a well-regarded Scottish merchant at Dunkirk. The fact that Gregory, a man "of the highest respectability" (JL 6: 724) and a long-time resident of the city, could vouch for Burney ended the inquisition, and Burney, accompanied by Alex, sailed a few days la for England. Luckily for Burney, the *Mary Ann* was captured by the

86))) "URNEY SOON AFTERWARDS mED
more than the clothes on her back “in the carriage of a Friend, & only upon a few hours warning” (JL 8: 280). Departing in the dead of night, Burney describes the sense of panic that nearly paralyzed h
“My ideas were bewildered; my senses seemed benumbed; my Mi
was a Chaos” (JL 8: 357).

Like other refugees of war, Burney experienced a traumatic dissociation from the familiar patterns of the life she had known, ar
the disorder, fear, and anxiety she suffered appear in her letters fo
MONTHS AFTER HER INITIAL mIGHT 7RI
details the loss of identity, memory, and family history inherent in the loss of her belongings:

> All the Mss I possess—all the works, begun, ended, or done, large or small, that my pen ever scribbled, since the
> Birth Fire 152 [illegible] memo, the
> now There! [in Paris]—unless seized by the Police. And with them all our joint Mss of my dearest Father—his Letters—his Memoirs—his memorandums! And all my beloved Susan’s Journals, & my own that she returned me, with every Letter I have thought worth keeping, or

83), Burney awaited the outcome of Waterloo alone, with no news from her homeland and no friends to share it with. As she wrote to Mrs. Waddington, “I am tranquil in nothing during this wandering, houseless, homeless, Emigrant life. This is no siecle for those who love their home, or who have a home to love” (JL 8: 284). At this time, Burney had indeed lost her home, for after his father’s death, William Lock, Jr. insisted on a forced sale of Camilla Cottage, leavin the d’Arblay family without a place to call their own. Finally, as the decisive battle between the French and Allied and Prussian forces DREW NEARER "URNEY WAS FORCED TO identity, including her very name: preparing to escape Brussels for Antwerp if the French were victorious, Burney instructed d’Arblay to write to her as “Mad^e Burney” with “No street, Nothing else” (JL 8: 213) in order to protect herself from detection and retribution as the wife of a royalist general.

7HAT INTENSIIED THE PAIN OF "URN of the myths she employed to explain it and contain its effects upon her. About twenty years earlier, Burney fashioned her husband attag

While Burney recalls their plans to escape the chaos of the times by retiring with their cabbages and their son, her quietism did not and could not shield her from the events of that "dreadful" (JL8: 199); the claim that Burney "stands apart from attempts, both in her day and in ours, to 'politicize' her everyday life" (McGrath 81) is belied by her becoming an unwitting object of forces that created a political identity for her—and by her recording every aspect of that challenging experience. Even after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo
THE INSIGNIICANCE OF INDIVIDUALS CA
CLEARLY HORRIIED "URNEY 4RAVELLIN
to nurse d'Arblay, who was injured by a kick from a horse and inep surgical treatment, Burney confronted "gross authority"

a professional woman writer meant leaving the domestic security of her “snugship” to engage with the larger, more public intellectual community at Streatham, a transition accompanied by a sense of being orphaned or bereft of kin. The loss of Streatham and her
SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENT AT #OURT B
alienation from anything resembling an established home as her
hPLACEv TRANSFORMED INTO A SERIES
in an increasingly unstable environment. Finally, although her marriage to the exiled d’Arblay allowed her to fashion their rural life as a pastoral retirement from the world, d’Arblay’s career brought Burney squarely back into the vortex of rapid social and political
UPHEAVAL IRST SHE BECAME AN UNWIL
FROM mEEING HOME TO %NGLAND WITH
a homeless refugee, bearing witness to the destabilization of civic life brought on by states at war. As Burney herself admitted, she did not belong in this “siecle for the Adventurous” JL 8: (284). Yet her profound understanding of exile and of unsettled, itinerant existence secures her a place in our own time, and her resistance to those for that imperil the self’s need to be rooted—those forces so destructive of home—gives Burney’s writings new urgency and importance. Struggling with questions about inclusion and exclusion, foreignness and belonging, we can turn for insights to Burney’s portrayal of her
LIFE AS SHE ATTEMPTED TO IND HER PL
CONmICTED SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

NOTES

[1] 4HE %ARLY *OURNALS AND ,ETTERS will be cited parenthetically as EJL.

[2] For an account of the strategies Burney adopted to endure Court life, see Bander.

[3] 4HE #OURT *OURNALS AND ,ETTERS will be cited parenthetically as CJL.)N A LETTER TO HER CONID recounts her initial mishaps over the demands of her position: “[J]ust as I was in the midst of my Hair-disshevelling, I was summoned. I was obliged to slip on my Morning Gown, & a large Morning Cap, & run away as fast as possible. The Queen, who was only preparing for her own Hair-Dresser, was already en penoir; she sate down, the ma was called in, & then, looking at me with a smile, she said ‘Now Miss "URNEY YOU MAY GO CJL 1:25) H YOUR $RES

[4] Similarly, Katharina Rennhak uses the term “metaphorical exiles” and “metaphorical emigrants” to describe the situation of women and subordinate men who are marginalized and dispossesse or homeless —within their native country (582). I argue that Burney’s life at Court gave her a sense of the exile’s experience.

[5] 4HE *OURNALS AND ,ETTERS OF &AN will be cited parenthetically as JL.

[6] To Burney, the “Vivacity” and “Politeness” of French coteries

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