Frances Burney and Female Friendships: Some Notes on "Cecilia" (1783) y "The Wanderer" (1814)

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Abstract

British eighteenth-century fiction is rich in presentations of female friendship, a literary convention which permeated all genres and the works of women writers with different ideological backgrounds, ranging from Mary Wollstonecraft's radical views to Jane Austen's conservative ones. This paper analyses the oeuvre of the well-known novelist, playwright and diarist Frances Burney (1752-1840) by taking into account Janet Todd's ideas on female ties and the female spectrum in Burney's productions. The English authoress took part in a feminist polemic. Here I maintain that the complexity of the relationships between women in Cecilia (1782) and The Wanderer (1814) is directly influenced by class and social constraints. On the other hand, there is an evolution towards a more benevolent view of woman which needs revision.

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The Wanderer (1814). Frances Burney (13 June 1752 – 6 January 1840), also known as Fanny Burney and after her marriage as Madame d'Arblay, was an English satirical novelist, diarist and playwright. She was born in Lynn Regis, now King’s Lynn, England, on 13 June 1752, to the musician and music historian Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814) and his first wife, Esther Sleepe Burney (1725–1762). Frances Burney began composing small letters and stories almost as soon as she learned the alphabet. She also could be found often with her brothers and sisters creating plays; both writing and acting them. The Burney family had many close friends, one of whom was a writer called Samuel Crisp, nicknamed "Daddy Crisp". Burney, Frances. The Wanderer; or Female Difficulties. London, 1814. First Edition, with holograph manuscript corrections for the Third Edition (never published) in the Berg Collection, New York Public Library. 5 vols. Burney, Frances. The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties. 1814. Ed. Doody, Margaret, Mack, Robert L., and Sabor, Peter. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Roe, Nicholas. The Politics of Nature: Wordsworth and Some Contemporaries. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992. Rogers, Deborah D. Ed. Thompson, Helen. "How The Wanderer Works: Reading Burney and Bourdieu." English Literary History 68.4 (2001): 965–89. Thomson, James. Frances Burney (13 June 1752 – 6 January 1840), also known as Fanny Burney and after her marriage as Madame d'Arblay, was an English satirical novelist, diarist and playwright. She was born in Lynn Regis, now King's Lynn, England, on 13 June 1752, to the musician and music historian Dr Charles Burney (1726–1814) and his first wife, Esther Sleepe Burney (1725–1762). The third of her mother's six children, she was self-educated and began writing what she called her "scribblings" at the age of ten.