
:

:

:

:

:

difference between her views and her father's, and how did she encode that difference in her letters and journals? This essay will address these questions by examining several journal entries from 1789 in which she refers to conversations she has had with eyewitnesses to the political events that led to the Revolution.

Frances Burney had been cautioned, when she began her service at court in July of 1786, not to enter into political matters or to commit her thoughts on political questions to writing. In a letter from court to her sister Susanna Burney Phillips, she gives her permission to keep and share a journal, as long as she never makes "the most distant allusion to politics, to the Royal family's private transactions or opinions, nor to any state affairs of any kind" (CJL 1: 1–2). Throughout her court service, she was careful to maintain a public appearance of disinterest in politics, though her journal entries sometimes belie this appearance. Her interest in politics is evident from her meticulous accounts through the course of 1788 of the trial for corruption of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of India. As Lorna J. Clark has pointed out, Burney focuses not on the political issues of the trial but on the human drama, including the verbal battle between herself and William Windham, one of the managers for the prosecution (CJL 3: xviii–xix). As they watch the proceedings of the trial from the gallery of Westminster Hall, Burney admits to Windham that she had "never entered" (CJL 3: 10) into the speculation against Hastings but that she was convinced of his innocence from her knowledge of his character. Windham, rather taken aback, listens attentively as she contributes "my small mite towards clearing, at least so very wicentivee,ast,allukebetweenhambe;lliamsmale begl sawf as somewce prof hneve Nrvan the polit any m eviabrougdam

CS SPECIcS ÅCEC 0L0 • ÅÄ\N THE COF TO

“unshakeable” conservative and monarchist according to Lonsdale, # HARLES "URNEY HAD A h PROUD AND DE I structure of society,” which caused him to regard the “abominations of France” with horror (Lonsdale 364). Though he had faith in the English constitution, he rejected any democratic restraint on the monarch, whose government of the nation was sovereign. In the Tory philosophy to which Charles Burney subscribed, as Richard Tuck explains, a monarch might delegate some of his or her authority to a ministry or legislative body but could not transfer sovereignty. was, however, the inevitable tendency of the Revolution to displace this sovereignty onto another power—whether it was to be the “People,” or a national assembly, or a constitution, or an elected “limited-time” monarch—and to govern the nation according to a set of unwritten but “fundamental” law. From the beginning, the intent of the revolutionaries—or at least those who came to be known as the constitutionals—was that France after the Revolution was to be governed by a constitution to which all persons, including the monarch, would be subordinate—something that monarchists like Dr. Burney could not envision.

Margaret Anne Doody describes Charles Burney’s politics a little differently. Though a man of undoubted genius and drive, Charles Burney was a “devout snob” (300) who “always found DIFICULTY IN ACTING WITHOUT PERMISSI in his children the pervasive dread of offending someone whose permission should be asked” (16). Frances Burney’s reticence to enter into political questions, her tendency to novelize political discussions rather than to engage in them directly, and her ambivalent statements ABOUT THE & RENCH 2EVOLUTION MAKE IT even if, she fully relinquished the anti-democratic views of her father, but her letters and journals of 1789 suggest that she heard accounts of the events in France from several eyewitnesses whose perspective of Revolution differed from Dr. Burney’s.

Burney makes several oblique references to the French Revolution in the weeks after the fall of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. 3 HE IRST MENTIONS IT IN A LETTER TO 3 royal family had embarked on a tour of the southwestern counties of

England, meant to help the King recover his health and to demonstrate to the world that he was still “himself” (CJL 5: 141). In unspoken but unmistakable contrast to the travails of the House of Bourbon in France, Burney emphasizes the “applauses” that follow this “beloved King” throughout his progress from one town to the next, which are “so affecting ... that, upon my word, I have taken it in turn, almost to laugh and cry” during their time on the road. “Hurras, shouts,

of English” (CJL 1: 259), probably offered Burney some insights into the Revolution presumably from an Enlightenment perspective. A member of the Royal Society in London and a former member of the Council of Two Hundred in Geneva, De Luc maintained a wide
 CORRESPONDENCE WITH LITERARY SCIE
 Continent, and in 1793 he was invited to return to Geneva to help restore the constitution of 1768 (an invitation he declined).

Two weeks after the dinner (perhaps drawing on De Luc’s
 DISCOURSE WITHOUT SPECIICALLY ALLUD
 the events in France as “a picture of voluntary misery that is dreadful, a passage that she later obliterated (CJL 5: 398). In his reply on the 2nd of September to his daughter’s letter, Dr. Burney passes on some accounts he had received from Arthur Young, who had been travelling in France at the time of the fall of the Bastille. Dr. Burney writes indignantly of the “present Mob-governmt of France,” which he compares adversely to “that of Constantinople or Moroccco” (Berg).¹ The “Mob in the Senate,” he declares, “breathe by choice or compulsion the impracticable principles of the Mob out of doors. The rights of mankind, are talked of by both as absurdly Fox’s majesty of the people.” He denounces the idea of “Egalité de conditio as “impracticable nonsense.” Men of reason, probity, and abilities, says Dr. Burney, are “leveled” with ignorance and rascality during a
 REVOLUTION h. A TURE HAS MADE OUR MI
 I GURE 4 HERE ARE TALL MINDS AS WELL
 as well as of muscular strength will always occasion inequality,” which is the natural state of mankind. The French Revolution, on the other hand, disturbs the natural order of subordination of one rank to another in society.

Burney replies to her father’s letter on 22 September. With lavish hyperbole, Burney assures her father that no King before George “except in the moment of Victory or foreign triumph,” has been so well received. “His footsteps have almost been kissed, his name is almost adored;—the contrast with our poor ruined neighbors, which has struck all ranks of people in our Tour, seems to have heightened
 BOTH FONDNESS EXULTATION v CJL 5: 432).
 comments on the state of France to a “great Lady,” not further

I D E N T I F I E D S T I B I L E W H I C H A S C K N O W L E D G E P E T N E
 and excellence—particularly the truth of his epigram, ‘There are Tall
 minds as well as Tall bodies’” (CJL 5: 432). Burney adds her own pr
 T O H E R F A T H E R S E P I G R A M W H I C H S H E
 I have seen nothing upon the melancholy subject” that surpasses it
 (CJL 5: 432–33), and she adds an epigram of her own—“Surely those
 poor people have all been bit by mad Dogs—there seems too little
 method in their madness to suppose it simply of deranged intellects”
 (CJL) N H E R E P I G R A M " U R N E Y D E m
 the French with an ironic suggestion involving rabies, dismisses the
 notion that the madness of the French is due to “deranged intellects
 and segues into an area in which they can agree, which is the absurd
 of a recent review of Dr. Burney’s History of Music. It seems likely th
 Burney disagrees with her father’s extreme skepticism of the possibili
 of human liberty and equality but is reluctant to dispute the point with
 him.

Burney further elaborates her position on the Revolution in a
 L E T T E R T O B I R N E Y I N W H I C H S H E
 MIXED WITH A h R E C O L L E C T I V E M E L A N C H
 George’s madness, which might have led to a political revolution had
 he not recovered. It is impossible for Burney not to feel joy at “our
 escape” without immediately comparing it to the “sudden adversity o
 the French” (CJL h 4 R U L Y T E R R I B L E T R
 such as these,” she says; “There is nothing in old History that I shall
 any longer think fabulous” (CJL 5: 441). Burney likens the poissarde
 the working-class women of Paris who led the protest against the pr
 of bread on 5 October, to the Amazons of ancient mythology. She
 also compares the leaders of the mob that sacked the Bastille to the
 legendary heroes Theseus and Hercules, both of whom slew monste
 associated with an ancien regime. If the stories coming out of France
 true, says Burney, then the ancient legends may be true as well. The
 is nothing in ancient history “more wonderful, nor of more sounding
 improbability, than the demolition of this Great Nation, which rises
 up, all against itself, for its own ruin—perhaps annihilation” (CJL 5:
 " U R N E Y S C O M P A R I S O N S S E E M A T I F
 heroic deeds by ordinary men and women in France are as improba

as the ancient legends; if, however, the reports are true, then we can “no longer doubt their existence or their prowess” (CJL 5: 442). Her sentiments about the Revolution are still ambiguous, because she does not applaud the *poissardes* or the mob that attacked the Bastille, but she CLEARLY NOW BELIEVES IN THE HISTORIC

On the 29th of October—two days after Frances Burney compares the *poissardes* and the mythological Amazons—Charles Burney borrows his daughter’s *bon mot* in a letter to Arthur Young. “The *Poissardes* are but the amazons OF THE PRESENT leaders at the attack of the Bastille the Hercules and Theseus” (Berg) re-cycling his daughter’s analogy between ancient and modern history. Dr. Burney draws a conclusion exactly opposite to the point she had made: “whether a total levelling scheme can be rendered permanent in a great Empire, or no, time, not experience, can shew. I used to think *la loi des plus forts*, only existed among savages, and that in Society there were tall minds as well as tall bodies; but none such have yet appeared in France,” he intones. Thus Dr. Burney calls for the emergence of a “tall mind in a tall body” to re-establish order in France, not knowing, of course, that the future emperor of France would be a bit shorter than average in stature.

A few weeks after this exchange with her father about the historical precedents of the revolution in France, Frances attended a royal command performance of the comic play *The Dramatist, or Stop Him Who Can* by John O’Keefe. The playhouse, the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, is so crowded that, although Burney’s party has a reserved box, not even the manager of the theatre can escort them to it. Burney and Mrs. Stainforth, the housekeeper at the Queen’s House in London, accept the assistance of a gentleman who seems to know who they are, though he later asks each of them individually who the other lady is. This enterprising gentleman was Hervey Redmond Morres, 2nd Viscount Mountmorres (1741/2–97) of Castle Morres, co. Kilkenny, Ireland.² He was known to Stainforth, and Burney had met him once before, the previous year at Cheltenham, although she could not recollect where she had seen him.³ Stainforth, having lost her cloak AND LOUDLY LAMENTING HER LOSS ASKS the Queen’s House (CJL 5: 452), which gives Lord Mountmorres an

opportunity to offer his services. De Luc, their designated protector, stands in the middle of the crowd, making “grave arguments” about their “right to proceed” THE wrong of not making way for us” and pushes past him (CJL 5: 451). As Burney develops the scene, it begins to resemble a parody of the recent pandemonium in Paris in which Burney and Stainforth represent the Amazonian poissardes, while the crowd resembles the “many-headed mob” that acts with uncontrolled passion, ignoring both the rational arguments of the French philosophers and the commands of the royal bodyguards.

When King George enters the theatre, there was “such THUNDERING CLAPPING KNOCKING WITH a chorus of God save the King” that Burney forgets the inconvenience of her situation and cries for joy (CJL 5: 453). Her Irish lord joins IN THE CELEBRATION BY KNOCKING HIS ALOUD TO "URNEY THAT THE KING WHO FIND THE DISPLAY OF LOYALTY EMBARRAS along with the disclosure that he had strongly supported the Pitt administration’s side in the debates in the Irish House of Lords on the Regency question, gives him the appearance of a sympathetic and trustworthy character. While returning to Ireland for the Regency debates, he had suffered a coaching accident in which his leg had been severely injured. This injury, which still causes him pain, makes him something of a sufferer for the Regency—a term that Burney often applies to the King himself—and gives Burney an additional reason INVITE MOUNTMORRES TO BE SEATED NEXT BY the theatre manager to his own box, just above the royals.

As the evening wears on, the noise in the theatre prevents Burney from hearing the actors, and it is Mountmorres who becomes the chief source of her entertainment. “We talked a great deal of & RANCE v "URNEY WRITES h HE RELATION SHE SHE VARIETY TO SHE TO ME

amongst individuals, had come from the Ecclesiastics” (CJL 5: 456).

Once again, Burney gives only a brief summary of their conversation. She says enough, however, to show that she and Mountmorres entered deeply into the politics that led to the Revolution. Mountmorres, it seems, had attended the Assembly of . OTABLES THAT WAS CONVENED TO CONS by Jacques Neckér. The Notables decided that all reforms, especially new taxes, should be referred to a newly revived body, the Estates General, in contradiction to the will of Louis XVI, who held that HIS EDICT ALONE WAS SUFICIENT TO ADO General, consisting of the clergy, the nobility, and a Third Estate of landowners and gentry, was convened in May of 1789 and almost immediately transformed itself into a National Assembly. An important factor in the proclamation of the National Assembly on June 17 was THE ALLIANCE OF A SIGNIICANT NUMBER

he give a lecture on the Rights of Man (as De Luc might have done if
he were not still down in the lobby, haranguing passersby about Mrs

Queen eat dinner, the "delighted mob . . . broke down all the paling,
MUCH OF THE (EDGES SOME OF THE V
TO SEE THEIR h-ONARCH AT 4 ABLEv YET

acclaim, have brought an end to his reign. In her insistence upon the acclaim, even if it should not be entirely authentic, Burney seems to show her sensibility of the need to celebrate and to validate the return of the sleeping sovereign—a need which her father, who never doubted the monarch’s sovereignty, may not have felt.

After leaving the court in July 1791, Burney evidently felt free to take a more active role in alleviating the effects of the Revolution. With the newspapers full of reports about the plight of the French clergy, who had been required by the Jacobin government to take a “Civic Oath” that in effect placed them under secular rather than religious authority,⁹ Burney and Anna Ord took a “Tour for Health” in August to Winchester and Salisbury (JL 1: 18). Burney happened to view the ruins of the “King’s House” in Winchester, a palace that had been begun, but was never completed, by Charles II in 1683. She notes in her journal that she would like to see it completed, “for an (OSPITAL OR)NIRMARY) HAVE WRITTE OF ITS APPEARANCE STATE WHICH) A (JL 1: 14). As usual, Burney is reticent about the content of her letter which has been lost, so it is not certain what use she proposed to M Schwellenberg for the hospital. But within a few months, the Home /FICE RECEIVED PRESUMABLY FROM TH that called for “the protection and victualling” of the French clergy at Winchester, and by September 1792 the project of converting the King’s House into a hospital for French clergy had received royal approval.¹⁰ It would appear that Burney was the initiator of the project for compassionate if not for political reasons. At the request of Franco Anne Crewe, Frances wrote a pamphlet, " R I E F 2 E m E C T I O to the Emigrant French Clergy: Earnestly Submitted to the Humane Consideration of the Ladies of Great Britain, which sought to raise money for the emigrant clergy, but when she was asked by Mrs. Crewe to contribute to a new anti-radical publication, she declined (Doody 205).

In all of these ways—her willingness to engage in conversation about revolutionary politics, her memorializing of public acclaim for an unelected sovereign, her interest in remedying the effects of the revolution on an expatriated clergy—Burney demonstrated a political

³ Margaret Anne Doody describes the political views of Alexandre d'Arblay in *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1988), 199–200. The differences among the POLITICAL PARTIES IN REVOLUTIONARY & in a memorandum quoted by Joyce Hemlow in *JL 1*: xii–xiv. For Burney and Germaine de Staël, see Doody 199–200.

⁴ Peter Sabor suggests that the person who thus cautioned Frances was her father (*CJL 1*: 1 n. 3), but the advice may equally have been given by Mary Delany, who advised her on the protocols to be followed at Court, or by Leonard Smelt, who assisted in obtaining her the appointment. See Davenport 25 and 37.

⁵ Roger Lonsdale, *Dr. Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1965), 347.

⁶ *25 August 1793, Burney to her father in Tisbury, Wiltshire, in BuParish, in*

¹⁰ For De Luc's family and career, see Tunbridge, as well as the articles on De Luc in the ODNB and the Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1910–11).

¹¹ In a letter (September 1792) to Frances Anne Crewe, who shared his political views, Dr. Burney gave his conviction that there is "no Tyrant so cruel, nor no Sovereign so worthless, as that of the Monarch" (Lonsdale 364).

¹² Hervey Redmond Morres (1741/2–97), 2nd Viscount Mountmorres, was the son of Hervey Morres (d. 1766), 1st Viscount

-
- . The Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney. Vol. 5 (1789)
Geoffrey Sill. Oxford: Clarendon, 2016. Print.
 - . The Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney. Vol. 6 (1790–
Ed. Nancy Johnson. Oxford: Clarendon, forthcoming 2018.
Print.
 - .

Whitehall Evening Post, 19–22 September 1789. Gale Newsvault.
Web.