

# Present versus Absent Addressees and Frances Burney's Journalistic Modes

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One of the most fundamental assumptions of the journal genre is that of privacy, which is supposed to manifest itself through a conspicuous absence of an addressee (Ponsonby 1923; Spalding 1949; Jackson 2010). The late twentieth century brought ultimate recognition of the generic integrity of autobiographical forms; consequently, they were subsumed within the field of literature and methodical study thereof, with means and techniques that became popular with literary scholars. Among unquestioned authorities on autobiographical issues is Philippe Lejeune (2009), who—when discussing the characteristics of the genre—declares that serial self writing<sup>1</sup> is “often addressed, but rarely at the outset or systematically” (100). While this may be a frequent occurrence, this is not always so with Frances Burney (1752–1840). The majority of her journals display “a strong sense of public audience” (Lanser 1981, 140)—a sense of sharing with external readership, declared by the diarist usually at the very beginning and sometimes additionally confirmed at the end of a journal section. Hence Julie Rak’s 2009 statement that “we are voyeurs when we read the diaries of others” (20) is not applicable to the case of Frances Burney, whose lifewriting may well be used to illustrate the belief that professional writers are continually audience-oriented and audience-aware, perhaps even more so if their lifewriting is addressed to a specified reader. Indeed, more often than not, serial lifewriting by Burney features a clearly defined addressee or reader. In this article, the connections between the presence or absence

of an addressee in Burney's serial lifewriting and the modes of her journalistic utterance are explored.

To date, three autobiographical modes of lifewriting have been distinguished: the testimony, the confession, and the challenge (Czermińska 2000, 15–52). The testimony mode is typical of memoirs, chronicles, travel journals and autobiographies proper. It is of epic nature, the narrator describing a world and events known to him or her, with both the narrator and the addressee/reader positioned in the background (Czermińska 2000, 21). The confession mode is found in personal journals, some types of letters, as well as spiritual and mystical autobiographies. It focuses on an individual's inner life, and the narrator may at times approximate a lyrical poetic persona. This mode necessarily positions the reader as an "intruder" (Czermińska 2000, 22–23). These two modes, situated at exact opposites—between the "me" and the "world," the introvert and extrovert attitudes, were widely used by lifewriters until the mid-twentieth century. Roughly at that time, there appeared a third mode (hence the concept of the autobiographical triangle), which Małgorzata Czermińska labels the "challenge." It is concerned with the conspicuous presence of the addressee in the text, which manifests itself as lifewriting authors begin to involve their readers in the lifewriting/-reading process. The "challenge" mode calls on the reader directly and rhetorically (Czermińska 24) by means of second-person singular or plural forms of address. Yet, as Czermińska tells us, the presence of an addressee is inscribed into all forms of lifewriting, which constitutes the very paradox of autobiographical expression (16). The three modes, however, occur in a perfectly isolated and distinct manner only in theory, as in practice texts do not tend to exclude any of the modes at the cost of another, instead allowing for predominance of one of these. It will be demonstrated that, in her serial self-writing, Frances Burney relies primarily on the testimony approach of a witness and persistently pushes the confession mode into the background of her serial self-writing.

The present standing of Burney scholarship has thus been summarized by Lorna Clark: "Her canonical status is confirmed by a memorial window in Westminster Abbey and a plaque by her gravesite in Bath. Her name has appeared in lights in London's West End; her life and fiction have been dramatised. Can a popular revival, led by television series or Hollywood film, be far behind?" (2007b, 178). So far, however, Burney's self writing has only received scholarly attention. Yet—rather than several volumes of her non-fictional writing—Burney's writerly reputation rests mainly on her four novels: *Evelina; or, a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), *Cecilia*,

or *Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), *Camilla: or, a Picture of Youth* (1796) and *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814). The most popular (and the most readable) is *Evelina*, which usually receives brief discussions even in critical works that are not directly concerned with the literary oeuvre of Frances Burney, but with the literature of the eighteenth century in general. These may be exemplified by Patricia Meyer Spacks's 1976 *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*; Judith Lowder Newton's 1981 *Women, Power and Subversion: Social Strategies in British Fiction, 1778–1860*; Jane Spencer's 1987 *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*; or Moyra Haslett's 2003 *Pope to Burney, 1714–1779*.

Expectedly, accounts of Burney's life by others abound: after all, her life was long, eventful and extremely well documented by herself. Most of these life stories combine biography (or psychobiography) with a discussion of Burney's novelistic works. One such is Margaret Anne Doody's *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (1988), which sets Burney's novels against the background of the novelist's private life and centers around the driving forces of violence and aggression behind her writing (3). Similar readings are offered by Julia Epstein's 1989 *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing*, which elaborates on feminine "strategies of indirection, understatement, and irony" (10), used for "an analysis of how powerlessness can be turned around to protect women" (26–27). Other well-known Burney biographies include Joyce Hemlow's now-classic 1958 *The History of Fanny Burney* and Kate Chisholm's 1998 *Fanny Burney: Her Life 1752–1840*. Among more recent accounts of Burney's life is Claire Harman's *Fanny Burney: A Biography* (2001), for which the use of selected passages from Burney's journals naturally comes in handy.

Because Burney's serial self writing has attracted increasing attention on the surge of feminist approaches to the English literary canon, critical works written on Frances Burney and related subjects by gender studies scholars require special attention. In her study of *Feminism in Eighteenth-Century England* (1982), Katherine Rogers examines Burney's contribution to contemporary understanding of marriage (13ff.). Kristina Straub (1987), in her *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy*, dwells on Burney's "perpetual babyism" (34) as she compares Burney's to James Boswell's journals in terms of their representations of the future. *Women's Life-Writing: Finding Voice/Building Community*, in turn, undertakes to see Burney as a champion of, rather than a rebel against, patriarchal and monarchist oppression of her day: "The novels she dared to write, the Frenchman she dared to marry, and

the life she dared to live had been accepted by the authorities in her life: her father, her king and her queen” (Coleman 1997, 39).

Several general studies of the journal genre have included chapters on Frances Burney’s journals: Arthur Ponsonby (1923), Robert Fothergill (1974), Julia Epstein (1989), the section on Burney’s journals entitled “Compulsive Writing”), Judy Simons (1990), Catherine Gallagher (1994), Stuart Sherman (1996), and Patricia Meyer Spacks (2003). Nevertheless, they mostly concentrate on the content of Burney’s lifewriting. If any interpretation is attempted, it is either offered through the perspectives of gender studies or biographism, linking the novels and journals so as to obtain a broader picture of Burney’s life and novelistic oeuvre. This approach has attracted considerable criticism: as Margaret Anne Doody (1988) has stressed, “a reading of her novels as if they were diaries (rather than vice versa) is fundamentally mistaken” (3).

It has been claimed that Burney’s most important literary achievement is her journals, “an outstanding work of art, not just offering insights into the mechanisms of Burney’s creativity, but forming a sustained and controlled series of discrete texts, connected by virtue of their central character” (Simons 1990, 20–21). Surprisingly, to date, Frances Burney’s lifewriting has received a relatively small amount of undivided critical attention. In 2007, *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney* and *A Celebration of Frances Burney* were published, both featuring sections devoted to “Letters and Journals” or “Journals and Letters,” as the case may be, which certainly marks a new critical trend. In contrast, the first seven decades following the publication of Burney’s lifewriting in 1889 brought little constructive criticism, and the author’s self-writing was generally disparaged on account of her incompatibility with subsequent epochs. The Victorians were condescending towards her mode of sensibility and limited social scope, while in the first half of the twentieth century she was seen merely as a precursor of Jane Austen—yet another old-fashioned lady novelist (Clark 2007a, 2007). Among the first to write non-judgmentally on Burney’s lifewriting in the twentieth century was Virginia Woolf in 1925 and 1930. In her *Common Reader* series (Woolf 1967), she included two essays based on Burney’s early journals: “Dr. Burney’s Evening Party” and “Fanny Burney’s Half-Sister,” the former depicting the first meeting of Mrs. Thrale (later Mrs. Piozzi) and Signor Piozzi, the latter building on the story of Maria Allen and her husband Martin Rishton, together with its connection to Burney’s *Evelina*. It is somewhat startling to find Burney’s lifewriting deprecated by some researchers working in the field of biography and autobiography, witness

Donald Stauffer who calls her “a chatterbox among the great” (125), alluding to the fact that her journal pages proudly record rubbing shoulders with the celebrities of her time—Dr. Johnson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, Mrs. Thrale, Elizabeth Montagu the Bluestocking, King George III, Queen Charlotte, and many others. A similar tone dominates the entry on Fanny Burney in Eva Simmons’ (1994) *Augustan Literature from 1660–1789*, which additionally comments on Burney’s influencing Jane Austen (87).

The reasons for critical reticence in approaching Burney’s journals are numerous. For one thing, the sheer volume of Frances Burney’s lifewriting may appear discouraging. In her lifetime, Burney produced a profusion of self writing: to date, the most complete edition has included twelve volumes at about five hundred pages each.<sup>2</sup> A prodigious journal and letter writer, Burney may have been propelled by the fact that diaristic and epistolary writing was not considered disrespectable for ladies, unlike novel writing, which was. She began her first journal in 1768, at the age of sixteen, and—for several decades to follow (starting from the late 1770s until the death of her husband, General Alexandre d’Arblay, in 1818)—she turned out more or less regular packets of journal-letters, addressed to her most regular readers (sister Susan Phillips, d. 1800; father Dr. Charles Burney, d. 1814; bosom friend Mrs. Frederica Locke, d. 1832; and husband—at the times of their separation), apart from several thousand personal letters to these and numerous other correspondents.<sup>3</sup>

More important, there exist several difficulties attending the classification of this author’s lifewriting. Even the non-epistolary self-writing of Frances Burney is problematic as it is far from clear which of her texts ought to be categorised as journals *sensu stricto*, and which represent other lifewriting forms. In fact, the only texts which do not breed any doubt in that respect are Burney’s *Early Journals* of 1768 through 1779, written in the standard journal manner, that is, observing the sequential principle of individual dated daily entries. Many of her later lifewriting texts, while taking the form of journal entries, were not generally composed daily, but compiled at a later date by expanding previously taken notes. The retrospective narratives thus produced emulate single entries, or—if prolonged and covering several consecutive dates—sets of journal-letters. On a more regular basis, in her mature years, Burney entered brief records for particular days on ivory tablets or in her private pocket books, some of which were ready to use: commercially ruled and dated. She frequently referred to these records as “memoranda.”<sup>4</sup> Apart from that, Burney frequently worked in

longer retrospect, also drawing on her memoranda, to produce extensive narratives of certain periods in her life, without consistent emulation of the journal form by means of dates or pseudo-daily-diary-type entries. In view of that, some researchers subsume most of Burney's self-writing under the hold-all term of "journals," making only the basic division into letters and "historical records" (Wiltshire 2007, 76).

Texts of the retrospective type (I call them "pseudo-journals") comprise Burney's 1811 account of her mastectomy (written in 1812 as a warning to her female relatives and friends),<sup>5</sup> the 1814 *Journal of Presentation to Louis XVIII* (written 1825),<sup>6</sup> the 1815 *Waterloo Journal* (written 1823),<sup>7</sup> the 1815 *Journal of the Journey to Trèves* (written 1825),<sup>8</sup> the 1817 *Ilfracombe Journal* (written 1823),<sup>9</sup> and the 1817–18 elegiac *Narrative of the Last Illness and Death of General d'Arblay* (written 1819–20). As this survey of dates relative to these texts illustrates, their reach, that is, temporal distance from the narrative time, may be considerable, while their extent, conceived as duration (Genette 1980, 48), varies. On the whole, however, it seems that Burney the self-writer makes no sustained effort to conceal her retrospective stance while still relying on dates from her original brief records. But according to some critics, texts of this type may still be classified as journals. As Aleksander Milecki (1983) has observed, it is at times possible for a journal to be "constructed from a more distant temporal perspective in order to create a complete autobiographical whole which pertains to a certain period in the author's life" (24; my translation). In view of that, it becomes disputable whether the editors of volume VIII of Burney's *Letters and Journals* have rightly called the diarist's attitude to the issue of dating "an inadvertence" (insertion of the year 1823 instead of 1815 in her *Waterloo Journal* (VIII: 421)<sup>10</sup> being a case in point).

Rather than retrospective autobiographical narratives, our preoccupation in the present paper is Frances Burney's serial lifewriting proper: her journals and journal-letters. The generic classification of the two is, in most general terms, based on the absence or presence of a text's addressee(s). What Frances Burney called weekals in fact occupy that borderline between letters and journals: it is a hybrid form of the so-called journal-letters or letter-journals. Journal-letters were "explicitly written over several separate occasions and posted at regular intervals," and constituted a typical form of early eighteenth-century serial self writing (Brant 2006, 25).<sup>11</sup>

In Frances Burney's serial self-writing, the category of journal-letters comprises private travel journals sent as letters (the 1773 *Teignmouth Journal* to Susan Burney, later Mrs. Phillips, and the 1791 *Journal of Travels*

to the Western Counties, addressed to Mrs. Phillips and the Lockes, that is, Frederica Locke and her husband, of Norbury Park) in which the narrator takes on the persona of a domestic tourist, as well as the more public travel and Paris journals of the 1802–12 period (the 1802 *Journal of the Journey to Dover*, addressed to the diarist's father, Dr. Charles Burney; the April–May 1802 *Paris Journals* to Dr. Burney and—separately—to Mrs. Locke; the 1806 *Journal from Paris and Passy*, addressed to Dr. Burney; and the 1812 *Journal of Dunkirk and Deal*, which records the diarist's adventurous return to England and is composed of fragments of her letters to her husband but is on the whole addressed to her son and his projected offspring at an imaginary future rectory), which she hoped her son would once occupy. Frances Burney's diaristic oeuvre also includes other texts of the journal-letter genre, such as the 1793 *Courtship Journal* meant for Susan Phillips; the 1796 *Windsoriana* in five parts, written to Dr. Burney, and the 1797 *Court Journal* to Mrs. Phillips, detailing the diarist's visit to the royal court; or *The Chelsea and West Humble Journal* (1798) to Mrs. Phillips, recording the diarist's domestic bliss in the company of her husband and baby son at the d'Arblays' Westhumble cottage.

The journal-letters to the diarist's friends and her favorite sister, Susan Phillips, are characterised by fairly intimate addresses to the readers, scattered over the texts. The addresses may be more or less numerous, and are not always placed at the very beginning, but they serve to establish intimate relationships between the diarist and her readers. They range from "my dearest Friends & confidants" (I:11); "my dearest Friends" (I:60); "my dear friends," "my beloved Sisters and Friends," "my beloved Susan & Fredy" (I:74); "my (most) beloved Susan" (II:57, 100; IV:6); "my dearest Susan(na)" (II:58, 81); or "my beloved Fredy" (V:247), to the uses of the third person to talk to her addressees about themselves: "I came to my dearest Susan – I was received by my dearest Fredy" (I:63); or "Had my Susan his Note?" (II:74). "its peculiar interest to my beloved Fredy" (V:247); "My dear Friend will not think this quite so elegant" (II:249); "My Susan will remember it" (IV: 18); "I need not paint them to my Susanna" (IV:29). Among the most frequently used is the simple "My Susan" (II:79, 84, 114, 117). The direct "you" is also quite common (I:35, 37, 50); but there are also less frequent ones, such as the French-sounding "my dearest Lecturers" (I:75, 114); or the joint address of "my beloved Susanna Frederica" (I:82). In Frances Burney's journal-letters, the diarist's father, Dr. Charles Burney, is invariably invoked as "dearest Sir" (III:175, 188, 196), "my beloved Father" (III:178; V:220), "my dearest Father" (III:188;

V:224, 246–47, 277, VI:531), “my kindest Father” (III:188, 196), “My dearest/most dear Padre” (V:242, 247, 309), “my most dear Father” (III:172); third-person phrases likewise abounding, as in “my dear Father will not wonder . . .” (V:307).

Despite the fact that Burney’s major journal addressees belong to the “dearest” category, the personas assumed by the lifewriting narrator tend to differ. It is symptomatic that in an interaction with her father the diarist adopts the pose of an emotionally dependent daughter whose desire to continue writing rests on his approval: “What encouragement does my kindest Father give my Windsoriana—which thus proceeds . . .” (III:188). She represents herself as eager to provide her father with a detailed story of her life in separation from him: “I seize, at length, upon the largest Paper I can procure, to begin to my beloved Father some account of our Journey” (V:216). “Here ends the account of my Journey,—& if it has amused my dearest Father, it will be a true delight to me to have scribbled it” (V:239), the diarist modestly claims in one of her 1802 *Paris Journals*. This attitude of reverence bordering on adoration towards one’s father was quite conventional: as Sidonie Smith (1987) explains, “attentiveness to the father was particularly critical for a woman of the eighteenth century” (105) because of the protection and certainty of survival offered by his household. Margaret Anne Doody (1988), in turn, enlarges on how the eighteenth century actually regulated father–daughter bonds by means of the woman’s requisite dependence and docility, giving the father an opportunity to show his softer and less authoritarian side (24).<sup>12</sup> The journal-letters to her friends and/or sister, in turn, display no apologetic tone but aim to address the recipients as the writer’s peers to whom the narrator does not hesitate to show her affection, besides narrating her stories. Needless to say, addressees of the above type are the recipients of the diarist’s testimony-type reports of conversations, meetings and events witnessed or experienced while traveling or at home, rather than intimate confessions.

Burney’s family life, court service or coach travel are invariably valorised as a writer’s material, dramatised by insertion of extensive chunks of dialogue and demonstrating no discontinuity, incongruity or fragmentation usually associated with the confessional journalistic mode. From her *Early Journals* onwards, the diarist is struck by the resemblance between real-life situations and dramatic scenes, and presents these observations of hers as metadiscourse. She may state, for instance, “never, sure, did any Conversation seem more like a scene in



a Comedy" (I E:50);<sup>13</sup> "What scenes we shall have!" (I E:223); or "Mrs Rishton & I walked out early [to] avoid a very disagreeable scene at Home" (I E:285). Burney's *Court Journals* (1786–91; actually, journal-letters to sister Susan, written during her employment at the court of Queen Charlotte) are likewise notable for several references to "scenes": "I had the opportunity to see another court-scene" (1842, 105), or "Have not, you also, my Susan, had enough of this scene?" (1842, 110), as well as stage-acting: "I knew, for me, it was a great honour, yet it made me feel, once more, so like a mute upon the stage, that I could scarce believe myself only performing my own real character" (Burney 1842, 280). In *The Court Journals*, the diarist appears to be torn between the dramatic and the novelistic mode. Despite her frequent references to dramatic aspects of her diarised experience, she also allows a novelist's dilemma to surface in one of her journal-letters to Susan (November 1786), in a telling passage of metadiscourse: "Shall I introduce to you this gentleman such as I now think him at once? or wait to let his character open itself to you by degrees, and in the same manner that it did to me? I wish I could hear your answer!" (Burney 1842, 207).

The confession mode is indeed rarely found in Burney's lifewriting, and when it does occur, it is often linked with her most curious addressee. This is the "Nobody",<sup>14</sup> invented when Burney still a teenager, in her first attempts at self writing. One of the most often quoted and anthologised fragments from Burney's *Early Journals*, the opening entry of March 27, 1768, reads,

To have some account of my thoughts, manners, acquaintance & actions, when the Hour arrives in which time is more nimble than memory, is the reason which induces me to keep a Journal: a Journal in which I must confess my every thought, must open my whole Heart! But *a thing of th[is] kind ought to be addressed to somebody*—I must imagion [*sic*] myself to be talking—talking to the most intimate of friends—to one in whom I should take delight in confiding, & remorse in concealment: but who must this friend be?—to make choice of one to whom I can but half rely, would be to frustrate entirely the intention of my plan. The only one I could wholly, totally confide in, lives in the same House with me, & not only never has, but never will, leave me one secret to tell *her*. To whom, then, must I dedicate my wonderful, surprising & interesting adventures?—to whom *da[re]* I reveal my private opinion of my nearest Relations? the secret

thoughts of my dearest friends? my own hopes, fears, reflections & dislikes?—*Nobody*!

To *Nobody*, then, will I write my Journal! since To *Nobody* can I be wholly unreserved—to *Nobody* can I reveal every thought, every wish of my Heart, with the most unlimited confidence, the most unremitting sincerity to the end of my Life! For what chance, what accident can end my connections with *Nobody*? No secret can I conceal from *No-body*, & to *No-body* can I be ever unreserved. Disagreement cannot stop our affection, Time itself has no power to end our friendship. The love, the esteem I entertain for *Nobody*, *No-body's* self has not power to destroy. From *Nobody* I have nothing to fear, <the> secrets sacred to friendship, *Nobody* will not reveal, when the affair is doubtful, *Nobody* will not look towards the side least favourable—. . . .

From this moment, then, *my dear Girl*—but why, permit me to ask, must a female be made *Nobody*? Ah! my dear, what were this world good for, were *Nobody a female*? And now I have done with preambulation. (I E: 1–2, my emphasis)

Attention has been drawn to the fact that Burney's *Nobody* is female (Blodgett 1988, 15; Spacks 1988, 190–91; Gallagher 1994, 203–205; Sherman 248; Spacks, *Privacy* 190), that the *Nobody* of Burney's journals in a sense epitomises the condition of women in general and women writers in particular (Cutting-Gray, 1992), and that eighteenth-century women could only enjoy a limited degree of privacy, hardly allowing them to develop their creative inclinations (Simons 1990, 21–25; Sherman 1996, 247, 253, 255–57). As Catherine Gallagher observes in her perceptive analysis of *Nobody's* "gender, class and literary characteristics" (205), "to delineate *Nobody's* virtues . . . is to cast aspersions on everybody" (204).<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, critics have been quick to deprecate young Burney's powers of self-assertion and label her actions with phrases like "the docile need to 'please papa' in everything," "desire to be everything her father most admired" (O'Brien 1944, 210), or "It is not her life so much as the scenes to which she happens to be a witness that continue to be the staple of her diary-letters" (Fothergill 1974, 54). Yet while there may be a grain of truth in the above statements, one finds it hard to agree with the 2001 editors of Burney's *Journals and Letters* who categorise her self writing as "confessional" (xiii), based solely on the opening entry and disregarding all that follows, i.e. plentiful records of familial and social intercourse, which stands in marked contrast to the extremely limited coverage of the diarist's inner life.

Having stated her earliest diaristic intentions in the opening entry, the narrator continues to address her effusions to her Nobody occasionally until 1777, i.e. for the first nine years of her journalizing. With the success of *Evelina*, Nobody is forgotten, and Burney's journals come to lack a clearly defined addressee. As long as the Nobody addressee of the journals is not discarded, her presence allows the narrator a certain amount of heteroglossia in an otherwise single-voiced journal narrative as she indulges in occasional imaginary dialogues with her addressee, as in:

Adieu, then, most amiable—who?—

*Nobody!*

Not so fast, good Girl!—not so fast—'tis true, I have done with last Night,—but I have all to Day—a Charming one it is, too,—to relate; (I E: 5)

or

Well, I shall have to undress in the Dark if I scribble any longer—& so I must petition for leave to bid you adieu: Granted.

Certainly I have the most complaisant friend in the world—ever ready to comply with my wishes—never hesitating to oblige, never averse to any concluding, yet never wearied [sic] with my beginning—charming Creature.

And pray, my dear Miss Fanny, who is this?—

*Nobody.* (I E: 36, my emphasis)

Yet, in her rarely employed confessional capacity, the narrator sometimes indulges in a dialogue with an imaginary addressee without defining her or him(?) as Nobody: "I am going to tell you something concerning myself, which, if I have not chanced to mention it before will I believe a little surprise you" (I E:10). These early examples point to the significance of dialogue for the diarist's later journalizing, wherein (mostly journal-letters) dialogue features as a major element. Despite several spelling inconsistencies occurring throughout the journals (one of the most conspicuous being the two spelling varieties of the diarist's sister's surname, i.e. "Philips" and "Phillips"), the first letter of Nobody as an addressee is consistently capitalised (as in "Well, my Nobody, I have read part of my Journal to Miss Young," I E:23) or used as a surname ("Miss Nobody" I E:65), whereas in cases when "nobody" is meant to be endowed with more than one

interpretation (as in “I read with *nobody*, & consequently have *nobody* to correct or guide my opinion: nevertheless, I cannot forbear sometimes writing what it is” (I E:24; my emphasis), capitalization is not sustained. At times, however, Nobody is explicitly identified with the journal itself, witness some of the “good night” and “good morning” passages:

Adieu—*My Journal*—*my Nobody*—Adieu—adieu!

Monday, May 22d. Well—I have slept, & perhaps have reflected – but as the sleep came last, it has drove all reflections away which at all tended to the detriment of this little Employment; & therefore, once more welcome my Pen! *my Nobody! my dear faithful Journal!* (I E: 67, my emphasis)

At the opening of the 1770 journal, the diarist inserts the following heading: “Frances Burney Memoirs / Addressed to a certain Miss Nobody” (I E:97). Throughout this year and the next, however, Nobody is addressed less and less frequently. One notable later usage occurs on the date on which the narrator turns nineteen years old: “Oh! *my dear Nobody*, I am turned of 19!” (I E:157; my emphasis). Far from confessional, this entry seems to vindicate the status of Burney’s Nobody to that of a family member addressed with the familiar “dear,” just like her father, sisters, and closest friends. The opening of the 1777 journal is the final time the diarist uses her Nobody in the old capacity of the addressee, at the same time mockingly imitating the solemn language of church banns of marriage:

Oh Yes! Be it known, to all whom it may concern,—c’est à dire, in the first place, – *Nobody*; – in the 2d place, *the same Person*;—&, in the third place, *Ditto*;—that Frances Burney, spinster, of the Parish of St Martin’s in the Fields, – – – – – did keep no Journal this unhappy year till she wrote from Worcester to her sister Susan, of the same Parish, & likewise a spinster. (I E:231, my emphasis)

After that, there is no more differentiation between “Nobody” spelled with and without the capital letter, but the concept recurs in various contexts other than that of the journal addressee. For instance, when asked by Dr. Johnson in 1778 if she likes his *Life of Cowley*, the narrator “crie[s] . . . ‘& if I was somebody, instead of Nobody, I should not have read it without telling you sooner how highly I think of it’” (III E:153). The sense of being

a “nobody” is also repeated in a letter to her father of July 6, 1778: “I have so earnestly desired to continue incog; for I, as myself, *am nobody*; but as your spawn” (I E: 41; my emphasis).

It must be noted that few serial lifewriting texts by Frances Burney are without a directly defined addressee, whether a close friend, a relative, or the previously discussed Nobody. Although not entirely devoid of isolated confessional elements, these texts are mainly of the testimony type, the diarist acting as a witness to, or participant in, the reported events. Among the no-addressee *Early Journals* is the one which covers the period from May to June 1775. It focuses around one central affair, namely the unsuccessful courtship of Frances Burney by a certain Mr. Barlow, whose first name is never even mentioned except in the closing valedictions to his letters written to the narrator, which she painstakingly copies and includes in her journal—as she does with her own communications to him. As the editors of Burney’s *Journals and Letters* have stressed, “in this episode Fanny really comes centre stage herself for the first time in the journals” (II E:xiv) and uses an “artful blend of skilful narrative and convincingly recollected dialogue, [which] is as finished as any scene in *Evelina*” (II E:xv).<sup>16</sup> The novelistic quality of the Barlow journal entries is striking indeed. The narrative tempo is fast, with dialogues decelerating it at crucial points, i.e. those that need to be covered in greater detail. Note, for instance, the slowly progressing introductory entry of May 8, which at once connects and disconnects the spring season from its standard association with youthful affairs of the heart:

This month is Called a tender one—It has proved so to me—but not in me—I have not breathed one sigh,—felt one sensation,—or uttered one folly the more for the softness of the season.—However—I have met with a youth whose Heart, if he is to be Credited, has been less guarded—indeed it has yielded itself so suddenly, that had it been in any other month—I should not have known how to have accounted for so easy a Conquest. (II E: 115)

This passage serves as an introduction to a flash-back entry, beginning on “the First Day of this month,” which is brought up to date by relating the first, prearranged, meeting of the diarist with the young man and providing a brief description of Mr. Barlow’s appearance and character inasmuch as the diarist can judge for herself after their brief meeting, which finishes with the conclusion that “niether [*sic*], though he may be very worthy, is

he at all agreeable" (II E:116). When the narrative is updated from a retrospective position five days later, an entire stilted letter, filled with the admirer's declarations of attachment, is included, thus reversing the narrator's role and placing her in the position of an addressee. In the end, the diarist finds herself unmoved by the letter in the least, after which she seeks the advice of her father who is, unexpectedly, far from insisting that she marry Barlow.

Like Burney's other testimony-type texts, the narrative further tends towards the epistolary mode as the diarist inserts a letter of advice from her second "Daddy," Samuel Crisp, who—in contrast—urges her to reconsider Barlow's proposal. The narrative is resumed after a week's gap detailing the suitor's visit after the diarist pretends to be suffering from a bad cold to avoid meeting him. For the next three weeks the progress of events is narrated in letters to Daddy Crisp rather than a journal. On June 6, the Barlow journal is resumed with a brief retrospective entry: "a Week passed after this, without my hearing or seeing any more of Mr Barlow & I hoped that he had resigned his pretensions. But on Saturday morning [27 May], while we were at Breakfast, I had a Letter brought me in a Hand which I immediately knew to be Barlow's" (II E:138). As earlier, this is followed by a copy of the letter itself. This letter is handed over to the diarist's father as she seeks his advice again, and left unanswered. The suitor visits; the narrator quotes a dialogue in which she pretends to have written him back with a refusal, and stresses her irritation as the conversation continues. The journalist's shift to an account of her own emotions marks the admixture of the confessional mode, which is sustained in parallel to the narrated events. She reports growing "extremely tired of saying so often the same thing;—but I could not absolutely turn him out of the House" (II E:143). Her feelings again come to the fore as she effuses: "Though I was really sorry for the unfortunate & misplaced attachment which this Young man professes for me, yet I could almost have Jumped for Joy when he was gone, to think that the affair was thus finally over" (II E:146), or admits "the utter impossibility of resisting not merely my Father's persuasion, but even his Advice" (II E:146), reiterating the verb "feel" several times over the span of one paragraph. After she writes, and copies into her journal, another letter to Barlow in which she states her having no intention to change her marital status, hoping that this puts an end to the affair, another meeting is arranged. It is again reported by means of direct speech, and the narrator comments as soon as it has ended: "Sorry as I am for Mr Barlow, who is a worthy young man, I cannot involve myself in a Life of discomfort for his satisfaction" (II E:152). It is now easy

for the diarist to say so when she has successfully persuaded her father to drop the subject of her marriage for good by playing a sentimental heroine, weeping all days and refusing to eat.<sup>17</sup>

Other examples of Burney's unaddressed lifewriting are found in her more mature pocket books, the later "memoranda" that the diarist uses to compose long, fully fledged entries in her more literary journals, journal-letters or memoir-type narratives. These might be termed "genuine" or "pure" diaries as they contain brief daily records of most significant events or incidents only. Yet most of these are not of the confessional type in the least. Although individual entries are not addressed, there are occasional hints from the diarist which define the implied reader of her memoranda. "My small records of my small [ad]ventures for the future knowledge [of] *my dearest Boy*" (VI:806, my emphasis) is a case in point.

On the whole, these largely unaddressed entries appear to be considerably less emotional than their expanded versions; they tend to be short and consist of one or two sentences, clauses or sentence fragments, frequently relying on dashes rather than other punctuation. Typical examples may include entries such as "Thursday 28 April. This Day arrived from Paris the Friend & dearest Delight of my Existence.—well, though harrassed [*sic*], gay, though worn with fatigue, and kind—oh kinder than Man ever was before him!" (VII:711), or "Thursday 10 July. Rove to Capstone Hill—Iron Salmon—height—Rams,—Children—The party—wash women—Plain & modest—L[etter] to Mr. Angerstein & Amine" (X:934). Longer entries are few, and they elaborate on significant moments, for example, a visit to the Queen's Palace (VII:514–15). The dates of January 6, anniversaries of Susan Phillips's death, are infallibly commemorated (this is typical of the majority of women diarists; Culley 1985, 20): the deceased is regularly invoked as an angel and entreated to pray for the diarist and her family, to guide and inspire them, and so on. Some of these unaddressed diary entries are often limited to bare lists of visits paid, letters sent and received, books read or to be read, clothing to be made, intended correspondence, lists of young Alexander d'Arblay's books, and even names of captains serving at the evacuation of Corunna, possibly copied from an English newspaper (VI: 806). During the diarist's sojourn in France, she occasionally mixes French phrases with her English-language entries, as in "10 Germinal, dimanche 31 Mars. V[isit]. Nous allons, tous les trois, faire des visites pour annoncer notre new appointment chez Me d'Henin. Me de Poix, where we meet Me de Simiane . . . & pass 2 Hours most agreeably. Thence to Me de Tussy, qui n'étoit

pas chez elle, Thence to Me Pinkney” (VI:751). This mixing of languages is not, as Beatrice Didier (1976) would have it, a sign of diaristic discontinuity (182), but is simply a result of being immersed in a foreign-language milieu.

In contrast to these testimony-type utterances, there also exist several no-addressee serial self-writing texts that come closer to the confessional type. This is the case with Frances Burney’s post-May 17, 1818, personal diary, which seems to be genuinely intimate and unaffected. It becomes a predominantly unaddressed mourning journal, in which the diarist records consecutive Sundays of her widowhood, without much resort to narration. The entries’ purpose seems to be predominantly to count the passing time, dotted as they are with churchgoing, praying and Bible-reading: “This melancholy second Sunday since my irreparable loss”; “This was the fourth Sunday passed since I have seen—and heard—and been blessed with the . . . presence & loved adored Existence of my Angel Husband—The third Sunday & the end of the 4th week of my bereavement!” (X:951); “This Day, this 3d of June, compleats a kalendar [*sic*] month since I lost the beloved Object of all my tenderest affections”; “June 7th The 5th sad Sunday This of Earthly separation!” (X:952); “June 14. A 5th Sunday is rising since my deadly privation of all Earthly happiness!” (X:953). The diarist’s son Alex is but once invoked as “my dear remaining Alexander” (X:953). On July 12, the diarist makes the following resolution: “To force Exertion from Inertion / For the remnant of my saddened [*sic*] Existence” (X:955) and sets herself four tasks relative to sorting and arranging of her late husband’s papers. The diary ends on September 30, 1818, the last but one entry reading, “Oh what anguish overwhelms my Soul in quitting the place where last He saw & blest me!—The Room—the spot on which—so softly—so holily—yet so tenderly—he embraced me—& breathed his last!—” (X: 958). It is at points like these that the privacy and emotion of Burney’s otherwise nonconfessional serial lifewriting comes to dominate and control her witness-style reporting impulses. Temporarily, confession takes the place of the testimony.

If it is accepted that a journal narrator aims “to build a memory out of paper, to create archives from lived experience, to accumulate traces, prevent forgetting, to give life the consistency and continuity it lacks” (Lejeune 2001, 107), Frances Burney achieves this with the help of her spectrum of addressees, whom she uses somewhat inconsistently for her testimony and confession purposes. Her *Early Journals* present both addressed and unaddressed sections, the Nobody addressee seemingly linked to the more



confessional content than that of the largely unaddressed testimony-centered entries. Yet in fact Nobody is rarely a recipient of truly private matter. Burney's journal-letters are most frequently addressed, and feature nonconfessional testimony type matter exclusively. Her memoranda expanded into mature diaries, regardless of the presence of an addressee, range from private confessional notes to the more common testimony-mode journalistic reports. In that sense, it can be argued, with Joanna Cutting-Gray (1992), that Frances Burney "is neither an introspective, autonomous entity speaking in the confessional mode" nor "simply a copier transcribing events" (119), and that her serial self-writing "vividly contrasts the confessional mode of speech, that form of private introspection that the bourgeois and Protestant turned into a sincerity or intimacy that self-validates, ensuring that one is free, truthful and above reproach" (120) with the stance of a witness to events. The latter she reports sometimes novelistically, sometimes dramatically, but—if her intention be judged—factually.

### NOTES

1. Hereafter, the terms *lifewriting* and *self writing* will be used interchangeably to denote broadly conceived "autobiography." "Serial lifewriting/self-writing" shall mean journals, journal-letters, and what Burney herself referred to as "memoranda," that is, daily diary-style entries that she kept in her mature years. The latter are not tantamount to the broader notion of "journals" as used herein. This disambiguation appears to be necessary due to terminological confusion attending autobiographical genres. Some students of autobiography (Simons 1990) make a distinction between journals (which are claimed to be more closely related to internal monologues or meditations and primarily concern an individual's inner life) and diaries (which focus on the external world for the most part although it is not uncommon for them to comprise more private records). Others argue exactly the opposite, namely that the journal is rather a record of incidents that befall the writer while the diary is the more intimate genre (Smith and Watson 2001). The majority of researchers into lifewriting, however, tend to use both of these terms interchangeably (see Fothergill 1974; Cuddon 1992; Lejeune 2009). For simplicity, in my discussion of her serial lifewriting, I refer to Frances Burney as "the diarist" in the broader sense of "life writer."

2. At the time of writing the present article, new scholarly editions of the *Early Journals and Letters of Frances Burney* and the *Court Journals and Letters of Frances Burney* are being prepared for publication, according to the website of the Burney Centre at McGill University (<http://burneycentre.mcgill.ca/index.html>).

3. Unless indicated otherwise, the correspondence does not fall within the scope of the present study.

4. This method was by no means exceptional, as editors of James Boswell's journals suggest (142).

5. This text has been discussed by Julia Epstein (1989) who reads it as a narrative of sexual violation—"the unspeakable" (54ff.); Katharine Rogers (1982, 180); Claire Harman (293–95), who dwells on its crime-story features and an all-encompassing metaphor for the diarist's life creed, concerning the benefits of complete submission; as well as John Wiltshire (2007, 86–88) who sees the somewhat Gothic operation as a struggle for power in which the patient may lose control but still keep her authority. It may be worthwhile to note that it is not common for late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century diarists to discuss their physicality other than pregnancies and childbirth (Blodgett 1988, 41). The genre that this text of Burney's approximates is, according to the classification of Smith and Watson (2001), a witness autopathography, that is, an account of medical intervention as experienced by the patient him- or herself. Hence Burney's use of "euphemism and circumlocution to conceal and to represent her horror" (Epstein 1989, 63). It also falls into the category of pain narratives, common in eighteenth-century England and France (L. Smith 2008).

6. This one features very emotional content as the narrator describes her meeting the King: "a presentation to his Majesty Louis XVIII, that filled me with much delight, yet emotion, that those who saw me when I retired from him thought I was taken ill—when I was only taken happy!" (VII:330), and falls into her usual journal routine reserved for recording royal interaction, that of being spoken to "in terms of boundless condescension" (VII:303).

7. A personal account, covering the four months preceding the Battle of Waterloo, the diarist's parting with her husband who serves in the King's Guardes du Corps, her frantic flight to Brussels, and the final relief of tension after the Waterloo victory.

8. A picaresque account of the diarist's troubled journey through Cologne, Bonn and Coblenz to meet her wounded husband in Trèves.

9. A narrative of a holiday at Ilfracombe, complete with a dramatised account of a beach recess adventure.

10. Quotations from Frances Burney's *Journals* come from the Fanny Burney, *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, 12 vols., ed. Joyce Hemlow, Curtis D. Cecil, Althea Douglas, Patricia Boutilier, Edward A. Bloom, Lillian D. Bloom, Peter Hughes, Patricia Hawkins, and Warren Derry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972–84). The Roman numeral denotes the volume number, and is followed by the page number.

11. Cf. Jonathan Swift's *Journal to Stella* (1710–13) which is in fact a collection of letters.

12. With Burney, however, her juvenile reverent attitude to her parent seems to remain intact for the rest of her days.

13. Quotations from Frances Burney's *Early Journals* come from Fanny Burney, *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*, 3 vols., ed. Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987–94). The Roman numeral denotes the volume number, complete with the letter E for "Early" and is followed by the page number.

14. Or “Nobody-Burney,” if the insightful label of Joanne Cutting-Gray’s (1992, 126) is accepted.

15. Much has also been said about the dubious status of diary writing as an occupation for young ladies, as exemplified by Dr. Burney’s response to the discovery of his daughter’s private scribbling and which he seriously threatened to expose to the public at a local marketplace (Simons 1990, 3; Sherman 1996, 254–257). In a similar vein, the predominance of the Nobody in the novelist’s private life has been discussed, culminating in her marital union with the French refugee from the Revolution, himself metaphorically reduced to nothing (*réduit à rien*) and forced to sojourn in a foreign country (Gallagher 1994, 255), that is, England. Similarly, Burney’s dedicatory poem, preceding her novel *Evelina* and addressed to her father—“the author of my being” (3), has been interpreted as part of the writer’s failure to perceive herself as an independent, valuable individual (Gallagher 1994, 211–12).

16. The present author endorses that view and cannot agree with Cutting-Gray (1992), who has claimed that “in writing about the Barlow episode, ‘Fanny’ affirms her self-respect precisely because she so seldom focuses on self” (119).

17. For the reasons outlined earlier, it is interesting to see how the diarist takes on a variety of roles in what has been called “a miniature Richardsonian drama” (Wiltshire 2007, 77): those of a respectful daughter and pliant young lady seeking the advice of her elders and professing to be eager to please them, or a young lady of sensibility when it comes to the crunch, but also that of a determined, independent-minded woman who pursues her goals while paying little attention to the goals of those around her and whose wishes she decorously declares her intention to obey.

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