

## TEACHING “THE YOUNG IDEA HOW TO SHOOT”: THE JUVENILIA OF THE BURNEY FAMILY

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THE BURNEY family stands at the centre of cultural life in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England. Often at the forefront of their professions—be it painting, music, or literature—the Burneys’ numerous successes may raise interesting questions about the roles played by nature and nurture in the development of creativity. Fertility of invention could be said to be part of the family heritage, as members expressed their creativity in a variety of ways. In literature, their best-known writer is Frances Burney, whose range of achievement is impressive, as the author of four novels, eight plays, a memoir, and twenty-five volumes’ worth of journals and letters. But there were other writers in the family: Frances’s father, Charles Burney, wrote musical tours and *A General History of Music*; her brother, Charles, published numerous works of classical scholarship; and brother James authored several works on maritime history. On the female side, no fewer than six generations of published authors can be traced (Clark, “Hidden Talents”). There were also dancing masters, musicians (church organists, violinists and pianists) and a successful artist, Edward Francisco Burney.

Exploring the products of their creativity is possible because, besides being remarkably productive, the Burneys managed to preserve many records; they seem to have had a “hoarding” as well as a “scribbling” habit, as Joyce Hemlow has noted (xxi). Today, some 10,000 documents remain in the family archive, making it one of the richest repositories of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts now extant, in which there are still new discoveries to be made. Two very recent discoveries are the works of juvenilia that I shall be exploring in this essay.

The period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a fertile one for child writers, as Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster point out in their study of Austen’s juvenile contemporaries, “Children Writing in Jane Austen’s Time.” The output was not only fiction; Katharine Kittredge has “identified 125 books of poetry that were published between 1770 and 1830 by authors under the age of twenty-one;

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eighty-nine of these were published between the years 1790 and 1820.” Along similar lines, Laurie Langbauer, noting the affinity of the Romantic poets with youth, characterises a somewhat longer period (1750-1835) as one in which “juvenile writers formed a recognizable writing presence—even more than that, a tradition”—which could be attributed in part to changing demographics (young people being an unusually large proportion of the population) and in part to “shifts in education, along with an exploding periodical press” that provided opportunities for juvenile writers “to write and find audiences” (1). Langbauer argues that “recovering juvenility ... recasts literary history” and will radically alter our understanding of the period (3); my work aims to contribute to this project of reassessment.

Often, a work of juvenilia acquires interest as the early production of an established writer, that is (to quote again from Alexander and McMaster), “as an ‘apprentice work’” on the “writer’s route to maturity,” in which some of the themes or techniques employed in his or her later work can be traced, in embryo (“Children Writing” 3). But, as Lesley Peterson and Leslie Robertson have reminded us, there does not need to be a “later ‘great book’ by the same author” to justify the study of the work of a child author (271). It is with all these insights in mind that I would like to present this study. While the field of juvenilia has taken tremendous strides in recent years, as witnessed by the flourishing of the Juvenilia Press, the formation of an International Juvenilia Society and establishment of a dedicated journal (of which this is the inaugural issue), there is still much work to do. This paper should be placed within the context of the rediscovery or reclamation of overlooked juvenile writers.

The Burney juvenilia is the work not of an established author but rather of a collective; the first work I shall discuss here is a collaborative effort that reflects or embodies a familial culture, which was evidently an environment that encouraged play, self-expression, and artistic creation. Even though the contributors did not go on to pursue professional careers as writers, they did continue to express their energy in other ways—in performing music for family and friends, penning stage plays for private theatricals, or educating the young. The study of their juvenilia, therefore, ripe as it is with the excitement and possibilities of youth, yields insight into the creative world of the Burneys in particular as well that of the child reader and writer in late eighteenth-century England more generally.

Before going further, I should like to identify these newly discovered child authors and explain how they fit into the family tree. They belong to the family of Esther Burney (daughter of Charles, elder sister to the novelist Frances Burney) and Charles Rousseau Burney—first cousins who married, thus bequeathing creative genes to their offspring from both sides. Charles Rousseau earned a precarious living as a performer and teacher; he may have been drawn to his cousin Esther through a mutual love of music, as they had both performed as child prodigies. They raised a large family (five children in the space of five years and two more a decade later) in a somewhat Bohemian atmosphere in which music, art, literature, and amateur theatricals played an important part. A household with so many children growing up together would have been stimulating enough in itself; in this case, at least three of the first group—Frances, Sophia Elizabeth, and Richard Allen—were involved in the creation of a family periodical.

Their work is remarkable in two respects: first, as a very early example of a family-produced magazine, which predates those already well known—of the Brontë, Stephen, Dodgson, or Alcott families—which belong to later centuries. Second, the publication that sparked their work was itself a children’s magazine, and one of the first ever produced.

The Burneys’ *Juvenile Magazine* was patterned after John Marshall’s publication of the same name, which was “one of the first journalistic attempts to cater to children” (Alexander 33).<sup>1</sup> There had been an earlier one published by Marshall’s rival, John Newbery, the *Lilliputian Magazine*, which lasted for just three issues in 1751–52, after which no fewer than eleven juvenile periodicals were started before 1800, leading to a flowering of the genre in the nineteenth century. Of these eleven, Marshall produced three—the first of which was *The Juvenile Magazine*.<sup>2</sup>

It ran for twelve months in 1788, *an Instructive and Entertaining Miscellany for Youth of Both Sexes* (as the sub-title proclaims) that included fiction (moralistic tales), dramatic dialogues, short plays, some poetry, and even music (see Appendix for a sample table of contents). Marshall’s *Juvenile Magazine* was a mixed bag that was primarily didactic: some articles taught the basics of geography, astronomy, arithmetic, and other scientific subjects, in keeping with Locke’s influential views on education and the expansion of the curriculum that occurred during the period.<sup>3</sup> All the stories in Marshall’s magazine have an obvious moralistic bent—with emblematic titles such as “The Young Miser” or “The Passionate Child Reclaimed” that underline the lessons they teach. Each month, there was also a section of instructive puzzles that combined education and entertainment, since an element of play had come to be seen as an important part of learning: “*texts that yield pleasure*” were thought to “bring a more lasting educative influence” to bear (Hilton 4).

The editor was a woman, Lucy Peacock, an author of moral tales and a bookseller in Oxford Street, London. From the outset, she creates a sympathetic persona. Defining her intended readership as “young people from SEVEN to FOURTEEN,” she projects a responsive young audience who will be grateful for these efforts on their behalf and send in contributions to the editor who invites their participation.<sup>4</sup> She also encourages her readers to seek advice, suggesting that the role of the Editor is to act as a mentor, especially to those without parents to guide them: if you should find yourself with “an *unruly passion* or *habit* intruding, or a *situation* in which you are at a loss to conduct yourselves, by addressing a letter to the *Editor*, at *Mr. Marshall’s*, you will be furnished, in the next magazine, with that advice which may enable you to *overcome* the one, and accommodate yourselves to the other.” This framework of “a two-way communication” would become standard in juvenile magazines (Drotner 21).

Girls or young women “received special attention,” reflecting the editor’s belief that “they must cultivate their minds and their manners just as intensely as their brothers” (Drotner 20). In fact, the writing often seems directed towards a female audience, emphasising those subjects which they were likely to cultivate: music and languages, for instance, which were seen as desirable feminine accomplishments (scores are regularly printed, and some articles are written wholly in French). A series of letters purportedly from a young lady in the city to her protégée in the country

instructs her in such subjects as arithmetic and ethics. A “Female Adviser” also writes a regular column about feminine deportment. (She advises “humility and diffidence” above all.) In essence, the appearance of this and other magazines geared towards a “mass reading public of juveniles” in a newly commercialised publishing industry could be seen as “an important element in the construction of modern childhood” (Drotner 4).

The *Juvenile Magazine* created by the Burneys in 1792 imitates its prototype in many ways, but moves away from the heavy didacticism—and uses a much lighter touch. While imitating the formal features of Marshall’s publication in content, it sets a very different tone in a world that is purely inventive, and often quite irreverent. The Burney’s *Juvenile Magazine* is also designed as a monthly; there are six surviving issues, bearing the dates of January to June 1792. These six surviving issues may be all there were, given that the last issue ends with an index, which would usually signal the completion of a series of issues which could then be bound. This is not the only feature that imitates an actual publication. The covers are printed neatly to look like typeface; the place of publication is given as well, as though the magazine were privately printed from a press located at the editors’ home address.

It is remarkable how closely the Burneys’ *Juvenile Magazine* resembles the original in its appearance and format: the regular features that begin each issue—the title page, table of contents, and the editor’s address to the “Correspondents”—look so similar that they surely must have been deliberately and carefully copied. On the back cover, the “Editor” of the Burneys’ magazine addresses an audience of “CORRESPONDENTS, SUBSCRIBERS, AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL,” suggesting a possible monetary motive, if the word “Subscribers” can be taken literally, but it is more likely a fiction, part of an editorial pose, in imitation of other periodicals. Some early magazines did publish a list of subscribers: *The Lilliputian Magazine*, for instance, printed a list of its financial supporters whose names ran over nine pages and included several junior members of the nobility (Drotner 22). The grandiosity of the editor’s address here is evidently playful; the audience probably consisted of a small group of readers made up of family and friends.

Also included is an advertisement for a second publication, *The Miscellaneous Review*, which never got off the ground. The intention, however, speaks to the ambition of the Editor, who claims that he “aims at rendering his work little short of Perfection.” Like other early collections of family-created newspapers, the *Juvenile Magazine* helped its young authors to construct an imaginary universe in which they could build confidence in their writing, refine their craft, and find a voice.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are signs that the young writers struggled with the task they set themselves—keeping to a monthly format, for instance. A poem celebrating the birth of a younger sister, Amelia Maria, on 5 August 1792, appears in the May issue, thus convincingly contradicting the chronology in a way that underlines the elements of play and fictional pose in the whole enterprise.

Some monthly columns or features soon disappear, such as the riddles or puzzles that were a regular feature of Marshall’s publication, in which they served a didactic purpose (as vehicles to teach the basic elements of grammar or astronomy). In the Burneys’ magazine, by contrast, the topic chosen for the puzzles was one that remains

dear to an adolescent's heart—food. In the first month, clues were given for elements of “The Dessert,” and in a subsequent issue, clues are keyed to the whole Dinner. After that, the entire section disappears.

Another example of adaptation is the column on “Remarkable Events,” a hold-over from Marshall's *Monthly Occurrences* which had given (under the guise of a news story) admonitory vignettes of children who had met with an untimely and often violent end through inattention to their parents' precepts. The Burneys' reports deviate from their model and eschew the didacticism; perhaps not unsurprisingly, they focus on the musical world, and are strictly circumstantial: for example, they give a report on the burning of the Pantheon on 14 January 1792 and a review of a concert, before fading away entirely.

The Burneys' first issue features an essay written in the genre of the formal periodical paper that contains reflections on the training of youth. Evoking the juvenile poems of Pope, it also cites Hume in stressing the importance of education. Rather than focusing on the need for correction and repression of the evil tendencies of children (as Marshall's publication had done), it borrows images from nature (of blossoming and growth) to suggest the natural flowering of talent: it ends with a couplet asserting that children, like “Tender plants, by due degrees / Grow up mature, to noble trees.” Advocating the nurturing and encouragement of talent, this message could be taken as the implicit theme of the entire family-produced magazine.

The illustrations are also intriguing. Elaborate frontispieces were a regular feature of children's magazines, and those found in the Burneys' production carry the boast that they have been specially engraved. Given the artistic skill of their uncle, Edward Francisco Burney, this was a claim worth investigating. However, it appears to be unfounded; the illustrations prove to be simply popular prints, which enhance the appearance of each issue but are often unrelated to the content. For instance, one is a print (c.1783) of the actress Sarah Siddons; another is an engraving titled the *Naval Review, Plymouth* (1792), by Robert Dodd; a third looks as though it were taken from a ladies' fashion magazine, and so on.

Another claim is that “all the works but those which are entirely original will be excluded.” In fact, carefully chosen excerpts appear in every issue, which means the magazine functions also as a commonplace book, a genre which was popular during the period. In the choice of texts, the tastes of the young editor can be detected. Some, like Andrew Marvell's *The Wounded Fawn*, in which a nymph mourns the death of her pet, are obvious choices to appeal to the taste of a young reader. Others consist of juvenilia themselves, and showcase the work of other young writers: *Poems by Susanna* (London, 1789), for instance, was composed when the author was fourteen years old;<sup>6</sup> and the *Poems* of Maria and Harriet Falconar (London, 1788),<sup>7</sup> when the authors were just sixteen and fourteen respectively.

In these cases, the authors were drawing on what Langbauer has identified as a self-conscious tradition of juvenile writing, which helped to create a sense of a shared community among the young writers. Roger Lonsdale, in his anthology of women poets, has remarked on the “number of precocious children who were finding their way into print at this period” (451), although the examples he gives are mostly male—whereas in the Burneys' *Juvenile Magazine*, all but one of the contributors appear to be

female. The exception is the eldest brother, Richard Allen Burney, who, as “Philosophus,” contributes a series of “Curious Experiments” that can be undertaken at home with everyday materials, such as shadow boxes or magnets: a feature in keeping with the scientific bent of Marshall’s publication.

While the impression is skilfully created of the magazine’s having numerous contributors, most of the enterprise was the work of just two. Foremost was the young Frances Burney (niece to the novelist), who, at sixteen, appears to have been the mastermind, acting both as editor and author of many of the stories. Her position of authority may have come naturally to her, given her rather “overbearing” personality,<sup>8</sup> and she apparently relished her role. Each issue begins with an address to “the Correspondents” in which she sallies forth, Lady Catherine-like, “to scold them into harmony and plenty.” For instance, she gives short shrift to a “Peggy Pindar,” whose “Pindaric Ode” is “trite and vulgar,” and to “Amicus,” whose “productions [are] too uninteresting” to be included. The emblematic names signal that these are fictitious characters and non-existent submissions, invented as a joke. When addressing real contributors, the editor’s tone is somewhat kinder, and—in the case of one who comes from a higher social class—positively deferential.

Besides playing the role of editor, the young Frances Burney also writes much of the material, experimenting with a variety of genres, reminding us of the level of literacy necessary for this kind of literary game; children’s magazines were geared to the middle or upper classes. Her best effort is probably “Wealth, Wisdom and Virtue,” a tale patterned after those contained in the *Arabian Nights*. It is full of exotic colour and imitates the heightened florid style of the translation while being shaped effectively towards an edifying lesson (the importance of using riches well), which follows a practice common in children’s literature of the period in which a moral is tagged on at the end of a fairy tale to make it serve a didactic purpose.

Frances also writes two pastoral dialogues, following classical models—and even quotes some Latin. Her ease in employing different genres suggests that she was conscious of the literary effects she was trying to produce, using touches of comedy or literary parody. In “A Turkish Tale,” for instance, she corrects the author, who (she writes) “forgets that the Muses of the ancients were very little if at all known among the Turks.” This light, metafictional comment is an example of the playfulness that emanates from the Burneys’ *Magazine*.

The versatility of the young Frances Burney’s contributions foregrounds the role-playing which arguably is at the heart of the pleasure of juvenilia (Neufeld 173–74). The multiplicity of the roles she plays is reflected in the number of pseudonyms she employs. First, there is the simple initial “F” that she signs as editor; perhaps its brevity is meant to be in keeping with the male persona she is assuming. In an example of literary cross-dressing, she refers to herself as “he,” thus making a claim to masculinity whenever she speaks loftily from the covers, thereby adding to her own authority. On special occasions, she uses her full initials “FB” (like those of her famous aunt), once enclosing them in an ornate medallion. Mostly, however, her nom-de-plume is “Francisca,” the Italianised form of her first name. Besides allowing her to adopt different voices and genres, the various pseudonyms create the

impression of multiple authors contributing to the *Juvenile Magazine*, in imitation of Marshall’s original.

The other main contributor is Frances’s younger sister Sophia Elizabeth, whose writing provides an interesting contrast with her sister’s contributions. While Sophia is equally versatile in her use of genres, her tone is quite different. At once more satirical, her work is often marked by black comedy and outlandish occurrences (somewhat reminiscent of the juvenilia of Austen). Throughout her work, children regularly defy or disobey their parents, who are often flawed or irrational characters. Her young protagonists frequently run away from home, experiencing raucous adventures untrammelled and unprotected by figures of authority.

Sophia Burney contributes several works of fiction as well as plays. Her main poetic contribution to the magazine is the ballad of “Egbert and Ellen,” a major effort consisting of thirty-four stanzas that evokes a world of legend and medieval folklore, imitating the adult writers of the time who were “working in a period ... that truly valued antiquarianism and mediaeval revivalism (Sumner 138).<sup>9</sup> It features a strong heroine, who defies the villain, disobeys her father, and rescues the noble hero. The light and airy tone is reflected in the upbeat rhythm of the quatrains, simple in form, yet well adapted to carrying the narrative:

1

Egbert, a young and valiant Hero  
 Lov’d a fair and virtuous Dame;  
 She saw the merits of her lover  
 And return’d his ardent flame  
 .....

29

After a battle she arrived  
 And through the soldiers push’d her way  
 Till she discovered Egbert’s body  
 Breathless on the ground it lay

30

Horror struck her gentle bosom  
 She fear’d his life she could not save;  
 But directed those around her  
 To bear him to the Hermit’s cave.

The strength and freedom of the heroine underlines the benefit of the family-produced magazine in allowing the young writers to find a voice. In this they recall the Brontës, who, as Christine Alexander has written, “experimented with a range of genres and styles, developed a sense of audience, played with a rich variety of characters, and experienced the power that editors and authors exercise over their literary creations” (37).

The six issues of the Burney's *Juvenile Magazine*, a rich compendium of poems, stories, plays, puzzles, excerpts, and illustrations, are remarkable first of all in their preservation, which in itself is a testimony to the appreciation of those around them, the adults who read, "subscribed" to, and evidently supported the venture. As a collaborative effort, the magazine reflects a familial culture and atmosphere that encouraged creativity and helped to bring the Burneys to the forefront of the artistic, musical and literary cultures of the time.

This is not the only collection of juvenilia of this literary family to have survived, however. The experience of creating a magazine may have stimulated further productions, for the following year, Sophia Elizabeth Burney took the time to gather her writing into several anthologies, thus creating her own body of work. Her anthologies represent a different kind of juvenilia in being single-authored works which often bear resemblance to the writing of Frances Burney (the elder), the novelist, who played a major role in encouraging their production, and to whom they are dedicated. A narrow strip of paper, just one inch wide, probably added as an afterthought to a letter, is glued into a cover of the first issue of the *Juvenile Magazine*. Dated October 1792, it was written soon after the sixth issue was completed. This strip of paper was sent by Sophia's aunt Frances Burney, who advises her niece to "summon all her brightest ideas" and "send off a Sheet a Week" to her aunt: "All will be welcome" (*Journals* 12: 994-95).

The connection between the two—published author and aspiring youth—is a significant one, especially in light of the disappearance of Frances Burney's own juvenilia in a symbolic act of destruction. She herself was a lifelong writer who (by her own account) "at ten, ... began scribbling, almost incessantly, little works of invention" (Frances Burney, *Memoirs* 2: 123) but on her fifteenth birthday built a bonfire in which she "committed to the flames" all her youthful writings, including an entire novel, the prequel to *Evelina*. Struggling to overcome a guilty "propensity" to write, she burned "whatever, up to that moment," she "had committed to paper," possibly to propitiate her future stepmother who disapproved of the unladylike habit of "scribbling."<sup>10</sup> There is, therefore, a note of poignancy in her urging of the young Sophia to continue her "scribbling" apace and send it on, to someone who would keep it safe and know how to value it.

As a published author, Frances Burney played the role of mentor to a niece who shared her sense of exuberance and fun. As a child, Sophia was described as "a merry pleasant little thing" with "very quick parts" and a "constant *gaieté de coeur*."<sup>11</sup> Even as a young woman, she was, according to her aunt Frances, full of "comic & quaint stories & conceits" (*Journals* 4: 212). The kinship between them remained, which may be one reason why Sophia's works often call to mind the novels of her famous aunt in their similar use of common themes and motifs and attitudes towards money, gender and class.

In response to her aunt's encouragement, Sophia Burney gathered some of her contributions to the *Juvenile Magazine*, as well as other original compositions, into a series of anthologies. They were purportedly written when Sophia was thirteen, which would place their time of composition between September 1790 and 1791; this timing accords with the date of the *Juvenile Magazine* that began in January 1792. The actual



copying and creation of the anthologies, however, must date from sometime later, given the use of Frances Burney's married name on the title-page, "Madame d'Arblay," which proves that they must post-date her wedding of 28 July 1793.

There are, in fact, three surviving manuscripts that I have amalgamated and prepared as an edition for the Juvenilia Press (2016), with the help of Sarah Rose Smith.<sup>12</sup> Previous to this, they had remained unpublished, although there was a privately printed edition of one of them, "Novels, Plays, and Poems," in fifty copies printed up by a bookseller in time for Christmas 1930, based on a manuscript in a family collection that was ultimately bought by McGill University. A second anthology, "Works," is held at the Kislak Centre at the University of Pennsylvania.

Although these two anthologies have different titles, they look very similar (both have the same "Dedication" and "Address to the reader") and contain a similar mix of fiction, poetry, and plays, none of which is duplicated. They dovetail very nicely in that the Table of Contents in "Works" lists four items that are missing but can be found in "Novels, Plays and Poems," which also contains two other titles. Both of these are labelled "volume 1"; a third manuscript, marked simply as "II<sup>d</sup>," is also found in the Kislak collection, and could be the second volume of one of these (possibly the McGill manuscript), but it is impossible to tell, as there is no title. It contains some duplicates and some unique titles.

In all, in the three manuscripts, there are three poems, four plays, four tales, and two longer stories. The elaborateness of the scheme (and the number of copies made by Sophia) testifies to the support given to the young author by those around her, who evidently encouraged her efforts. Although adult encouragement for juvenilia is not universal, it can be an important factor in the confidence and productivity of the child writer.

Richness of invention is the phrase that best characterises the work of Sophia Burney. Remarkable as the jokester in the family, Sophia usually writes in a humorous vein. Of the thirteen titles, just two are explicitly called "Tragedies"; most are ostensibly comic—although the comedies often incorporate violence (evidently meant to be funny). Meanwhile, the actual tragedies end in a bloodbath. In the first, "The Royal Tragedy," an orgy of stabbing at the end leaves the stage littered with bodies in a scene that is evidently played for laughs, judging by the risible dialogue. The second tragedy, "Murder Committed," features just four main characters and moves quickly to its fatal conclusion in which the heroine is killed by her father for refusing to marry a high-ranking male, and her fiancé kills himself for grief. This embryonic plot is not dissimilar to those featured in the heroic tragedies penned by Frances Burney at court, which often depict female "anguish" and "confinement" at the hands of men (Darby 58). In Sophia Burney's writing, too, the women suffer from male violence in coercive situations which could be read as a protest against the female lot, raising gender issues which have been the subject of debate in criticism of Frances Burney's novels.<sup>13</sup>

Even in Sophia Burney's comedies, narrative closure is often brought about through death. Although this may simply be the tying up of loose ends by an inexperienced author, the pattern does seem quite obsessive. The fates that overtake her characters can be gruesome, such as the blinding and drowning of the ass in "The

History of Blind Jack,” the swallowing of the hero by a shark in “The Adventures of a Boy,” and the gibbeting of brother and sister in “The Unlawful Marriage.” While somewhat grotesque, all of these grisly incidents are treated lightly by the narrator. The first provides the occasion for a bad pun, the second allows the narrator to move on with the story, “Our valiant Hero being now at Ease in the Sharks [*sic*] stomach” (S. E. Burney 42), and the last immediately precedes the up-beat conclusion, “So there ends our happy tale” (32). While outlandish humour may seem a hallmark of juvenilia (Austen’s work, for instance, is often described as “sprightly,” “daring,” or “raucous” [Doody, “Jane Austen” 102]), still the pervasiveness of extreme violence and its light-hearted dismissal in Sophia Burney’s work seem unusual. Her opening epigraph even evokes the death of the reader quite cheerily: “Keep them ever in your head, / And dont [*sic*] forget them till you’re dead” (1).

Some of the tales feature another recurring motif, a wayward youth who runs away, often paired with a brother who is sent to look for him. The pattern occurs in “The Unlawful Marriage,” where the first embarks on a long sea voyage and the pursuing brother dies. The loss of a prodigal son with destructive consequences for his loved ones may have had personal resonance for the author, given a little-known piece of family history. A family memoir recounts the story of Sophia’s high-spirited elder brother Charles Crisp, who ran away twice: once (at twelve) walking one hundred miles home to London from his grandfather’s house, and again at the age of sixteen, absconding suddenly from his apprenticeship, and disappearing without a trace. He was never heard from again, and his whereabouts remained unknown for several years.<sup>14</sup>

The impact of the missing son or brother must have been devastating, causing much “uncertainty, and painful suspense” to the family. The episode might explain the figure of the runaway youth that haunts the juvenilia, and the tendency of the imagined endings to bring uncontested finality. The repetition suggests a way of dealing with trauma by revisiting it and resolving it in a narrative, a practice not dissimilar to that of Frances Burney who (as Julia Epstein has suggested) often depicted “moments of trauma,” pain, and violence in her journals which she recovers from through her writing.<sup>15</sup>

As for Charles Crisp, it would not be until seven years later that his sad fate was learned. Without money or plans, he had joined the East India Company and sailed to Calcutta, caught dysentery on the voyage, and died in a military hospital on Christmas Eve, at the age of seventeen. An eye-witness account stresses his courage in the face “of his approaching dissolution,” and his wish that his “sincere penitence” should be conveyed to his parents.

For many writers, the grief of bereavement acts as a catalyst for creativity. The death of Frances Burney’s mother when she was ten may have encouraged her habit of compulsive writing, begun in childhood; grief may also have played a role in the juvenilia of the Brontës, Maria Edgeworth, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as Beverley Taylor has pointed out (142). For Sophia Burney, the banishment and loss of her brother Charles Crisp may have had a similar effect. Charles Crisp disappeared early in 1791, the year that apparently produced all these compositions. The uncertainty of his fate might also explain her tendency to end her plays and stories so

decisively, using death (that unanswerable narrative incident) to provide a firm and inescapable conclusion (Clark xxix). Death, at least, brings closure.

There are other violent incidents in Sophia Burney's writing, such as imprisonment, duels, kidnapping, maiming, and wife abuse. The latter occurs in "Pensylvania [*sic*]," in which the heroine wavers so much between two suitors that the one who marries her "always left her in a straight waistcoat when he went out [so that] she did not prove unfaithful to him" (48), a solution which apparently has the approval of the narrator. The strident nature of her comedy reminds us that a robust sense of the ridiculous was acceptable within the cultural and, more specifically, the familial context. As Charles Burney writes, gatherings of family members were strongly marked by laughter: "we used, old & young, Male & female, to sit up all night—not to drink, but to laugh a gorge *déployée* ..." (38).

In one poem, Sophia Burney evokes Henry Fielding, a reference which seems especially apt, given the boisterousness of her humour and her inclusion of direct addresses to the reader. Fielding has often been compared with Frances Burney, who was said "to translate the Fielding-type of novel into the feminine key" (Cecil 78). For some readers, however, her comedy went too far, degenerating into coarseness, the more surprising in a woman writer. Recent critics have remarked on the problematic nature of scenes (such as the beating of Madame Duval) which depict cruelty yet invite the audience's laughter. The works of Sophia Burney, which are even more strident in their content, bring an added perspective to these controversies.<sup>16</sup>

The boisterous tone of Sophia Burney's work contrasts with that of her sister Frances, whose work often centres on love, courtship, and marriage. Just three of Sophia's tales close in an uncomplicated way with a wedding, and few of the marriages she depicts are satisfactory, often bedevilled with differences of class. In "The History of Walter Scarecrow," for instance, the hero fails to secure the "handsome, ... fashionable, ... [and] rich" woman to whom he aspires, and has to settle for a farmer's daughter, only to find that her parents "disliked him on many accounts," of which his "meanness" and "poverty" are key.

If meanness defines the suitors, mercenariness would be the word that best defines the brides, raising interesting questions about female characterisation.<sup>17</sup> Marriage is presented as a way to rise and a stepping-stone to riches. Anxiety about finances marks the works of Sophia Burney, as it does those of her aunt Frances Burney, who often juxtaposes characters from different classes, to great comic effect.<sup>18</sup> A quintessentially Burney scene is one in which the heroine is embarrassed by her association with someone of a lower class than she or in which she aspires to belong a class higher than her own,<sup>19</sup> which is similar to the situation of Sophia's Walter Scarecrow who goes up to London in hopes of becoming a gentleman.

Similar attitudes towards money and class in the works of both writers should be placed in the context of the precarious position of the Burneys and their aspirations to gentility. The family's place in London society was an equivocal one: Charles Burney, a self-made man who had risen from lowly origins by virtue of talent and hard work, ensured his entrée into London society by cultivating agreeable manners. This strategy may be echoed in the advice given to Walter Scarecrow, the (comically inept) hero, that "to render himself as agreeable [*sic*] as possible [was] the surest way

to make his fortune.” Yet with his “mean appearance” and “awkward and clownish” manners, Walter fails to impress anybody; moreover, his intended debut as a gentleman is undercut by the shady district in London from which he launches his campaign (he lodges in the same street from which Sophia Burney’s family had started out). This kind of inside joke and personal reference shows that the juvenilia are written for an intimate circle; the implied audience is one whose tastes and habits are well known.

In conclusion, the creativity fostered in the family bursts from the pages of these two works of juvenilia. Both are inspired by—but soon depart from—their models. Marshall’s *Juvenile Magazine* provides a format, structure, and impetus to the young Burneys, who soon turned their own magazine into a co-operative venture, creating a community of shared literary activity. The effect of all this activity, in encouraging Sophia Burney to create her own single-author anthologies, reflects the role that juvenilia can play in forming the next generation of authors. Dedicating her efforts to her famous aunt, who had already written two bestsellers, is a sign of Sophia’s aspirations and underlines the role played by Frances Burney. Her literary success encouraged the women of her own and later generations, serving as a model to which to aspire.

There are other works of Burney family juvenilia that survive and even more that were lost, including an entire series of three-act plays, apparently presented in a private theatrical season.<sup>20</sup> These enticing traces point to the possibility of more discoveries, and underscore the extraordinary productivity of this gifted family.

In her comprehensive biography of the Brontë family, Juliet Barker emphasises that their “intense family relationship” was essential to their writing (830). Expanding on these insights in her own study, Lamonica Drew notes that “family underpinned the social, emotional, and imaginative lives of the Brontës. Family provided the supportive network in which they wrote and through which they embarked on publication.” The parsonage at Haworth, she writes, was because of this family support “a place of extraordinary creativity and productivity” (1–2).

The same could be said for the young Burneys and for their home on Titchfield Street, from which they operated their own private “juvenilia press.” Further study of their early works and those of other creative families is warranted—writers whose skill was formed in the crucible of an intense period of shared creativity in childhood and youth. A focus on these family collectives would represent an important sub-category in the field of literary juvenilia.

**APPENDIX: MARSHALL'S *JUVENILE MAGAZINE*  
SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS**

THE YOUNG Burneys imitated John Marshall's *Juvenile Magazine* to create their own *Juvenile Magazine* in 1792. The table of contents found in Marshall's January 1788 issue is reproduced here, with the original capitalization and italics preserved:

THE JUVENILE MAGAZINE; OR, AN INSTRUCTIVE and ENTERTAINING MISCELLANY FOR YOUTH of BOTH SEXES. For January 1788. Embellished with Two Prints; L'ENFANT DOCILE; and the SILLY BOY. CONTENTS.	
THE EDITOR'S ADDRESS to her Young Readers . . . . . page iii An Easy Introduction to GEO- GRAPHY . . . . . 5 THE SCHOOL-BOY . . . . . 10 L'ENFANT DOCILE . . . . . 14 Fire Side Dialogues—THE SILLY BOY . . . . . 15 FAMILIAR LETTERS on Various Subjects—From Miss <i>Truelove</i> To Mrs. <i>Wingrove</i> —From Miss <i>Truelove</i> to <i>Phillis Flowerdale</i> . . . . . 22	THE YOUNG MISER . . . . . 27 THE LITTLE BOY who behaved LIKE A MAN . . . . . page 33 INSTRUCTIVE PUZZLES—An Enigmatical Description of a Good Girl . . . . . 34 NOTES TO THE INSTRUCTIVE PUZZLES . . . . . 35 THE LITTLE FOREIGNER; a DRAMA in One Act . . . . . 37 POETRY . . . . . 55 MONTHLY OCCURRENCES . . . . . 57

## NOTES

1. Alexander gives a good analysis of the early family magazines. See also Dawson, who discusses the *Lilliputian* and the *Juvenile Magazine* at length as “the earliest English children’s periodicals” (175).
2. Published monthly beginning (and ending) in 1788, there are twelve issues, copies of which are held at the British Library and the Bodleian. Microfilm copies are held at other libraries, for instance, at the Cambridge University Library and the National Library of Australia.
3. A good discussion of the subject is in Hunt, ch. 2.
4. In the first issue, the editor announces: “Those young persons who wish to contribute to the *Juvenile Magazine* by any literary production, will have that attention paid to their performances, which their abilities, and the goodness of their intentions may merit” (iv).
5. The value of juvenilia in allowing a young writer to imitate and, at the same time, appropriate adult authority has been noted by Alexander (31).
6. *Poems, By Susanna* (London, 1789) were purportedly written by “a young Lady of fourteen years of age” whose poems were “being published without either the knowledge or consent of their author,” which accounts for no last name being given (v–vii).
7. The first volume of *Poems* by Maria and Harriet Falconer was published by subscription in 1788 when the co-authors were about sixteen and fourteen respectively. They also published *Poems on Slavery* (1788) and *Poetic Laurels* (1791). For a brief biographical notice and an excerpt, see Lonsdale (451–52).
8. The remark is found in a journal-letter of Susanna (Burney) Phillips to Frances Burney, printed in an entry under Sunday 17 January [1788], in R. Brimley Johnson (200). Susanna writes that her niece Frances is “generally harsh and overbearing to Sophy, who I think, as I always thought is much the more interesting and pleasing of the two—.”
9. It is possible that this poem was a joint production with her sister.
10. Frances Burney tells the story of the bonfire in the Dedication to her last novel, *The Wanderer* (1814). She also repeats it in her *Memoirs of Doctor Burney* (2: 124–25). Doody suggests a connection between the bonfire and the impending marriage of her father with the widow, Elizabeth Allen, which it preceded by a few months (*Frances Burney* 36).
11. The first of these remarks is contained in a letter from Susanna (Burney) Phillips to Frances Burney, 20 January [17]88, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, quoted with permission, and the second in an entry dated 17 January [1788], printed in R. Brimley Johnson (200).
12. My edition of Sophia Elizabeth Burney’s “*Works and “Novels, Plays, and Poems,”*” was edited with the help of Sarah Rose Smith. Permission to quote here from the text and introduction of this edition has been kindly granted by Christine Alexander and the Juvenilia Press.
13. Influential critics who see sublimated protest in Frances Burney’s works include Staves, Lowder Newton, and Cutting. Spacks’s early feminist readings also played an important role in revisionist readings.
14. The tale unfolds in a family memoir generally referred to in Burney scholarship as the Worcester Memoranda, a typescript of which several copies survive.
15. Epstein notes the “obsessive recurrences of violence” in Burney’s journals, and finds a strong narrative focus on the “retrospective memorialization of herself at moments of trauma” (41).
16. Critics who write on the violence in Burney’s fiction include Fraiman and especially Zonitch. For an overview of Burney’s critical reception since her own time, see Clark, “The Afterlife.”
17. Influential critics on gender issues in Frances Burney’s writing (besides those already mentioned) include Brown, Rogers, Straub, and Cutting-Gray. Thaddeus, in her biography of Burney, outlines three stages of feminist criticism of Burney since the 1970s.
18. Examples of financial anxiety in the novels of Frances Burney include the loss of Cecilia’s fortune; the debt troubles that plague Camilla; and the Wanderer’s frustrating attempts to make a living. Copeland raises the issue of money in Frances Burney’s novels; other critics who comment are Campbell, Burgess, Thompson, and Henderson.

19. As Doody writes of the fiction of Frances Burney, the “clash of cultures and ideologies” forms “a large source of her humour,” and is evident in scenes in which characters from different classes clash to comic effect (“Burney and Politics” 99).
20. The inside covers of two of the issues, evidently recycled and reused, bear the titles of two plays which were written in 1791, evidently as part of a series, *The Eastern Theatre*, which included at least four plays.

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