

Introduction

The manuscript draft of Frances Burney's second novel *Cecilia* (1782) provides a striking illustration of revision. There are hundreds of deleted words and phrases in the manuscript, but the longest obliterated passage is located within the novel's famous masquerade scene, in which the heroine Cecilia Beverley remains undisguised and recognizable while her masked suitors pursue her openly, especially the duplicitous Mr. Monckton, who is costumed as a devil. The scene epitomizes the disastrous spending habits of the Harrels, the partial guardians of Cecilia, and dramatizes Cecilia's vulnerable position. The recovered text reveals a bizarre depiction of Mr. Monckton's satanic ritualism juxtaposed with the comically confused interjections of the other revelers, which focus more on the exotic language Mr. Monckton is speaking rather than the disturbing import of his actions. The significant implications of this unique passage extend beyond Burney's *Cecilia* to larger questions about eighteenth-century authorship, the novel, and revision.

Burney's nonsensical approximation of the Coptic language and her figuration of satanic rites are startling additions to *Cecilia* that reveal the transformative potential of "digital paleography," or the use of digital technologies to analyze handwriting, most frequently within manuscripts. The deleted masquerade scene has been restored using image manipulation software. The process employs layering techniques, color levels, and filters, and is more advanced than the simple image enlargement techniques used by most researchers.¹ Digital paleography is one of several methods of textual recovery employed in this study to detect the networks that influenced eighteenth-century authorship. Textual recovery can open up new interpretive frameworks, in this case the potential to change prevailing views of Burney and her work. By interpreting Burney's suppression and revision of *Cecilia's* masquerade scene alongside her contemporaneous letters, readers can understand for the first time that she succumbed to familial pressures to remove innovative elements while writing the novel.

The recovered text shows that *Cecilia* should not be considered as an act of Burney's literary independence nor should Cecilia's role in the masquerade scene be construed as empowering.² Rather, a focus on revision calls into question the novel's portrayal of female subjectivity and exposes the limits of Burney's authorial autonomy.

The deleted passage from *Cecilia* demonstrates the importance of textual recovery and its larger ramifications for manuscript studies, authorship, and the novel, all central concerns of this book. *Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel* recovers and analyzes material from novel manuscripts and post-publication revisions in order to construct a new narrative about eighteenth-century authorship and its dependence on the networks in which writers lived and worked. The book's overarching claim is that a model of "networked authorship" shaped the compositions of eighteenth-century novels, challenging, as some previous scholars have, the individualistic view of authorship that arose during the Romantic period. Instead of being restricted to single writers working on their own projects in isolation, eighteenth-century authorship should be conceived of as a fluid group centered in a principal author figure that other contributing author figures – usually members of literary and familial circles, reviewers, and readers – were continually entering and exiting. Networked authorship serves as the organizing principle for this book: while my chapters focus on canonical authors, I repeatedly stress the extended social and cultural networks that contributed to novelistic production. Networked authorship has external and internal, as well as public and private dimensions that emerge in a variety of ways as I discuss below, and it can be discerned primarily by tracing textual revisions.

Revision has been neglected in previous discussions of the eighteenth-century novel, even though it has been recognized as essential to more established genres such as non-fiction and drama, which, as with the early novel, were collaborative and subject to post-publication revision.³ Publication in the eighteenth century did not have the finality it does today, and novelists of the age were aware of the possibilities afforded by such collaboration and revision because of their widespread experimentation with other genres. In exposing the networks that constitute eighteenth-century authorship, my project is in dialogue with previous work in textual studies and the rise of the novel. Jerome J. McGann's contributions to bibliography and textual theory, particularly his practice of "versioning," a term textual theorists have appropriated from computing to mean "The control, comparison, or management of multiple [textual] versions," are important foundations for this book.⁴ *Revising the Eighteenth-Century*

Novel embraces the multiplicity of versions available due to authorial revision, not only to gesture toward the unstable nature of the literary text as McGann does, but also to propose a model for eighteenth-century authorship.⁵

Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel constructs a model of networked authorship based not only on the revisions of Frances Burney, but also on those of her predecessor Samuel Richardson and her later contemporaries Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth. This book uncovers significant manuscript passages from fictions by Burney and Edgeworth and from letters by Richardson that had been previously considered irrecoverable.⁶ These recovered texts, along with their manuscript, published, and revised counterparts, inform this book's theory of eighteenth-century British novel revision. There are three features of revision that were central to the composition process in the long eighteenth century: authors were enmeshed in networks – literary, familial, or otherwise – that influenced their novels and revisions; authors were affected by the rise of literary reviews to such an extent that they would make post-publication revisions; and authors recycled and reworked material from their previous texts, a type of self-collaboration that attenuates our sense of the novel as an isolated creation. These three features arise from different forms of networked authorship that can be characterized as external – inspired by public or private factors – or internal. For instance, revision that is external and private is usually stimulated by an author's network; revision that is external and public is often inspired by reviews or other types of public response; and revision that is internal can be an author's recycling of previous material. These aspects of revision and the networks of authorship that gave them birth arise from developments in eighteenth-century manuscript and print culture, one of the key subjects of this book.

Manuscript and Print Revisions

Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel is the first sustained examination of novelistic revision in the late eighteenth century, and, as such, contributes to ongoing debates on manuscript and print during the period.⁷ The relative paucity of work on eighteenth-century novel drafts can be explained by the fact that it was rare for novel manuscripts to survive since compositors generally destroyed them during the printing process. Nevertheless, novels by three of the four authors discussed in this project – Frances Burney, Jane Austen, and Maria Edgeworth – have manuscript counterparts. These rare surviving drafts provide key insights into their

authors' process of composition and revision, a perspective this book supplements with extracts from their letters and journals. The practices of these four authors inform this book's central arguments, which build on previous work in manuscript culture, particularly David McKitterick's claim that "instability in print is not just a linear process, from speech to manuscript to print."⁸ This "instability" manifests itself in revision. Revision is not a unidirectional action that moves solely from manuscript to print. Revision can appear in manuscript, in print, or in both formats. Revision is never isolated or fixed. And revision, as this book contends, complicates notions of solitary authorship and the unified novel text in three significant ways: it reveals that authors were enmeshed in literary, familial, and social networks; that authors were affected by the birth and rise of the literary review; and that authors recycled and reworked material from their previous texts.

Throughout the long eighteenth century, authors and their novels were influenced by networks, usually generated by their literary and familial circles, and thus participated in a form of networked authorship. External influence was not an "inhibit[ion] from creativity," as Harold Bloom has argued, but rather an essential component of a novelist's creative process.⁹ *Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel* engages with previous conversations on the interactions of manuscript and print by Margaret Ezell, Betty Schellenberg, and McKitterick, scholars who have shown that social authorship and professional authorship were not mutually exclusive.¹⁰ Schellenberg, in particular, contends that the relationships that influenced eighteenth-century women writers could be both professional and collegial, outlining a "complex network" in which they were supported instead of patronized by their illustrious male counterparts and seen as central figures themselves.¹¹ None of these critics, however, focuses exclusively on novel manuscripts; consequently, *Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel* adds a new dimension to their arguments, in particular, to Ezell's contention that social authorship weakens distinctions between the author and the reader: "a reader in a manuscript culture, with a fluid text constantly subject to change, is responsible for participating in literary production as well as consumption." Ezell's view of the reader as both consumer and producer has significant ramifications even for works that were eventually published: (manuscript) texts encourage collaborative authorship. Her study, however, focuses largely on shorter works and on individuals and groups who used manuscript dissemination as an alternative to print publication.¹² This book instead examines largely canonical authors of the long eighteenth century who wrote and published novels, arguing, in

many cases for the first time, that these authors and their novels were shaped by larger networks of authorship.

The related, though comparatively neglected topic of the literary review and its influence on authors' revisions is the focus of this book's second claim. The two first major book reviewing journals, *The Monthly Review* and *The Critical Review*, were founded respectively in 1749 and 1756. According to Michael Gamer, these two journals "permanently changed print culture in Britain"; starting in the second half of the eighteenth century, almost every published novel was reviewed at least once, though usually most novels received multiple reviews.¹³ With the creation of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802) and *The Quarterly Review* (1809), book reviewing acquired a more intellectual tone, and most of the authors discussed in this study benefited from their reviewers' advice and criticism. Little work has been done on the interaction of authors with their reviewers besides Frank Donoghue's *The Fame Machine* and its antagonistic model of authors and reviews at war.¹⁴ This book argues instead that reviewers were often unintentional collaborators who participated in a system of networked authorship. The primary function of reviewers was to serve as arbiters of public taste. While they did aim to influence readers and authors, their role as textual correctors for post-publication revisions went beyond their intended mandate.¹⁵

In addition to the external forces that influenced authors' revisions, this book discusses internal factors, specifically authors' decisions to reuse and repurpose material from their previous texts. This may seem the most obvious of its claims, but internally motivated revision can be interpreted as a type of self-collaboration that creates an authorship network between an author and his or her own past selves. Often these repurposed texts, as in the case of Austen's juvenilia, were not published during the author's lifetime. And a number of the manuscript counterparts, especially in the cases of Burney and Edgeworth, have not previously been part of the scholarly discussion. These manuscripts are sometimes linked to another key aspect of an author's internal revision process: revision necessitated due to an author's disadvantaged gender or social class position. As seen above with *Cecilia*, earlier, alternate versions of Burney's texts can reveal hitherto hidden aspects of her creative process of composition and revision. *Camilla* (1796), which exists in multiple manuscript drafts, contains dark and abusive characters who were somewhat sanitized in the published novel. Clermont, cousin to *Camilla*, is a minor figure, significant only because of his tremendous debts and his ostentatious epicureanism. We get a glimpse of his seething interiority in an early draft of the novel, as he attacks

Eugenia, his rejected bride-to-be, and implicates Melmond, who had “pretensions to Eugenia . . . which extremely <incensed> him; for he had flattered himself, when he refused her, she would at least die an old maid, & that the fortune of Sir Hugh might ultimately devolve to his heirs.” His mercenary plotting is overshadowed in the draft by his abusive language, referring to Eugenia initially as “that little squab,” or undeveloped bird, and then more contemptuously as “that little queer shrimp there, with the hump,” alluding to Eugenia’s small hunchback.¹⁶

The culmination of the deleted *Camilla* passage unveils one of Burney’s most trenchant critiques of eighteenth-century patriarchy. Clermont emphasizes that it is Eugenia’s erudition, not her ugliness, that is her worst feature: “She’s learned, too! Ha! Ha! that’s the best joke of all! Did you ever hear of such an old dotard as my precious uncle must be? What could a man get by <such> a wife? I should look for Cobwebs over my dishes, & see spiders boiled in my soup.” Clermont’s rudeness is unanswerable: Melmond only “coloured” and “looked utterly confounded.”¹⁷ His initial desertion of Eugenia in favor of her beautiful cousin Indiana is here given better justification. By removing this abusive language in the published novel, Burney renders Clermont’s character uneven and toothless. Moreover, Burney softens the theme of toxic masculinity: as with her revisions to *Cecilia*, perhaps Burney – or members of her literary network – considered his language too vulgar or his character too accurate an indictment of masculine privilege. As with the deleted masquerade scene in *Cecilia*, this passage transforms prevailing views of Burney’s stance toward the patriarchy, suggesting that networked authorship could be shaped by gender norms and indicating the revelatory possibilities that multiple textual versions can provide.

Revising the Formation of the Novel

Besides making available a new range of textual interpretations, a focus on novelistic revision contributes to a better understanding of the novel’s proximity to other more established genres, which is linked in turn to how authors themselves viewed the emerging novel genre during the eighteenth century. Frances Burney’s *Camilla* is also a fine example of how eighteenth-century novelists avoided classifying their works as novels. In a discussion of *Camilla*’s form, Burney declared, “it *is* of the same species as Evelina & Cecilia: new *modified*, in being more multifarious in the Characters it brings into action, – but all *wove* into *one*, with a one *Heroine* shining conspicuous through the Group, & that in what Mr.

Twining so flatteringly calls *the prose Epic Style*.¹⁸ Burney's declaration is connected to a long tradition of skepticism about the novel genre. Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), regarded by some as the first English novel, disclaims its fictionality in its subtitle, "*A True History*." Daniel Defoe casts himself as the "editor" of *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and defends its claims to veracity in the editor's preface: "*The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it.*"¹⁹ In *Pamela* (1740), published more than twenty years after *Robinson Crusoe*, Samuel Richardson similarly claims to be the "Editor" instead of the author of "*the following Letters, which have their Foundation in Truth and Nature.*"²⁰ Like many of their contemporaries, Behn, Defoe, and Richardson may have been unwilling to embrace the novel form because they were writing and publishing during a period when the novel genre was novel and fictional prose was devalued as "lies,"²¹ or as J. A. Downie has argued, they couched their works as true histories in a "shrewd marketing ploy" that was familiar to their readers.²² The frequency of such disclaimers lessened around the mid-eighteenth century as authors began to acknowledge openly the fictionality of the novel form even while testing its limits.

Despite or perhaps because of their skepticism, eighteenth-century authors exploited the flexible generic boundaries of the novel at a time when the form was condescendingly defined by Samuel Johnson as, "A small tale, generally of love."²³ Shortly after the appearance of his third and final novel, Richardson published *A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Maxims, Cautions, and Reflections, Contained in the Histories of Pamela, Clarissa, and Sir Charles Grandison* (1755), a distillation of the most significant moral principles from his three novels. In the preface, Richardson emphasizes the dichotomy between plot and principle in his previous works and contends that his *Collection* has removed the fictional and hence unnecessary elements:

But as the *narrative* part of those Letters was only meant as a vehicle for the *instructive*, no wonder that many readers, who are desirous of fixing in their minds those maxims which deserve notice distinct from the story that first introduced them, should have often wished and pressed to see them separate from that chain of engaging incidents that will sometimes steal the most fixed attention from its pursuit of serious truth.²⁴

Richardson's claims emphasize the proximity between the novel and the conduct book, two seemingly disparate genres that are united in his works and in later didactic fiction. His facility of moving between the two genres

indicates the malleable nature of the eighteenth-century novel, though he implicitly denigrates the novel form as something that tends to “steal” notice from its more important didactic content. Above all, his claims demonstrate that as the novel developed, it borrowed from and was associated with other textual forms and that its practitioners did not consider themselves solely as novelists.

Published nearly forty years after Richardson’s *Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments*, Charlotte Palmer’s strikingly titled text, *It Is, and It Is Not a Novel*, confirms the novel’s flexible generic boundaries even as late as 1792 through her own consciousness of her work as a networked text. In her preface, Palmer anticipates her readers’ confusion regarding the title and provides an anecdotal conversation to justify her choice: “And pray what do you mean to call your Book, when finished – A Novel?’ – I replied, ‘I do not know what to call it; for it is, and it is not a novel.’ ‘A very curious composition truly,’ said he, ‘It *is*, and it is *not*, is quite in the female style of contradiction!’”²⁵ Palmer goes on to explain that the uncertainty implicit in the title reflects the text’s mixture of fictional and biographical elements. While this slippage of genres is feminized and trivialized in Palmer’s anecdote, her use of genre is even more sophisticated than Richardson’s amalgamation of the novel and conduct book. *It Is, and It Is Not a Novel* plays with and incorporates different forms, such as the literary advertisement, the headstone inscription, the conduct book, and the framed story or romance. The narrative combines the marriage plots of no fewer than seven heroines, and Palmer’s overstuffed text alludes and is indebted to the novels of Oliver Goldsmith, Samuel Richardson, Laurence Sterne, and Thomas Holcroft’s translation of *Caroline of Lichtfield* (1786). Palmer’s preface also reveals that the publication of *It Is, and It Is Not a Novel* was guided by “the advice of partial friends,” and she was anxious about the reception of the “*observant* Reviewers.”²⁶ Palmer’s acute awareness of her novel’s networked authorship, owing to the influence of her friends and reception of her reviewers, is connected to her hesitation to declare her work a novel. Her appropriation of other genres, especially those in which networked authorship and post-publication revision were standard practices, complicates clear-cut notions of authorship and the novel. Rather than viewing *It Is, and It Is Not a Novel* as exceptional, we should see it instead as an explicit acknowledgment of the generic uncertainty and networked authorship underpinning the eighteenth-century novel.

Scholars of the eighteenth-century novel, starting with Ian Watt’s *The Rise of the Novel* (1957), have frequently yoked the youthful form to other

genres, but this book argues instead that a focus on revision reveals that the novel was not a fixed form by the mid- or even late eighteenth century. Watt claims that the early novel was a departure from the seventeenth-century romance genre and emphasizes its indebtedness to philosophical realism.²⁷ In *The Origins of the English Novel*, Michael McKeon more acutely traces the instability of prose genres, highlighting the “evident interchangeability” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries between “the terms ‘romance’, ‘history’, and ‘novel’.”²⁸ J. Paul Hunter and Lennard J. Davis connect the novel to journalism and other forms of print media.²⁹ This book is more concerned with work that has acknowledged the vital part that women have played in the development of the novel genre, especially studies by Janet Todd, Jane Spencer, and Nancy Armstrong, which are responsible for highlighting the indispensable role of women writers like Frances Burney, Jane Austen, and Maria Edgeworth,³⁰ and with studies that locate the formation of the novel genre later in the period. The mid-eighteenth century, the starting point of this book, is viewed as an endpoint in the novel’s development by a number of critics, including McKeon and William Warner.³¹ Homer Obed Brown’s *Institutions of the English Novel* posits that the novel was not recognized as a genre until the early nineteenth century. Brown uses Sir Walter Scott’s meditations on the novel as proof of its generic stabilization, especially Scott’s review of Austen’s *Emma* (1815) and his “Essay on Romance” (1824).³² Clifford Siskin also locates the “rise” of the novel toward the end of the Romantic period and argues that the periodical played an important role in its generic formation.³³

Revising the Eighteenth-Century Novel similarly contends that the novel had not fully stabilized as a genre by the turn of the nineteenth century: by focusing on the act of revision, we can detect compositional parallels between the early novel and the more established genres of drama and non-fictional prose.³⁴ Eighteenth-century novelists did not view themselves merely as novelists, and the four major authors discussed in this study also contributed to the dramatic and non-fictional prose genres. Samuel Richardson published a letter-writing manual, *Letters Written to and for Particular Friends* (1741), and a loosely organized conduct book, *A Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments*. He was also urged by his friend, Elizabeth Carter, to write a series of six plays.³⁵ Frances Burney wrote eight plays and penned a charity tract, “Brief Reflections Relative to the Emigrant French Clergy” (1793). Jane Austen’s juvenilia contains a number of dramatic scenes, as well as the mock-scholarly “History of England.” Maria Edgeworth was known for her works on education,

Practical Education (1798) and *Essays on Professional Education* (1809), which were written with her father Richard Lovell Edgeworth. She also published a volume of *Comic Dramas* (1817).

Eighteenth-century non-fiction genres, in which Richardson, Burney, Austen, and Edgeworth participated to varying degrees, were subject to pre- and post-publication revision and to collaboration; the practice of networked authorship was commonplace for non-fictional prose even as the novel form was developing. Academic work in the eighteenth century was generally collaborative since scholars had a mutual interest in the advancement of knowledge.³⁶ Revision and collaboration were interconnected in the new model of eighteenth-century periodical scholarship: the introduction of correctors and editors and the practice of peer review encouraged revision. Adrian Johns details several examples of eighteenth-century printers employing external experts to assess and correct work submitted for publication. Readers, too, were expected to influence texts; according to Johns, “This public was no longer a passive recipient of spectacle but an active participant: to be a fully-fledged citizen, one must contribute to periodicals as well as read them . . . the journals explicitly aimed to unite this ‘republic’.”³⁷ Johns delineates an active model of periodical readership not unlike figurations of eighteenth-century manuscript circulation, though he claims a larger circle of influence. Similarly, in her account of the Republic of Letters, Dena Goodman shows that external influence on scholarly work and ideas extended beyond readers to include the social world and larger public. The Republic of Letters influenced the growth and development of the English coffeehouse, which was similarly linked to the pursuit of knowledge.³⁸ Traditional accounts of the rise of the public sphere and its social structures, such as that of Jürgen Habermas, often argue for the importance of the coffeehouse as a testing ground for ideas before authors would present and publish them.³⁹ Such a conception of the public sphere advances an expanded notion of authorship that prefigures this book’s conception of “networked authorship,” in which an “author” is influenced by his or her participation in a larger intellectual circle, though this circle was virtual as often as it was materialized in institutions.

Dramatic literary composition and production replicated to some extent the circulation of ideas in the Republic of Letters and, more largely, the public sphere through its long-standing practice of networked authorship. This is not the first book to connect theatrical and scholarly practices during the eighteenth century,⁴⁰ but I primarily want to emphasize that both were collaborative and appropriative. The performative aspect of