

Is Arrival Still Possible? Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* and the New Cartography in the Long Eighteenth Century

MITCHELL GAUVIN

The present analysis considers the literary representation of coerced migration at the fraught historical and political juncture between the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars—a period when modern political arrangements began to emerge in Europe and North America owing to developments in documentary controls like passports and the forging of nation-based citizenship regimes. The novelist Frances Burney seems like an odd candidate for this analysis given her celebrity, thematic interests, and privilege relative to other women of the period (she achieved a level of financial independence owing to her novels and plays that was exceedingly rare). At the same time, however, Burney's biography and literary output invite examination owing to her celebration of cultural hybridity (she was herself both 'Fanny Burney' and 'Madame d'Arblay') and multiple encounters with transnational movement. The literary text that centres this analysis is her last full-length novel *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814), a work which intimates in its very title a concern for travel, albeit travel that is existential as well as literal. The novel's opening scene involving the protagonist's irregular arrival to England will be analyzed alongside Burney's own harrowing emigration under circumstances of war, which she experienced during the novel's gestation. Before exploring the relationship between Burney and the continued relevance of nineteenth century statecraft, I begin first in our contemporary period by outlining what Ayelet Shachar terms the 'new cartography', which is constituted by fluid border enforcement that moves with the refugee to deny lawful arrival prior to the act of physically crossing a national boundary. This first section considers post-Soviet U.S. immigration policy as emblematic of a particular politics of arrival that I suggest is prefigured in Burney's *The Wanderer* (despite the geographic and historical distance

between the two). In the second section, my analysis will turn to Burney and in the last section I elaborate more fully the politics of arrival.

The New Cartography

In 1996, the United States made a seemingly innocuous reform to its Immigration and Nationality Act that portended profound and striking legal consequences for anyone wishing to cross the U.S. border. The reform was a lexical and legal distinction between ‘entry’ and ‘admission’, the former referring to *physical* entry and the latter to *lawful* admission.¹ In casual use, entry and admission operate as synonyms, but U.S. policy began making a meaningful distinction between the two as a means for recognizing only some movements to the country as legitimate, namely by legally constructing (through an act of wordplay) two different types of arrival. The result? One could conceivably enter the country without being admitted, or in other words one could be in the U.S. without having any constitutional rights. Despite United Nations protocol dictating that all persons possess inalienable rights which every nation ought to recognize, just as the 1789 *Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et du Citoyen* did in France at the beginning of the revolution, rights can be rendered unavailable to persons at the border who are not technically within the country. As Hannah Arendt bluntly put it, there are no human rights without national rights, a point revealed most clearly in the figure of the stateless person or refugee. ‘The whole question of human rights’, Arendt notes, referring to the *Déclaration*, ‘was quickly and inextricably blended with the question of national emancipation.’² A particular ‘stage of civilization’ needed to be reached, a stage of ‘popular and national sovereignty’, for a people to lift itself from a condition of oppression into a condition of emancipation.³ The refugee thus poses for Arendt a defining paradox: the figure meant to boldly signify the inalienable rights of the human being is likewise the one most in need of protection.

A strengthened resolve on the part of successive U.S. administrations to prioritize national sovereignty and tough border security has, somewhat ironically, led to U.S. policy that actively positions the American border

1 Ayelet Shachar, ‘The Shifting Border of Immigration Regulation’, *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 30, 1 (2009), pp. 809–39 (p. 815).

2 Hannah Arendt, ‘Perplexities of the Rights of Man’, in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, ed. by Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2013) p. 84

3 Arendt, p. 84.

as robust and fluid rather than static and immobile. The ‘*location* of the border is shifting,’ Shachar writes in 2009, ‘at times penetrating into the interior, in other circumstances extending beyond the edge of territory.’⁴ The motivation behind this shifting border has essentially been to deny immigrants access to constitutional rights they would legally be afforded if they were in the United States. This narrowing of the possible legitimate means of movement treats the non-citizen present in the country as if they had never really crossed the border—the border moved with them, constantly denying them admission wherever they went. The practical significance of this lexical and rhetorical reform cannot be understated: a non-citizen, migrant, refugee, or stateless person who had physically entered the U.S. could be removed under grounds of inadmissibility instead of deportation, a significant legal distinction.⁵ In a sense, they’re not being deported because they (legally) were never admitted to the U.S. to begin with. The implication for the possibility of arrival is clear: certain persons, namely the undocumented or the unauthorized migrant, can never arrive in the United States even when they physically enter the country. In fact, so versatile is the U.S. border, some may never actually *depart* their own country in order to be denied admission thanks to the presence of U.S. pre-clearance facilities in airports around the world, which can deny entry before a traveller has even technically encountered the border.

The immigration landscape today involves countries like the U.S. seeking to meet the traveller or migrant at the border well before they can claim rights, which has the effect of altering both a country’s interior, where ‘illegal’ immigrants can be captured and deported, and the spaces beyond the edge of national territory: conceivably anywhere is a space that a traveller or migrant can be denied rights, not just at the traditional border or port-of-entry. ‘This *shifting border of immigration regulation*,’ Shachar continues, ‘is selectively utilized by national immigration regulators to regain control over their crucial realm of responsibility, to determine who to permit to enter, who to remove, and who to keep at bay.’⁶ The border is, in other words, a liquid demarcation open to manipulation by national legislatures and regulatory agencies, ‘bleeding it into the interior or extending it beyond the territory’s exterior.’⁷ Shachar refers to these border practices as the new cartography, a form of remapping conducted and facilitated by

4 Shachar, p. 810.

5 Shachar, p. 816.

6 Ibid., p. 811.

7 Ibid., p. 818.

changes in the rhetoric of citizenship and immigration. The consequence of this new cartography is the nation-states' capacity to redraw themselves in novel and innovative ways such they may meet particular persons at the border before any rights may be claimed or may move with the citizen as they ostensibly cross borders. Rather than Arendt's refugee being a figure whose status results from a lack of laws or legal apparatus, shifting borders like those of the U.S. ensure the refugee is everywhere bounded by laws that enclose them in the liminal space of neither arrival nor departure.

For decades scholars from a host of fields have argued that borders bounding the modern sovereign state are contrived, contingent, historical inventions—a point which popular audiences and some politicians have failed to grasp or appreciate, preferring national mythologies where borders either naturally arise from shorelines or emerge divinely from providential declaration. The development of a globalized economy dependent on the smooth exchange of both people and currency has likewise seemed an undeniable confirmation of borders as unstable distinctions perceived as a nuisance, if not redundant. The result, however, has been far from what scholars and the general public probably envisioned: the U.S. acceptance of the mutability of its own border has led to the border's weaponization against immigrants. This new cartography owes its emergence to a two-hundred-year-old confrontation between states, individuals, and organizations like the church over the authority on human movement within and across national borders. Despite short periods of relaxed controls in the nineteenth century, the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen xenophobic legislation in both Europe and North America that bars specific racial, ethnic, and religious minorities from admission. Far from being new, it is rather a cartography embedded in the post-Enlightenment imaginings of the nation and the citizen, the development of the passport, and revolutionary decrees on human rights. Attempts to liquify the border are not strictly a contemporary phenomenon but discernable at the historical juncture of the nation-state. It is a transnational and transgenerational strategy for the transformation of persons into unwanted figures who possess no civic or legal recourse for admission, and are dispossessed of their rights.

While these examinations of statecraft where it concerns immigration and citizenship are easy enough to elaborate in broad theoretical terms, they fail to articulate the inherently personal and embodied dimensions of the politics of arrival. It is here that the relevance of reading Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* arises. Burney offers a rich novelization of the French Revolution from a position of cultural hybridity that prioritizes the personal experience of immigration and tyranny over a generalized

critique of revolutionary politics. In particular, the new cartography emblematic in U.S. immigration policy is prefigured in her own experience as an émigré, which she recounts in her journals and letters, and in her novel *The Wanderer*, which fictionalizes an émigré's return to England under an intensified anti-immigrant political climate. An analysis of Burney's work can illuminate both the dynamics of border liquidity and the refugee as the central figure of modern politics, if not modernity itself.

One Hot Summer in 1812

Burney relates in her journal the months of July and August of 1812, which began with a 'sad' trip from Paris to Dunkirk—sad 'from the cruel separation which it exacted, and the fearful uncertainty of impending events.'⁸ The plan, while not necessarily dangerous, was nonetheless consequential: a rare chance to escape for England to see family and friends for the first time in ten years and to shed some of the encroachments on liberty instituted by the Napoleonic regime. The plan was to board a ship in Dunkirk with her son Alex and sail for Dover, but due to the state of war between the two countries a vessel could not (legally) travel between England and France, meaning a ship and its passengers wishing to cross the channel had to disguise their intentions. Burney's husband, decorated French general Alexandre d'Arblay, had managed to find such a ship, which would alight in Dunkirk 'under American colours, and with American passports and License'⁹ with the allusion of returning to the United States but would instead make a stopover in England. The prohibited journey, if successful, meant Burney would finally return to her native country after ten years of exile in France and see her father, who was sick and whose condition was worsening (he would die two years later), but it likewise meant 'cruel separation'¹⁰ from her husband who would stay behind, the reason for her initial sadness at leaving Paris. General d'Arblay had himself been an exile in England during the revolution but his favour had been restored temporarily under Napoleon, leading the couple to move to Paris where Burney subsequently became an exile in France.

Now at Dunkirk with a chance to escape, Burney wrote that she was 'compelled, through the mismanagement and misconduct of the Captain

8 Frances Burney, *Journals and Letters*, ed. by Peter Sabor and Lars E. Troide (London: Penguin Books, 2001), p. 884.

9 Burney, *Journals and Letters*, p. 884

10 Ibid.

of the Vessel to spend the most painfully wearisome – though far from the most acutely afflicting – 6 Weeks of my Life.’¹¹ The weather was uncomfortably hot and with the captain looking for more passengers to ferry, Burney was left to wander for weeks in the liminal space of neither arrival nor departure. She could not return to Paris to wait out the six weeks, lest the captain decided for a speedy exit, nor feel secure that at least her entry to England was assured: capture at sea by French authorities was a prospect. With very little to do but wait, Burney requested some unfinished documents left in Paris be sent to her in the hopes that her severe boredom and anxiety waiting to leave could be tempered. The documents in question happened to be the incomplete manuscript of *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, her last full-length novel and most critically panned (it ended up garnering less-lasting attention relative to her other more celebrated works, *Evelina*, *Camilla*, and *Cecilia*; in fact, after its initial editions in 1814, *The Wanderer* remained out of print until 1988).¹² If Burney’s own illicit travel was not enough, even the migration of a simple manuscript from Paris to Dunkirk was laden with risk of discovery. Documents, specifically of a political nature, could not simply be exported out of the country. Permission to transport them required disguising that England was the ultimate destination for both Burney and her luggage. Additionally, Burney had to affirm ‘that the Work had nothing in it political, nor even National, nor possibly offensive to the Government’, which she did, and thanks also to d’Arblay, the manuscript managed to make it to Burney without being thoroughly examined.¹³

In truth, *The Wanderer* is deeply political despite a title and preface that prefigure the work as apolitical romanticism. A novel of manners as well as historical fiction, the novel opens with upper-class English travellers escaping Robespierre’s France owing to the increased climate of terror and political persecution. These travellers continually comment on the revolution from a safe geographic distance, although sometimes ignorantly (most of the characters never seem able to pronounce ‘Robespierre’ correctly). The French Revolution figures the plot, the tide of general suspicion cast upon the protagonist (Juliet), and the sensibilities of the British, although in her preface addressed to her father she writes that any readers

11 Ibid., p. 885

12 Margaret Anne Doody, ‘Note on the Text’, in Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. xxxviii-xxxix (p. xxxix).

13 Burney, *Journals and Letters*, pp. 887–8.

‘who expect to find here materials for political controversy; or fresh food for national animosity; must turn elsewhere their disappointed eyes’ for all they will instead find is a ‘composition upon general life, manners, and characters.’¹⁴ Burney’s disclaimer of being apolitical or non-political in her writing is perplexing, not only from the revolutionary events which haunt the work but the explicit British class-politics she targets: the female difficulties in the subtitle are a reference to Juliet’s struggles as a woman to gain financial independence in a patriarchal society without resorting to traditional feminine roles. Juliet’s attempts to contest the financial obstacles to a distinctly feminine liberation have been the primary focus of contemporary scholarly interest renewed by the work’s republication in 1988, but *The Wanderer* is also arguably one of the earliest literary English works to depict a recognizably modern form of immigration circumscribed by competing foreign policy, custom checks, cultural and racial hybridity, emphasis on individual documentation, and the figure of the nation-bound refugee fleeing state-based political violence or persecution against the backdrop of two modern European citizenship regimes. Even though this opening scene only occupies a few of the opening pages, it prefigures all of Juliet’s exploits over the course of the work. Yet because her border crossing is so singular (as in the extraordinary experience of one person) the act of immigration is portrayed as a personal adventure rather than emblematic of an emerging form of politicized existence.

Perhaps Burney sought to cast her work as apolitical to protect against expected criticism regarding the work’s depiction of the British upper-classes; or to appeal to readers of the etiquette novel, who may be dissuaded by the work’s explicit reference to contentious political events. Burney was also keenly aware that one’s personal success or failures could not be read as sanctions or indictments for the prevailing political climate. For reasons that will soon become clear, irrespective of Burney’s disclaimers regarding the non-political nature of her writing, we can nonetheless read a distinctive politics of arrival in the character of Juliet.

Despite the manuscript’s safe arrival to the French coast in the summer of 1812, this was far from the end of Burney’s journey. The manuscript subsequently had trouble clearing the customs house at Dunkirk; Burney writes that a French police officer ‘began a rant of indignation and amazement, at a sight so unexpected and prohibited, that made him incapable

14 Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p. 4.

to enquire, or to hear the meaning of such a freight'¹⁵. Thanks to a local English merchant, and with the help of forged American licenses, what would become *The Wanderer* was cleared to travel with Burney, but the event led her to remark in her journal on 'such unexampled strictness of Police Discipline with respect to Letters or Papers' between England and France.¹⁶ She was aware that along with the passports for herself and son, her passage across the channel was remarkably lucky and doubts that had Napoleon been in Paris at the time (instead of at war on the Russian front), Burney would not have secured the necessary documentation to return to England.¹⁷

After six weeks 'consumed in wasteful weariness,' the voyage involved a 'sickening Calm' in which their ship 'could make no way, but lingered two days and two nights.'¹⁸ Burney remained bedridden almost the entire journey, but the ship would not land at Dover under its own authority. Instead, a few miles from shore the vessel was apprehended by British authorities: the War of 1812 had broken out against the United States while Burney was waiting for passage to England, and the ship as an American vessel was seized. Burney and her son, who was initially accused of being born in France, were technically captured rather than rescued, prisoners in their own country albeit temporarily.

We move now to *The Wanderer*, which was published two years after Burney's harrowing emigration from France. The shared difficulties in crossing borders for Burney and her manuscript were re-articulated in *The Wanderer*, a work which, as previously mentioned, announces itself as concerned with travel in its title, and not just any travel but specifically 'wandering,' a 'quintessential Romantic activity,' as Margaret Doody remarks, 'as it represents erratic and personal energy expended outside a structure and without progressing to a set objective.'¹⁹ The act of wandering that Burney refers to in her title is spiritual and symbolic, involving seeing and traversing cartographies that are not purely geographic, although the *physical* act of wandering may nonetheless contribute to the inner voyage the wanderer undertakes. Juliet is easily identifiable as the wanderer of the

15 Burney, *Journals and Letters*, p. 889.

16 Burney, *Journals and Letters*, p. 890.

17 Burney mentions this encounter with French customs in the preface of the novel but for some reason leaves out the officer's indignant rant, choosing instead to relate the manuscript's initial troubles as merely a minor hiccup in its conveyance to England.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 904.

19 Margaret Doody, 'Introduction' in *The Wanderer: or, Female Difficulties*, pp. vii-xxxvii (p. vii).

novel's title, both by the reader and the characters, yet the Romantic ideal does not seem to bring with it any sort of respect or deference. In fact, Juliet's practice of wandering invites expressly negative assessments: she is referred to as an 'illegitimate stroller',²⁰ a 'frenchified stroller', a 'vagabond', and a 'needy travelling adventurer'²¹—rhetoric which suggests that while the Romantic ideal of wandering may still be possible in theory, in practice the act also invites accusations of vagrancy and itinerancy, especially in a modern geography bounded by political borders.

The work opens in 1790s with a perilous escape across the channel as several British travellers flee Robespierre's Reign of Terror under cover of darkness intending to return to 'that blessed shore!'²² Just before departure, however, a mysterious figure beckons in French for permission to join them. There is initially some confusion, but its soon determined that the agonized voice belongs to a woman. As a sea officer already onboard exclaims, 'A woman, a child, and a fallen enemy are three persons that every true Briton should scorn to misuse.'²³ The woman is allowed onboard despite continued consternation from other travellers, a small bit of light revealing only that she is dressed in 'ordinary attire.'²⁴ Upon reaching safer waters, passengers speak more freely without fear of alerting French authorities and address the unknown late arrival. In a deliberate narrative move from Burney, we find out much later that her name is Juliet, but both the reader and the characters within the novel mostly know the protagonist as Incognita and Ellis. A fed-up passenger on board calls her 'dulcinea',²⁵ the imagined love-interest of Don Quixote. Later she will be given the name Ellis after trying to collect letters addressed to 'L.S.', which is clearly an additional pseudonym and which further ensconces her in disguise. Margaret Doody reasons part of Burney's choice in naming her L.S. may involve the first two letters of L.s.d. (or £sd), the Latin abbreviation for the currency pounds, shilling, pence.²⁶ The difficulty for women to become financially self-sufficient involves confrontation with an economic world that treats women as currency, as the means of exchange. Juliet's exchange between two countries becomes part of a series of transactions she will have to overcome in order to achieve some level of independence.

20 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 86.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 13.

26 Doody, 'Introduction', p. xvi.

When the day finally dawns, daylight reveals the Incognita to be dressed in tattered clothes and heavily bandaged around the face and hands, but the others in the boat continue to try and place her socially and religiously. While Juliet does speak English, it is remarked that she speaks with a ‘foreign accent’.²⁷ Mrs. Maple soon demands an extensive itinerary of Juliet’s origins. Another passenger remarks that ‘Her dress is not merely shabby; ‘tis vulgar. I have lost all hope of a pretty nun. She can be nothing above a house-maid’²⁸ and a moment later that ‘If [...] she has one atom that is native in her, how will she be choaked by our foggy atmosphere!’²⁹ The question of Juliet’s nationality occasions a political discussion regarding the ongoing revolution in France, at which point, ‘the stranger, having taken off her gloves, to arrange an old shawl, in which she was wrapt, exhibited hands and arms of so dark a colour, that they might rather be styled black than brown’; moreover, a ‘closer view of the little that was visible of the muffled up face, perceived it to be of an equally dusk hue’.³⁰ Juliet appears to be a black woman and her apparent racial identity ignites a fury of interrogation, whether she is from ‘West Indies’ or ‘somewhere off the coast of Africa’.³¹ The passengers do not as yet know the multiple levels of concealment with which she has dressed herself, initially under darkness of night, then clothing, and now blackface.

Once landed in England, some of the fellow travellers continue to pester Juliet, hectoring her with questions regarding her real name (still unknown at this point), her origins, and her reasons for travelling to England. Mrs. Maple desires the landlord of the inn to which the passengers are temporarily residing to take notice ‘that a foreigner, of a suspicious character, had come over with them by force’,³² an obviously misleading retelling of how Juliet had arrived onboard their vessel. Harleigh, a later love interest, refuses to take on Mrs. Maple’s suspicions, to which she responds that she will inform the magistrates herself. At the possibility of having the authorities arrive, Juliet proclaims ‘I am no foreigner,—I am English!’³³ Her initial status as a political refugee dissolves as her admission suggests that while perhaps French-sounding, Juliet is in another sense returning home. Soon, however, her other layer of disguise unravels. Juliet’s ‘dark hue’ ap-

27 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 17.

28 Ibid.

29 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 18.

30 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 19.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 26.

33 Ibid.

pears to be ‘smeared and streaked’ and a day later ‘to be of a dusky white’.³⁴ The next day, the metamorphosis is complete, as Juliet’s skin has ‘changed from a tint nearly black, to the brightest, whitest, and most dazzling fairness’.³⁵ This causes Mrs. Ireton to remark ‘for ‘twas but an hour or two since, that you were the blackest, dirtiest raggedest wretch I ever beheld; and now—you are turned into an amazing beauty!’³⁶ Juliet had entered the vessel ostensibly black and arrived in England white.

It is tempting to read Burney’s turbulent relationship with France into the character of Juliet: both are culturally French Englishwomen who are forced to escape the country due to political turmoil or instability—for Juliet this is initiated by Robespierre and for Burney by Napoleon, but when this opening scene was written remains uncertain. By the time the manuscript had arrived at Dunkirk to travel with Burney to England in the summer of 1812, she had been working on the manuscript inconsistently for over a decade and had already written three of the eventual five volumes, although it is not certain which sections composed these volumes.

Regardless of Burney’s biography, the opening of the work is peculiar to say the least—a white woman appropriates a racialized persona ostensibly to hide her own identity and assist in her escape from France. Burney seems not to have been concerned or aware that a racialized persona would compound movement rather than expatiate it. But how are we to read Juliet’s racial appearance knowing later that she will shed it? How are we to even describe it? Sara Salih calls Juliet’s temporary complexion a ‘racial cross-dressing’,³⁷ a phrasing which intimates a sort of dramatic disguise or theatrical costume. Salih’s terminology aligns with *The Wanderer’s* depiction of gendered performance and amateur theatre, which constitutes a major subplot and which would place Juliet’s racial appearance along a thematic continuum of recitals, routines, and acting, with questions of where the essential Juliet resides, what aspects of character are inherent and which performative. Coupled with the novel’s genre as a conduct-book focusing on gender and class-bound social etiquette, Burney seems to subsume Juliet’s initial appearance as a person of colour as one among many roles or temporary dressings that Juliet acquires to escape France, as a disguise among a host of other disguises used to

34 Ibid., p. 43.

35 Ibid.

36 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 43.

37 Sara Salih, ‘*Camilla* and *The Wanderer*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 39–53 (p. 48).

smuggle herself out of a dire situation. Indeed, quoting Salih again, 'Her appearance in racial drag in the first scene of the novel is only the first in a series of transformations (narrated and represented) from white to black, from female to male, from aristocrat to working class – and back again.'³⁸

For those who witness Juliet's multiple changes, the shedding of what at the time would have been read as essentialist categories of race and gender is destabilizing, although Salih suggests readers of the era likely 'would have been relieved that a gleaming white heroine – albeit culturally French – emerges from the 'stained' skin that the heroine wears in the novel's opening pages.'³⁹ Indeed, many characters comment positively on Juliet's new appearance when she does eventually emerge as white, having taken her previously black skin as a sign of dirtiness and vulgarity. Even characters like Elinor, Mrs. Maple, and Mr. Ireton, who cause Juliet the most consternation, seem at least relieved to know Juliet is not a person of colour. Additionally, the use of racial persona as a metaphor for the oppression she faces as a woman in the late-eighteenth century would be a familiar trope for readers of proto-feminist writings which were attracted to the language of slavery as conduits for discussions of feminine subjugation going back to Judith Drake and Mary Astell in the late-1600s.⁴⁰ Astell in particular used raced-based slavery as a convenient analogy for the strictures of marriage.

Yet the obviously racial overtures of the work remain frustratingly unexplored within the novel itself as the issue of race is quickly discarded by Burney once Juliet has been revealed as white. Her whiteness is depicted as essential to Juliet; there is nothing else beneath her white skin to reveal. While so many other aspects of her character remain contingent and negotiable—her class and social standing, for example—ultimately her race is presented as ontologically secure. The characters and readers of *The Wanderer* initially discomfited by the intimation that race may in part not be determining of essence or virtue are instead affirmed in their belief that their own whiteness is inalienable, in turn leading to particular privileges and social status. In other words, Burney instrumentalizes race as a convenient form of disguise for her protagonist to appear more mysterious, to obscure Juliet's origins wrapped up in revolutionary politics. It seems for Burney—a writer acutely aware of British class distinctions

38 Salih, 'Camilla and *The Wanderer*', p. 50.

39 Ibid., p. 51.

40 Sara Salih, "Her Blacks, Her Whites and Her Double Face!": Altering Alterity in *The Wanderer*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 11, 3 (1999), 301–15 (p. 304).

and the assumptions casted upon 'low society'—the eventual revelation of Juliet's artistic talent and high standing acquires more force and profundity if we are initially misled by her persona as the most disenfranchised, most invisible figure in late-eighteenth century France and England, which for Burney and her audience is the black woman.

While Burney's witty undressing of the British upper classes might acquire more poignancy if the person they falsely derided and interrogated ended up being a figure farthest from her initial appearance, the instrumentalizing of race for literary purposes cannot be ignored in critical assessment of *The Wanderer*. Juliet's shedding of disguises results in a political volatility as her fellow émigrés, who are British citizens returning to the comfort of their middle to upper-class lives, jockey to ascertain precisely how she relates to the rest of them (citizenship is, after all, fundamentally relational). Her initial appearance as a foreigner, refugee, or stateless person—a racial refugee from either the West Indies or Africa as Mr. Riley surmises⁴¹—leads Mrs. Maple to threaten alerting the 'magistrates' to Juliet's presence, at which point she exclaims that she is in fact English and not French, at least by nationality. Throughout these opening passages, references to the shore alludes at not just a geographic point where land meets sea but as a figural or metaphorical configuration to distinguish between the liberty and morally superior air of Great Britain and the dangerous and ideological space of France. Yet despite alighting on physical land, Juliet continues to be treated by some of the other travellers as if the shore had moved with her, as if she had never really exited the ship. The disguises add to her predicament, but as she sheds them they likewise eliminate the successive borders Juliet must cross in order to naturalize, or rather re-naturalize, in the eyes of her fellow Britons, who are comforted that Juliet has revealed herself as not a foreigner or a refugee but instead a talented, humble, intelligent, white woman of modesty, good character, and (crucially) British citizenship. After Ellis/Juliet is overheard playing the harp with tremendous skill in the home of Mrs. Maple, the reader learns of the surprise that her fellow travellers experienced:

All, except Harleigh, remained nearly stupefied by what had passed, for no one else had ever considered her but as a needy travelling adventurer. To him, her language, her air, and her manner, pervading every disadvantage of apparel, poverty, and subjection, had announced her, from the first, to have received the education, and to have lived the life of a gentlewoman.⁴²

41 Burney, *The Wanderer*, p. 19.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 86.

The lesson they have learned from the experience (save for Harleigh) is not the hubris of their relentless and unjustified suspicion casted upon foreigners and vulnerable human beings—the seemingly obvious lesson to be gathered from this episode—but rather that their own positions of privilege are secure. The implication is that for those who cannot so easily shed their racial identity, the shore shall move with them, denying them the unfussed movement afforded to Juliet once she is revealed as white, although Juliet remains a convenient Other even as details of her identity slowly emerge. ‘She is at the same time alterity’, Debra Silverman writes, ‘otherness even to herself’.⁴³ With Juliet’s various costume changes, however, her alterity is ‘altered’ during the course of the work, ‘so that by the time the novel concludes’, writes Salih, ‘the unfathomable ‘other’ has been converted into a reassuringly ‘native’ subject, who may assume her rightful place in the upper echelons of English society without disturbing existing social or racial structures.’⁴⁴ Juliet’s alterity intimates that the otherness that denies her a smooth channel for arrival is contingent and inscribed from without rather than from within, yet this fact remains unseen by the other characters who continue to treat Juliet as a suspicious foreigner whose political dispossession and shady allegiances render her a potential enemy to the British nation.

Burney happens to capture in both her novel *The Wanderer* and her own lived experience as an émigré a point in which arrival is no longer literal, but which is nonetheless smoothed owing to her privilege and celebrity. The manifest singularity of Juliet’s exodus derives from the fact it was successful, for any other person of presumed racial and lower-class background would likely not have had the opportunity to convey themselves into English society the way Juliet does. A distinctly modern politics of arrival defined by networks of custom checks and interrogative gazes emerges to catch Juliet, and it is only by inexplicably becoming white does she avoid worse. Burney herself is explicitly thankful that her own celebrity (even Napoleon knew of her) and personal connections could soften the trouble of bypassing border enforcement, while also keenly aware that post-revolutionary Europe in imposing draconian custom checks is flirting with a new type of control that threatens to hamper the sort of transnational movement so integral to her disposition as a cultural hybrid of English and French. It is no wonder Burney thought of the

43 Debra Silverman, ‘Reading France Burney’s *The Wanderer*; or, *Female Difficulties*: The Politics of Women’s Independence’, *Pacific Coast Philology*, 26, ½ (1991), 68–77 (p. 72).

44 Salih, ‘Altering Alterity in *The Wanderer*’, p. 302.

French Revolution as an event impossible to ignore, just as the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had been for writers a century earlier, but it is not just the act of migration and the threat of restrictive customs that Burney so interestingly decides to inaugurate her novel *The Wanderer* with—Juliet's fellow émigrés take it upon themselves to enact strict immigration control in the absence of authorities for reasons that are racial, class-based, and grounded in hearsay.

A culture of anti-immigrant sentiment familiar to twenty-first century readers informs their ruthless interrogation of Juliet. In the absence of identifiable magistrates with which to conduct deportations, Juliet's fellow citizens take it upon themselves—under the banner of national interest—to racially profile and cross-examine the assumed foreigner, whose alterity is manifest. They persist in asking for her name and their interrogations are sustained even as Juliet's identity becomes clearer and characters move away from England's shore. These interrogations are in part hypocritical: the 'ship of fools'⁴⁵ that Juliet boards is patronised by British tourists leaving France who fail to extend hospitality or even indifference to Juliet, who is decidedly not a tourist to either country. Her cultural duplicity gives her essentially claim to both shores but this is read by Mrs. Maple and others as a sign of shifting allegiances, if not a spy.

In choosing to focus on a political refugee with her novel, Burney likewise depicts the forces of stereotype and personification that others attach to Juliet in the absence of a name or identity—and the name she is initially given, Ellis, being contrived, carries no social weight and as such cannot protect her from the continued suspicions of others.⁴⁶

The Politics of Arrival

Burney's difficulty escaping France, along with Juliet's, portrays the degree to which national sovereignty is not purely horizontal. Shorelines make poor substitutes for political borders because shores cannot move the way national dimensions can, nor can shores reflect all the invisible walls which make arrival an insurmountable elevation. The relative ease in placing boundaries onto a flat representation of territory belies all the other mechanisms of border enforcement, of governmental or colonial operation, or the technologies for the exercise of power. The cartographic make-

45 Doody, 'Introduction', p. xvi.

46 Silverman, p. 70.

up of a state is not just horizontal but layered and three dimensional. In the case of Juliet and *The Wanderer*, her arrival is initially stalled by being unable to pay her way across the English Channel. When she does manage to reach England, she is routed between spaces as her stay at the inn and her attempts to hire a stage-coach or *post-chaise* are hindered by her reliance on the charity of fellow travellers, whose arrival is smoothed owing to their wealth. For Juliet, however, her financial predicament essentially immobilises her at the shore and renders her a dependent to whomever is willing to underwrite her stay.

Juliet faces borders embedded in racial and class relations where categories of alterity are enforced. In the absence of robust infrastructural arrangements like border security or police officers, characters like Mrs. Maple attempt to steer Juliet into the recesses of belonging where no claim of arrival can be made and where the category of foreigner reflects not merely a political status but a pejorative laden with intimations of untrustworthiness and the impossibility of truly belonging to England. Various conceptual paradigms, such as categories of alterity, are erected to slow, imbed, stifle, and ultimately halt Juliet's possibility of arrival. Alongside them is the limited economic infrastructure available for women: Juliet requires charity from her fellow travellers to initially survive in England; in fact her passage across the Channel was not self-funded but spontaneously and voluntarily paid for by Harleigh, one of the other passengers. Juliet may move physically across the channel and through the mists of darkness, but she is in this opening scene immobilised—immobilised by financial difficulty, by her fellow travellers, by the text, by the persona of the wanderer.

The multiple methods for immobilising the immigrant means that arrival is never purely geographic—it might also mean that arrival is never really possible. To arrive physically at a location is to do so in terms of only one of several cartographic arrangements, and while one level may be reached, other successive ones may not. Juliet arrives to the territory of Great Britain, but her initially black skin and French persuasion is treated by some of her fellow travellers as a sign that culturally and socially she has yet to truly enter the country.

In contrast to the era of Juliet and Burney—when custom checks were fraught and unorganized, when nations' ambitions for border control could not match what was physically or administratively possible, when passports listed merely a name and no description—in the present day, these cartographies have been successfully systemized into the bureaucratic machine of contemporary statecraft. The insistence on controlling movement to the point of having borders cross oceans to meet the travel-

ler prior to departure is a technology embedded in the political juncture of revolution (hence the focus of this paper on a novel that expressly addresses France in the 1790s). John Torpey argues that the defining feature of modern statecraft from the eighteenth century onwards has been the nation-states' successful monopolization of authority on the 'legitimate means of movement'—an authority which they have 'successfully usurped [from] rival claimants such as churches and private enterprises—that is, their development as states has depended on effectively distinguishing between citizens/subjects and possible interlopers, and regulating the movements of each'.⁴⁷ Human affairs since the French Revolution have seen the laborious construction of a bureaucratic and administratively complex international passport system where human movements can be smoothly and effectively governed (most of the time), to the extent that the contemporary passport is now wholly legitimized as an expression of national origin and as a reflection of states' exclusive right to assert control over the legal means of movement. States restrict or narrow the legitimate channels for physical and political mobility to those in possession of required documentation (i.e.: a passport) usually conditional on some sort of landed status, such as citizenship. However, the functional significance of the passport should not detract from the fact that it is likewise a political document—it tells a story, ostensibly apolitical and scientific, but in truth a narrative laden with the scaffold of ideology. Passport ownership migrates the issuer away from the margins of social or political recognition towards a national centre where the outsider may be wholly ignored and the passport holder may travel within the territory relatively unmolested and outside the territory with relative ease, depending on the geopolitical climate and strength of one's passport.

Torpey's central thesis is that the invention and history of the passport extending back to the eighteenth century reveals an unrivaled concern by nation-states for controlling the movement of their subjects—not necessarily restricting it, but rather to monopolize the *authority* of movement. While such a system of passports allows for relatively seamless, temporary migration across borders once administrative structures are in place, it also results in the formation of an entire underclass of movement. Torpey

47 John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 2.

explains how this underclass arises specifically in relation to the authority that states' wield over movement:

The point here is obviously not there is no unauthorized (international) migration but rather that such movement is specifically 'illegal'; that is, we speak of 'illegal' (often, indeed, of 'undocumented') migration as a result of states' monopolization of the legitimate 'means of movement'.⁴⁸

The wide acceptance of the notion that some movements can be legal and illegal reflects the success of the nation-state in monopolizing the legitimate means of movement. These sorts of 'illegal' movements prefigure the refugee and the stateless person as existential threat to nation-states because they constitute movement outside their sphere of embrace and penetration—or more accurately, refugees and stateless persons are a consequence of a worldwide collective endeavour by nation-states to embrace and penetrate their respective populations. Burney in 1812 successfully skirted France's attempt at embrace through her unauthorized emigration from the country, only to then face additional obstacles while immigrating to Britain owing to the American licenses and passports she had used to escape from France. In turn, the opening scene of *The Wanderer* depicts a political refugee overcoming successive obstacles to movement under a climate of war and revolution that had accelerated efforts by states to exercise authority over movement—an authority that states did not necessarily relinquish even during relative peace.

Immigrants, whether stateless or not, 'are seen as the vanguards in testing 'the new world order'', Shachar notes, 'their authorized (or more so, *unauthorized*) movement across borders symbolizes the impossibility of enforcing strict immigration controls over access in an increasingly interdependent world'.⁴⁹ Rhetoric regarding immigration in many Westernized countries may intimate a concern for national or territorial integrity if borders are unfortified and shores unguarded, but one source of government consternation over 'illegal' immigration is deeply embedded in a longstanding desire by nation-states to exercise full authority over movement, especially the movement of visible, religious, and ethnic minorities, or the movement of the stereotypical outsider and foreigner, rhetoric which carries extensive cultural purchase in an era in which persons are more or less forced to possess documentary evidence of personal identity.

48 Torpey, p. 11.

49 Shachar, p. 813.

As such, successive governing administrations across the globe (regardless of differences in geography or ideology) deem irregular immigration as a secession of authority and the purpose of the nation as closely aligned with restrictions on movement.

The linguistic/lexical development of deeming some movements ‘illegal’ (and some persons as ‘undocumented’) implies the invention of a new type of mobility—a mobility that is inherently handicapped; a mobility that while perfectly literal in a geographic sense can never result in arrival. The person that moves ‘illegally’ has in fact never left from the point in which their journey began. Arrival becomes an impossibility, movement becomes a chaotic choreography between differing legal, political, and cultural boundaries for the traveller, migrant, wanderer, or stranger. Arrival is therefore never purely a literal act. Every arrival is regulated to ensure geographic relocation is only the first in a series of restrictions applied unequally upon persons based off any number of arbitrary distinctions and intimations of alterity. Immigration and emigration are siphoned through legitimate channels for mobility that are intended to *inhibit* arrival rather than smooth its facilitation, as governments erect successive impediments to citizenship or permeant residence or some other contract of stay, including temporary visas that simply redefine arrival as a form of delayed departure or deportation. For Burney and Juliet, both of whose movements were technically ‘illegal’, their capacity to arrive was constantly contested, but their respective successes at overcoming the infrastructural arrangements impeding or slowing movement, the personal toil on those who are not able to shed their alterity the way Juliet does, reveals the degree to which arrival remains an impossibility for many.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary

- Burney, Frances, *Journals and Letters*, ed. by Peter Sabor and Lars E. Troide (London: Penguin Books, 2001)
- . *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Secondary

- Arendt, Hannah, 'Perplexities of the Rights of Man', in *Biopolitics: A Reader*, ed. by Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2013), pp. 82–97.
- Doody, Margaret Anne, 'Introduction' in *The Wanderer: or, Female Difficulties* by Frances Burney, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. vii–xxxvii.
- . 'Note on the Text' in *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* by Frances Burney, ed. by Margaret Anne Doody, Robert L. Mack, and Peter Sabor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. xxxviii–xxxix.
- Salih, Sara, 'Camilla and *The Wanderer*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 39–53.
- , 'Her Blacks, Her Whites and Her Double Face!': Altering Alterity in *The Wanderer*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 11, 3 (1999), 301–15.
- Silverman, Debra, 'Reading France Burney's *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties*: The Politics of Women's Independence', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 26, ½ (1991), 68–77.
- Torpey, John, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).