



Bristol and Bath in Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778)

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Abstract:

Frances Burney's mother died in September 1762 of an illness which her stays in Bath and Bristol Hotwells could not cure. Reversing this tragic outcome, Burney has her first heroine, Evelina, go to Bristol « for the recovery of [her] health » (*Evelina* [1778], Oxford, OUP, p. 261), also in September, a plan so successful that in the process she also recovers her name and her father and acquires a husband, a brother and a sister of sorts in the most lavish happy ending in all of Burney's novels. Evelina also visits briefly « [t]he charming city of Bath » (*id.*, p. 390) where she laments the impropriety of the « public exhibition of the ladies in the bath » (*id.*, p. 392-93). The purpose of this paper is several: after a brief introduction retracing Burney's links with Bath in particular, which she visited on several occasions, where her husband died and where she is buried, I would like to study the vision of Bath and Bristol Hotwells offered in the novel, at a time when Burney's acquaintance with those cities was by hearsay or purely literary. I will thus focus particularly on the literariness of Evelina's stay, wondering for instance what it owes to Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1772), before finally analysing the light that Evelina's reading of the *New Bath Guide* with Lord Orville (p. 295) sheds on the novel that bears her name.

Biography:

Anne Rouhette is a Senior Lecturer in 18th and 19th Century British Literature at the University of Clermont-Auvergne, France. Her main field of interest is women's fiction from the late 18th and the early 19th centuries and she has published in particular on Mary Shelley, Frances Burney and Jane Austen. She is currently working on a critical edition of an 18th-century translation of *Evelina*.