

Editor's Note

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MARILYN FRANCUS

Volume 14 of *The Burnley Journal* features articles that focus on history and materiality in Frances Burney's life and works.

In "History as Heuristic in *The Wanderer*," Tara Ghoshal Wallace discusses Burney as a novelist and historiographer, arguing that Burney mines the intersections between personal history and national history—as the history of the individual is related to, if not a part of, major historical events like the English Civil War and the French Revolution. In doing so, Burney works between novelistic genres, as *The Wanderer* is situated between novels that feature personal narratives in contemporary society (like Richardson's *Clarissa* and Fielding's *Tom Jones*) and novels set in the historical past (as in works of Scott). In Wallace's analysis, disruptions in personal and national history are vital to Burney's narrative method and novelistic agenda, as Burney makes the case for valuing the power and clarity of retrospection over the limited (and often distorted) responses to the immediate moment.

Kelly Fleming's Hemlow prize essay of 2013, "The Things of Masquerade in Frances Burney's *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*," uses thing theory to analyze costumes and acts of masquerade in *Cecilia* and *The Wanderer*. Masquerade thwarts the understanding of things (in light of their cultural history) and people (in light of their personal history)—by putting on costumes, people shed the items that identify them and revise the meaning of the costume as well. By focusing on the masquerade costumes of workers in *Cecilia* and Juliet's disguises as a member of the working class in *The Wanderer*, Fleming argues that Burney highlights the objectification of the working class by fashionable society—and that a person in costume can reveal, if not illuminate, a hidden cultural history.

The Hemlow prize essay of 2015, Emma Walshe's "'This crowded Sheet': Speaking Through Space in Frances Burney and Georgiana Waddington's Correspondence," is a study of the physical aspects of Burney's letters: the length, size of

the page, use of space, signature (and often lack thereof), and postscripts. Walshe contends that Burney conveys meaning through the material attributes of her letters, and that reading the correspondence for the content of Burney's words alone is to miss aspects of her meaning. Walshe demonstrates that Waddington read Burney's letters in a material fashion; Waddington frequently found Burney's letters to be too short, as she judged the value of their friendship based on the length of a letter. Burney, by contrast, valued every correspondence, and even a brief notice was evidence of friendship. Walshe argues that Burney's unsigned letters and her lengthy postscripts signal that Burney perceived her correspondence as a work in progress.

Hilary Havens' article, "Two Decades of the Burney Society and Burney Studies," provides a history of the origins of the Burney Society and the rise of Burney studies from the end of the twentieth century to the present. Havens begins her history with the publication of three major studies in the late 1980s, which still shape the field: Kristina Straub's *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy* (1987), Margaret Anne Doody's *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (1988), and Julia Epstein's *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (1989). Havens then surveys and evaluates the major trends in Burney studies, including feminist, New Historicist, and biographical analyses of Burney's life and works, and the many monographs, collections, and articles that have been published in the past twenty years. Havens also discusses the multiple editions of Burney's fiction and the publication of Burney's journals (soon to be completed), along with the rising interest in members of the Burney family, most notably the research on Sarah Harriet Burney, Frances's half-sister, and her father, Charles Burney. As she identifies the recent trends in Burney studies—in archival studies, performance studies, and ideological analysis—Havens anticipates the future scholarship on Frances Burney, her writings, her family, and her world.