

## **Editor's Note**

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HILARY HAVENS

The five articles featured in this volume of *The Burney Journal* share new insights on Frances Burney's life-writings, contain bibliographical and lexicographical approaches to her first novel *Evelina* (1778), and reveal the intersection of music and race in three novels by her younger half-sister Sarah Harriet Burney.

The first two articles present archival and historical contexts that illuminate key aspects of Burney's life and life-writings. Peter Sabor and John Avery Jones unearth "Frances Burney's Original Will (1839)" in a carefully annotated transcription paired with photographs of the original pages and an introduction to the document. This is an important find for Burney scholars who have hitherto relied upon Joyce Hemlow's inaccurate transcription from the twelfth and final volume of *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney*. Sabor and Avery Jones identify nearly all of the individuals mentioned in Burney's will and explain various legal and financial details. Their contribution not only clarifies Burney's principal relationships during her final years but also reveals the will's collaborative nature as Burney's figurative language contrasts with her lawyer Alfred Turner's more jargonistic diction.

Deborah Kennedy provides the first article-length analysis of "Frances Burney's Adventure at Ilfracombe," which transpired in September 1817. Next to the account of her unanesthetized mastectomy, Burney's description of her near drowning in the coastal town of Ilfracombe in North Devon is arguably her most riveting narrative set piece, though it has garnered comparatively little critical attention. Kennedy's essay demonstrates the importance of this account and its contribution to several different narrative traditions, including those focusing on maritime adventure, animals, and the Gothic. Contextualized against Ilfracombe's tourism and dangerous tides, contemporary literary and artistic accounts of the sea, and Burney's own life, Kennedy's immensely readable narrative demonstrates the significance of Burney's Ilfracombe episode for studies of both her life-writing and fictions.

The next two articles focus on Burney's *Evelina*: they expand our knowledge of its publication history and analyze the gendered nature of Burney's lexical contributions. Svetlana Kochkina's "A Book 'Seen by Every Butcher & Baker, Cobler & Tinker': Early English *Evelina* Rediscovered" serves as a corrective to Joseph A. Grau's *Fanny Burney*:

*An Annotated Bibliography* (1981). Kochkina argues that Grau's list of early editions of *Evelina* does not include four versions published by the novel's initial printers, Thomas and William Lowndes, and six by their Irish counterparts. These recently uncovered editions give a clearer and more expansive picture of the novel's reach and readership since the cheaper reprints of the novel promoted a greater degree of accessibility. Kochkina ultimately argues that the existence of these new editions shows that *Evelina*'s popularity at home and abroad has been underestimated.

Kristin Zodrow's "Stupid Tingmouth Stuff": Contemporary Language and the Problem of Propriety in *Evelina*" won the 2021 Hemlow Prize. In her essay, Zodrow associates women with neologisms and "particulars," as in their interest in such quotidian matters as dress and daily life. The words "propriety" and "particular" are contrasting themes within the essay: behaving with decorum and narrating politely are often at odds with being distinct and narrating precisely. Zodrow argues that Burney's interests in neologism and colloquialism reveal this conflict, especially within *Evelina*'s letters. The particularity and fluidity of language apparent in Burney's and *Evelina*'s writings are in contrast, Zodrow argues, to contemporary aesthetic and philosophical debates that seek to regulate femininity and standardize the English language. The novel, then, becomes an outlet for the "particular" language and behavior of female characters, who resist semantic fixity and societal impulses to generalize.

The final article touches on three novels by Burney's younger half-sister, Sarah Harriet Burney, and the connections between race, class, and music that emerge. Danielle Grover's "Black and White Singing: Race, Social Class, and Music-Making in Sarah Harriet Burney's Novels" argues that Sarah Harriet Burney progressively devalues feminine musical accomplishment across the course of three novels, *Clarentine* (1796), *Geraldine Fauconberg* (1808), and *Traits of Nature* (1812), while using music—at the same time—to display a progressive view of race. In *Geraldine Fauconberg*, in particular, a white woman's and a Black man's performances are contrasted. Although *Geraldine*'s display is universally celebrated, Caesar's music is still encouraged and accepted by the novel's most virtuous characters. Burney is ultimately unable to ignore contemporary racial stereotypes, but by giving Caesar space to perform, she both celebrates the diversity of other cultures and challenges the prejudice of her readers in an implicit show of support for greater equality for both women and Black people.