

Jane Austen and Sarah Harriet Burney

LORNA J. CLARK

Toronto, Ontario

Jane Austen's role in emerging from and surpassing a host of women writers who dominated the English novel in the latter eighteenth century has long been noted. Many female writers then flourished about whom little is known; novels which were by and large a female phenomenon—written by women, about women and for women—were undervalued at the time and have been unjustly neglected ever since. According to Dale Spender in *Mothers of the Novel* (1986) “we have a splendid but suppressed tradition of women writers,”¹ very few of whose works have been preserved in the literary canon. Austen herself was very much aware of her sister authors, whom she defended in the famous passage in *Northanger Abbey*. “Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body.”² While some predecessors of Jane Austen have received some attention (so much so that Jocelyn Harris has recently tried to redress the balance, tracing the influence of serious writers such as Locke, Milton and Shakespeare)³ there remains, nevertheless, a lot of work to be done.

“The rise of women's prose fiction and the emergence of female literary professionalism” has been studied as a movement,⁴ but it is worth remembering that the movement was made up of individuals who shared the same ideological and cultural context and responded to it in similar ways—by becoming writers for one thing. Focusing on one of Austen's lesser-known contemporaries who also turned to the pen will highlight similarities as well as differences and may help to show what was unique about Austen. While the work of the vast majority of her sister-novelists was consigned to oblivion, her own has actually been incorporated into the Great Tradition of the English Novel.

Frances Burney (later Mme d'Arblay) has long been recognised as an important precursor without whose pioneering efforts, Austen's would hardly have been possible. Combining the satirical comedy of Fielding with the sentimental heroine of Richardson, she produced in *Evelina* a hybrid form whose theme of female education and moral reform became central to the novel of manners.⁵ Certainly, Austen was an avowed admirer; she reportedly “thought Madame D'Arblay the very best of English novelists”;⁶ of the novels named in her famous defense of the genre, two of the three “performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them” were Burney's,⁷ and the character who slights Mme d'Arblay condemns himself irretrievably as an ignorant boor.⁸ The indebtedness of *Pride and Prejudice* to Burney's *Cecilia* is also well-known, with the earlier work possibly suggesting the title, one of the great scenes, and even the basic plot

of Austen's novel. It is therefore not surprising to find Burney's novels like Richardson's pervading Austen's letters (her characters are mentioned casually as if they were real people)⁹ nor to find the name of Jane Austen of Steventon appearing on the subscription list for Mme d'Arblay's *Camilla*.¹⁰

What is less well-known is that Burney had literally a sister-novelist, Sarah Harriet Burney, the youngest child of Charles Burney by his second wife, Elizabeth Allen. Sarah Harriet's double-marginalisation within her own family as well as the community raises some interesting questions. That enigmatic patriarch Charles Burney (the view of whose benign influence has recently been challenged by Margaret Anne Doody)¹¹ was extremely zealous in defending and promoting the literary efforts of his famous novelist-daughter in 1796 while virtually ignoring those of his daughter, Sarah Harriet, whose first work was published about the same time. Writing to Frances (Burney) d'Arblay in December of 1796 and enclosing a "critique" of her latest novel, he mentions his youngest daughter, "Sall," half-apologetically, as "a kind & good girl.—Don't you find considerable merit in her novel, particularly in the conversations: The opening is embarrassed & incorrect; but she afterwards gets on very well."¹² While Mme d'Arblay's *Camilla* was "his most ardent passion"¹³ (he interested himself in all aspects of its publication—approaching booksellers, drawing up subscription lists and collecting reviews), he appears to have given no help to his youngest daughter. Even Sarah's favourite half-brother, James, with whom she supposedly had an incestuous relationship (another family myth which needs re-examining),¹⁴ raised laughs in the family by his witticism on one of her heroines. For useful criticism of her manuscripts, Sarah Harriet was reduced to seeking advice wherever she could find it—among nephews, nieces, and neighbours—and her diffidence about her work is indicated by the extensive revisions she was willing to make on their suggestions (for one novel, this included the title, the opening scene, and the final resolution). While she was very useful to her father in his own professional career—she copied his manuscripts for the press and conducted his correspondence—there is no evidence that Charles Burney did anything to further or encourage her novel-writing.

It is all the more striking therefore to discover that Jane Austen read and appreciated the work of this lesser-known Burney, whose first novel *Clarentine* was read aloud to the family. Admittedly, Austen's remarks are not wholly flattering: "We are reading Clarentine, & are surprised to find how foolish it is. I remember liking it much less on a 2^d reading than at the 1st & it does not bear a 3^d at all. It is full of unnatural conduct & forced difficulties, without striking merit of any kind.—"¹⁵ While this may not sound like a ringing endorsement, there is at least the expression of "surprise" that the novel does not stand up to multiple readings (as how many would) and even the fact that Austen was prepared to peruse it not only a second but even a third time is surely some commendation. Such a remark gives a ring of authenticity to her defense of women writers, and may also be taken as an indication of the development of Austen's own literary taste; the third reading takes place eleven years after the novel's first appearance.

Burney's *Clarentine* had been published in July 1796, just three months before Austen's novel *First Impressions* was begun. In Austen's case, an initial burst of activity between 1796 and 1799 when three novels were completed was separated by an apparent creative hiatus of twelve years before the second flowering (1811-16) ended by her death.¹⁶ Burney's career stretched out over a longer period; an epistolary novel *Geraldine Fauconberg* came out in 1808, while her most successful, *Traits of Nature* (1812), was advertised simultaneously with *Sense and Sensibility*. Her first volume of *Tales of Fancy* appeared about the same time as Austen's *Emma* (early in 1816), but a second tale did not appear until 1820; her last work, *The Romance of Private Life*, although completed years earlier, was not published until 1839, five years before she died.

The moderate success of Burney's novels was comparable to that of Jane Austen's: She was favourably reviewed, pirated in America and translated into French; most of her works ran into second editions; her most popular, *Traits of Nature*, sold out within three months. She was like Austen too in being accorded the privilege of a royal dedication; the second of her *Tales of Fancy* was dedicated to Her Royal Highness, the Princess Elisabeth. In effect, Sarah Harriet Burney and Jane Austen were competing for the same market; unlike the more famous Miss Burney whose trail-blazing works belonged to a previous generation, Sarah Harriet was an exact contemporary of Jane Austen's.

They were born within three years of each other: Austen at Steventon, Hampshire in 1775; S. H. Burney in the provincial town of King's Lynn, Norfolk three years earlier; both reached womanhood during the period of change inaugurated by the French revolution. Each was absorbed into a large and talented family of limited resources whose sons had their own way to make in the world. Both had brothers in the navy, giving them a personal interest in world events: in Austen's case, the Napoleonic wars; in Burney's, the war of American independence and Cooks' voyages of maritime exploration. There were clergymen in both family circles, while Burney's brothers also became school-masters, musicians and soldiers. One might argue, as some of Austen's critics do, that the circumscribed limits of the female domestic sphere were mitigated somewhat by exposure to the wider world of commercial and professional activities.

There was, however, a class difference between the two writers; Austen, through illustrious ancestors on her mother's side, was able to conceive of herself as belonging to gentry; no such comfortable assurance was available to Burney. Although her father, the musician Dr. Charles Burney, had risen in his career to associate with the wealthy and fashionable elite, it could not be forgotten that he was a mere music-master. While he did become friendly with aristocratic patrons, his entrée into their homes had been to give music lessons to their daughters. His was the pride of the self-made man, and he was anxious to protect his position; some of his reluctance to allow his daughter Frances to write for the stage might be attributed to the risk to her social status as well as to her literary reputation. Subsequent generations of Burneys who sought careers in the professions—legal, ecclesiastical, edu-

cational and military—quickly forgot their lowly origins (one even applied for a Burney coat of arms); even the second generation could disapprove as a degrading misalliance a match made between first cousins—as if a mate chosen from one’s own sphere were somehow inappropriate (this was a family on its way up).

The marriage in question, that of James Burney’s daughter Sarah to the bookseller, John Payne, actually reaffirmed a link first forged in 1785 by James himself when he married the bridegroom’s aunt, daughter of the well-known bookseller Thomas Payne. This family connection to the world of publishing may have made Sarah Burney’s literary aspirations that much easier. Meanwhile Jane Austen had no such easy entrée into the commercial world of London. Her first publishing venture, which depended on the mediation of her clergyman father, was doomed to failure; even later, her more worldly brother Henry failed to secure advantageous terms.¹⁷ Ironically, Burney’s lower social status may have favoured her advent as a lady novelist. Exposed to dealings with the press as her father’s amanuensis, she could rely on half-brother, Charles, who was conversant with the trade, to act as go-between. The reputation of her more famous half-sister also helped; although Sarah Harriet’s first two works were published anonymously, her identity was an open secret, and the ambiguity of a new work by “Miss Burney” was exploited by her publishers.

The social distinction, however, between the daughter of a country clergyman and a London music-master was not so great as to be unbridgeable. In the small world of English society, the Austen and Burney paths were likely to cross. Mrs. Austen’s cousin, Cassandra Cooke, became quite friendly with Sarah’s half-sister, Mme d’Arblay.¹⁸ Names of certain acquaintances recur in the letters of Jane Austen and of Sarah Harriet Burney—the Barnewall family in Bath, for example (the wife was a former pupil of Charles Burney’s), and that of Lord Saye and Sele. The latter association, however, illustrates a difference in attitude; whereas Burney was clearly gratified by any mark of aristocratic condescension, Austen (who was distantly related to the family) scrutinised the party coolly to identify a rumoured “adulteress.”¹⁹ Although her own father’s circumstances were quite modest, Austen was well-connected and could associate on equal terms with the wealthy land-owning family who had adopted her brother Edward.

In one respect, however, the social positions of both women were similar in that they failed to marry and shared the experience of marginalisation which was the lot of the spinster. In the late eighteenth century, as Austen’s narrator reminds us, marriage offered “the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want.”²⁰ It was a path which neither woman took, at least partly by conscious choice rather than necessity. Like Austen, to whom more than one love affair has been attributed (although sometimes on rather shaky grounds),²¹ Burney also experienced love as well as rejection; she too is known to have turned down an advantageous proposal of marriage which would have guaranteed her a life of comfort and ease.²²

Deborah Kaplan has recently hypothesised that at least one of Austen's motives for rejecting the proposal of Harris Bigg-Wither may have been literary ambition;²³ perhaps it was the same for Burney, whose independent spirit was noted by her family.²⁴ Certainly there was no easy outlet for a highly intelligent well-read woman craving intellectual stimulation; a satisfactory mate would have been difficult to find. Burney appears to have compensated by immersing herself in books, but at the cost of becoming somewhat of a social outcast. Complaining of a lack of congenial companions, she described herself as a "Hermitess,"²⁵ condemning the narrow limits of the female society to which she was relegated ("a mere petticoat party is rarely worth putting one foot before the other for"). Throughout her life, she explicitly preferred the company of men: "They may be vulgar, and they may be illiterate, but at all events, they can bring home some news from the Library,—and they know nothing about caps, & bonnets, & female bargains."²⁶ Criticised in her own family for an unbecoming self-assertiveness,²⁷ she found that writing fiction gave her a sense of release. While her own life might be "dull, monotonous and lonely,"²⁸ she could immerse herself in "a little ideal world of my own, and care nothing about the humdrum of surrounding realities."²⁹ The act of self-expression offered escape; meanwhile, ironically, both women were writing fiction in which marriage as the ultimate goal would satisfy all the heroine's aspirations.

Burney appears to have chosen her fate with open eyes, expressing a rueful awareness of the result. Describing herself in jest as "mortal old maid" or "a craving spinster,"³⁰ she wished to dissociate herself from the general species of those "who would have married if any body had asked them, but whose attractions were not sufficient to procure an offer. Of course they are not rich, else they would have been gladly snapt up, faults & all."³¹ This theme is echoed in Austen's remark that "Single Women have a dreadful propensity for being poor—which is one very strong argument in favour of Matrimony."³²

For whatever the reason, the result was clear in economic terms; the lot of the single genteel woman in eighteenth century society was not an enviable one. Deprived of the traditional female role at the centre of a domestic circle, with few (and not very desirable) alternatives, she became a financial burden, dependent on the kindness of her own family (in the case of Austen) or on others (in Burney's case). Through the generosity of their brothers, the Austen sisters were luckily spared isolation and poverty; Burney was less fortunate and ultimately forced to depend on her own exertions. The only unmarried daughter, she remained at home to nurse both parents in their declining years. Her attempt to break out of this role (keeping house for her brother) was chastened by the realisation that she was making inroads on her small capital, leaving her even less room to manoeuvre in future.³³ Moreover, her dereliction of duty was amply punished by her father who appropriated some of the property intended for her and left insufficient provision in his will.³⁴ Experiencing at first-hand the trade in "human intellect," as it was called by Jane Fairfax, in *Emma*³⁵ Burney tried stints as teacher, governess and companion, and adopted the expedient of residing abroad where she

could live more cheaply than at home. In her position, writing fiction was not only an important creative outlet, but also a financial necessity—"prudence in the shape [of] pen and ink,"³⁶ she called it.

It is difficult to compare the financial returns of the two writers. While the four novels published in Austen's lifetime netted just under £700,³⁷ the figures for Burney's total earnings are not available. For her third novel, she was offered £50 a volume (making £200 in all) by Henry Colburn, the principal publisher of light literature, who was known as a liberal paymaster. So profitable was this venture, that she was offered £100 a volume for her next work and promised £150 thereafter if it should prove successful.³⁸ These figures compare favourably with those earned by other women writers of the time. The popular Charlotte Smith was usually paid about £50 a volume;³⁹ at the upper end of the scale, however, the highly successful Maria Edgeworth could earn £2000 for a single novel.⁴⁰

The importance of these earnings cannot be overestimated when one considers that the annual income from Burney's investments was never higher than £100. Jane Austen, by comparison, felt pinched in a household which shared £460, with housing provided (and occasional gifts of fuel and food).⁴¹ Certainly both writers were gratified by the money earned by their fiction, Austen noting with satisfaction that "I have now therefore written myself into £250—which only makes me long for more"⁴² and Burney proudly calculating her profits which she sometimes used for living expenses. She went so far as to insist that her literary activity was for the sake of gain ("I must scribble, or I *cannot live*"),⁴³ and looked forward to the day when she would be freed from the necessity of "compulsory Authorship."⁴⁴ When publishing her last work, she excused herself by pleading impoverishment.⁴⁵

It is curious, however, that her bank account does not confirm any crisis in her finances, leading one to suspect an element of pose in her attitude. It is worth noting that Burney did not stop writing when it was no longer financially necessary, and when she had no immediate plans to publish. In Italy, where she could live very cheaply, she composed a two-volume tale which she read to family and friends, and whose completion she reported with satisfaction. Her writing for the desk drawer is comparable to Austen's persistence in revising her earlier works and circulating them in manuscript after her initial attempts to publish had failed.

Both writers of course were subject to the ideology of domesticity which prescribed a woman's proper sphere⁴⁶ and precluded authorship which might "transgress against the [feminine] virtues of modesty, obedience, decorum and silence."⁴⁷ As if to disarm opposition, Burney falls into the affectation satirised by Austen of deprecating her own work. Referring disparagingly to her "little booky," she dismisses her audience, "the common run of Novel readers," and claims to respect only those "who read better things habitually."⁴⁸ Her position as a published author she claims to find demeaning, forcing her to pursue her literary activities in secret:

... I live here amongst such a set of idle and heavy-bottomed old and young women, that, of a morning, my time is never my own. Our Street door opens

with a latch . . . I am forced therefore to avoid as much as possible all ungenteel jobs; and as I reckon scribbling by trade *very* ungenteel, I never set too with comfort, till candles come, & visitors cease."⁴⁹

Her remark brings to mind the story of the squeaking door at Chawton which gave timely warning of visitors, from whom Austen would hide her literary employment.⁵⁰

One senses the fear of poverty and dispossession shaping the lives of these two writers, just as one finds it haunting Austen's novels. One critic discovers an undercurrent of protest at the unequal position of women, who are either imprisoned in a stultifying domestic role, or exiled from their home.⁵¹ Another notes that each novel begins with an act of dislocation⁵² which is often economic in origin. Austen's female characters suffer from male irresponsibility as well as the law which ensures patrilineal succession. They function as mere tokens of exchange in a marriage market which perpetuates the patriarchal hierarchy. Those who do succumb to financial pressure (like Charlotte Lucas) are sympathetically treated; those who aspire for more discover, like Elizabeth Bennet, that they cannot transcend their society; their lives remain circumscribed by forces beyond their control.

Austen's work elicited a strong and enthusiastic response from Sarah Harriet Burney. *Pride and Prejudice* impressed her immediately: "I could quite rave about it! How well you define one of its characters when you say of it, that it breaths a spirit of 'careless originality.'—It is charming.—Nothing was ever better conducted than the fable; nothing can be more *piquant* than its dialogues; more distinct than its characters." It soon became her "prime favorite of all modern Novels" and she claimed to have read it as many times "as bumper toasts are given—three times three!" *Emma* she read with "such glee" that "even amidst languor and depression, [it] forced from me a smile, & afforded me much amusement" (she was particularly struck with the phrase, the old man's "gentle selfishness," (perhaps in memory of her father?))⁵³ She also owned copies of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Mansfield Park*.⁵⁴ One of these works was sent her by her publisher, who may have sensed a kindred spirit; in any case, Burney's percipience in recognizing the genius of Austen was unusual at the time.⁵⁵

Her admiration did not affect her own writing, however, which is in an entirely different vein. Although she enjoyed reading comedies or satires and evinced an acerbic wit in her letters, little is displayed in her novels, which focus almost exclusively on the love interest. She herself was uncomfortably aware of the discrepancy between her professions and her practice: "I never insert love but to oblige my readers: if I could give them humour and wit, however, I should make bold to skip the love, and think them well off into the bargain. But writing for the press . . . cramps my genius, & makes me weigh my words, and write as you call it *mawning*."⁵⁶ Ironically, perhaps Burney was so affected by economic forces that she would not enunciate them; she simply succumbed, producing what would sell and saving her best writing for her letters, which reflect the quiet but heroic struggle of a single woman for independence and self-respect.

It was left to Austen to articulate for a whole generation, perhaps for a whole gender, the forces which ruled their lives rendering them voiceless, powerless and trapped in unfulfilling roles. The clarity of her insight and the irony of her voice resonates for us today as it did for Burney. This, in the end, is what sets Austen apart from her sister novelists; she took the shape of womanhood in the late eighteenth century and with a quiet realism gave it substance in fictional form. While expressing the essence of the female experience, her novels ultimately (the most subversive act of all) were able to win recognition in the society which they undercut. Through the eyes of her contemporary Sarah Harriet Burney, one can see the implications of Austen's work for the women of her day, while for us "her achievement has . . . a retroactive effect . . . her work, like that of all great creative writers, gives a meaning to the past."⁵⁷

NOTES

- ¹ Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel* (London: Pandora, 1986), p. 145.
- ² *The Novels of Jane Austen*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), V, 37. All quotations from Austen's novels are from this edition.
- ³ Jocelyn Harris, *Jane Austen's Art of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- ⁴ Cheryl Turner, *Living by the Pen: Women writers in the eighteenth century* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 2.
- ⁵ Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 95-99.
- ⁶ The remark, attributed to Austen's nephew James Edward, is recorded in a copy of *Northanger Abbey* in the Dyce Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, cited in David Gilson, *A Bibliography of Jane Austen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 89.
- ⁷ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, in *Novels*, V, 37.
- ⁸ In *Northanger Abbey*, the philistine John Thorpe dismisses *Camilla* as "such unnatural stuff!" and its author, Madame d'Arblay, as "she who married the French emigrant"; not surprisingly, he is no friend to novels in general: "there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since Tom Jones, except the Monk"; *ibid.*, V, 48-49.
- ⁹ E.g., "Give my Love to Mary Harrison, & tell her I wish whenever she is attached to a young Man, some respectable Dr. Marchmont may keep them apart for five Volumes" (*Jane Austen's Letters to her sister Cassandra and others*, ed. R. W. Chapman, Vol. I [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932], p. 13). Dr. Marchmont, the cynical tutor in Mme d'Arblay's *Camilla* (1796), advises the hero to investigate the heroine's character fully before committing himself, thus delaying their felicitous union.
- ¹⁰ "The subscription was a gift from her father" according to Austen's biographer, John Halperin, *The Life of Jane Austen* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 62, although this may be an assumption. See also Park Honan, *Jane Austen: Her Life* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 119.
- ¹¹ Margaret Anne Doody, *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988).
- ¹² Charles Burney to Frances (Burney) d'Arblay, 2 December 1796, Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.
- ¹³ *The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay)*, ed. Joyce Hemlow, Vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 239.
- ¹⁴ In 1798, Sarah Harriet Burney left her father's home to live with her half-brother James, an arrangement which lasted for five years. Joyce Hemlow first raised the exciting possibility of incest in *The History of Fanny Burney* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 281-85. This view has been accepted without question by other scholars since; see e.g. Doody, pp. 278-82.

- The myth is exploded in Lorna J. Clark "Introduction," *The Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, forthcoming from University of Georgia Press.
- ¹⁵ Austen, *Letters*, I, 180; the date of the letter is 8 February 1807.
- ¹⁶ I am following the traditional dating of the novels by Cassandra Austen, laid out conveniently in Appendix II of Jane Aiken Hodge, *The Double Life of Jane Austen* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972). This chronology of course has been open to question.
- ¹⁷ Jane Austen's efforts to publish her novels are discussed in the recent biography by Park Honan, *Jane Austen: Her Life* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), *passim.*; see also Jane Aiken Hodge, "Jane Austen and her publishers," *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 75-85.
- ¹⁸ Honan, p. 183; *Journals and Letters*, III, 2-3.
- ¹⁹ Burney proudly announced her acquaintance with Gregory William Twistleton (1769-1844), 14th Baron Saye and Sele (1788), in a letter of 1814, "Yesterday I was very grand, and dined at Belvedere, the seat of Lord Eardly with four noblemen, an honourable, a Lady, and an honourable Miss. . . . All these fine folks were very civil and pleasant" (SHB to Charlotte [Francis] Barrett, 10 Sept [1814], Berg).
Lord Saye and Sele's sister Julia had married a relative of Austen's mother; another sister, Mary Cassandra (b. 11 June 1774) was apparently the "Adultrous" whom Austen identified at Bath in 1801: "I am proud to say that I have a very good eye at an Adultrous, for tho' repeatedly assured that another in the same party was the *She*, I fixed upon the right one from the first . . . she was highly rouged, & looked rather quietly & contentedly silly than anything else" (Austen, *Letters*, I, 127-28; see also Honan, pp. 173, 225).
- ²⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, in *Novels*, ed. Chapman, II, 122-23.
- ²¹ John Halperin has attributed lovers to Jane Austen somewhat liberally in his full-length biography as well as his article "Jane Austen's Lovers," *SEL*, 25, No. 4 (1985), 719-36; rpt. in *Jane Austen's Lovers and other Studies in Fiction and History from Austen to Le Carré* (London: Macmillan, 1988). He is accused of anachronism and inaccuracy in Deborah Kaplan, *Jane Austen among Women* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 114-15.
- ²² As a young woman, Burney was teased about a young clergyman who lived next door and commiserated when his family moved away. At the age of 52, she was sufficiently charmed by a widower, the Rev. Willoughby Crewe (1792-1850), to resent his attentions shifting elsewhere. The same year, she turned down a very eligible proposal of marriage from the Rev. James Greville (1753-1836), disappointing some members of her family; "she had no reasons very rational," commented Mme d'Arblay (SHB to Charlotte [Francis] Barrett, 17 April 1839, Barrett Collection of Burney Papers, Department of Manuscripts, British Library, Eg. 3705, ff. 51-52v; Clark, "Introduction," *Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney: Journals and Letters*, XII, 574).
- ²³ "Even with the support of a few critical and appreciative female readers, a married Jane Austen probably could not have continued to write novels or ventured to publish them," Kaplan asserts (see pp. 109-17).
- ²⁴ Maria (Allen) Rishton to Frances (Burney) d'Arblay, [3 Sept. 1798], Barrett, Eg. 3697, ff. 276-77v.
- ²⁵ SHB to Henry Crabb Robinson, 3 April [1839], Dr. Williams' Library, London.
- ²⁶ SHB to Henry Crabb Robinson, 9 December 1842, Dr. Williams'.
- ²⁷ "She knows she is a very clever Girl, & she is neither well contented with others, nor happy in herself, but where this is evidently acknowledged" commented Mme d'Arblay (*Journals and Letters*, III, 352).
- ²⁸ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 22 March [1829], Berg.
- ²⁹ SHB to Frances (Burney) d'Arblay, 7 December 1820, Barrett, Eg. 3698, ff. 84-87 v.
- ³⁰ SHB to Charlotte Francis, [pre 10 June 1806], Berg.
- ³¹ SHB to Henry Crabb Robinson, 9 December 1842, Dr. Williams'.
- ³² *Letters*, II, 483.
- ³³ Burney's bank account at Coutts shows all of her investment income (approximately £100) going to James over a two-year period (1801-03); in addition, she sold out £340 in

investments giving the proceeds or transferring the stock itself to her brother. As her capital was reduced by almost one third in five years, it is clear that such an arrangement could not last for ever.

- ³⁴ In addition to some small bequests, Sarah Harriet was left £1000 in Charles Burney's will, considerably less than two of her half-sisters and not even so much as one of her nieces; invested immediately, it increased her annual income to £85. The will was a curious one, favouring some children and disinheriting others. Mme d'Arblay (who was favoured) defended her father's actions, believing that he had earned everything he owned. This belief, however, was ill-founded, as it appears that Charles Burney had benefited considerably from his second marriage, and might therefore have been expected to provide adequately for the child of that union. Moreover, it is doubtful that Charles Burney passed on the property specifically designated for Sarah by her maternal grandmother (see *Letters of Sarah Harriet Burney*, L. 9, n. 2, L. 77, n. 2).
- ³⁵ Austen, *Emma* in *Novels*, ed. Chapman, IV, 300-01.
- ³⁶ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 23 [November 1815], Berg.
- ³⁷ Most biographers have used Austen's own figures to arrive at a total of £684.13s. earned from her fiction during her lifetime. See Hodge, p. 84, followed by Halperin, *Life*, p. 281; Honan agrees, p. 393. However, Oliver MacDonagh, in *Jane Austen: Real and Imagined Worlds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), asserts that she earned more than the net sum of £910 left in her will (p. 54).
- ³⁸ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 1 April 1812, 23 [November 1815], Berg.
- ³⁹ Spencer, p. 10.
- ⁴⁰ Marilyn Butler, *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 1.
- ⁴¹ MacDonagh, pp. 44-54; see also Honan, pp. 213-14.
- ⁴² *Letters*, II, 317.
- ⁴³ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 23 [November 1815], Berg.
- ⁴⁴ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 30 March 1819, Berg.
- ⁴⁵ SHB to Anna (Wilbraham) Grosvenor, 15-21 January 1838, Berg.
- ⁴⁶ Kaplan discusses contemporary women's culture and its significance for Austen; see especially pp. 17-85.
- ⁴⁷ Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 48.
- ⁴⁸ SHB to Henry Crabb Robinson, 26 February 1840, Dr. Williams'.
- ⁴⁹ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 23 [November 1815], Berg.
- ⁵⁰ The tradition is recounted in Halperin, *Life*, p. 183.
- ⁵¹ Alison G. Sulloway, *Jane Austen and the Province of Womanhood* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).
- ⁵² Zelda Boyd, "The Language of Supposing: Modal Auxiliaries in *Sense and Sensibility*," *Jane Austen: New Perspectives*, ed. Janet Todd, *Women & Literature*, NS Vol. 3 (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1983), p. 142.
- ⁵³ The phrase occurs in the first chapter of *Emma*; Burney quotes it and comments "Was there ever a happier expression?" in her letter to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 1 March 1816, Berg.
- ⁵⁴ Sarah Harriet Burney owned first editions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* and a second edition of *Sense and Sensibility* (Gilson, pp. 18, 28, 52, 73).
- ⁵⁵ Burney's appreciative remarks are hitherto unknown and do not appear in Gilson. They appear in various letters: SHB to [Elizabeth] Carrick, 6 December 1813, National Library of Wales; SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 1 March 1816, Berg; SHB to Henry Colburn, [c. January 1816], Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; SHB to Anna (Wilbraham) Grosvenor, 15-21 January 1838, Berg.
- ⁵⁶ SHB to Charlotte (Francis) Barrett, 1 March 1816, Berg.
- ⁵⁷ F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948), p. 5.