

Anna Lefroy's Continuation of *Sanditon*: Point and Counterpoint

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I

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Jane Anna Elizabeth Austen (1793-1872), always known as Anna, was among the liveliest and most talented members of the Austen family. The only child of Jane Austen's eldest brother James by his first wife, Anne Mathew, she was closer to Jane than any other of her numerous nephews and nieces. When she was just six weeks old, she became the unwitting subject of Austen's elaborate dedication to two diminutive mock-didactic stories, entitled "Miscellaneous Morsels," in which the author, with mock solemnity, expresses her hope that "if you seriously attend to them, You will derive from them very important Instructions, with regard to your Conduct in Life.—If such my hopes should hereafter be realized, never shall I regret the Days and Nights that have been spent in composing these Treatises for your Benefit."¹

At the age of two, on the death of her mother in 1795, Anna was brought to live at the Steventon rectory, remaining there until her father's second marriage in 1797 and often returning during her childhood for visits with her aunts Cassandra and Jane. She was evidently a highly precocious child. According to her own account, at the tender age of three she listened with alarming attentiveness as Jane read to Cassandra the first draft of *Pride and Prejudice*, then named "First Impressions": "Listen . . . I did with so much interest, & with so much talk afterwards about 'Jane & Elizabeth' that it was resolved for prudence sake, to read no more of the story aloud in my hearing."² At about the same time, Jane Austen might have been working on her comic dramatization of Richardson's novel *Sir Charles Grandison*, with, according to Brian Southam, her young niece Anna as her helper, "offering suggestions . . . inserting a word or two here and there, changing a phrase, bringing a character on stage."³ Other Austen scholars believe that Southam underestimates the extent of Anna's contribution. Park Honan, for example, contends that Jane and Anna collaborated on the play when Anna was in her late teens or early twenties, and that Anna may have been the primary author.⁴

Anna also added some material to another early piece by Jane Austen, the short story "Evelyn," probably in about 1809 when she was sixteen. As with "Sir Charles Grandison," the extent of her contribution is disputed by Austen scholars.⁵ It is, however, striking that the addition to the story does no more than graft a fragmentary addition onto a fragment, just as in the case of Anna's much later continuation of *Sanditon*.

With artistic as well as literary talents, Anna made the only sketches of Steventon rectory known today, as well as of other places and buildings connected with Austen.⁶ She also occupies a prominent place among the readers of *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* whose opinions Austen recorded, and her responses provide a useful indication of her literary tastes. She liked *Mansfield Park*, Austen tells us, "better than P. & P.—but not so well as S. & S.—could not bear Fanny.—Delighted with Mrs. Norris, the scene at Portsmouth, & all the humorous parts.—" That the effervescent Anna should dislike frail and pious Fanny Price while relishing Austen's satire of Mrs. Norris seems only appropriate. Anna must have pleased her aunt particularly in preferring *Emma* to "all the heroines," even though she found the novel "not so *Brilliant* as P. & P.—nor so *equal* as M.P."⁷ It was perhaps after hearing Anna's remarks on her novels that Austen wrote one of her best poems, the delightful "Mock Panegyric on a Young Friend" celebrating "the charms of lovely Anna" through an extended analogy with spectacular North American natural phenomena. That Anna's mind is said to be as "unconfined" as a savannah, her fancy to be as large as Lake Ontario, and her wit to flow as fast as Niagara Falls all suggest a certain wildness in the subject. There is also an intriguing reference to her "judgement sound, thick, black, profound, / Like transatlantic groves": a mixture of qualities appropriate for one who could share Austen's sympathy for *Emma* but was unable to see the attractions of Fanny Price.⁸

Austen also expresses her mixed feelings towards her irrepressible and sometimes irresponsible niece in several of her letters. In 1808, she told Cassandra that the fifteen-year-old Anna, anticipating George Eliot's Maggie Tulliver, had wilfully cut off her hair, an event "much regretted by several of the party in this house."⁹ Some months later Austen was still lamenting "that sad cropt head," which "must have injured" Anna's looks, although in the same letter she admires Anna's "fluent pen."¹⁰ Just after her niece's sixteenth birthday, Austen depicted her as "quite an Anna with variations—but she cannot have reached her last, for that is always the most flourishing & shewey—she is at about her 3^d or 4th which are generally simple & pretty."¹¹ At the age of twenty, Anna became engaged to Ben Lefroy,

a cousin of the Tom Lefroy to whom Austen had been attracted when she herself was twenty. The engagement, Jane told her brother Francis, "came upon us without much preparation;—at the same time, there was *that* about her which kept us in a constant preparation for something." Austen was concerned about the couple's dissimilar tastes: "he hates company & she is very fond of it;—This, with some queerness of Temper on his side & much unsteadiness on hers, is untoward."¹² Austen also describes Lefroy, who declared that he would rather give up Anna than take holy orders against his will, as "maddish."¹³ They married none the less, in 1814, and Anna gave birth to a son and six daughters, outliving her husband, who died prematurely at thirty-eight, by over forty years. In 1864, eight years before her death, she wrote a memoir of Jane Austen in a letter to her brother, James Edward Austen-Leigh, who was then preparing his biography; Deirdre Le Faye describes this letter as "one of the primary sources of biographical information concerning Jane Austen."¹⁴

In addition to her contributions to Austen's "Sir Charles Grandison," "Evelyn," and *Sanditon*, Anna Lefroy had an authorial career of her own. Her most ambitious effort was a novel to be entitled first "Enthusiasm" and then "Which is the Heroine?," which she began at about the age of twenty. Something of its contents can be gathered from the many detailed criticisms of the work in progress made by Jane in a series of letters to her niece in 1814. These comments included advice to confine the action to England, avoiding Ireland, of which Anna knew nothing and thus would "be in danger of giving false representations."¹⁵ Anna should avoid such worn-out phrases as a "vortex of Dissipation": "it is such thorough novel slang—and so old, that I dare say Adam met with it in the first novel he opened."¹⁶ All lovers of Austen, of course, are familiar with her most celebrated piece of advice to the budding novelist: "You are now collecting your People delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot as is the delight of my life;—3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on."¹⁷ Despite her aunt's encouragement, however, Lefroy failed to complete her novel, which she was still working on in 1818.¹⁸ She seems to have made little further progress, and when her third daughter was still a small child, in about 1825, she burned the manuscript, subsequently telling the daughter that "she could never have borne to finish it, but incomplete as it was Jane Austen's criticisms would have made it valuable."¹⁹

Although she was never to complete a novel, Lefroy did publish two children's books: *The Winter's Tale: To Which Is Added Little Bertram's Dream* (1841) and *Springtide* (1842). I regret that I have

not had the opportunity to read either of these two extremely rare, never reprinted items. A third publication probably by Lefroy, a novella entitled "Mary Hamilton," was first published in a periodical of 1834, with the anonymous author described as "A Niece of the late Miss Austen." It was reissued in 1927, with a preface eager to emphasize the pedigree of the work, describing it as "virtually a miniature Jane Austen novel" and as "a kind of miniature *Persuasion* enlivened by occasional sallies obviously derived from *Northanger Abbey*; it affords as it were a conspectus of Jane Austen's earliest and latest manners."²⁰ Such comparisons seem mere wishful thinking to me. The story is clumsily told by two first-person narrators: one a female servant and the other the man who will eventually marry Mary Hamilton. Mary herself remains a shadowy figure, and the dialogue is sadly lacking in invention or wit. It is all too obvious that, unlike "Which is the Heroine?," *Mary Hamilton* was never subject to Austen's critical observations. The *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer in 1924 concedes that "a phrase now and then suggests kinship with Aunt Jane," but deplores the story's "pale and languid characterization."²¹ Lefroy, if she was indeed the author of *Mary Hamilton*, had produced a barely competent piece of work, and her failure here did not bode well for her subsequent attempt at that most challenging of literary enterprises: completing Jane Austen's *Sanditon*.

The surviving manuscript of Lefroy's attempted completion is somewhat shorter than the fragmentary *Sanditon* itself. It remained unpublished, in the possession of her descendants, unknown to Austen scholars, until it was sold at a Sotheby's auction in London in December 1977 to James Borg of Lake Forest, Illinois, who still owns the manuscript today.²² In 1983 it was transcribed and edited by Mary Gaither Marshall, in a limited edition of 500 copies, issued by the Chiron Press of Chicago. In addition to transcribing the manuscript, Marshall provides an extensive introduction and full textual notes. Although I disagree with some of her findings, and in particular with her contention that Lefroy "probably had some idea how Austen would have developed the plot" (xxxiv), we are all indebted to her for making this intriguing work available for the first time.

Sanditon, as everyone here will recall, concludes with a witty remark. Charlotte Heywood, looking at the portraits on display in Lady Denham's sitting-room, is struck by the disproportion between the whole-length portrait of Sir Harry Denham, centrally placed over the mantelpiece, and the miniature of Mr. Hollis, huddled inconspicuously amidst a group of miniatures in an obscure part of the

room: "Poor Mr. Hollis!—It was impossible not to feel him hardly used; to be obliged to stand back in his own House & see the best place by the fire constantly occupied by Sir H[arry] D[enham]." ²³ Anna Lefroy takes up the joke at the outset of her continuation. Here we find that "poor Mr. Hollis" must also suffer the posthumous indignity of seeing the best buildings and land on his own estate—Denham Place, Denham Villas, and Denham Gardens—named after his wife's second husband; only "the little old way-side Public House . . . retained it's allegiance, & still bore the name, as it had once done the sign, of 'The Hollis Arms'" (1).

The episode reveals Anna Lefroy's fine understanding of her aunt's comic technique, and makes a promising opening to the continuation. Lefroy shares Austen's fascination with the use of material possessions to reveal character traits. When her Lady Denham makes her appearance in the sitting-room, she boasts to Charlotte of having bought two expensive light-coloured muslins for Clara Brereton, while revealing that she would have bought cheaper gingham material had Clara been returning to her own family: "living with me, as she does, at least for the present, & at Sanditon House, it seems proper that she should be dressed conformably" (3-4). The gift, that is, is not for Clara's enjoyment, but rather to satisfy Lady Denham's sense of propriety. Lady Denham also draws attention to the portrait of Sir Harry Denham with which Austen's *Sanditon* concludes, telling Charlotte that "it is the only thing belonging to the family that I brought away with me" (5). Here Lady Denham echoes the *bon mot* of her precursor, Austen's Lady Denham, about her second marriage: "that though she had *got* nothing but her Title from the Family, still she had *given* nothing for it." ²⁴

Reading Anna Lefroy's continuation of *Sanditon* provides numerous instances of *déjà lu* of this kind. Some are duly noted by Mary Marshall in her edition of Lefroy's work. Thus when Lady Denham complains of the exorbitant price charged for muslin in Sanditon, Marshall observes that Austen "discussed this same subject of increased prices in shops because of tourists" (108). Later, contemplating the long walk to church from Trafalgar House, Lefroy's Mrs. Parker "thought, with regret, as she had done many a previous Sunday, of the pleasant shady walk, scarce half a mile in length which had formed one of the many comforts of her former home" (24). Marshall's note draws attention to the passage in *Sanditon* in which Austen's Mrs. Parker speaks nostalgically of the old dwelling: "It was always a very comfortable House . . . And such a nice Garden—such an excellent Garden . . . it was a nice place for the Children to run about in. So Shady in Summer!" ²⁵

These and other parallel passages demonstrate Lefroy's ability to take up subjects raised in Austen's *Sanditon*, providing readers with the pleasures of recognition and recollection. Unfortunately, this ability, while making her a talented mimic of her aunt, does nothing to solve her principal problem: how to resolve the sketchily developed plot of Austen's fragment. The complaint commonly made about the various attempted completions of both *Sanditon* and *The Watsons* is that their authors develop the plot along lines alien to Austen's imagination. *Somehow Lengthened* (1932), for example, which Alice Cobbett disarmingly subtitled a "development," rather than a completion, of *Sanditon*, features a love-potion consisting of a spider and a cock's comb administered to Arthur Parker by Miss Lambe, a gang of smugglers, an abduction, and a narrowly-averted duel. Far from being vitiated by any such fantasies, however, Lefroy's continuation remains so close to home that it finally goes nowhere at all.

Lefroy does, to her credit, introduce various new characters, the most significant of whom is a friend of Sidney Parker, the disagreeable Mr. Tracy. She also creates a stepfather, uncle, and several other relations for Clara Brereton, and populates *Sanditon* with assorted shopkeepers, servants, and tradespeople. Clara, in her version, is said to be "cold, calculating, & selfish" (81) and Thomas Parker's financial difficulties are more acute than Austen had indicated. The suggestion of an intrigue between Clara and Sir Edward Denham is further developed, while Sidney Parker and Charlotte seem to be developing a romantic involvement. At this point, regrettably, Lefroy's imagination falters. With most of the leading characters assembled one evening at Trafalgar House, an unexpected visitor is announced: Mr. Woodcock, proprietor of the *Sanditon* hotel. He has come to see Sidney Parker, who leaves the room at once, leaving Charlotte to wonder nervously "What *could* have happened" (78). Since the manuscript breaks off at this point, we shall never know.

In her edition of Lefroy's continuation, Mary Marshall conjectures that Mr. Woodcock's mysterious visit to Sidney Parker might be connected with Thomas Parker's financial difficulties (xxxvii). Since Mr. Parker is not known to be in debt to Woodcock, and since Woodcock has no apparent knowledge of Parker's business dealings, the suggestion seems implausible to me. I do not, however, have a better one to offer. Nothing in Lefroy's fragment provides a reasonable clue, and I suspect that the author was unable to answer Charlotte's question herself.

It might have been on reaching this impasse that Lefroy set to work on the second section of her manuscript: an account of the life

of Clara Brereton. Marshall suggests, very reasonably, that “this part of the work was intended to appear after the main section following a transition passage which apparently never was written” (xxxvii). Marshall does not though acknowledge what seems obvious to me: that the second part of Lefroy’s manuscript is much inferior to the first. Half of it is taken up by an account of a seemingly irrelevant episode: a visit paid by Clara to a prospective employer, Mrs. Cavendish Dawes, who takes an inexplicable dislike to the normally winning, if deceitful, young woman. Clara’s uncle and aunt then debate the best way to pay their respects to Lady Denham, newly arrived in London, and the episode breaks off with five different versions of a sentence. Marshall is, I believe, overly generous when she claims that this desultory ending “is of interest because it shows Lefroy at work revising her text” (144). Rather, it shows the poverty of her invention. In chapter three of *Sanditon*, Austen tells us that the Breretons, “who seemed always to have a spy on [Lady Denham], introduced themselves at this important moment, & learning her situation, persuaded her to accept such a home for the rest of her stay as their humbler house in a very inferior part of London, c^d offer.”²⁶ All that Lefroy has to do here is dramatize an episode that Austen has already recounted, yet even this task seems to be beyond her. A proposed letter from the Breretons to Lady Denham—the sort of letter at which Mr. Collins would have excelled—is never written, and the second of Lefroy’s fragments trails off weakly in mid-sentence.

In a manuscript note on Austen’s *Sanditon*, also first published in Marshall’s edition, Anna Lefroy declares that “the story was too little advanced to enable one to form any idea of the plot” (153). Elsewhere, in a letter of 1862 to her brother James Edward Austen-Leigh, Anna took credit for suggesting members of the Parker family in “conversations which passed between Aunt Jane & me during the time that she was writing this story.”²⁷ Again, however, she makes no claim to possess any knowledge of how Austen intended to develop and resolve the plot of *Sanditon*. Lefroy’s abortive continuation is an intriguing curiosity, but her putative discussions of the novel with her aunt gained her no special knowledge of the mysteries that Austen took to her grave. As we explore, at this conference, the new directions taken by Austen in *Sanditon*, we cannot turn for guidance to Anna Lefroy.

II

Kathleen James-Cavan

Anna Lefroy's continuation of *Sanditon* does not presume to revise the fragment upon which it is based. This fact, and another which will appear at the end of this discussion, may explain why Lefroy did not finish the continuation. It begins with Charlotte Heywood's reflections upon the prevalence of the Denham name on buildings erected on and at the expense of the Hollis Estate as she and Mrs. Parker await Lady Denham's return from her inventory of the kitchen (1). When Clara Brereton arrives, Charlotte notes Clara's easy dissimulation as she appears "in her Bonnet & Shawl" but betrays no indication of "being taken by surprise" after returning from her assignation with Sir Edward Denham (7). The stage is set: the continuation is to gain most of its force from an air of mystery surrounding the characters to whom the reader has already been introduced in Austen's *Sanditon*. Initially continuing the narration from Charlotte's point of view, Lefroy's story soon switches permanently to an omniscient narrator when Mr. Tracy enters the scene. In my view, Anna Lefroy's continuation therefore required a complete rewriting of the fragment and continuation with a consistent point of view. Why Lefroy never revised along these lines remains unexplained; however, the continuation's fragmentary nature is separate from its status as a valid and imaginative reading of Jane Austen's unfinished novel.

The two subsequent, twentieth-century completions did revise Austen's *Sanditon*. When she published her completion entitled *Somehow Lengthened* in 1932, Alice Cobbett explained in a letter to *The Spectator* that although she "had the kind permission of *Sanditon*'s publishers" to complete the novel, she could not "bodily annex and reprint Miss Austen's fragment." While this explanation hints at legal impediments, it actually reflects the completer's method. Believing that Austen's fragment seems "to foreshadow a story with more force, danger, and dash than belong to Jane Austen's norm,"²⁸ Cobbett revised most of the fragment's dialogue into narrative, and continued the plot by pitting the machinations of the evil kidnapper, Sir Edward Denham, against the efforts of the plucky heroine, Charlotte Heywood. The completion ends with Charlotte's rescue of Clara Brereton and the betrothals of Clara and Sir Edward, Miss Denham and Sidney Parker, and, finally, Charlotte and a Lieutenant Godfrey Perivale, who turns up for the first time on the last page of the novel. Marie Dobbs's 1975 completion makes minor editorial changes to Austen's work and continues the fragment with an elopement, a failed abduction and the eventual betrothal of Sidney

Parker and Charlotte Heywood. Dobbs adds Sidney's friend, Henry Brudenall, who elopes with Clara Brereton and whose name comes from Austen's "The Three Sisters," a novel contained in *Volume the First* of the juvenilia. Like Lefroy's continuation, Dobbs's novel concentrates on the courtship plot between Sidney Parker and Charlotte Heywood. Whether readers view these completions as successes or not (and most reviewers panned them), the authors were at least able to come to the end of their works probably because they asserted some control over the original text.

As we see in the continuation, Lefroy reads *Sanditon* as a novel of courtship and character development but she shows little taste for her aunt's brand of literary satire. In Austen's fragment, Sir Edward Denham assures Charlotte that he is "no indiscriminate Novel-Reader" as "a young Whitby . . . [runs] off with 5 vols. under his arm to Sir Edward's Gig;"²⁹ the reader and Charlotte soon discover that Sir Edward derives "only false Principles from Lessons of Morality, & incentives to vice from the History of it's [*sic*] Overthrow."³⁰ By contrast, Charlotte demonstrates her good sense by remembering the lesson of Frances Burney's *Camilla*, and, repressing her desire for "rings & Broches" at the Library, she pays for her purchases.³¹ Nevertheless, this absence of commentary on authors and novel-reading in Lefroy's continuation remains a significant aspect of her vision for the novel. It reveals that although she could neither continue the literary satire nor rewrite her aunt's fragmentary story, she used it as a point of departure for imagining a text of her own.

The important features of Lefroy's continuation include the introduction of new characters, the fleshing-out of Clara Brereton's background, and some hints at a bankrupt future for Mr. Parker. In Austen's *Sanditon*, Sidney declines an invitation to stay at Trafalgar House because he expects "to be joined there by a friend or two."³² Lefroy then invents Sidney's friend, the mysterious Mr. Tracy, who lives "without an Income; & what may be more uncommon, without getting into debt" (34). Without precisely having "the character of a gamester" he is known to play occasionally and successfully; he is also "an acute & very useful political agent" who also has connections in the literary world (35). In short, there is "scarcely a count in Europe with which Mr. Tracy had not had some connection, nor a country with whose usages he was not acquainted" (36). It is hard to avoid conjecturing what might have been Lefroy's intention in creating such an implausible character. Perhaps he is to be of some use to Mr. Parker's plans for improving *Sanditon*, as he has on a much earlier occasion rescued the young Mr. Edward Denham (later Sir Edward) from disastrous gambling debts during his few weeks on

the Continent in 1814 (37). Mr. Tracy is the most significant new character in the continuation not only for his apparent benevolence but also for his inclination toward Charlotte Heywood. The narrative tells us that “amongst those people he so liberally professed to like, she held the very first place” (49). Considering Charlotte’s observation that Sidney Parker is “very pleasant . . . clever—superior in someways [*sic*] to the rest of his family” (24), we might be reminded of Lefroy’s early work and, changing genders, wonder which is the hero of this work.

Beyond Mr. Tracy’s contribution to the courtship plot, Lefroy’s other additional characters are introduced to contribute to Mr. Parker’s business schemes. Mr. Parker first appears in the continuation returning from a visit to a farmer from whom he attempts the “purchase of some Donkeys for the use of invalid Ladies, or children,” a measure which is to substitute for the Doctor whom he failed to attract to Sanditon (14-15). He plans to enrich Mr. Steadman, landlord of Hollis Arms, by paying him to provide “food & yard room for the animals” and by employing Steadman’s sons in having charge of the donkeys on the beach (17). Although he does not explain his own hopes for profit, Mr. Parker will receive the fees for the hire of the donkeys. In the same breath Parker introduces another of Lefroy’s inventions, “old Willis,” whose fishing boat with “a new coat of paint” is to stand in as the proposed, but as yet unrealised, “Sanditon Pleasure boat—perhaps even a small yacht” which, “after another season or two,” will augment the attractions of the place (15). While not inventing Mr. Woodcock, the keeper of the Sanditon hotel, Lefroy adds the detail that hotel guests will be afforded comfortable “land excursions” by his purchase of a second-hand “sociable” (16). In this early section of the continuation these *ersatz* luxuries, so proudly announced by Mr. Parker, intensify the comic contrast between his enthusiasm for Sanditon’s prosperity and its tawdry reality. Lefroy strengthens the comedy of potential in Austen’s fragmentary novel while at the same time suggesting that Mr. Parker’s “by & bys,” as Lady Denham describes his hopes, may indeed do serious harm.

For most of the existing characters, Lefroy’s continuation sharpens the reader’s impressions of their salient features already outlined in Austen’s story, especially those of Lady Denham. In Lefroy’s work, Lady Denham demonstrates her famous parsimony in her personal, twice-yearly, “strict examination of her Kitchen & other offices, with all their contents” (1-2); her complaints about the high price of muslin in Sanditon (3), and her astute self-congratulation in expecting to gain from the success of Mr. Parker’s donkey venture

without risking a penny of her own if it fails (46). She believes she will have a market for the product of her "milch Asses" should the invalid ladies be attracted by donkey rides (46). Lefroy's Lady Denham is also the most "fluent talker" of the story (69). In the Austen fragment, Diana Parker lays claim to this title from her remarkable diatribe explaining her arrival in Sanditon although convinced that "the Sea air wd probably be the death" of her.³³ In Lefroy's story, Diana is no match for Lady Denham who confines Diana to three sentence fragments in a three-paged discussion about the best treatment of Miss Lambe's condition (69). Diana privately admits to being "worsted" in the encounter (69). Although Lefroy's notes on *Sanditon* indicate that she considered Lady Denham to be "Mr. Parker's most influential colleague . . . considerably older, & in some points considerably wiser than himself,"³⁴ her continuation does not support such an interpretation. While Lady Denham is certainly influential, she is shrewd but not wise in taking advantage of Mr. Parker's financial risks because *his* calculations admit neither "the probability of delay, nor the possibility of loss" (33). Lady Denham's domination of Lefroy's continuation in this section and in that concerning Clara Brereton suggests that Lefroy's reading takes seriously the self-subverting statement in Austen's *Sanditon* that "Every Neighbourhood should have a great Lady."³⁵

Apart from the addition of Mr. Tracy, one of the more striking of Lefroy's deviations from her aunt's story is in Mrs. Parker's character. In Austen's *Sanditon*, Mrs. Parker refuses to convey to Lady Denham Diana's several requests for charitable donations: Mrs. Parker exclaims, "I could no more mention these things to Lady D.—than I cd fly."³⁶ From this detail Lefroy creates a Mrs. Parker who is articulate and capable of sound judgement. Although her ordinarily prolix sister-in-law cannot defeat Lady Denham, Lefroy's Mrs. Parker successfully defends the shopkeepers' practice of setting higher prices on goods against Lady Denham's objections early in the continuation. Mrs. Parker explains that

[t]he demand for goods being precarious, & confined to a few months of the year . . . the shop keepers are obliged to make their prices high for the season, in order to meet the falling off of custom during the last of the year. (3)

Unable to respond adequately to the argument's logic, Lady Denham utters the nonsense that "Trade people should have some conscience" (3) and continues her ineffectual complaints. Later, Mrs. Parker objects to her husband's schemes for the young Steadman boys, reminding him that their teacher "may not approve of their being so suddenly taken away" from the Sanditon School (17). In

Lefroy's version she is permitted to have values which conflict with those of her husband. Lefroy also vindicates Mrs. Parker's criticisms of Trafalgar House's exposure to the elements. Toward the end of the first week of Sidney's visit, "two stormy days & nights of cold continuous rain" prevent Mrs. Parker's cook from procuring "supplies from the garden of Old Sanditon" and on Sunday "nobody beyond it's [*sic*] immediate precincts could get to church" (49-51). While Mrs. Parker does not seem destined in Austen's work to be an important influence on the plot, all three completing authors, working in isolation, embellish her character with strong opinions and the capacity for self-expression; moreover, each completion contains a storm calculated to raise Mrs. Parker's judgement in the estimation of the reader. Lefroy's treatment of Mrs. Parker is more than an imitation; it is an enlargement that indicates her close reading of Jane Austen's original text.

Lefroy's manuscript comprises two sections. The first continues the action at Sanditon but stops abruptly when late one evening Mr. Woodcock interrupts a family party at Trafalgar House. Sidney Parker is suddenly called away to attend Mr. Woodcock and he asks Charlotte to take his place at the card table. This section ends as Charlotte wonders "What could have happened—" (78). The second section of the manuscript takes up Clara Brereton's story. At five or six years of age, Clara loses her father and her mother's remarriage soon brings several additional children into the family. At ten Clara is removed from school to become "a Household drudge" to the growing family (82). After her mother's death when she is eighteen, and the rest of the children have "been thinned down by death til only two Boys remained" (84), Clara joins her uncle James Brereton's family. But her uncle insists that "she must endeavor to fit herself for gaining her own livelihood" within six months (86). This move coincides with the family's intention to involve Lady Denham in Clara's future but at this point the continuation breaks off.

While plot would seem to be an important consideration for an author completing another's work, the fragmentary nature of this continuation makes assessment of this aspect almost impossible. As they stand, the quiet events of the continuation are much like those of the original fragment and Austen's other completed novels—visits, walks, and character observations which all tend toward the settlement of a heroine or two in marriage. I agree with Gene Ruoff's assertion that Jane Austen's contribution to the development of the novel consists in her creation of "a full social and economic environment" for her characters with a corresponding emphasis on "the importance of internal response and small-scale actions rather than overt adventure."³⁷ These features helped to change the direction of the novel over the next two centuries.³⁸ If thoroughly revised to

maintain a consistent point of view, Lefroy's continuation might have been completed; it contains as many hints for development as the other two, later completions. Indeed, this second section contains a detail that might have been intended to bring the plot to a possible complication and resolution, at least for Clara Brereton, and its significance may help to solve the mystery of Lefroy's failure to revise her work. By way of explanation, however, I must turn to the work of another of Jane Austen's nieces who completed another of her fragmentary novels, *The Watsons*.

In 1850 Catherine Hubback, daughter of Jane Austen's brother Francis, published her thousand-paged version of *The Watsons* entitled *The Younger Sister*. At about the same time, Anna Lefroy probably attempted and abandoned her completion of *Sanditon* between receiving the manuscript from her Aunt Cassandra in 1845³⁹ and writing to her half-brother James Edward Austen-Leigh in August of 1862 to discuss the possible publication of the *Sanditon* fragment. In this letter, she refers to Mrs. Hubback's unauthorized acquisition of a copy of the *Sanditon* manuscript: "The Copy which was taken, not given, is now at the mercy of Mrs. Hubback, & she will be pretty sure to make use of it as soon as she thinks she safely may."⁴⁰ Her disapproval of her younger cousin probably originates in her knowledge of Hubback's use of *The Watsons* fragment. The manuscript of *The Watsons* belonged to the Lefroy family; nevertheless, relying only upon her memory of Cassandra Austen's oral readings of the fragment as the basis for her work, Catherine Hubback added over nine hundred pages to complete the story for publication.⁴¹ Lefroy's continuation of *Sanditon* shows that she was familiar with Hubback's *The Younger Sister*: both Lefroy's and Hubback's completions contain an inexplicable refusal by a potential employer to hire a heroine as a nursing governess. In *The Younger Sister* Emma Watson is turned away by Lady Allston because the evil surgeon Mr. Morgan whom Emma has unwittingly employed as negotiator has alleged an intrigue with Emma, thus nearly destroying her health and reputation.⁴² This event precipitates the conclusion of the novel as Lord Osborne sets out on a mission to restore Emma's good name, clearing the way for her union with Mr. Howard. Because Anna Lefroy's continuation remains incomplete, Mrs. Cavendish Dawes's reasons for refusing to hire Clara Brereton are not fully explored; however, Anna Lefroy's letter shows that she is aware of her cousin's authorship and her use of her cousin's plot device could have resulted in a similar outcome.

This line of reasoning is highly speculative, of course, but the connections between the two works are unmistakable. Lefroy had already added twenty thousand words to Austen's original work and invented numerous details for her version of the story. Leaving her

continuation incomplete may not be the result of a failure of imagination. Rather, she may have had some scruples about appearing to imitate the work of the cousin she had criticized and, like Catherine Hubback, publicly annexing her name as author to that of her beloved aunt. In my view, there are new directions for Austen's work in this novel, directions to which Lefroy responded. All of Jane Austen's novels contain a passionate interest in settlements and landed money; however, *Sanditon* and this continuation turn their attention to the motivations of those engaged in the newer world of financial speculation. Had either of these works been completed, I believe they would have contributed to the "condition of England" novels which we associate with the later nineteenth century.

NOTES

- ¹ Jane Austen, "Detached Pieces," *Catharine and Other Writings*, eds. Margaret Anne Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1993), 67-68.
- ² Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (London: British Library, 1989), 93.
- ³ Brian Southam, ed., *Jane Austen's "Sir Charles Grandison"* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 11.
- ⁴ Park Honan, review of Southam, ed., *Sir Charles Grandison, Notes and Queries*, 228 (1983), 173-74.
- ⁵ See Doody, Introduction, *Catharine*, ix-xx.
- ⁶ See George Holbert Tucker, *A Goodly Heritage: A History of Jane Austen's Family* (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), 195.
- ⁷ "Opinions of *Mansfield Park*" and "Opinions of *Emma*," *The Works of Jane Austen*, Vol. VI, *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 432, 438.
- ⁸ *Catharine*, eds. Doody and Murray, 244-45. Doody and Murray (233) date the poem conjecturally 15 July 1817, the same day that Austen wrote "Winchester Races" and just three days before her death, which seems unlikely to me.
- ⁹ Letter of 15-17 June 1808, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 128.
- ¹⁰ Letter of 24 January 1809, *Letters*, 170.
- ¹¹ Letter of 25 April 1811, *Letters*, 184.
- ¹² Letter of 25 September 1813, *Letters*, 231, 232.
- ¹³ Letter of 26 October 1813, *Letters*, 246.
- ¹⁴ Deirdre Le Faye, "Anna Lefroy's Original Memories of Jane Austen," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 39 (1988), 417. For a different version of this letter, see *Jane Austen's Sanditon: A Continuation by her Niece*, ed. Mary Gaither Marshall (Chicago: Chiron Press, 1983), 155-68.
- ¹⁵ Letter of 10-18 August 1814, *Letters*, 267.
- ¹⁶ Letter of 28 September 1814, *Letters*, 277.
- ¹⁷ Letter of 9-18 September 1814, *Letters*, 275.

- ¹⁸ Letter from Anna Lefroy to James Edward Austen-Leigh, 26 October 1818; see Deirdre Le Faye, "Sanditon: Jane Austen's Manuscript and Her Niece's Continuation," *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 38 (1987), 57.
- ¹⁹ Fanny-Caroline Lefroy, cited in Le Faye, *Family Record* (193). Since she was "amused with the flames and the sparks," I assume that Fanny-Caroline (born in 1820) was about five years old at the time. Mary Gaither Marshall wrongly attributes the story to Fanny-Caroline's younger sister, Louisa Langlois (born in 1824), later Mrs. Bellas; see *Jane Austen's Sanditon*, xxvii.
- ²⁰ Preface by "H.V.M.," *Mary Hamilton* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1927), 7, 9.
- ²¹ *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 July 1927, 517. The anonymous reviewer tentatively attributes *Mary Hamilton* to Anna Lefroy, as do Reginald Brimley Johnson, *Jane Austen: Her Life, Her Work, Her Family, Her Critics* (London: Dent, 1930), 224-27; and David Gilson, "Anna Lefroy and 'Mary Hamilton,'" *The Warden's Meeting: A Tribute to John Sparrow* (Oxford: Oxford University Society of Bibliophiles, 1977), 43-46.
- ²² As announced by Mary Marshall during her "Poster Session" on the continuations of *Sanditon*, San Francisco AGM, 3 October 1997. Marshall does not provide information on the whereabouts of the manuscript in her edition of Lefroy's continuation.
- ²³ *Minor Works*, 427.
- ²⁴ *Minor Works*, 376.
- ²⁵ *Minor Works*, 380-81.
- ²⁶ *Minor Works*, 378.
- ²⁷ Letter of 8 August 1862, in Deirdre Le Faye, "Sanditon: Jane Austen's Manuscript," 58. I agree with Le Faye's remark that, in abandoning her continuation of *Sanditon*, Anna Lefroy "had to admit the task was beyond her powers" (60).
- ²⁸ Letter, *The Spectator*, 149 (1932), 582.
- ²⁹ *Minor Works*, 403.
- ³⁰ *Minor Works*, 405.
- ³¹ *Minor Works*, 396.
- ³² *Minor Works*, 425.
- ³³ *Minor Works*, 387.
- ³⁴ "Anna Austen Lefroy's notes on *Sanditon*," *Jane Austen's Sanditon: A Continuation by her Niece*, 154.
- ³⁵ *Minor Works*, 375.
- ³⁶ *Minor Works*, 425.
- ³⁷ See Gene Ruoff, *Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 113.
- ³⁸ *Jane Austen's Sense and Sensibility*, 113.
- ³⁹ Deirdre Le Faye, "Sanditon: Jane Austen's Manuscript," 56.
- ⁴⁰ Letter of 8 August 1862, in Deirdre le Faye, "Sanditon: Jane Austen's Manuscript," 58.
- ⁴¹ David Hopkinson, "Completions," *The Jane Austen Companion*, ed. J. David Grey (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986), 72.
- ⁴² Catherine Hubback, *The Younger Sister*, Vol. III (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1850), 51.