Brian Southam

An easy step to silence: Jane Austen and the political context

Essay published in Women's Writing*, Vol 5, No 1, 1998*

Abstract: Discussions of the "political" Jane Austen are multitudinous and often theory-based or theory-bound. By contrast, my essay is historical and biographical and sets out to show what part politics and political issues, as understood by Jane Austen and her contemporaries, played in her life and to what effect political experience enters her work. The context or scenarios I have chosen all impinged on Jane Austen personally: the Hanoverian Tory politics of the Austen family; the Stuart politics of her mother's family, the Leighs; Mr Austen's political "nous"; the party rivalries of Whigs and Tories, the French Revolution; and, as a coda, the slave trade.

Jane Austen's political context may sound a very limited topic. When Henry Tilney lectures his sister Eleanor and Catherine Morland on "the picturesque", he soon arrives "at politics; and from politics it was an easy step to silence" (p.111). And true enough, in the novels politics as such is little mentioned and never discussed. Notwithstanding this, the "political" aspect of the novels is one of the liveliest areas of present-day discussion. Its beginnings can be traced back to Marilyn Butler's *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975) where the case is made for reading Jane Austen historically and ideologically as a Christian, conservative novelist writing in direct opposition to radical and Jacobin contemporaries advocating a broad programme of social and political reform, and also against the sentimentalist who placed paramount value upon individual impulse.

Marilyn butler's account of a conservative Jane Austen has given rise to wide discussion, revisionism and much dispute. Counter-Jane Austens have been proposed: for example, a subversive writer, undermining the power-structures and values of a patriarchal society; a proto-feminist, a writer in sisterhood with Mary Wollstonecraft; a Marxist Jane Austen; and other provocative and intriguing characterisations which challenge the traditional image and invite us to rethink our understanding of the novelist.

These developments and varieties of interpretation have brought with them a particular semantic problem. Attached to Jane Austen, "politics" and "political" have taken on a protean quality, their meaning stretched and extended to a point approaching meaninglessness, certainly confusion, an issue taken up provocatively by Roger Gard writing from a traditionalist position.

> She is remarkably unpolitical for a novelist – except, of course, in the rather tiresome sense, which modern critical theorists are eager to point up on almost any occasion, that everything is in a wider way implicitly political … Traditional subordination and duty – most evidently that of child to parent – is, of course, present (although treated very critically), but it is a private matter and not a political factor.[1]

There is much to discuss here. But on this occasion it is a debate I want to sidestep, preferring a literalist and biographical approach and accepting "politics" and "political" in their everyday, commonplace usage, as Jane Austen employs them, referring to party politics and, more widely, to national and international events.[2]

On the biographical front, for example, we know that Jane Austen could be fiercely political, *party* political. This was the case in the spring of 1807, when she launched a bitter attack upon the Government, the so-called "Ministry of all the Talents", a "Ministry", as she called it, "pitiful, angry" and "mean".[3] Another example is her support for a bold and aggressive policy of expanding the war against Napoleon and launching a powerful and decisive land attack into Europe and beyond.[4] Such a warmly "political" Jane Austen is very far from the conventional picture of a "Gentle Jane" remote from the events of the time.

However, these examples carry us forward too rapidly. They take us into the last 10 years of Jane Austen's life. Before that I would like to propose five episodes or scenarios which come much earlier, during her formative years as a writer: first, the politics of the Austen family; secondly, the Stuart politics of the Leighs; thirdly, Mr Austen's finger in the political pie; then the party rivalry of the Whigs and Tories; and finally the French Revolution. To all five of these scenarios Jane Austen was connected by personal ties.

***

The first and most immediate political context is Jane Austen's own family. We have a very clear picture of their allegiances. The Austens were staunch Tories, exactly what we would expect of a country clergyman's family in the later eighteenth century. With his appointed authority and position in society, the parish clergyman stood alongside the local squire. His duties, civil and religious, were to preach the fear of God, and obedience to the King and to the laws of the country. These values, essentially the values of late eighteenth-century Toryism, are set out in Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Although in party terms Burke was a Whig, politically and philosophically his reaction to the French Revolution had turned him into a Tory thinker. He maintained that the basis of Britain's "civil society" is "religious" as opposed to the "atheism" of Revolutionary France[5]; that instead of overturning our national institutions, "we cleave closely to them. We are resolved to keep an established church, an established monarchy, an established aristocracy, and an established democracy, each in the degree it exists and in no greater".[6]

Against the backdrop of an ongoing Revolution across the Channel, Burke's vision of active Toryism is defence of the *status quo.* Burke uses the image of a landed estate in good order, to be protected from innovation and change, and handed on intact to the next generation. In political terms, this meant defending the supremacy of the Church of England; the position of the King, his powers and prerogatives; and the existing hierarchy of our social order ; the hereditary House of Lords on the one hand, the elected house of Commons and its voters on the other; and all this, in view of the turmoil of Revolutionary France, to be essentially unchanging in its political structure. Improvement or innovation was acceptable provided that it was a

strengthening of tradition, a sentiment or condition which come across explicitly in Jane Austen's attitude towards the changes which her brother, Edward, was planning for the grounds of the Great House, the Manor House at Chawton. Writing to her sailor brother Francis in July 1813, she explains that Edward is talking of a new kitchen garden: "the present one is a bad one & ill situated" and he means to have the new, at the top of the Lawn behind his own house. – We like to have him proving & strengthening his attachment to the place by making it better"[7]

In effect, it was a *status quo* in which the Austens were comfortably at home, securely situated as they were within the country gentry, what the Tories of the later eighteenth century could cherish as their heartland. The Austens were not well off. Indeed, Mr Austen had to take in pupils to eke out his clerical income. Yet they knew exactly where they stood. His sons and daughters were welcome at the great houses of Hampshire, and his eldest son James (like Elizabeth Bennet) could marry into a branch of the aristocracy (James's first wife, Anne Mathew, was a granddaughter of Peregrine Berrie, second Duke of Ancaster and the fifth Duke and Duchess became godparents to their first child). His second son, Edward, adopted by the Knights, could enter Darcy's wold, the ranks of the greater landed gentry, with an inheritance of estates and country houses in Kent and Hampshire. Like Elizabeth Bennet, Jane Austen could answer anyone, proudly and confidently, that she was one of a gentleman's family.

Although the Austens were not politically active, nonetheless both her brothers James and Henry Austen were men of political conviction. To carry their views, they created *The Loiterer.* This was a thoroughgoing Tory Weekly, which the conducted at St John's College, Oxford. It ran to 60 issues between January 1789 and March 1790. Far from amateur, *The Loiterer* was well-organised, with distributors in Bath, Birmingham, Reading and London, as well as in Oxford itself; and its contributors, including James and Henry, were drawn largely from their own college. One of their central targets was the literature of sensibility with its celebration of emotional self-indulgence and extravagance, an assertion of individualism incompatible with duties and responsibilities. In serious, Johnsonian prose, readers were warned against its excesses, it was ridiculed in burlesque stories and letters, one from Sophia Sentiment[8], probably contributed by Jane Austen herself. As Park Honan has put it, *The Loiterer* was designed to purge St John's "of an Old Jacobite taint, satirise the Whigs and give readers a dose of Tory Loyalty"[9], and warn them, too, of an incipient doctrine of revolution.

Jane Austen learned a great deal from *The Loiterer* in shaping her own early satires. But there was one stand she would have been unhappy with, the anti-Stuart prejudice of the Austen brothers who were staunch and patriotic Hanoverians. For Jane Austen inherited Stuart sympathies. These came down on her mother's side, the leighs, famed in history as the "loyal Leighs" with their "inflexible loyalty to the House of Stuart".[10] And the Leighs were not only Stuart sympathisers, they were among the most active of supporters. In 1643, when the gates of Coventry were closed against Charles I, it was to Stoneleigh Abbey he came, to be welcomed by Sir Thomas Leigh – for which act of loyalty Sir Thomas was ennobled as Baron Leigh of Stoneleigh. A hundred years later, in the rebellion of 1745, Stoneleigh Abbey was once again ready to welcome a Stuart, this time Bonnie Prince Charlie, on his march to London, a march which ended prematurely, at Derby,30 miles short of the Leighs' awaiting hospitality. The other branch of the Leigh family, the Leighs of Adlestrop, were equally staunch. Theophilus Leigh, Jane Austen's great-grandfather, who died in 1725, refused to recognise William and Mary, and then George I, as his sovereigns. His loyal toast was drunk to the King across the water. His son, Theophilus, the Master of Balliol for almost 60 years, remained a firm Jacobite until, in

the 1750s, in the political wilderness long enough, he sacrificed his family loyalty for the sake of Hanoverian patronage – "The Tory, the Whig, the Trimmer alike" as a mock elegy put it in 1753.[11]

It was with the Stuart troubles of the seventeenth century that the origins of the Whig and Tory parties are to be found, the Whigs seeking to exclude James II from the throne on account of his Catholicism, the Tories supporting him as the rightful king despite his religion. In the very short term, the Tories triumphed. But James's attempt to introduce a catholic court and officialdom and his bullying of the Church were resented and the arrival of a male heir in 1688 was the last straw. William of Orange was called in and James fled with his court to safety in France, the first of those "kings across the water". James's son, James Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender, styled himself James III; to be followed by his son, Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, Charles III; followed in turn by his younger brother, Cardinal York, Henry IX, the last of the direct line, who died childless in 1807.

The Jacobite story soon passed into legend and romance – sad, endearing, and, in its last stages, sometimes ridiculous. But its political legacy was serious and enduring. The central tenet o the Stuarts was the Divine Right of Kings, the doctrine that the sovereign derives his royal authority from god alone, is God's anointed, and that he is accountable for his actions only to God and himself, and not to Parliament. When James II fled to France, in Louis XIV he found a fellow-Catholic and King holding the same conviction of divine appointment. Louis supported James and his Court-in-exile, allowed him to retain the title "Defender of the Faith" and continued to ascribe to him, and to James III, all the attributes of majesty. For many years, the Jacobite cause found a body of support in England as well as Scotland and it was not until the death of George II in 1760 and the Coronation of George III in the following year that the threat of a Stuart return finally vanished. The Germanic House of Hanover, regarded at first as an alien though necessary presence, was now firmly established. The country was prosperous, stable and balanced in terms of politics and religion, and no one, whatever their Stuart sympathies, could face the prospect of the civil war which an attempted Stuart return would lead to. The political significance of the Stuarts finally fizzled out with the death of Charles III, the young Pretender, in 1788.

Nonetheless, clergymen, along with MPs and others holding public office, were still required to swear the Oath of Abjuration of 1701 formally renouncing "any Allegiance of Obedience" to the Stuart line. Mr. Austen took the Oath on a number of occasions: on becoming a Fellow of St John's in 1751; on his ordination, again when he became a master at Tonbridge School and yet again on presentation to his livings. On these occasions he expressly swore "to support maintain and defend the Limitation and Succession of the Crown" against James III and his descendants. Although, in reality, the Stuarts posed no threat, the solemn declaration of loyalty to the Hanoverian succession, to the exclusion of the Stuart line, as a requirement which continued and it was an Oath that, in their turn, the Austen brothers James and Henry were to take, as Fellows of St John's and later as clergymen, yet again pitting the Austens' Hanoverian loyalty against the Stuart loyalty of the Leighs.

Inevitably, there was a legacy of tension within the family. In Jane Austen's case, this emerges in the "History of England", a work she wrote towards the end of 1791, at the age of 16. Her immediate target was Goldsmith's *History of England,* the four volumes published 30 years before, in 1764. It was a standard school-room text-book which Jane Austen was given to read at Steventon as part of her education. How she must have hated it! It was a plodding piece of hack-work, largely a digest of Hume's *History of Great Britain (*1754-61), written for

money. Not surprisingly, it lacks the slightest hint of what we would call historical tact or imagination. Take, for example, the description of Anne Boleyn:

> Her features were regular, mild and attractive, her stature elegant, though below the middle size, while her wit and vivacity exc3eded even her other allurements.[12]

This could come out of an eighteenth-century novelette. With no feeling at all for his material, Goldsmith is left struggling to dish up palatable and assimilable history, and Jane Austen mimics his style with pinpoint accuracy. But as far as she was concerned, Goldsmith's principal offence was his violently anti-Stuart stance: and the Steventon copy of the *History* carries the record of Jane Austen's angry response. Passages are marked with her marginal exclamations and comments, some in blunt contradiction, some in ironic agreement. Goldsmith quotes a speech by Robert Walpole, an arch-opponent of the Stuarts: her comment, "Nobly said! Spoken like a Tory!"[13] – by which, of course, she means quite the opposite of a "Loyal Leigh" Tory of the High Tory "Old Interest". Cromwellian assaults on the Stuart Charles I are greeted with "Oh! Oh! The Wretches".[14] And when Goldsmith delivers his grand verdict against the entire Stuart line, Jane replies in kind, with weight and formality:

> The family who were always ill-used, BETRAYED OR NEGLECTED, whose virtues are seldom allowed, while their errors are never forgotten.[15]

In part, Jane Austen's own "History" is an attempt to set the record straight, to remind the reader of the Stuart "virtues" and to see that their tragic story is "neglected" no longer. Indeed, the scope and design of Jan4 Austen's "History" works to this end. Instead of demonstrating the onward and progressive march of events, in the style of Whig historians, Jane Austen concludes her account at a low point, the reign of Charles I, the last English monarch to suffer execution.[16]

Overall, the "History" is a highly accomplished satire, a remarkable parody of Goldsmith's writing at its worst. From a political point of view, what is of more interest is the focus on Mary Stuart – mentioned in no less that seven of the 13 reigns, sometimes more than once in a reign and occupying well over half the section on Elizabeth. But the measure of Jane Austen's attention is not just quantitative. Far more important is the remarkable change in style and feeling. When Mary Stuart is the subject, the comic note, the parody and the jokiness disappear. The writing takes on a gravity of tone. It carries compassion for Mary's suffering and her "scandalous Death"[17]: "abandoned by her son, confined by her Cousin, abused, reproached and vilified by all…"[18], and admiration for her "magnanimity"[19]; all this confirming Jane Austen's explanation that her "principal reason for undertaking" the "History" is "to prove the innocence of the Queen of Scotland".[20]

This was embattled ground, one of the fertile areas of historical dispute in the later eighteenth century, with historians lined up in opposing ranks arguing the legalities of Mary's clai9m, to the English throne and the extent of her involvement, or entrapment, in the plots against Elizabeth, the authenticity of fabrication of the evidence, the so-called Casket Letters in particular, used to blacken Mary's name and purporting to show her connivance in the murder of her husband Darnley. Vindications of the Scottish Queen abounded. A very recent one, John Whitaker's *Mary Queen of Scots Vindicated* (1787), Jane Austen mentions, introducing the author's name within a family joke.[21] Perhaps part of the joke was the disparity in length between Jane Austen's miniature "History" and Whitaker's *Vindication:* the 1787 edition, in three volumes, runs to almost 1400 pages, the second edition, 1790, "Enlarged and Corrected", to over 1700!

And beyond the histories, the literature on Mary was enormous and Europe-wide. Poets and playwrights in France, Italy, Germany and Spain, as well as in England and Scotland, seized on the tragedy and pathos of her fate. Later in the day come the novelist, with an eye on the scandals attached to the Scottish Queen: her suspected involvement in the murder of Darnley and her supposed liaisons. One notorious price of embroidery was *The Recess* (1785), a historical novel by Sophia Lee, described by Mary Lascelles as "that most ridiculous of historical romances"[22]. Amongst its fantasising is a clandestine marriage between Mary and the Duke of Norfolk, with twin daughters, a piece of nonsense that Jane Austen seems to have enjoyed and refers to twice in the "History".[23]

From a literary standpoint, the puzzling feature of Jane Austen's "History" is the tone or, more accurately, the variations in tone, the veering between the serious and compassionate on one side, and the comic, ironical and self-mocking. Some critics hold this up as evidence of Jane Austen's precocious maturity. Jan Fergus, for one, has made this point cogently, using the concept of what she calls "Jane Austen's double vision, her surprising ability at fifteen to laugh at her most cherished feelings , to view them ironically without relinquishing them"; suggesting that while Jane Austen "seriously admires Mary", she "presents her own admiration as ridiculous".[24]

I find this explanation interesting but not persuasive since the variations of tone are often discordant, contradictory rather than complementary, signalling uneasiness, not a command of artistic control but its absence. I put this uncertainty down to something more than deficient technique. Rather, it stems from the confusion of conflict of feeling awakened in Jane Austen as the Stuart and Hanoverian loyalties with in the family drew the young writer in contrary directions, an opposition which, at this point in her life, she was unable to reconcile, with these consequences.[25] [26]

Somewhat patronisingly, the family biographers dismiss Jane Austen's Stuart attachment as a passing phase of childhood, as if it expressed no more than a sentimental and romantic view of history, an immaturity that she left behind her. If Jane Austen was a romantic of this tendency, she stood in good company. Her "dear Dr Johnson"[27] was reputed to be a fervent Jacobite[28]; and not everyone in the eighteenth century swallowed the Whig view of history as a progressive forward march of improvement. Charles I was celebrated by the Church as "King and Martyr" and there were many who stood with Jane Austen in their attachment to Mary Stuart. More to the point, Jane Austen's Stuart sympathies long outlasted her childhood. Her niece Caroline remembered her aunt's infectious enthusiasm and felt it to be sufficiently important to place on record:

> She was a most loyal adherent of Charles the 1st, and that she always encouraged my youthful beleif (sic), in Mary Stuart's perfect innocence of all the crimes with which History has charged her memory.[29]

As Caroline was born in 1806, this recollection must belong to the last few years of Jane Austen's life. Clearly, her support of the Stuart cause was no less passionate then than it had been 25 years before. And there is further evidence that it was sustained into the next generation. Just below Jane Austen's long and serious comment that the Stuarts were a family "always ill-used, BETRAYED OR NEGLECTED" a young nephew has written "Bravo, Aunt Jane! Just my opinion of the case".[30]

Long after the Stuart Cause, as a political force, had faded in Britain, it survived on the European scene – an amusing, pathetic or tragic presence, depending on one's point of view.

Following the Old and Young Pretenders, Henry IX too preserved the regalia of a king and continued to conduct the solemn, semi-religious ceremony of the Royal Touch, last practised in England by Queen Anne, who touched Dr Johnson as a child, without success, in 1712. Henry's wealth was lost early in the French wars and in 1800 George III was generous enough to grant him a pension of £ 000 a year. Nine years later, after Henry's death had ended the line of direct descent from James II, Napoleon interviewed the Young Pretender's widow, the Countess of Albany, hoping to learn that there was a son, a successor in the Stuart line, someone he could put on the throne of England as a quasi-legitimate puppet ruler should his invasion plans ever succeed. Thirty years earlier, in the 1780s, the Countess had been a leading figure in Parisian society and news of her movements could very well have been reported back to Steventon in the letters of Eliza de Feuillide to her uncle and aunt. (Eliza was the only child of Mr Austen's married sister, Philadelphia Hancock.) In the summer of 1791, the Countess paid a visit to England, widely reported in the press. She remained travelling the country for 4 months, stopping at Oxford and Bath where Stuart supporters gathered to welcome her. The high point of her stay was to be received at the Court of St James's by George III and Queen Charlotte. Could this brief episode in the last days of the Stuart story have been the event which triggered Jane Austen's own Stuart "History", finished, as it was, at the end of November 1791, only a month or so after the Countess's departure?

In 1814, with the publication of *Waverley,* Jane Austen was touched again by Jacobite traditions. Walter Scott revealed that tales of the Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, handed down by word of mouth, "were the absolute delight"[31] of his childhood; and when, in financial need, he turned from poetry to fiction, it was the Rebellion of 1745 that provided the centrepiece to his story, Jane Austen greeted its arrival with wry humour:

> Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. – It is not fair. – He has Fame & Profit enough as a Poet, and should not be taking the bread out of other people's mouths.

Confiding in Anna Austen, a favourite niece, she was free to make an admission from the heart, and with this she concludes:

> I do not like him, & do not mean to like Waverley if I can help it – but fear I must.[32]

- the irresistible fascination for Jane Austen being the novel's central conflict between Jacobite and Hanoverian loyalties, a conflict which she knew from her own past experience and found re-enacted in the story of Edward Waverley, a young man from an English Jacobite family whose father "has decided to move with the times and abandon the old loyalties"[33] for the sake of advancement under the Hanoverians, a step which the Leighs, other than her great-uncle Theophilus, had refused to take.

Jane Austen's "fine … Brush", working on that "little bit of Ivory" "two inches wide"[34]. Could never capture the colour, violence and tragedy of the Stuart story. What Jane Austen does allow herself is a Stuart moment in *Mansfield Park,* chapter 9, the visit to Sotherton. The party is shown round by Mrs Rushworth. Mary Crawford is bored and uninterested, "had seen scores of great houses, and cared for none of them"[35], whereas Fanny Price finds this Elizabethan house full of interest. Coming from Mansfield Park, described pointedly by Jane Austen as a "modern"[36] house, she listens with fascination:

> To all that Mrs Rushworth could relate of the family in former times, its rise and grandeur, regal visits and loyal efforts, delighted to connect any thing with history already known, or warm her imagination with scenes of the past.[37]

Such a house and such a family Jane Austen knew in Stoneleigh Abbey and the "loyal Leighs", with their own history of "rise and grandeur, regal visits and loyal efforts". And from her own childhood she knew about warming one's "imagination with scenes of the past", Stuart scenes most potently of all.

At length, they arrived at the Chapel. Mrs Rushworth explains that it "was fitted up as you see it, in James the Second's time" – a strange particularity, given that the reign of James II ran for only three years, 1685-88, suggesting (with the details that follow) that the Rushworths were a recusant Catholic family observing their faith within the privacy of Sotherton Court. The chapel:

> was formerly used both morning and evening. Prayers were always read in it by the domestic chaplain, within the memory of many. But the late Mr Rushworth left it off.

At this, Mary Crawford makes her own comment, *sotto voce.* "Every generation has its improvements", provoking a spirited retort from Fanny, who deplores the loss of this custom, the "valuable part of former times", the:

> chapel and chaplain so much in character with a great house, with one's ideas of what such a household should be! A whole family assembling regularly for the purpose of prayer, is fine![38]

In this little scene, Fanny's conservatism is set against the modern and progressive views of Mary Crawford: on one side the 'old' Tory appeal to tradition, which a very precise Stuart attachment in Mrs Rushworth's mention of James II; on the other, the Whig appeal for "improvement" – a word that so often sounds a warning note in Jane Austen – the "improvement" of houses, landscapes, customs and manners, so often involving a break with the past and a step into uncertainty, a theme pursued through *Mansfield Park* and the later novels, ending with *Sanditon*, that wonderful comedy of ideas. In a world of movement and commercial speculation its characters are fired with the "spirit of restless activity"[39], pursuing a way of life quite remote from the settled and "established" society beloved of Burke – and beloved of Jane Austen too. "Every generation has its improvements", says Mary Crawford. "Every ancient custom ought to be Sacred"[40], counters Jane Austen. These are the sentiments of Fanny Price but not her words. The words are Jane Austen's own, that young child of the Leighs, inscribing her Stuart loyalty, 25 years before, in the margins of Goldsmith's *History*. And in the "History of England", she names her own "sacred Place", none other than the "Great Hall at Fotheringay Castle", the place of Mary's execution.[41] The chain of association running through these words and ideas tells us how closely Jane Austen identified with Fanny Price in her romantic affection for the past and how, in the writer's mind, that sentiment embraced the tragedy of Mary Stuart's life and death.

***

The party rivalry between the Whigs and the Tories entered the life of the family at different levels. A superficial but nonetheless revealing example crops up in a letter from Jane to Cassandra reporting a morning call paid one day on the Harwoods, at neighbouring Deane House, only to find Mrs William Heathcote and Mrs Chute already there, a fact that Jane communicates to her sister with the enigmatic expression "Heathcote & Chute for ever".[42] This was the slogan of the two Tory candidates in the bitterly fought Hampshire County election of 1790 and its appearance in one of Jane Austen's letters 10 years later shows us how easily such political tags were taken into the currency of family sayings in a Tory household whose head was canvassed for his vote as a 40 shilling freeholder and who, along with his fellow-

freeholders, enjoyed an election dinner at Basingstoke Town Hall in the company of the two candidates.[43]

The Austens were more deeply involved in party rivalries during the length of the 7-year trial of Warren Hastings, the former Governor-General of India. Hastings was impeached by the House of Commons, in 1786 on charges of corruption and maladministration. Beyond these accusations there was a highly political motive, an attempt by the Whigs to curb the activities of the East India Company and make it even more strictly answerable to Parliament , thus carrying forward their long-term political purpose of extending the area of Parliamentary control at the expense of the Crown.

The Austen connection with Hastings went back over 30 years, with the marriage in India of Mr Austen's elder sister, Philadelphia to a Mr Hancock, an East India Company surgeon who became a close friend of Hastings and his trading partner. Hastings stood as godfather to Eliza Hancock, Philadelphia's daughter, a regular visitor to Steventon in the 1780s and 1790s during Jane Austen's childhood. Moreover, Hastings had known the Leighs of Adlestrop throughout his early years and it seems likely that in the course of time he sent his young son back to England, first to be in the care of the Leighs and then to be looked after by Mr and Mrs Austen.

It was natural for the Austens to rally to Hastings's support. Mrs Hastings was visited in town and

accompanied to hearings at the House of Lords, where the great Whig orators could be heard: Sheridan, Burke and Fox, the last of whom was superior in the clarity of his diction, "but not to our satisfaction". As one of the Austen ladies reported, "as he is so much against Mr Hastings whom we all here wish so well"[44] – a well-wishing sustained over many years. Jane Austen valued Hastings's literary judgement, telling Cassandra in 1813 that she was "quite delighted" with his "opinion" of *Pride and Prejudice.* His admiring my Elizabeth so much is particularly welcome to me." In this same letter, she refers to Hastings as "such a Man"[45], a turn of phrase that carries her deep admiration.

It was on the political front, in helping the careers of Jane's sailor brothers, Francis and Charles, that Hastings proved his usefulness to the Austens. Advancement in the Navy called for practical seamanship, merit and experience at sea. But such were the numbers that a successful career called for "interest", i.e. access to someone with the influence to urge your case with the Admiralty Board, ideally with the First Lord himself. Since the First Lord was a political appointment and carried with it membership of the Cabinet, political affiliations were of prime importance in gaining Admiralty "interest" and the Navy was one of the main channels of Government patronage. Pollical services were rewarded by way of naval promotion, and in return for support an MP's son or nephew could be helped on his way to a commission, or a favourable posting to the right ship on the right station, where promotion, honour and prize-money were to be won.

The problem for the Austens of Steventon was their position, or predicament, as an obscure clerical family without naval or political connections. But the boys had one advantage – their father. It may seem strange to put such an emphasis on Mr Austen. In all the family records and biographies, he comes across, just as he should do, as a man of benevolence and learning, dedicated to his family and his parishioners, a worthy priest, but certainly not someone equipped to lead his sailor sons through the highly political territory of patronage and interest.

What changes our picture entirely is a single letter of advice that Mr Austen sent to Francis in Dec4mber 1788, when the boy was 14 ½ , his training at the Royal Naval Academy completed and about to set sail for India on his first tour of duty at sea. As the family biographers have observed, this is "A very charming letter"[46] "wise and kind" and "written with courtesy and delicacy".[47] But what they do not say is that the letter is shrewd and astute. It confronts his son's situation as youngster from a non-naval family seeking to advance in a service where patronage, "interest" and connections count for so much; and it provides practical advice on how to get ahead. There is a paragraph or two of spiritual wisdom. But the prevailing wisdom is worldly wisdom. Make influential friends and find patrons is the message; offer deference and politeness to the powerful. The advice is calculated and we can understand why it was prized by Francis all his life. Some 76 years later, at the time of his death in 1865, as Admiral of the Fleet, this letter was found among his private papers, "water-stained, singed at the edges and frayed by constant reading".[48]

It was not just in the matter of giving advice that Mr Austen proved his astuteness. When the time came to take action, e was shrewd end resourceful. In 1794, a year into the war, Francis was serving as Lieutenant in a sloop, a small and lightly-armed vessel. Patrolling in the North Sea. There was little chance of action for a ship of this size. What engagements there were involved larger vessels, frigates and sips-of-the-line, and it was to a frigate that Francis wanted a posting. This was a move for which "interest" could do the trick. So in October of 1794 Mr Austen approached Warren Hastings. Not a party politician, Hastings nonetheless commanded "interest". Throughout the years of his trial, Hastings continued to enjoy the favour of George III and the support of the "King's friends" in Parliament. His own power base was the East India Company with its immense field of patronage. As a Tory himself and with a Tory government in power, Hastings's route was clear. In the normal way this would have led straight to Lord Chatham, the First Lord of the Admiralty. However, Chatham was famously lazy and much of his business was delegated to another member of the Admiralty Board, the senior Naval Lord, Admiral Affleck, a fortunate circumstance since Hastings had known Affleck for over 30 years, their friendship going back to the 1760s, when they served together in the East India Company as young men. With the benefit of Hastings's introduction, Mr Austen could now, by convention, refer to Admiral Affleck as his "warm Friend"[49] at the Admiralty, someone who could oil the wheels on his son's behalf. To make doubly sure, Mr Austen approached a second "great" man (whose identify remains unknown to us) to gain the "interest" o another Lord of the Admiralty with Indian interest, a Mr Pybus, MP for Dover, a civilian member of the Board.

Sadly for Francis, this delicate network of "interest" was torn apart and the impressive line-up of Admiralty influence collapsed; for, a month later, in December 1794, Chatham gave up his position as First Lord and Earl Spencer came in. Spencer was an energetic First Lord, took affairs into his own hands, and Affleck's power was curtailed accordingly. In all this turmoil Francis was forgotten. But this was only temporary. By August 1795, he was moved to a ship-of-the-line for service in the West Indies, the very cockpit of naval warfare he was looking for.

Inevitably, the prospects of the sailor brothers were talked over in the family and Jane Austen followed her father's excursions into the politics of "interest" with close attention. When a similar situation arose in 1798, Cassandra was away from home and we are able to follow the progress of the affair from beginning to end in a sequence of three letters Jane wrote to her sister (18,24 and 28 December 1798) recounting their father's rapid and highly effective correspondence with Admiral Gambier – later to become Francis's patron – a most valuable connection made through James's marriage to Anne Matthew. This time the outcome was swift.

In the space of 10 days the news arrived of Francis's promotion to Commander and for Charles, the move from a sloop to a frigate.

On two later occasions at least, a politician was involved in attempts to get Francis the command he wanted most of all, the captaincy of a frigate. This was a post highly sought after because it offered the best opportunity for gaining prize-money and, as distinct from serving on a ship-of-the-line, which involved the discipline of a fleet, frigates often sailed on their own and a frigate captain was able to enjoy independence of command. The politician involved in these applications was Lord Moira, a cousin of Warren Hastings and important politically as an intimate friend of the Prince regent, in public life his political representative, and leader of the Carlton House party in Parliament. On the second of these occasions, in February 1807, Moira was serving in the Cabinet and we know from Jane Austen's letters that he was promised by the First Lord in person that Francis "should have the first good Frigate that was vacant"[50] – in the event, a promise that was never honoured.

Through Jane Austen's letters we can see her fascination with the minutest detail of these processes of power and politics, a fascination that carried through to the writing of *Mansfield Park* and the story of William Price, a midshipman burning with ambition, determined to become a lieutenant. But this is a problem, seemingly insuperable, for a young sailor with neither "interest" nor connexions and with a lazy, ill-bred ex-Lieutenant of Marines for a father, a man who only stirs himself for his newspaper and his grog, Jane Austen puts it bluntly: as for Mr Price, "he swore and he drank, he was dirty and gross".[51] No George Austen here. It is Henry Crawford who comes to the rescue and introduces Midshipman Price to his uncle, Admiral Crawford. In turn, the Admiral contacts a friend, an unnamed "Sir Charles", presumably a politician, probably a Minister. Sir Charles sends his recommendation to the First Lord. The wheels turn and promotion follows. All this is retailed to us in a single, remarkable sentence 130 words long, one of the longest sentences Jane Austen ever wrote:

> The first was from the Admiral to inform his nephew, in a few words, of his having succeeded in the object he had undertaken, the promotion of young Price, and enclosing two more, one from the Secretary of the First Lord to a friend, whom the Admiral had set to work in the business, the other from that friend to himself, by which it appeared that his Lordship had the very great happiness of attending to the recommendation of Sir Charles, that Sir Charles was much delighted in having such an opportunity of proving his regard for Admiral Crawford, and that the circumstance of Mr William Price's commission as second Lieutenant of H. M. sloop Thrush, being made out, was spreading general joy through a wide circle of great people.[52]

A feat of style, this sentence communicates all the formality of the process by which "interest" is set to work, its studied politeness, its circuitousness and its hypocrisies of procedure: that all these steps are accompanied with happiness and delight, concluding with the bland presumption that the "circumstance" of Mr Price's commission "was spreading general joy through a wide circle of great people", a social falsehood behind which stands the simple fact that Mr William Price is a nonentity, wholly unknown in any "circle" other than that of his own family, from which "great people" are notably absent – not unlike the Austens themselves when Francis and Charles first entered the Navy.

***

The French Revolution was the momentous political and historical event of Jane Austen's lifetime. Its progress, from early in 1789 through to the beginning of 1794, was watched by the Austens with a growing sense of anxiety and horror since members of their own family were involved – Philadelphia Hancock, Mr Austen's married sister, and her daughter Eliza.

Following Mr Hancock's death in India in 1775, Philadelphia had returned to Europe, travelling on the Continent to give Eliza the benefit of European culture, its polish and social accomplishment, and the chance, too, to find a husband. After 4 years, in 1779, when Eliza was 18, they settled in Paris, entering the fringe of Royal circles at the Versailles of Marie Antoinette and not forgetting to tell their cousins at Steventon of their social success. It was during this period that Eliza met her husband-to-be, Jean de Feuillide, an aristocratic young captain in the French Queen's Regiment of Dragoons. The news of her engagement caused Mr Austen some disquiet. As her senior male relative and trustee, he felt responsible for her welfare and feared that in this foreign marriage she would be giving up her friends, her country and her religion. However, this proved not to be the case. Eliza remained a faithful Anglican, a patriotic Englishwoman and after marriage, which took place in December 1781, Mrs Hancock and Eliza eventually became regular visitors to Steventon, following their first visit in 1786. Very soon Eliza was an established star of the family theatricals and added to the high spirits of her young cousins and their neighbourhood friends at Steventon.

It was during these years that Jane Austen formed a close friendship with Eliza, a woman 14 years her senior. In 1790, she dedicated to Eliza one of the largest and most important of her early works, the burlesque novel *Love and Freindship*. With the worsening situation in France, Eliza *and* her mother settled in London, her husband joining them early in 1792. Very soon, however, he was forced to return to France under the threat of being condemned in his absence as a Royalist émigré and his property seized by the revolutionary government. Eliza's movements at this time are not fully documented, but family papers tell us that she returned to join de Feuillide "just before the Reign of Terror broke out in full force in March 1793."[53] Britain protested at the execution of Louis XIV (21 January 1793) and France declared war on 1 February. A year later, in February 1794, her husband, in the course of protecting a fellow-aristocrat, was arrested on charges of bribery and suborning witnesses. On 22 February de Feuillide was tried, found guilty, and guillotined, all this on the same day. It is said that Eliza remained with de Feuillide until his arrest and only then fled to safety, reaching Calais, crossing to Dover and seeking refuge at Steventon. To quote Deirdre Le Faye:

> Whatever may have happened to her during these two years (1792-94), the cruel death of her husband brought the horrors of the French Revolution straight into the peaceful Steventon rectory, and left Jane with a loathing of republican France for the rest of her life.[54]

And a loathing too, one might add, for the inclination harboured by many Whig politicians towards the policy, led by Fox, of making peace with France. If the patriotism of war carried a party label, Jane Austen was a deep-dyed Tory, prepared to face a prolonged European war to ensure Napoleon's destruction, once and for all, in a crushing military defeat.

***

Such violence of feeling is not allowed to cross the surface of the novels. The French Revolution passes unmentioned.[55] Tongue in cheek, Jane Austen accepts the genteel convention that for ladies politics was a taboo, a subject unfit for their conversation, to be left strictly to the menfolk, a public attitude which hardened with the progress of the Revolution in France and the growing threat of Revolutionary ideas on English soil. Early on, in 1792, Jane Austen could situate politics within her comedy of manners: in "Catharine, or the Bower" we meet, for the first and last time, a woman who engages in political discussion and who sees her niece's social indiscretion leading to national ruin, a familiar line of argument taken by moralists addressing the young.[56] But 5 years later, in *Northanger Abbey,* the political division of the sexes is drawn with a firm line. Once Mr Allen has drunk "his glass of water" in the Pump Room in Bath, off

he goes to join the "gentlemen to talk over the politics of the day", while the ladies are left to take their social stroll, "noticing every new face, and almost every new bonnet in the room".[57] When Henry Tilney's enthusiastic exposition of "the picturesque" takes him:

> By an easy transition … to forests, the enclosure of them, crown lands and governments, he shortly found himself arrived at politics, and from politics, it was an easy step to silence.

That Henry's "short disquisition on the state of the nation"[58] is received in "silence" is no reflection on his sister Eleanor and Catherine Morland. Things are as they should be. With politics in the air, the ladies listen, as ladies should do, without a word. Their interests lie elsewhere, as General Tilney reminds Catherine, sending her off to bed so that he can turn to serious matters and finish his "many pamphlets". While she sleeps, he will be:

> Poring over the affairs of the nation … Can either of us be more meekly employed? My eyes will be blinding for the good of others; and yours preparing by rest for future mischief.[59]

Jane Austen plays with the convention of ladylike silence throughout the novels, not to the exclusion of politics but through this technique achieving the effect of dramatic intervention made all the more telling by the very fact of silence. A striking example occurs in *Mansfield Park.* It brings to life Stendhal's observation that "Politics in the work of literature is like a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert, something loud and vulgar, and yet a thing to which it is not possible to refuse one's attention".[60] The "pistol-shot" in question is Fanny Price's enquiry to Sir Thomas Bertram about the "slave trade", a question received in the family circle in "dead silence".[61] Quietly and politely asked, as it surely was, coming from Fanny Price, it nonetheless fully matches up to Stendhal's definition as to loudness and vulgarity. For in the Family gathered to welcome home the head of the house from his West Indian property, those plantations upon which the prosperity of the family depends, what "pistol-shot" could be louder and more rudely vulgar than Fanny's blunt question – for the Bertrams, as for all West Indian magnates, a highly charged political issue – quietly advanced and left hanging in the air, as it remains for the rest of the book?

The political dimensions of this question reach back into the Austen family. Since 1760, Mr Austen had been a trustee of a plantation on Antigua, the island of the Bertram property. About this, too, silence prevailed. None of the family biographies record the fact, nor that the plantation owner, James Langford Nibbs, a former pupil of Mr Austen at St John's, stood in 1765 as godfather for James, the eldest Austen son.

Like Sir Thomas Bertram, Mr Nibbs himself was burdened with a spendthrift elder son, James junior; and like Tom Bertram, Janes junior was taken off to Antigua by his father to detach him from his "bad connections"[62] in England. In this circuitous way, the Austens too had a dependence however slight, upon the prosperity of a plantation in Antigua and hence upon the slave trade; and events similar to this thread of the *Mansfield Park* story would have become known to Jane Austen in childhood. Like many planters 'sons, James Langford Nibbs was sent home from the West Indies for education and gentrification. He aimed to escape his "West-Injinness" and set himself up as a propertied English gentleman, beginning the process in 1759 with the grant of arms and crowning the elevation of the family with a country seat in Devon, where he died in 1795. Could this be the story, typical of West Indian advancement in the mother country, that Jane Austen drew upon in portraying the Bertrams in their "modern-build" house?[63] And was it this piece of family history that crystallised Fanny Price's question and its attendant "silence"?[64]

What conclusions can we draw? One thing is clear. The value of tracing Jane Austen's "political" biography is not that it provides an insight upon her writing. In some cases, such as the "History of England" it may seem to do so, or we think it may. But in other cases, the connection is problematic, intriguing rather than illuminating, raising more questions than it answers. Does our knowledge of Mr Austen's plantation connections add anything to our understanding of *Mansfield Park?* It may explain why Jane Austen chose Antigua as the location for the Bertram property, but little else. Nor does a grasp of her political context provide us with a theoretical framework, a mode of mechanism of interpretation to set the novels in a fresh and revealing light.

On the other hand the political context does serve a purpose in reminding us that although Jane Austen was an intensely private person, who shunned public life, and chose to remain enmeshed within the embracing network of the Austen family, nonetheless she was neither isolated nor insulated from the larger world, a world at war, a world of political parties and divisive historical loyalties. These were the passions and pressures she experienced and registered in her letters with their swift, wry humour, their irony, and their declarations of assured Christian conviction: her view, in 1814, of Britain "as a Religious Nation, a Nation in spite of much Evil improving in Religion"[65]; or of Mr Lushington, the MP for Canterbury, whom she liked: "I am sure he is clever & a Man of Taste", she wrote to Cassandra, "He got a vol. of Milton last night & spoke of it with Warmth. – He is quite an M.P. - very smiling, with an exceeding good address, & readiness of Language … I dare say he is ambitious & Insincere".[66] A description that may put us in mind of Henry Crawford or Frank Churchill – that "chattering coxcomb", as Mr Knightley sees him, "the practised politician".[67]

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to Irene Collins for reading a draft of this paper and her kindness in offering advice. A version of this paper was first given on 12 April 1997 at "Jane Austen in Context", a conference arranged jointly by the Jane Austen Society and the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education.

Bibliography

B. Brophy, "Jane Austen and the Stuarts", in B. C. Southam (ed.) *Critical Essays on Jane Austen* (London: Routledge, 1968).

M. Butler, "History, Politics, and religion", in J.D. Grey (Ed.) *Jane Austen Handbook* (London: Athlone Press, 1986).

J. C. D. Clark, *Samuel Johnson: Literature, religion and English Cultural Politics from the restoration to Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

C. L. Johnson, *Jane Austen's Beginnings: The Juvenilia and Lady Susan* (London: UMI Research Press, 1988).

C L. Johnson, "'The Kingdom at Sixes and Sevens': Politics and the Juvenilia", in J. D. Grey (Ed.) *Jane Austen's Beginnings: The Juvenilia and Lady Susan* (London: UMI Research Press, 1989).

C. Kent, "Learning History with, and from, Jane Austen" in J.D. Grey (ed.) *Jane Austen's Beginnings: The Juvenilia and Lady Susan* (London: UMI Research Press, 1989).

J. Lees-Milnes, *The Last Stuarts* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989).

R. Quintana, *Oliver Goldsmith: A Georgian Study* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

W. R. Ward, *Georgian Oxford: University Politics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

Notes and References

[1] R. Gard *Jane Austen's Novels: The Art of Clarity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 15-16.

[2] As in a letter to Casandra written from Southampton in January 1809: "The Regency seems to have been heard of only here, my most political Correspondents make mention of it", *Jane Austen's Letters,* ed. D. Le Faye, 1995 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 163. These "political Correspondents" would have included her brother Henry, for 5 years in the Militia and then a London banker, and an Army and Navy Agent closely in touch with political and military events and the latest news.

[3] "On Sir Home Popham's sentence – April 1807", *Jane Austen: Collected Poems and Verse of the Austen Family,* ed. D. Selwyn (Manchester: Carcenet Press, 1996). P.7; also, *The works of Jane Austen,* ed. R. W. Chapman, Vol. VI, *Minor Works* (1954, rev. edn B. C. Southam, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.446.

[4] This was the long-term strategy advanced by Charles Pasley in his *Essay on the Military Policy and Institution of the Empire* (1810), a widely influential book which Jane Austen admired for its "extraordinary force & spirit" (*Letters,* p. 198).

[5] Edmund Birke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* (1790, Everyman Edn, 1910), p.81.

[6] Ibid., p.88.

[7] *Letters,* p 2`15.

[8] Issue No. 9

[9] Park Honan, *Jane Austen: Her Life,* (London: Orion Press, 1987, rev. edn 1997), p.57

[10] M.A. Austen-Leigh, *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen,* (London: John Murray, 1920), pp. 14-15.

[11] Freinshemius (pseud) (1753) *Threnodia, or an Elegy on the unexpected and unlamented Death of the M- of Balliol* (quoted) in J. Jones, Balliol college: *A History 1236-1939,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp.172-173.)

[12] David Hume (1754-61) *History of Great Britain,* iii, p. 353.

[13] Austen-Leigh, *Personal Aspects,* P. 27.

[14] Ibid., p 26

[15] Ibid., p. 27

[16] Jane Austen, *Catharine and Other Writings,* eds M. A. Doody & D. Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 328.

[17] *Minor Works,* p. 145.

[18] Ibid. p 146.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., p 149

[21] Ibid., p 145. Whitaker is mentioned approvingly in the 4th edition (1790) of William Tytler's *An Inquiry, Historical and Critical, into the evidence against Mary Queen of Scots* (1771), yet another "apology, or vindication, of the character of the illustrious Mary Stuart" (p35). Whitaker is praised for his "liberality and candour", for his disinterestedness and "humanity" (p. 17).

[22] M. Lascelles, *Jane Austen and Her Art* ((Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), pp. 44-45

[23] *Minor Works,* pp. 143, 145.

[24] *Jane Austen, The History of England,* ed. J. Fergus (London: The British Library, 1993), p. vii.

[25] A different interpretation is possible. Irene Collins points out that "Toryism was more a matter of sentiment than of party doctrine and could embrace some quite contradictory elements (as it did in the case of Jane Austen herself). A romantic attachment to the Stuarts, whose coats of arms had been dutifully erected on the walls of many country churches in the seventeenth century and had remained there in spite of the change in dynasty, was combined with a fierce loyalty to George III and the Protestant Succession …" *Jane Austen and the Clergy,* London: Hambledon Press, 1993), p 114.

[26] Compare the treatment of Mary Stuart in the "History" with Jane Austen's letter to Cassandra, 8 February 1807, in 2which there is an *en passant* reference: "It is no use to lament. – I never heard that even Queen Mary's Lamentations did her any good, & I could not therefore expect benefit from mine" (*Letters, p. 118).* Jane counted on Cassandra picking up a double allusion, firstly to Goldsmith's *History:* "The unhappy princess continued her lamentations; but being informed of his (Rizzio's) fate, at once dried her tears, and said she would weep no more, for she would now think of revenge" (ii.85); secondly, to the song entitled "Queen Mary's Lamentations" which Jane had copied into one of her manuscript music books (see Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion* (London: Douglas Cleverdon, 1979), pp. 152-153). The smart, dismissive tone is under tight control and characteristic of the letters to her sister, in which the mood and tone change from sentence to sentence, from the gaily cynical to the sad and heartfelt.

[27] *Letters,* p. 121.

[28] A point much discussed. For a recent consideration, see J. Cannon, *Samuel Johnson and the Politics of Hanoverian England,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), ch. 2 "Johnson and Jacobitism".

[29] C. Austen, *Reminiscences* (Alton: Jane Austen Society, 1986), p.9

[30] Austen-Leigh*, Personal Aspects*, p 27.

[31] W. Scott (1814), ed. C. Lamont, *Waverley* (Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1981). p.x.

[32] *Letters,* p.277, to Anna Austen, 28 September 1914.

[33] Scott, Waverley, p. xii.

[34] *Letters,* p.323

[35] *Mansfield Park, The Novels of Jane Austen,* ed. R.W. Chapman, 5 vols, (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), vol III, p.85. All subsequent references to the novels are in this edition.

[36] Ibid., pp. 48, 447.

[37] Ibid., p. 85.

[38] Ibid., p. 86

[39] *Minor Works,* p. 412

[40] C. M. C. Austen, *My Aunt Jane Austen,* (Alton: Jane Austen Society, 1952, 1952), pp 27-28

[41] *Minor Works*, p. 146.

[42] *Letters,* p.50 (25 October 1800)

[43] See I. Collins, *Jane Austen and the Clergy*, (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 114-115 and R. Vick (1993) The Basingstoke Assemblies, *Jane Austen Society Annual Report,* p. 25

[44] Reported by Philadelphia Walter, a daughter of William-Hampson Walter, Mr Austen's half -brother, see R. A. Austen-Leigh *Austen papers 1704-1856,* (Colchester: Spotiswoode Ballantyne, 1942), p. 129.

[45] *Letters,* pp. 218, 221.

[46] W. & R. A. Austen-Leigh, *Jane Austen, her Life and Letters,* (London: Smith, Elder, 1913), p.50.

[47] E. C. & J. H. Hubback, *Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers,* (London: John Lane, 1906), p.16.

[48] D. Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (London: British Library, 1989), pp. 61-62.

[49] BL Add. MS. 29173, f.400.

[50] *Letters,* p. 123.

[51] *Mansfield Park,* p. 389.

[52] Ibid., pp. 298-299.

[53] Le Faye, *Jane Austen,* p.72

[54] Ibid., p.73

[55] Or virtually so. The tree indirect references add p to almost nothing. In *Northanger Abbey,* Fanny Burney (unnamed) is "she who married the French emigrant" (p.49), i.e. General D'Arblay; and her novel *Camilla* is spurned by John Thorpe: "as soon as I heard she had married an emigrant, I was sure I should never be able to go through with it" (ibid.) In *Sense and Sensibility,* Mrs John Dashwood is proud of her gift to each of the Steele sisters, "a needle book, made by some emigrants …" (p.254).

[56] See *Minor Works,* pp. 200-201, 212, 228, 232-233.

[57] *Northanger Abbey,* p. 71.

[58] Ibid., p. 111.

[59] Ibid., p. 187.

[60] Quoted in I Howe, *Politics and the Novel* (London: New Left Books, 1975), p.15

[61] *Mansfield Park*, p. 198.

[62] Ibid., p. 32.

[63] Ibid., p. 48

[64] For a fuller discussion of this question see B. C. Southam, The silence of the Bertrams, *The Times Literary Supplement* (17 February 1995), pp. 13-14.

[65] *Letters,* p. 274.

[66] Ibid., p. 240.

[67] *Emma,* p. 150.