Marian had been an orphan, a twin adopted by the Passmore family, and while she was always on loving terms with them, as the letters attest, she was also always haunted by her feeling of marginality: "I didn't realize *it hurt so much* to be a foster-child and orphan." Above all, she was always hard up and bedevilled by the double demands of single parenthood and her writing career. Christl Verduyn has long since become the pre-eminent Engel scholar and critic. In this volume she and her associate, Kathleen Garay, have assembled an excellent selection of letters both to Marian and from her. Her letters are noteworthy for the lasting impression they give of a wonderfully talented woman fully involved with her life at all times. From the letters of her travelling years to her parents, the Passmores, in Sarnia, to a letter to Timothy Findley shortly before she died of cancer in 1985, she is fully engaged in her adventure of living her life to its fullest, always with a ready and gallantly humorous flavour: "I'm in fantastic shape except of course for being seriously ill, and in the night got up and rewrote an article on psychological criticism I've been thinking of all year."

Together with the introductory chapters, which communicate the same attractive endorsement of a feisty, gifted, and loving woman, the letters bring us extraordinarily close to Marian Engel. Her life was cut off much too soon, but to the very last she lived its every moment with a vivid involvement that left its mark on all those who knew her or read her works.

JANE AUSTEN AND THE THEATRE

Penny Gay
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002

JANE AUSTEN'S "OUTLANDISH COUSIN": THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF ELIZA DE FEUILLIDE

Deirdre LeFaye, Ed.
London: British Library, 2002

REVIEWED BY M. JANE BATEY

Penny Gay has written a delightful and informative book, and one that will be a welcome addition to the library of Jane Austen fans as well as anyone interested in the English theatre during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The author has a sound knowledge not only of Austen's novels and her life, but also of the theatre at that time. Gay is able to draw on Austen's correspondence to show her familiarity with various playwrights and their works, as well as her use of it in shaping the theatricality of many scenes in her novels. In Gay's own words, she "attempts to tease out both the theatrical context of Austen's writing, and how she deals in each of her major novels with a society that she perceives to be inescapably theatrical."

Gay's opening chapter gives an excellent insight into the world of theatre in Austen's time, especially various performances held in Bath, and there is ample evidence that Jane Austen did attend many of them. The author then goes on to discuss Austen's six major novels, focusing on, as she says, the ironic steadiness of Austen's gaze at her society. From the Gothic overtones in *Northanger Abbey*, to the drama of Marianne's near death after the betrayal by Willoughby, to the reuniting of Anne Elliott and Frederick Wentworth in *Persuasion*, Gay relays numerous scenes and situations which confirm Austen's strong sense of 'theatre'. "The plays performed in the Steventon home theatricals during Austen's childhood had a profound influence on the young writer, alerting her both to the seductive power of the theatre and to the ambivalence of acting." Gay also makes reference to similarities in plots between some of the popular plays of Austen's time and her novels, but points out that what Austen does, however, is place her own ironic stamp on her characters and situations.

The author also remarks on a number of women playwrights and authors whose influence on the theatre at this time was pronounced, including Hanna Cowley and Ann Radcliffe. As well, she calls on her knowledge of her subject to examine gender and its effect both on the theatre and in Austen's novels. Gay succeeds in showing not only Austen's familiarity with the theatre and the subtle aspects of that genre, but also how Austen uses theatricality in her novels. This book will certainly serve to broaden both the reader's enjoyment and understanding of the works of Jane Austen.

Throughout her book, Penny Gay makes reference to Eliza de Feuillide, a cousin of Jane Austen's, who shared in some of the theatricals performed in the Austen home and who would later marry Austen's brother, Henry. Eliza is the subject of another recent book entitled *Jane Austen's 'Outlandish Cousin,'* edited by Deidre LeFaye. This volume is primarily a collection of letters sent over a period of some fifty years, primarily from Eliza de Feuillide, although LeFaye draws on correspondence from Eliza's mother and others. A well-known Austen biographer, LeFaye's knowledge of Austen's life and of her family, both immediate and extended, adds greatly to the editing and commentary throughout the book. The letters in

this volume serve as an insight into many aspects of the life of young women in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and touch on the questions of marriage, widowhood, survival in a male-dominated world, and how one woman in particular overcame many obstacles. It is extremely well edited, and LeFaye's comments are unobtrusive and do not in any way interfere with the thrust and continuity of the letters; rather they serve to elucidate situations and explain some of the customs prevalent in India, England, and France during that time. They are particularly revealing with respect to the plight of many women at the time, for whom marriage was one of the few available options.

The author tells how Eliza's mother, Philadelphia Austen, sister of Jane Austen's father, journeyed to India in search of a husband. There she married Saul Tysoe Hancock; she continued to live there until 1765 when she returned to England with her husband and Eliza, born in 1761. Her husband would return to India and never see his family again, but there are many poignant letters between husband and wife, and father and daughter.

Later we read correspondence between Eliza and another cousin, Phylly Walter. They corresponded for over 30 years and these letters contain gossipy little snippets about fashions, hairstyles, life in Paris and even the French Court. After the death of her father, Eliza and her mother had moved to the continent because the cost of living was cheaper. Eliza married a young Captain in the Queen's Regiment of Dragoons, Jean-François Capot de Feuillide (who liked to be known as the "Comte de Feuillide," though in fact he was only the son of a provincial lawyer). She spent a few years as a young officer's wife, and may well have suffered one or two miscarriages (there is mention of an "accident" in one letter, which was a euphemism for miscarriage at the time). She and the "Comte" did eventually have one son whom Eliza named Hastings-François-Louis-Henri-Eugéne, no doubt, at least in part, for Eliza's benefactor, Warren Hastings.

In much of the correspondence between Eliza and Phylly, Eliza's life and lifestyle are spelled out: the death of her husband by the guillotine during the Terror; the poor health and early death of her son; the courtship by not one, but two, of Jane Austen's brothers; and her eventual marriage to Henry Austen in 1797. Once again, she spent time as an officer's wife while Henry was in the Oxfordshire Militia, and there is some correspondence covering this period which again deals with parties and descriptions of some of the new fashions (some of which were thought scandalous at the time). These letters are quite "gossipy" and it is not too difficult to think of them as being simply chatty and somewhat hollow, but on closer reading one realises the insight they do give into the lives of ordinary people, their relationships, family disputes, and disagreements. It seems that James Austen's wife formed a particular dislike of Eliza and thought her flirtatious—with all the Austen [male] cousins and even George Austen himself.

The later correspondence tells us of trips both to Steventon and Godmersham (the estate of Austen's brother, Edward Austen Knight) and meetings with Austen over the years. There are also a few letters between Austen and her sister Cassandra, written while Jane was staying with Henry and Eliza in Sloane Street in London. Unfortunately, Eliza was to succumb to illness (probably the same breast cancer that had killed her mother) and it was Jane whom Henry asked to come and stay with her. Jane was with Eliza when she died in 1813 at the age of 50.

Deirdre LeFaye has compiled and edited a wonderful collection of correspondence from this fascinating woman, as well as others, and her comments and sense of history tie these letters together into an interesting and readable account of the life of one "outlandish" lady. This correspondence reveals much about the life of a woman of the middle class with a limited income but ample wits. Eliza de Feuillide lived an interesting life and, it would seem, to the fullest. She travelled half the world, spent time on not only the fringes of two royal families but was witness to, and aware of, her political surroundings, while her cousin has often been accused of ignoring all that was happening in the outside world when writing her novels. Yet it is Jane Austen whom the world knows, and Eliza is simply her 'outlandish cousin'.

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT AND THE FEMINIST IMAGINATION

Barbara Taylor
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003

THE COLLECTED LETTERS OF MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT

Janet Todd, Ed.
New York: Columbia University Press, 2003

REVIEWED BY LAURA MCLAUCHLAN

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was never afraid of asking hard questions. As Ann Crittendon notes in *The Price of Motherhood* (2001), after the American and French Revolutions, "Wollstonecraft posed the perfectly logical question: How could societies founded on the principles of universal human rights deny those rights to women?" Her questions stay with her reader. And so does her rebellious example of seizing life and living it by her own