

women are put to the side as the aberrant experiences of a minority of youth." The first chapter of this book tells us how women have emerged as the central subject of discourses on how to prevail in a late modern world. Chapter two looks more closely at education and employment. Chapter three looks at how women are invested in as symbols of ideal citizenship. Chapter four explores some of the more significant places in the lives of young women and how these spaces have become more regulated. Chapter five examines the idea that young women are not only perceived to be seen everywhere but heard everywhere as well. Harris explores the idea that this new emphasis on eliciting young women's voices constitutes a kind of surveillance. In the future, young women will have to find new public and private spaces for their politics, where the politics of choice for women can be debated. Networking, cell phones, zines and e-mail can be very effective in organizing responses to political issues. Young women today have new ways of being activists.

MARIAN ENGEL LIFE IN LETTERS

Christl Verduyn and Kathleen Varay,
Eds.

Toronto: University of Toronto
Press, 2004

REVIEWED BY CLARA THOMAS

The editors of *Marian Engel: Life in Letters* might well have called their book *Life and Letters*, so skilfully done are their biographical introductory chapters to the book's five parts. Arranged chronologically, these are: "Woman Travelling, 1960-1965"; "Waiting for Honeyman, 1965-1970"; "Growing Up at Forty.



1971-1975"; "Changing the Landscape, 1976-1980"; and "A Woman among Friends, 1981-1985." The reader is left with a vibrant, satisfying sense of Marian Engel as a many faceted woman—writer, student, teacher, mother, wife, competent organizer, and staunch and beloved friend. First, of course, comes the writer: from her youth she wrote, and whatever else she was doing, her dedicated work was always writing.

She was very much a part of her fellow-writers' "tribe," the name given to them by Margaret Laurence. The first President of the newly founded Writers' Union, she was an exceptionally able organizer and activist: "My thinking time has got absorbed by Public Life... and my rhetoric is used up mostly writing long letters to people like the Bureau of Intellectual Property, so it will be some time before I get down to serious work again." She called the struggle for the very important Public Lending Right her "baby" and many many writers owe her a great deal for her determination and endurance. We have all been financially much better off since its inauguration.

In 1978-9 she was Writer in Residence at the University of Alberta and in 1980-81 at the University of Toronto. She served on the Board of the Toronto Public Library for sev-

eral years, following one of her most memorable letters, to the Chief Librarian, in 1965. She had paid a fine of \$3.50 and writes: "Please use it to decide whether you're a good library or not and review your prejudices." These include American novelists, detective novelists, domesticity (cookbooks), and literature. "We need your literary section to be at least as scholarly as your public affairs section." Anyone familiar with the TPL in the '60s will applaud its frank and funny indictment.

With a B.A. from McMaster and M.A. from McGill, she taught for a year in Montana and from 1958-60 at a Montreal private school. Then to her great delight, for she longed to travel, she was awarded a Rotary Foundation Fellowship in France at the Université d'Aix-Marseilles. The early sixties were her travelling years, in England, France and Cyprus, with side trips all over Europe, much of the time with Howard Engel whom she married in 1962. All the time, of course, she was writing; in Cyprus she was also teaching. There were four unpublished novels in these years. Obviously she wrote quickly and was never at a loss for subject matter. In 1964 the Engels returned to Canada and the next year their twins were born, William and Charlotte. From then on she was a tirelessly productive writer, publishing five novels, a book of short stories, two children's books and numerous occasional articles, all this as well as bringing up her children and enduring the stress of a gradually failing marriage. She and Howard divorced in 1977. Her novels, *Sarah Bastard's Notebook*, *The Honeyman Festival*, *Monodramas*, *Bear*, and *Lunatic Villas*, all published after the return to Toronto, were well read and well reviewed, particularly *Bear*, which won the Governor General's Award in 1976, and *Lunatic Villas*, which won the City of Toronto Book Award in 1982. Her major contributions to the cause of Canadian literature and its writers were recognized by the Order of Canada in 1982.

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 Deirdre 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