



## Heads and Arms and Legs Enough: Jane Austen and Sibling Dynamics

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How soon, the difference of temper in Children appears!—Jemima has a very irritable bad Temper (her Mother says so)—and Julia a very sweet one, always pleased & happy.

—Jane Austen to Fanny Knight (13 March 1817)

JANE AUSTEN'S EARLY CORRESPONDENCE frequently shows the young satirist in rollicking bad taste as she entertains her older sister with rude remarks about family resemblance in her acquaintance: the bad breath of all the Misses Debary (20–21 November 1800); the “fat girls with short noses” who “all prove to be Miss Atkinsons” (20–21 November 1800); the adulteress whose face “has the same defect of baldness as her sister’s, & her features not so handsome” (12–13 May 1801). When Austen describes her fictional families, however, the fun is toned down considerably. The famous advice given to her novel-writing young niece Anna, for example, that “3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on” (9–18 September 1814), is simple but forensically accurate. *Emma*, Austen’s work-in-progress at the time she wrote to Anna Austen, turns on the question of whether it is literally three or four families that drive the plot: the novel is apparently organized around the affairs of the Woodhouses, the Knightleys, the Westons—three families—but the grouping turns out to be four, including the Bateses when the mystery of Frank Churchill’s secret romance with Jane Fairfax is revealed. The unwary twenty-first century reader, perhaps distracted by “mystery and

finesse,” as Mr. Knightley disapprovingly remarks, and for psychological and social-historical reasons, may minimize the extent to which the treatment of sibling and family dynamics drives Austen’s plots, but these issues are crucial. In this paper, I therefore want to tease out Austen’s treatment of family dynamics, especially in terms of sibling competition and birth order, and the implications of this treatment.

Literary criticism has certainly observed that many of Jane Austen’s novels are centrally concerned with “sibling relationships” (Byatt and Sodre 3), but Austen herself does not flag the extent of her interest, and detailed analysis of her treatment of this material is infrequent. A remark from the first pages of *Northanger Abbey* suggests that her attitude to the finer points of sibling life may be dismissive: “A family of ten children will always be called a fine family, where there are heads and arms and legs enough for the number” (14). The suggestion that groups of small brothers and sisters constitute little more than a lumpen mass of functioning physiology is not far philosophically from the more affectionate description of the little Gardiners, a “troop” massed on the stairs, or waiting in the drive, their bodies a series of capers and frisks, or the wry glimpse of Christmas at the Musgroves, with unspecified numbers of noisy boys and silly girls exasperating Lady Russell. Seen superficially and from the outside, Austen implies that families of children are boring and unattractive: a multi-limbed, multi-throated, time-consuming noise and mess organism. If an analysis is made of her detailed treatment of family and sibling dynamics, however, a complex picture emerges.

My own understanding of sibling dynamics is indebted to Frank Sulloway’s monumental work on birth order, *Born to Rebel: Birth Order, Family Dynamics and Creative Lives* (1996). Sulloway’s thesis is that Freudian thinking about sibling behavior has overshadowed the significance of the Darwinian issues: that is, we tend to read the family in terms of Oedipal configurations, and children’s erotic and conflictual relationships with parents, rather than in terms of sibling issues centering on competition. Indeed, the study of sibling dynamics has not been of much interest to contemporary social science or psychology until recently. As Freud said of infantile sexuality, mothers and nursemaids have always known that siblings turn out differently; but social theorists have not been very interested in why this might be. “The same parental neglect that somehow turns Lydia into a thoughtless flirt turns Jane and Elizabeth into independent and responsible moral agents,” reflects Claudia Johnson (77), glossing a good deal under that word “somehow.” In the case of the Bennet family, it is often said that parental preference shapes the girls.

There is something to this, but it is by no means clearly true: it doesn't explain Jane, Mary, or Kitty very well, for example, nor certain aspects even of Lydia and Elizabeth. More interesting from my point of view, however, is the fact that the personalities and behavior of the Bennet girls conform to a widely observed pattern of sibling personality spread, where older sibs are conventional and cautious, the younger ones are perceived as rebellious and inclined to take risks, and the middle child is ignored and obliged to be satisfied with a family niche that nobody else has taken (or wants).

Sulloway suggests that sibling issues are best understood in terms of Darwinian competition for parental investment. If this is the case, and all things being equal, one would expect firstborns, who are usually sure of their parents' interest, their inheritance prospects, and so on, to be dominant, industrious, and socially conservative, and laterborns, for whom competition with the beloved firstborn is more urgent, to be more extraverted, radical, and rebellious. Middleborns, as every parent is aware, have special issues, and are often negotiators, like Elinor Dashwood and Anne Elliot (though not Mary Bennet). Personality and sibling contrasts are magnified by the fact that firstborns can identify with whatever prevailing social or familial goal has pre-eminence, an effect that was exaggerated in Austen's world by primogeniture of various sorts. Younger children must "diversify," that is, find their own special niches to avoid sibling aggression and maximize parental interest. Within the basic pattern, there are attractive and unpleasant characterological versions of every sibling position, and the pattern is also affected by a number of variables. The most important of these seems to be conflict with a parent: firstborn children who are harshly treated are likely to be much more adventurous, and laterborns whose parents dislike or abuse them may be more conventional. Another confusion may be that sibling position, apparently so self-evident, may be nothing of the sort, disguised perhaps by a death, a half-sibling relationship, adoption, expulsion, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

If the reader is sensitized to the issues, the centrality of sibling dynamics is relatively explicit in those of Austen's novels where the plot is driven by primogeniture, in the case of brothers, or by brilliant marriage in the case of sisters, affecting an individual's success in life and reshaping a family. *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Persuasion*, novels organized around vicious competition between siblings for economic resources or mates, treat these issues in considerable detail. In *Northanger Abbey*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Emma*, however, where sibling interaction is generally less savage, the focus on sibling competition is less obvious, but siblings are still in muted competi-

tion for parental favor and family resources, and sometimes for lovers. The sibling status of Austen's central characters is always crucial to plot outcome. It has often been noticed that lovers are brother-like figures and vice-versa in Austen's work (Kirkham; Hudson), and lovers are indeed often literally brother-figures, as in the case of Edmund Bertram and George Knightley in particular. The lovers (or would-be lovers) of Austen's characters are also invariably a brother's friend, a friend's brother, or the good brother of persons unknown, and main characters, as well as many minor ones, are invariably located within a sibling set.

The plots of all the novels are in fact made up of groups of siblings interacting with each other.<sup>2</sup> In all the novels except *Emma*, an entanglement of three sibships constitutes the plot (in *Emma* the third group consists of orphans: Frank Churchill, Jane Fairfax, and Harriet Smith; the Martin siblings are also on the sidelines). Sibships thus provide the essential intersubjective space in Austen's novels and much of their psychological structure. Only children are relatively rare: some characters have no siblings as a result of family catastrophe: illegitimacy, as in the case of Harriet Smith or Eliza Williams, or maternal death, as in the case of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax. Some, like Anne de Bourgh in *Pride and Prejudice*, or the Honourable Miss Carteret in *Persuasion*, live in claustrophobic family fragments with their widowed mothers; Miss Bates has become a pathetic elderly version of this sort of only child after the death of her sister Jane. It might be said that Emma Woodhouse and George Knightley get a taste of quasi only-child status after the marriage of their only sibling (and dislike it for reasons which are specific to their individual circumstances). But most of Austen's characters live in large, complex families, with a brother or sister or two, or more; and brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and various half- and foster-siblings to swell the pool. Sibships can be wholly persecuting, as for Anne Elliot; a mixed experience, with some obnoxious and some lovable siblings, as for the Bennet and the Price families; or merely "normal neurotic," with all siblings having both annoying and endearing characteristics, as in the case of Emma and Isabella Woodhouse and George and John Knightley.

There is much to be said about the issues raised by Austen's own sibship, although I can only glance at the issues here. Austen's position in her sibship is significant: she was the second daughter and seventh-born child in a group consisting of one absent and disabled sibling, three big boys studying with her father, and then a nursery of girl, boy, girl, boy. It is common for large families to form two or more subgroups, and Austen seems to have

found her own niche with the little ones, in twin-like closeness with her sister and taking intense vicarious pleasure in her younger brothers' exciting naval careers. Hers was perhaps a moderately privileged position: the lucky rank of seventh child, and a second-born daughter, possibly less likely to be called into action in family crises.<sup>3</sup> Various lost siblings and quasi-siblings cluster round the edges as part of the Austen sibling set;<sup>4</sup> sibling groups intermarried with the Austen siblings.<sup>5</sup> Austen's experience of interlocking sibships, enormous by any measure, provided her with extensive data about how they work, so that her novels can depict sibling dynamics with complexity and sophistication.

The sibling world in which Austen lived and about which she wrote does not seem to have been a claustrophobic intersubjective space such as marriage can be in her novels, where the wife has no resources when her husband disappoints her and the husband decamps to his library or his hunting to escape. The sibling world provided Austen with a busy and interesting environment in which most economic, affective, intellectual, social, and business needs could be met, and in which there was plenty of room for change. It also, inevitably, became tiresomely complicated as it aged, and siblings became part of their own huge families. Towards the end of her life, ill and exhausted, the once-devoted Aunt Jane declared herself "quite tired of so many children" (23-25 March 1817); and sixteen years after her death, dutiful Cassandra Austen remarked austerely, "My possessions in great nephews and nieces are so extensive that I have done keeping an exact account of them. I know there were five born in the course of last year" (Lane 218).

In the family of children born to George and Cassandra Austen, the firstborn James was his mother's favorite and his father's heir; he duly became a clergyman and eventually took over his father's livings. The second son, George, was disabled and was cared for outside the home, in a Darwinian victory for the other children, who did not have to share their parents' attention with a particularly time-consuming sibling. The third son, Edward, achieved a spectacular example of "diversification" and sibling Nirvana, by skyrocketing out of the need for parental investment, finding himself another family where he commanded enormous parental resources, and had no annoying sibling rivals. The fourth son, Henry, diversified in classic scatterbrained later-born style, by delighting everybody and taking on many unrelated careers. The fifth and sixth sons, Francis and Charles, ratcheted the whole thing up: they made like ultra-laterborns, parachuting right out of the family setting and into the Navy in late childhood, thus avoiding competition with and dom-

ination by their three big brothers for much of the rest of their lives. Frank and Charles Austen also exemplified the laterborn interest in travel. Lastborns are said to be three times more likely to circumnavigate the globe than firstborns (Sulloway 113). Mrs. Musgrove, married to an eldest son, “could not accuse herself of having ever called [the West Indies] anything in the whole course of her life” (*P* 70); and Mrs. Croft’s elder brother, the clergyman, stays quietly at home in Monkford, while her dashing younger brother sails the seas. The Austen sisters’ situation was less dramatic than their brothers’, but Jane and Cassandra Austen seem to have avoided open competition with each other by diversifying in ladylike ways, Cassandra celebrated in the family for her drawing, Jane for her stories and music. Their reported temperaments, too, bear the mark of the older/younger sib divide: Cassandra controlled, Jane sunny.

The Austen sibship, then, bears all the marks of a healthy and conventionally organized sibship, in which children have comfortably assumed predictable but adaptive birth-order positions. The youngest sons, Frank and Charles, seem to have calmly accepted that the family could not provide for them as it had for James, Edward, and Henry, who were all recipients of family fortunes and/or family livings. There were simply not enough fortunes and livings to go around, and, with family help, Charles and Frank found a different path.<sup>6</sup> Siblings are found to get along especially well when there is little reason to compete for parental resources, material or psychological. This seems to have been the case in the Austen family, where the parents were loving, but money tight, father busy with his several professional responsibilities as clergyman, farmer, and tutor, and mother, like Mrs. Morland, “much occupied in lying-in and teaching the little ones” (*NA* 15) as well as looking after boarders and managing an old-style semi-subsistence country household.

As a novelist, however, Austen was concerned with less successful sibships, where the comfortable, taken-for-granted outcome of birth order has been disrupted by accidents of life or the influence of social and economic structures. Many things affect the pattern of sibling interaction: family conflict, social class, gender, parental death, sibling spacing, and so on. Briefly, factors that maximize parental discrimination between siblings (such as primogeniture) tend to foster sibling disharmony: when parents are less concerned with their children, for whatever reason, the children tend to be fonder of each other. In Darwinian terms, siblings compete firstly over the need to survive childhood, and then, crucially, over the right to reproduce. In terms

of Austen's novels, sibling issues with regard to mate-selection loom large for both sexes, as Colonel Fitzwilliam, the Steele sisters, the Ferrars brothers, the Bennet sisters, the Bertram sisters, the Elliot sisters, the Musgrove sisters, and many others make clear.

Austen's plots usually focus not on the predictable oldest or the wild youngest, but rather unexpectedly on the fortunes of the second-born child. This aspect is somewhat obscured in the earlier novels: the heroine status of second-born Elinor Dashwood is not very pronounced, and neither is her birth position;<sup>7</sup> and Catherine Morland is in fact the fourth-born child and eldest girl, although her plot function is a generic second-born to her brother James. In terms of the foregrounding of sibling issues in plotting, the choice of second-born as heroine is a surprisingly sensible move. Middleborns may be the most adaptable, and potentially reflective, of siblings. Where oldest children tend to naturalize their position in the world, and youngest children may expect to continue to be fussed over, middleborns are typically skilled tacticians and observers, inclined to "develop diplomatic skills and to cultivate coalitions . . . to *share* power with others (Sulloway 303). This is not obviously true of Mary Bennet or Marianne Dashwood (although one should perhaps think of these two as grouped with younger siblings), but it is very true of Anne Elliot, and true also of Catherine Morland, Elinor Dashwood, and Fanny Price. Middleborns are least assured of parental interest, neither the special eldest nor the special baby, and thus have a rockier, potentially more interesting, road to travel. Mrs. Bennet is particularly interested in the marital prospects of her oldest and youngest girls: the middle three are on their own in the marriage market. Mary and Kitty Bennet are pathetic examples of the middleborn as spare wheel, Elizabeth of the spectacularly adaptable one, presumably because of her "twinning" with an oldest.

Sibling issues are crucial in all of Austen's novels, but I will here sketch the issues only in terms of *Pride and Prejudice*. I choose the novel almost at random; but it might nevertheless be observed that, with its focus on the problems caused by too many sisters, this novel almost seems to demand to be discussed in this way. *Pride and Prejudice* concerns the fortunes of a sibship disadvantaged by both the parents' behavior and the social system. In many ways the plot kernel of all of Austen's novels can be described as the failure of parents to work for the maximum benefit of their children in a dangerous world. This is very much a perception from a child's point of view: parental investment is crucial in ensuring survival, certainly in the Darwinian terms of achieving reproductive success by being able to marry, but the children fear

that there is not enough attention to go around, or that one child may be favored over another. *Pride and Prejudice* makes the case very clearly: Mr. Bennet is expected to make sure that rich young men who move into the neighborhood will marry a daughter or two, but all fear that he may not regard the task with much interest. He also makes matters worse by provoking potential insecurities and sibling jealousies by devaluing all his daughters while testifying to his greater interest in Elizabeth.

In Darwinian terms, one expects parents to invest heavily in their children, and in certain ways Mr. and Mrs. Bennet do—but only so long as they are there to see it. That is, they make no provision for the girls' futures after the parents' deaths. Girls, of course have another way of securing their future, and this the Bennet girls go for, albeit within the firstborn/afterborn distinction, and within the parameters of their quite neglectful environment. The fact that all the Bennet girls are "out" at once, which Lady Catherine finds so unseemly, is said to be characteristic of the poorly supervised family environment, where children "tend to reach puberty earlier, to engage in intercourse earlier, and to have more sexual partners" than children reared more conscientiously (Sulloway 433). These effects, moreover, should be magnified for younger siblings, who, according to Sulloway, are also likely to engage in "mate poaching and infidelity." All of this provides a rather comic gloss on the behavior of Lydia Bennet, flirt and mate-poacher extraordinaire, whose "stout" build and precocious sexuality are constantly alluded to. Jane and Elizabeth are both relatively better behaved in their "love styles," but Jane is the most conservative and conscientious within the Bennet style. She is far more "modest" than her sisters, who all perform to the best of their abilities, Elizabeth winningly, Mary boringly, Kitty and Lydia crassly. In short, the Bennet sisters strikingly exemplify the most common sibling pattern, whereby the older sibs are better behaved, and the younger ones are less so, more inclined to take risks, and so on. The groupings are also conventional, with two pairs of twinned allies (two good, serious sisters and two naughty, frivolous sisters), and a pathetic reject in the middle. The Bennet sisters are also conventional in their attempts (within the twin pairings) to maximize parental attention by choosing one parent over the other: the older girls choosing to ally themselves with the more sensible father, the younger with the sillier mother.

So far this is sharp but a little predictable. What makes the sibling analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* interesting is the way the novel explores the sisters' interactions with other sibling groups, in particular, the Darceys,



including Wickham as a sort of cuckoo in the nest, the Bingleys, and the Lucases (there is also an older generation of sibling problematics in Mrs. Bennet, her brother, and her sister, and Lady Catherine and the late Mrs. Darcy). Mr. Darcy has the firstborn male style *par excellence*: “socially dominant and defensive . . . protecting their special status . . . dogmatic, cold and distant” (Sulloway 100). Elizabeth, while conscientious enough to engage him, is not so “dominant and defensive” as to compete with him—as Lady Catherine and Miss Bingley are. Wickham is a classic destructively rebellious younger brother trying to monopolize parental resources and displace the “real” children. He and Lydia are certain to end up together because of their mate-poaching and anti-social styles, and Georgiana Darcy, another lastborn, is vulnerable to him, too.<sup>8</sup>

*Pride and Prejudice* devotes most of its energy to tracing the Darcy—Elizabeth relationship, where an unpleasantly classical firstborn has his world-view modified by a charming and reflective middleborn who is strongly identified, or “twinned,” with a firstborn, and thus carries some of those characteristics, too, and is motivated to try to understand some of what he feels about the world. The relationship is compared and contrasted with the Bingley-Jane attraction in which the sibling issues are relatively muted. It is not completely clear whether Bingley is firstborn, although I am inclined to think that he is. He certainly has firstborn-like traits, either because of literal birth order or because he was a younger sibling in a disorganized family, as his sisters’ horrible manners suggest it to have been, and thus would invert the usual pattern. In either case, however, Bingley is not “as much” the eldest as Darcy, being from an undistinguished family; and Jane, as a girl and also as a member of an undistinguished family, is likewise more modest in her eldest status. The temperaments and family status of Jane and Bingley correspond uncomplicatedly. They simply complement each other with little narrative complexity.

Some of the narrative excitement of the reader’s awareness of the psychological “fit” between Elizabeth and Darcy comes from tracing of the minute variations of their complicated family positions. Darcy, as an indulged but virtuous firstborn, and heir to a vast fortune, has to contend with a corrupt adopted brother and gullible younger sister. He is in the tiring position of being the repository of all that is both informed and moral in his family, as both his cousin and his friend mischievously indicate. Elizabeth’s position is similar to Darcy’s in that she seems to be Mr. Bennet’s son substitute, thought of as less silly than her sisters, and in having both gullible and corrupt sib-

lings, as well as two who are just superfluous. The echoes from other sibships (Mr. Gardiner who has two silly sisters; Charlotte Lucas who has silly brothers; and others) are played out in various permutations of the marriage question: sensible Mr. Gardiner marries a sensible woman; sensible Charlotte marries a silly man. What makes Elizabeth and Darcy so suited to each other seems to be their shared experience of suffering the crimes of younger sibs, the sibling problematics of the older generation, and Elizabeth's "twinning" with an eldest.

As a novel drafted so early in Austen's life, *Pride and Prejudice* adopts the "default birth order" model, uncomplicatedly showing older children as more sensible and reliable than their siblings. The later novels challenge this position. *Emma* shows the older of two sisters as dim and dithery, a sort of boring version of Jane Bennett, and in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* the stakes are higher: siblings fight viciously for resources, the girls for lovers and the boys for money. Salloway observes that in certain sorts of families, particularly aristocratic ones, oldest children expect the younger to act as their servants (67), and actively attempt to dispossess them. This is certainly the case in *Mansfield Park*, where Tom "rob[s] Edmund for ten, twenty, thirty years, perhaps for life, of more than half the income which ought to be his" (23), and quickly falls back on "cheerful selfishness" as comfort; and where Maria and Julia appear ready to fight each other to the death over Henry Crawford. Likewise, in *Persuasion* Elizabeth expects Anne to undertake all housekeeping and family duties; Mary Musgrove energetically argues that, being married, *she* has a quasi-oldest status, and her sisters should work for her convenience, an argument that does not influence either sister, though Anne still helps her out of kindness and a sense of propriety.

Sibling hatred seems close to the surface in Austen's later novels. This is a new development. The Dashwood sisters detest their half-brother's wife, and she seems to hate them; but their feelings about the half-brother himself are more moderate. Jane and Elizabeth Bennet are exasperated and humiliated by their younger sisters, but they do not hate them: the worst thing Elizabeth says about Lydia is that she is vain and thoughtless. Although they are very ready to leave the sibling group for marriage, the group as a whole often seems companionable enough, with the shared meals, group walks, sewing and reading circles, and so on; and of course the primary relationship is with each other, so that even the future husbands do not seem as close. Siblings are part of the social landscape, and Elizabeth accordingly accepts without remark the company of Charlotte Lucas's silly (younger) sister Maria during

a lengthy visit. In the later novels sibling feelings are not companionable. Siblings are isolated and attacked by siblings, and in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* in particular, feelings for some siblings often do seem close to hatred, especially the contempt Elizabeth Elliot shows for Anne and Mary, and the cannibalistic ferocity exhibited by Maria and Julia Bertram and Susan and Betsy Price in conflict over various phallic trophies: Henry Crawford for the Bertram girls and “little sister Mary’s” knife for the Prices.

*Pride and Prejudice* shows Jane Austen’s virtuosity with the world of “ordinary” sibling dynamics, in which too many sisters cramp a girl’s style and embarrass her at parties, where parents play favorites, and where older sisters think the younger ones are wild and frivolous and the younger ones think the older ones are stuffy. All the girls pretty much think the parents are irrelevant, with no sense of style and no sense of how things are done these days. This novel maps the “normal” effect of birth order on parental and sibling behavior very precisely, and shows how these effects influence an individual’s interaction with the outside world of potential mates. The other early novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*, show a similar pattern. In the later novels Austen produces a set of dazzling variations on the regular course of sibling dynamics, particularly by introducing Sulloway’s main variable, “conflict with a parent,” to the mix, and by detailed attention to the resulting sibling hatred. Austen’s novels thus move from the representation and analysis of the normal functioning of sibling groups, even irritating ones, to an interest in the darker possibilities for sibling interaction in disturbed families. Her work shows a grasp of social realities and the psychologies they support that is consistent with, and in some ways in advance of, models such as Sulloway’s, which are still being developed. She understands that sibling interaction is one of the major engines of psycho-social existence, and the extent to which these matters might “plot” a life, and a novel.

#### NOTES

1. For instance, the expulsion of second-born George Austen from the Austen family, and the “adoption” of third-born Edward, which seems to have affected the psychodynamics of the Austen sibship. In Austen’s novels sibling position is also at times unclear, in the Price family, for example; and especially in the ambiguous sibling position of the Dashwood children. This actually provides the plot impetus for *Sense and Sensibility*. Because John Dashwood is a half-brother, it isn’t entirely clear to the reader or to the girls themselves whether Elinor should be considered an oldest or a second-born, and whether Marianne is the second or third child. I would argue, however, that birth order will out: Elinor acts like a second-born with some first-born qualities (like Elizabeth Bennet, and, Marianne acts like a generic “youngest” (the real youngest, Margaret, is “off-stage” and still a child). The whole thing is satirized in Mrs. Ferrars’s repeated attempts to “reassign” the birth order of her sons, where the point is that, whether he is allowed to inherit as “eldest” or not, Edward still *acts* like a first-born.

2. The Morlands, the Tilneys, and the Thorpes in *Northanger Abbey*; the Dashwoods, the Steeles, and the Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*; the Bennets, the Bingleys, and the Darceys in *Pride and Prejudice*; the Knightleys and the Woodhouses in *Emma*; the Bertrams, the Crawfords, and the Prices in *Mansfield Park*; the Elliots, the Musgroves, and the Wentworths in *Persuasion*.
3. The family configuration and Austen's position in the sibship is uncannily similar to Virginia Woolf's sibling group and family position (a disabled child living in seclusion, three "big" children, and a nursery of girl-boy-girl-boy), although the dynamics in Woolf's case were complicated by the fact that the children were the product of three marriages. Woolf has a great deal to say about her own experience of being neither babied like her younger brother, nor burdened with domestic responsibility like her older sister: nobody's favorite but nobody's slave.
4. A foster child, dead before the birth of George and Cassandra Austen's first baby; a disabled brother cared for outside the family; George Austen's pupils; various boarders, in-laws, women friends, cousins, nieces and nephews.
5. James and Francis Austen took the Lloyd sisters, who were close friends of the Austen women, as their second wives. James Austen married Mary Lloyd in 1797, two years after the death of his first wife, and after being rejected by his first cousin Eliza de Feuillide, who subsequently married his brother Henry. Frank Austen married Martha Lloyd in 1828 (when she was 63 and he 54), five years after his first wife had died with her eleventh child. The third Lloyd sister married the brother of Cassandra Austen's deceased fiancé. Charles Austen actually married his deceased wife's sister, a semi-legal act at the time (i.e., "voidable"), and he took the precaution of getting married in France. The Marriage Act of 1835 declared such marriages illegal, although it was not retrospective. It was not made legal to marry the deceased wife's sister until 1907, nor deceased husband's brother until the 1960s.
6. Some remnants of the Leigh fortune eventually trickled down to Frank, the older of the two youngest sons (Lane 1984).
7. See note 1 above.
8. As the second child, Miss Darcy is less silly than Lydia as the fifth. Moreover, Sulloway would argue that the large age difference between her and Mr. Darcy gives her a quasi-only child status.

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