their bodies as animals, machines, and sources of spiritual power. Pain is seen as uncontrollable, intermixed with pleasure, something to be endured, something that can be overcome, and a source of enlightenment. Klassen is careful to explore both the potentially harmful and the potentially liberating ways home-birthing women make sense of their childbirth experiences. The final chapter explores the political significance of women's choices about childbirth.

Blessed Events will appeal most to those in the alternative birth movement, but it will be of interest to anyone committed to exploring female embodied experience, as well as those interested in relations between religion and spirituality. While the interviews themselves are intriguing and Klassen writes clearly, the book is sophisticated theoretically and will be most fully appreciated by those fascinated by how the experiences of home-birthing women both reflect and shape politics, culture, and religion.

Mothering Daughters: Novels and the Politics of Family Romance, Francis Burney to Jane Austen

Greenfield, Susan.
Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002.

Reviewed by Bonnie A. Nelson

In *Mothering Daughters*, Susan Greenfield offers illuminating interpretations of *Evelina*, *The Italian*, *Wrongs of Woman*, *Belinda*, *Adeline Mowbray*, and *Emma* and argues that these early novels emphasize "the centrality of mother-child attachment and ultimate separation that psychoanalysis inherited" (20). She also explores such topics as breastfeeding debates, women's rights to child custody, and "the role of maternity in colonial and abolitionist discourses" (14).

Greenfield connects the great resemblance of Evelina to her mother with the historical question of legitimacy. "The father has the lawful right to name the daughter, but the mother's imprint proves a more reliable record of marriage, kinship, and legitimacy" (37). Greenfield includes a fascinating discussion of "imaginationist" theories which erroneously "suggested that a mother's imagination and desire affected her child in utero, primarily in negative ways" (48). Burney, Greenfield argues, turns such theories upside down when Evelina, "through her uncanny resemblance to her mother ... is able to correct the injustices perpetrated against both of them" (42).

In "Gothic Mothers and Homoerotic Desire," Greenfield offers a psychoanalytic reading of *The Italian*, a work she believes "linger[s] on the daughter's physical desire for her parent" (57). Using the term "homoerotic" rather than

"homosexual" because it is "descriptive" and does not "connote a form of modern sexual identity" (63), Greenfield examines the threat that mother-daughter love "poses to compulsory heterosexuality" (60).

In her chapter on *The Wrongs of Woman*, a book that focuses "on the law, which discriminates against women of all classes and favors men by treating the female body and its offspring as male property" (86), Greenfield discusses the "politics of maternal breastfeeding" and how breastfeeding influenced the passage of the Infant Custody Bill (1839). "Supporters of the act repeatedly drew on images of breastfeeding to demonstrate the naturalness of maternal custody rights" (84). Greenfield believes Maria's famous court defense "logically extended ... might include a defense of the mother's right to child custody" (99).

Greenfield explores "the rise of maternal ideals" in Opie's *Adeline Mowbray; Or, The Mother and Daughter*, and she examines "inadequate mothers," like Lady Delacour in *Belinda* and Mrs. Mowbray, and the necessity of surrogate mothers. Savanna, an escaped mulatto slave, is the surrogate in Opie's novel. "Though [Opie's] novel condemns slavery, it also suggests the value of importing West Indian women to England to perform the maternal and psychological work biological maternity cannot guarantee" (134). Savanna's role "prefigures the 'racialized history of child care' that grew out of colonial slavery" (134).

"The Riddle of *Emma:* Maternity and the Unconscious" best exemplifies Greenfield's general thesis that "the mother's absence highlights her indispensability" (13). Emma's "internal troubles ... stem from the very motherlessness nobody acknowledges as a problem" (146). "Though there are a wide variety of ways to account for Emma's mistakes," Greenfield believes that each mistake "can be explained as her unconscious reaction to her mother's absence" (153). Since the novel encourages readers "to understand Emma as she herself cannot, *Emma* might be said to anticipate the role of the modern psychotherapist" (153).

Underpinning Greenfield's compelling analysis is a wealth of careful research. Her three approaches—historical, literary, and psychoanalytic—will appeal to scholars in a variety of disciplines.

A Slant of Sun: One Child's Courage

Kephart, Beth.
New York: William Morrow, 1998.

Reviewed by Trudelle Thomas

A Slant of Sun is a carefully crafted memoir by a mother who is coming to terms with her young child's developmental problems. As the book opens, Kephart is