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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Biography of Jane Austen



Jane Austen was an English novelist. She favored a realist style of writing. Her incisive descriptions of social conditions, and her skillful use of third-person narrative style, parody and irony have made her one of the most beloved writers in English literature and her works are read everywhere.

Born in England on December 16, 1775, Jane came from a modest family. Jane had six brothers and an older sister with whom she was very close. The Austen family was fond of books and plays. Therefore, she was already familiar with literature from a young age. Jane and her sister Cassandra were educated at a boarding school. However, they did not finish school due to lack of money.

The environment in which Jane Austen grew up in, within a loving and dynamic family, helped shape her writing. In addition, her connections through both familial ties and friendships allowed her to gain exposure to a wider spectrum of

experiences beyond her home in Steventon rectory. This realm, which primarily consisted of the lower echelons of the landowning class and rural clergymen in various locales such as villages, small towns, and even visits to bigger cities such as Bath and London, provided Austen ample inspiration for creating the settings, characters, and themes of her novels.

Between 1787 and 1793, Jane Austen wrote several plays, verses, short novels, and other prose, which were compiled into three manuscript notebooks: Volume the First, Volume the Second, and Volume the Third. Her earlier works showcased a parody of literary forms such as the sentimental novel and comedy, while later works such as *Lady Susan* reflected a more serious view of life. In 1802, Jane agreed to marry Harris Bigg-Wither but changed her mind the next day. There are conflicting stories about her love life, but her novels prove her understanding of love and disappointment. Her novels *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion* were published between 1811 and 1818. In her later years, Austen was productive and, despite being anonymous, her novels were well-received by critics and enjoyed by the prince regent. She died on July 18, 1817, and her authorship was announced to the world by her brother Henry. Although her work received little recognition during her lifetime, it was praised by Sir Walter Scott and Richard Whately, and their insights formed the basis for serious criticism of Jane Austen in the 19th century.

Source: Southam, B. C. (2023). Jane Austen. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jane-Austen> Accessed on April 22, 2023

Appendix 2 – Synopsis of Mansfield Park

The main character, Fanny Price, is a young girl from a large, poor family. When she was 10 years old, she was taken in by her uncle and aunt, Sir Thomas, a baronet, and Lady Bertram, who lived at *Mansfield Park*. before that she lived with her own parents, Lieut. Price and his wife, Frances (Fanny), Lady Bertram's sister. She was the second child and first daughter, with seven siblings born after her. She had a strong attachment to her older brother, William, who at the age of 12 had followed his father into the navy. With so many mouths to feed while income was limited, Fanny's mother was grateful that Fanny lived with her brother who fared well.

In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny grew up with her older cousins, Tom Bertram, Edmund Bertram, Maria Bertram and Julia, but she was always treated badly by them. Only Edmund, the second child, was kind to her. He was also the kindest of his siblings: Maria and Julia were arrogant and spoiled, while Tom was an irresponsible gambler. Over time, Fanny's gratitude for Edmund's attention quietly grows into love. Another aunt, Mrs. Norris, the wife of the local parson, gave her Bertram nieces and nephews, especially Maria, abundant attention and affection, but she was rude and cruel to Fanny.

She excluded Fanny from events and other pleasures. A few years after Fanny arrived, Aunt Norris was widowed, moved into her own cottage, and became a regular visitor to *Mansfield Park*. Sir Thomas offered a rectory to Dr. Grant, who moved in with his wife.

When Fanny was 16 years old, the head of the family, Sir Thomas left for a year to attend to the affairs of his estate in Antigua. He took Tom with him in the hope that the experience would awaken him. Meanwhile Mrs. Norris was on the job of finding a husband for Maria Bertram and managed to introduce her favorite niece to Mr. Rushworth, a wealthy gentleman who was a bit of a fool. Maria accepted his proposal of marriage, Sir Thomas agreeing as soon as he returned.

At that time, the rich, fashionable and worldly Henry Crawford and his sister, Mary Crawford, arrived at the rectory to stay with Mrs. Grant, their half-sister. After a year in Antigua, Sir Thomas sent Tom home while he continued his own business. Although his wife was lazy and irresponsible about everything, Sir Thomas felt confident about his family's situation, relying on Mrs. Norris' intervention and feeling confident that the responsible Edmund would take care of his family.

The arrival of the attractive Crawfords disturbs the tranquility of Mansfield and triggers a series of attractions between the two families. Mary and Edmund begin to take an interest in each other, although the real choice is Tom as heir to *Mansfield Park*. Although Edmund is worried about Mary's often cynical and less assertive style of speaking, and Mary is also unhappy with Edmund wanting to be a clergyman, their attraction grows.

Fanny fears that Mary will take a liking to Edmund, and that love will blind Edmund to Fanny's flaws. Meanwhile, during a visit to Mr. Rushworth's estate in Sotherton, Henry deliberately plays on Maria and Julia's love, putting them at odds. Maria believes that Henry is in love with her and treats Mr. Rushworth with

indifference, which fuels her jealousy. Although no one notices Fanny, she is very observant of Maria and Henry's relationship situation.

Encouraged by Tom and his friend Mr. Yates, the young people decide to play Elizabeth Inchbald's game of Lovers' Oath; however, Edmund and Fanny are the reason for the game, believing that Sir Thomas would not approve and feeling they deserve it to involve inappropriate and unacceptable things. Eventually Edmund reluctantly agrees to take on the role of Anhalt, the lover of the character played by Mary Crawford.

When Sir Thomas unexpectedly arrives home in the middle of the play, the event is immediately halted. Henry, whom Maria had expected to propose to her, leaves, and she is devastated, realizing that Henry does not love her. Despite her dislike or respect for Mr. Rushworth, they eventually marry, to escape the stifling atmosphere of Mansfield, and they leave for Brighton, taking Julia with them. Meanwhile, Fanny's good looks and gentle nature endeared her to Sir Thomas, who began to treat her well. With Maria and Julia gone, Fanny and Mary Crawford became close to each other. Against Mary's wishes and knowing this would please Edmund and her father, Mary eventually befriends Fanny.

Henry returns to *Mansfield Park* and decides to amuse himself by making Fanny fall in love with him. But Fanny still loves Edmund secretly, and things take a turn when Henry actually falls in love with Fanny. To make his point, he uses family connections to help Fanny's brother William get promoted to naval lieutenant, in order to make Fanny happy. But, when he proposes Fanny rejects him, partly because she dislikes Henry's nature and also because she loves someone else.

Sir Thomas was disappointed and surprised by the rejection, as the proposal was very favorable for a poor girl like Fanny. He reproached Fanny's attitude and believed the rejection was because Fanny was too shy to accept, and encouraged Henry to persist.

To ease her mind, Sir Thomas sends her to visit his home in Portsmouth, hoping that the comfort there will help Fanny reconsider Henry's offer. She meets up with William who is on leave. In Portsmouth, she gets close to her younger sister Susan, but is shocked by the difference in the moral environment - noise, chaos, good food with the environment in Mansfield. Henry visits her to convince her that she has changed and deserves to be with Fanny. Although Fanny still insists that she cannot marry him, her attitude has begun to soften, especially as Edmund and Mary look set to become engaged.

Henry goes to London, and soon after, Fanny learns of the scandal involving Henry and Mary. The two meet at a party and rekindle their attraction, and Maria has left her husband for Henry. A huge scandal of infidelity, Maria is branded an adulterous wife, Mr. Rushworth sues for divorce, and the Bertram family's dignity is shattered. And to make matters worse, Tom falls ill, and Julia, fearing that her father will lock her up, has eloped with Tom's friend, Mr. Yates.

Amidst the distress, Fanny returns to *Mansfield Park* with her sister, Susan, who is happily accepted by the whole family. Sir Thomas realizes that Fanny acted right by rejecting Henry's proposal and now regards her as a child. During an emotional meeting with Mary Crawford, Edmund realizes that Mary does not condemn Henry and Mary's deeds, and hides them. Her main concern is to cover it

up, and she implies that if Fanny had accepted Henry, this problem would not exist. Edmund, who has idolized Mary, feels that he has learned Mary's true nature. He tells Mary and returns to Mansfield to complete his ministerial assignment.

In his grief to forget Mary, Edmund realized how important Fanny was to him. He declares his love and they marry, then move to *Mansfield Park* Rectory, close to their loved ones. Tom recovered from his illness and became a better man than before. Henry Crawford refused to marry Mary, who was discarded by her family and lived in another country with her aunt Mrs. Norris. Fanny becomes a moral example for *Mansfield Park*.

Source: Austen, J. (1814). Mansfield Park. United Kingdom: Thomas Egerton

Appendix 3 – Critical Reception of Jane Austen’s Mansfield Park

Mansfield Park, Austen’s third novel published in 1814, has evoked controversy and divided readers. While some consider it their favourite Austen title, others hold it as their least favourite among the six major novels. The debate largely centers around the unusual heroine, Fanny Price. In contrast to the quick-witted, confident, and satirical Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*, Fanny is depicted as slow, quiet, and obedient, which has made her a polarizing character among readers. However, Fanny’s intelligence still shines through and she is admired by some for her unassuming strength and delicate modesty, while others dismiss her as mousy. Therefore, readers must choose which side of the argument they stand on when it comes to Fanny Price.

Austen probably would not be surprised by a controversy over Fanny Price’s tastes. He knew the Mansfield Park heroine divided her early readers. No reviews were published about Mansfield Park, so Austen had no idea what the critics were thinking. But he kept track of how readers in his own circle were reacting. A document in his own handwriting survives with a series of views of Mansfield Park. He captures the reactions of his family and friends, most of whom had also read his first two novels, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Austen had apparently invited some of those readers to be honest with her about their reactions. Some were brutally honest.

These are some of the opinions he collected about Mansfield Park: “Mr. Egerton the publisher. – he praised him for his morals and for being such an equal composition. – There are no weak parts.” Austen’s niece Anna said: “I couldn’t

stand Fanny.” Furthermore, Austen’s nephew Edward "admired Fanny" but another nephew, George, "did not like her". Sister-in-law Miss Lloyd was “Delighted with Fanny.” Perhaps the most cutting remark Austen collected is this one: “My Mother—not liked it so well as P. & P.—Thought Fanny insipid.” Two centuries later, most readers agree that *Mansfield Park* is setting a new tone. It's rarely laughable and doesn't have many stormy, melodramatic scenes. It takes a more serious approach and unfolds at a slower, more deliberate pace.

The name Mansfield Park does not just refer to the "country house" or "big house," the mansion where the owner's family lived and where many employees worked. It refers to an entire estate, including land, tenants, church, and vicarage.

The fictional Mansfield Park is set in a real county, Northamptonshire, 60 miles north of London. The largest town, Northampton, was a military post and shoemaking center in Austen's time. There were far more skilled merchants than domestic workers, meaning the area had a growing middle class earlier than anywhere else. This fact provides economic background for the history of Mansfield Park. In fact, critics have long claimed that Mansfield Park, the property, functions almost like a fictional character.

Source: Looser, D. (2022). Jane Austen’s ‘Mansfield Park’: The Varied Opinions. Wondrium Daily. <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/jane-austens-mansfield-park-the-varied-opinions/> Accessed on April 22, 2023