AUTHORITY, EMOTION, AND DEVELOPMENT: THE IMPACT OF AUTHORITARIAN PARENTING IN JANE AUSTEN'S MANSFIELD PARK

السلطة، العاطفة، والتطوّر: تأثير التربية السلطوية في رواية مانسفيلد بارك لِجين أوستن

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submission date: 03/05/2026 acceptance date: 03/06/2026 published date 15/09/2026

Abstract:

The objective of this study is to analyze Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* using a psychological approach. The analysis is based on the connection between parental authority, education, and moral development of the novel's female characters. Using the framework suggested by Diana Baumrind in her study on parenting styles, it is argued that different types of upbringing affect the path of life of Fanny Price, Maria Bertram, and Julia Bertram. In particular, it is demonstrated that the authoritarian type of Sir Thomas Bertram does not promote the moral growth of his children. Maria and Julia serve as good examples of the adverse effects of restrictive and poor moral education. On the contrary, Fanny Price develops an independent sense of morality despite the emotional deprivation she experienced as a child.

Key words: Mansfield Park; parental authority; moral development; poor moral education; emotional deprivation.

ملخص باللغة العربية:

تهذف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل رواية مانسفيلد بارك لجين أوستن باستخدام النهج النفسي. وسيعتمد التحليل على العلاقة بين السلطة الأبوية والتعليم والتطور الأخلاقي لشخصيات الرواية النسائية. وباستخدام الإطار الذي اقترحته ديانا بومريند في دراستها حول أساليب التربية، تجادل الكاتبة بأن أنواع التربية المختلفة تؤثر على مسار حياة فاني برايس، وماريا بيرترام، وجوليا بيرترام. وعلى وجه الخصوص، سوف تظهر الورقة أن النوع الاستبدادي من السلطة الذي يتمتع به السير توماس بيرترام لا يعزز النمو الأخلاقي لأطفاله. تعتبر ماريا وجوليا مثالين جيدين للآثار السلبية للتعليم الأخلاقي الضعيف. على العكس من ذلك، تطور فاني برايس إحساسًا أخلاقيًا مستقلاً على الرغم من الحرمان العاطفي الذي عانت منه عندما كانت طفلة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جين أوستن؛ السلطة الأبوية؛ التطورالأخلاقي؛ التعليم الأخلاقي الضعيف؛ الحرمان العاطفي.

Introduction

The works of Jane Austen, particularly her novel, *Mansfield Park* (1814), offer an excellent example for the analysis of family organization and their influence on the character formation of the people belonging to this family. Contrary to what might be expected, this novel provides a psychological analysis of how paternal authority influences, or rather distorts, the personality formation of children. At the center of this novel stands the ambiguous figure of Sir Thomas Bertram, a rigid and austere patriarch whose authority controls the fate of his children.

To understand the divergent destinies of Jane Austen's heroines in *Mansfield Park*, we have to look closely at the man running the estate: Sir Thomas Bertram. This article explores how Sir Thomas's heavy-handed patriarchal authority shapes the lives of his daughters, Maria and Julia, and his niece, Fanny Price. By analyzing his parenting through the lens of modern developmental psychology, we can see exactly how different

upbringings within the very same household yield dramatically contrasting lifepaths for these three young women.

To unpack this dynamic, a threefold analytical approach is employed. First, the psychologist Diana Baumrind's classic framework of parenting styles is applied to decode Sir Thomas's behavior, providing a modern developmental vocabulary to understand the psychological fallout of his household regime. Next, a close textual analysis maps how these parenting dynamics manifest in the narrative, contrasting the women's distinct coping mechanisms: Maria's open revolt, Julia's anxious submission, and Fanny's quiet resilience.

Finally, the scope widens to encompass the historical reality of Regency England, examining how Sir Thomas's individual paternalism mirrors—and ultimately critiques—the rigid socio-political structures of Austen's wider world.

By combining these approaches, it is established that the originality of Austen in *Mansfield Park* resides in her capacity to create a dialogue between the two forces of authority and the hidden victory of moral independence, a lesson that exceeds by far the novel's frame.

I. The Weight of Authority: A Psycho-Social Approach to Educational Styles in *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen

Jane Austen's narrative, especially *Mansfield Park*, is highly suitable for analysis from the standpoint of the influence exerted by family relationships on personality development. By no means should *Mansfield Park* be considered only as a description of the manners of the British gentry; rather, it provides an extremely detailed clinical examination of the process through which children's personalities are formed—or deformed—by parental control.

Nevertheless, before conducting character analysis, it is important to develop an adequate theoretical background in order to gain insight into the correlation between patriarchal power and the methods of education, which serve as key elements in identity building and ethical orientation. Research findings within the field of developmental psychology, specifically the studies conducted by Diana Baumrind, provide a convenient model for interpreting the processes taking place at *Mansfield Park* and for explaining why certain types of education determine characters' fates.

A. Theoretical Background: Parenting Styles and Personality Construction

The results of modern research in the field of educational psychology prove that parents' style is crucial for the psychological, emotional, and social development of their children. This determines the way of affectionate communication, the extent to which freedom and capacity to take morally independent decisions are given to children. According to the classical classification of Diana Baumrind (1967), further developed by Maccoby and Martin (1983), there are four main types of parenting style.

****A.1. Authoritarian Style****

In such cases, parents impose severe requirements and high expectations; they demonstrate little affection and attention towards their children, and they frequently use punishment to conduct them. Children in return are supposed to follow all parents' commands. Baumrind describes parents adopting this type of style as *« obedience- and status-oriented, and expect their orders to be obeyed without explanation. »* (Baumrind, 1991, p. 62).

Sir Thomas Bertram fully fits into this style of parenting. He demands that his daughters, Maria and Julia, adhere to certain standards of conduct and morality, but with no involvement of emotions or conversations. Austen describes already in the first chapter that in the general course of things, *« Their father was no object of love to them; he had never seemed the friend of their pleasures, and his absence was unhappily most welcome »* (Austen, ch. 2, p. 28). As a result, children of this category of parenting are taught to act properly through observation and direct control without receiving any moral insight.

Baumrind claims that those who grow up in such environment may seem obedient; however, they do not develop internal moral criteria and have no self-control. This fact helps explain the morally undeveloped behavior of Maria and Julia in spite of strict obedience to father's commands.

****A.2. Authoritative Style*****

In this type of parenting, discipline and emotions work together, giving much attention to communication. An authoritative parent usually *« exerts firm control at points of parent-child divergence, but does not hem the child in with restrictions. She recognizes her own special rights as an adult, but also the child's individual interests and special ways. »* (Baumrind, 1971, p. 22). This style of parenting is believed to be the most

appropriate for the proper development of moral consciousness, self-respect and independence.

Fanny Price experiences a somewhat restrictive variation of such parenting style. While giving his child an opportunity to receive education and some sort of protection, Sir Thomas sets certain social boundaries for him. This kind of environment, which may not be very warm, helps develop one's sense of moral integrity.

In this case, an individual acquires exceptional ethical awareness. He or she is capable of taking independent decisions following personal values. For instance, Fanny refuses to join the theater group in order to act accordingly to her own beliefs.

****A.3. Permissive Style****

This style is marked by considerable warmth and freedom with loose boundaries. According to Baumrind, *« Permissive parent attempts: to behave in a nonpunitive, acceptant, and affirmative manner toward the child's impulses, desires, and actions. »* (Baumrind, 1971, p. 23). The child should follow his or her wishes, while parents interfere little with the process.

This style may become apparent when dealing with both distant family members or servants. Children are often left rather freely, but at the same time have no sense of moral standards. Some degree of independence may be achieved by them, but not self-control.

The permissive style of parenting is exhibited in the Bertram family in that there is minimal oversight and moral guidance offered to Maria and Julia. While Sir Thomas is in charge from afar, he does not supervise the upbringing of his daughters, and Lady Bertram does not take an interest in the moral instruction of her girls. The Bertram girls have great freedom without having grown into responsible young women. This leads them to be self-indulgent and unable to exercise self-restraint.

Even after being engaged to Mr. Rushworth, Maria chases after Crawford, showing how she gives preference to instant pleasure over doing her moral duty. This is also reflected when she elopes later on, indicating how she cannot control herself despite society's norms. The same case applies to Julia, who runs away with Mr. Yates based on emotion rather than rational thinking. From the point of view of Baumrindian theory, one can argue that while the two have achieved some form of autonomy, they lack the ability to exercise self-control. This is what can be interpreted from Jane Austen's presentation of the situation in terms of parenting.

In addition to that, while Mrs. Norris cannot be viewed as a permissive parent in regard to her attitude towards Fanny Price, her approach towards Maria and Julia shows the features typical of permissive parenting. Instead of offering moral support and rectifying mistakes of the girls, she indulges in their vanity and instills superiority complex in them. Mrs. Norris compliments her nieces' achievements, finds excuses for their misbehavior, and never pushes them to reflect upon their actions. This means that Maria and Julia are encouraged to believe in themselves, but they do not know what is morally right or wrong. According to the Baumrindian parenting theory, indulgence and lack of correction are bound to result in preference of one's needs to moral considerations by young adults.

****A.4. Neglectful/Permissive Style****

This style is characterized by low levels of requirement and responsiveness, absence of emotional communication and the absence of interest in the psychological needs of the child. Maccoby and Martin characterize it as « low in both demandingness and responsiveness » (1983, p. 56). There are many negative aspects of such parenting.

Fanny Price's experience in her biological parents' family is a vivid example of parental neglect of her emotional needs. Austen comments: *« was a partial, ill-judging parent, a dawdle, a slattern, who neither taught nor restrained her children, whose house was the scene of mismanagement and discomfort from beginning to end. »*(Austen, ch. 39, p.341).

In terms of a developmental perspective on childhood, this sort of atmosphere should lead to a lack of development of self-confidence and good social skills, and consequently poor interpersonal skills. The results are evident in Fanny Price's traits, which are characterized by timidness, self-doubts, and a tendency to avoid social confrontation or stand up for her point of view. Throughout most of the novel, she is constantly aware of her own subordination and tends to yield to the will of other people whenever she encounters opposition.

Yet, there are instances where Austen challenges our expectation While the main character was deprived of emotional care during her formative years, she managed to develop very high moral standards as well as an ability to distinguish right from wrong. Contrary to what we have learned from our reading on the selected psychological theory, Fanny's childhood has led to deep reflection, compassion, and consideration of other people's emotions. Such an outcome can be attributed to the positive

influence exerted on her by other people or simply due to the her personality traits which are conducive to moral behavior.

This theory, based on the psychology of development, has a profound embodiment within the world created by Austen in her novels. It helps us understand the characters in *Mansfield Park* not as merely fictional creations but rather as examples of the impact of different types of education.

B. Sir Thomas Bertram: The Embodiment of Patriarchal Power and its Implications

It is precisely the figure of Sir Thomas Bertram who gives rise to this theory of the authoritarian type of parenting. He represents absolute patriarchal power, which is associated with high social status and strict moral principles. In his parental practices, he prioritizes discipline and adherence to the rules, neglecting emotional communication and an understanding of the needs of his children and his niece, Fanny.

B.1. Rigidity and Formalism in Education

The authoritarian educational approach of Sir Thomas follows the example of Baumrind and emphasizes discipline and compliance at the expense of cultivating a sense of internal morality. It includes imposing harsh behavioral standards without negotiation and empathy (EBSCO). Austen emphasizes this emotional detachment through irony by stating that he *« did not know what was wanting, because though a truly anxious father, he was not outwardly affectionate, and the reserve of his manner repressed all the flow of their spirits before him »* (Austen, ch. 2, p. 17).

The rigidity and lack of emotions of Sir Thomas result in an obvious emotional detachment between him and his children. The fact that he is more focused on authority and strictness means that there is little room left for creating a warm atmosphere and developing healthy parent-child relationships. As a result, the children react not with warmth and tenderness but with some form of aloofness toward their father. According to the narrator, *« They were relieved by it from all restraint; and without aiming at one gratification that would propel have been forbidden by Sir Thomas, they felt themselves immediately at their own disposal and to have every indulgence within their reach »* (Austen, ch. 3, p. 28). This observation serves to underline the limitations of fear-based education.

B.2. Psychological and Social Consequences on the Children

The rigidity and power of Sir Thomas cause great anxiety in his children. While obeying formalities, Maria and Julia rebel against their father. In particular, Maria tries to compensate for her father's cold attitude to herself through social approval and the enjoyment derived from her affair with Henry Crawford. Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu explain such behavior in the context of transmitting habitus as *« pedagogic communication which can produce its own, specifically symbolic effect only because the arbitrary power which makes imposition possible is never seen in its full truth »* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 11). This means that education does more than impart information; it is also a way of legitimizing social power.

In the case of Sir Thomas's daughters, however, this lack of recognition is thwarted by the absence of the necessary affectivity, making it impossible not to recognize the arbitrary character of this authority. As for Julia, being repressed and deprived of the necessary amount of love, she develops low self-esteem and hidden frustration. The difference between outward compliance and internal unrest is indicative of the negative effects of such an instruction as it creates personality dependent on the gaze of others, unable to form its moral judgment independently and prone to influence.

****B.3. Authority and Ethics: The Dialectics of Control****

Using Sir Thomas as a figure, Austen describes the struggle that exists between formal authority and genuine moral upbringing. Concerned with order and social decorum at all costs, he is unable to empathize with his children's emotional demands. Austen draws an important criticism: having power does not mean being virtuous, rather, it can have opposite effects by creating rebellious behavior or hypocrisy.

As the narrator writes about Sir Thomas, *« He had meant them to be good, but his cares had been directed to the understanding and manners, not the disposition; and of the necessity of self-denial and humility, he feared they had never heard from any lips that could profit them »* (Austen, ch. 47, p. 405). The manner in which he brings up his children reflects the system of domination employed by the managers of the colonial government, where power and control are kept by keeping distance and obeying orders rather than feeling and communicating.

Since Sir Thomas prioritizes good manners and intellect in his children and fails to bring them up properly morally, Sir Thomas makes it impossible for his kids to grow up to be morally good individuals. This

analogy thus illustrates the fact that when a system is based more on control, it tends to ignore the needs of its subjects.

Being too interested in orderliness and reputation, Sir Thomas cannot empathize or comprehend the inner emotional world of his offspring. As Austen says,

> Something must have been wanting within, or time would have worn away much of its ill effect. He feared that principle, active principle, had been wanting, that they had never been properly taught to govern their inclinations and tempers, by that sense of duty which can alone suffice. They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice. To be distinguished for elegance and accomplishments - the authorized object of their youth - could have had no useful influence that way, no moral effect on the mind. (Austen, ch. 47, p. 405)

Through the depiction of the Bertram children's educational environment, Austen exposes a profound dichotomy between superficial social achievement and intrinsic ethical values. Sir Thomas ultimately realizes that an upbringing anchored strictly in behavioral decorum, reputation, and social advancement fails to foster true virtue when the cultivation of moral character is neglected.

This systemic failure is manifested in Maria and Julia; unable to govern their own impulses, they emerge as casualties of a prescriptive education that prioritized outward presentation and blind obedience over self-regulation. Furthermore, as Marilyn Butler (1975) suggests, the parallel between Sir Thomas's governance of *Mansfield Park* and his management of the Antiguan plantation is highly deliberate. In both spheres, he employs a rigid, hierarchical framework that values compliance over meaningful communication.

****B.4. Fanny Price: Example of Contrastive Adaptation****

Fanny Price, who is placed in a position of subordinacy, adapts herself in a completely different way. She learns obedience towards the principles but develops her personal virtue through observation and analysis and therefore becomes more virtuous than her cousins. In this context, Fanny's marginality allows her to be observant of the behavior and morals surrounding her, thus helping her build up her moral judgment. Virtue, in this case, is not something passive but rather something Fanny comes to

understand by actively thinking about the morals she observes. As it is put by Butler: *« Fanny is the steady critic of worldly vanities and is rightly to become a leader of the reformed community »* (Butler, 1975, p. 243). It is because of this reason that she understands all that she has learned through reasoning and reflection, and not through submission.

C. Maria, Julia, and Fanny: Three Fates Oppressed by Authority

The three cases represented by the selected heroines are concrete examples of the effect of varied educational approaches on members of the same family setting. While Sir Thomas stands for the cause—an oppressive patriarchal authority—the three young ladies represent the contradictory outcomes of the latter.

C.1. Maria and Julia: The Struggle between Compliance and Passion

As the eldest daughters of Sir Thomas, Maria and Julia represent the outcome of the educational approach of their father. Under his strict tutelage, these two sisters appear to conform externally, yet hide deep-seated internal conflicts.

The most defiant Maria attempts to establish her own identity by breaking societal barriers through her affair with Henry Crawford. The actions of Maria are symptomatic of a person who lacks the capacity to make independent judgments on morality since she adheres to the conventions outwardly yet indulges in her desires at the slightest opportunity.

Maria's marriage to Rushworth without love and in fear of losing her social standing, *« Maria was indeed the pride and delight of them all—perfectly faultless— an angle; and of course, so surrounded by admirers, must be difficult in her choice »* (Austen, ch. 4, p.33). Followed by her extramarital affair with Crawford, she demonstrates her inability to harmonize her desires and morality. The scholar Claudia Johnson comments that Maria *« never really attended for lessons in female modesty in the first place, nor is her disposition so placid as he wishfully fancies »* (Johnson, 1988, p. 103).

Julia, however, is an example of resignation and submission. Her submissive behavior and inability to express her feelings in front of her elder sister indicate that Julia must have felt inferior to her sister for some

reason, which may be attributed to the absence of any recognition. Her elopement with Mr. Yates does not signify her emancipation but seems more like an attempt to flee from a situation where she sees no place or recognition for herself.

****C.2. Fanny Price: Ethical Virtues as Compensation****

It is interesting to mention that Fanny Price's life also serves as a perfect example. Having experienced a lack of affection from the people around her in her childhood, as her mother, who was a woman of very little judgement, had no notion of making her children happy, and later being controlled by Sir Thomas, she gains ethical power, which makes her different from the rest of her relatives.

Fanny's refusal to act in Lovers' Vows and her refusal to marry Mr. Crawford have not anything in common with servility; it is a conscious decision, which is based on Fanny's ability to distinguish between what is good and what is bad. As the author states: *« She trusted, in the first place, that she had done right, but her judgment had not misled her, for the purity of her intentions she could answer; and she was willing to hope »* (Austen, ch. 16, p. 125).

According to Austen, therefore, genuine virtue may not come through traditional education but through the resilience that one learns from adversity. The construction of Fanny's moral values comes about through self-reflection and keen observation, creating an independence that her cousins lack due to their exposure to extremes of either too much authority or freedom.

According to Tony Tanner, "Fanny is the silent conscience of *Mansfield Park*, the one who sees clearly because she has learned to look from the margins. Her virtue is not the product of her education but its corrective" (Tanner, 1986, p. 156). Similarly, Nina Auerbach argues that Fanny's apparent passivity is in fact a form of power, the power to remain oneself in a world that demands conformity (Auerbach, 1982).

D. Comparison, Analysis, and Psychological Issues Involved

****D.1 Comparative Analysis of Character, Educational Style, and Psychological Outcomes****

The comparative analysis allows drawing conclusions on the different influence of education upon the girls, and making more general remarks about the situation of women in Regency England.

Character	Educational Style	Behavioral Response	Issues
Maria Bertram	Authoritarian style (Sir Thomas) but with some degree of indulgence when the father was absent	Rebelliousness but seeking constant recognition from outside the family settings	Adultery, public scandal, disgrace in the family, banishment
Julia Bertram	Strict authoritarian upbringing without emotional modification	Emotional restraint combined with passive resistance	Hasty elopement by marriage of convenience disapproved by society
Fanny Price	Emotional neglect followed by structured guidance under Sir Thomas	Moral autonomy; silent and thoughtful resistance towards social pressure, moral integration into the family.	Moral integrity and socially successful marriage

****D.2 Synthetic Interpretation****

The typology shows how varying levels of control, neglect, and emotional involvement create divergent moral and psychological results. Maria has too much appetite for life with no limit on it; Julia vacillates between being submissive and escaping in an impulse; but Fanny creates a moral structure inside herself that enables her self-control.

****D.3 Authority, Upbringing, and Moral Development in *Mansfield Park* ****

In addition to being psychologically complex, *Mansfield Park* provides an examination of the interplay between authority, education, and moral instruction within a social structure. The author criticizes not just the individual ways in which children have been brought up, but also the entire social rationale that emphasizes submission, elegance, and refinements rather than morality as the inner understanding of good conduct. In her dedicated work to *Mansfield Park*, Nancy Armstrong, claims,

> Their (The Bertram girls) education is supposed to be as exclusive as the one that distinguishes males according to classes. We learn that in contrast to Fanny the "Miss Bertrams" know some French, play duets, are able to recite the kings of England in chronological order "with the dates of their accession, and most of the principal events of their reigns... and of the Roman emperors as low Severus; besides a great deal of the Heathen Mythology, and all the Metals, Semi-Metals, Planets, and distinguished Philosophers." To which Austen adds, "it is not very wonderful that with all their promising talents and early information, they should be entirely deficient in the less common acquirements of self-knowledge, generosity and humility (Armstrong, 1987, p. 275).

In this respect, it should be noted that Maria, Julia, and Fanny demonstrate completely different reactions to the parental pressure in the novel, which suggests that the three girls have different attitudes to the same system. Maria's eventual moral failure can be read as a consequence of inadequate internalized restraint, while Fanny's moral caution and self-regulation suggest a more reflective, internally guided form of ethical awareness.

On the other hand, Julia's reaction to her father regime is particularly intriguing because she neither develops Fanny's moral resilience nor reaches

Maria's level of open transgression. Instead, she exhibits a mixture of resentment, emotional impulsiveness, and passive resistance**.** It becomes evident from Julia's attitude that she has imbibed the significance of prestige and social acceptance, but lacks the self-control to manage her feelings. Throughout the novel, she is a mere appendage to her elder sister, Maria, and constantly measured up against her. In the environment, where achievements, appearances, and prestige matter more than self-awareness, Julia remains at a disadvantage.

This difference in moral attitudes by the three girls sets *Mansfield Park* apart from other novels like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, where there may be a certain degree of frivolity surrounding the idea of parental influence. Parental influence is integral to the development of characters and their moral consequences in *Mansfield Park*. According to Mary Poovey, "many readers have found *Mansfield Park* Austen's most problematic novel. Part of the problem finally seems to stem from the inherent difficulty of distinguishing between Fanny's emotions, which are moral, and the emotions of the other characters, which often are not. Austen demonstrates that feeling is an extremely powerful force, but she cannot unequivocally grant or deny its inherent morality" (Poovey, 1984, p. 198)

Consequently, *Mansfield Park* depicts the development of morality as a task, which can only be achieved in a manner that is independent of authority, education, and society's expectations. In describing how different characters respond to their identical surroundings, the novel illustrates the complicated dynamic of the relationship between outside influence and personal morality.

****D.3 Authority, Emotions, and Ethical Growth****

Mansfield Park appears to be an exceptionally modern work in analyzing family relationships. An analysis of Sir Thomas and his daughters as well as their cousin, Fanny, exposes the basic contradiction between the notions of authority and virtue, discipline and maturity, socialization and individualization.

Jane Austen attacks the authoritarian approach to education that tends to ignore the emotional aspect, resulting in children with a rebellious or submissive character. By means of the character of Fanny, the author makes us understand that true virtue can never emerge because of blind compliance; it should rather come as an independent choice made by the

individual. The neglect of her family and the severity of her uncle have not deprived her from acting with moral goodness; on the contrary, they have helped her gain it. As Butler states, Fanny's is a triumph of conscience over circumstance, of interiority over exteriority. She is a woman whose virtue was achieved rather than inherited (Butler, 1975).

Conclusively, the book promotes a balance between having authority and empathy, between structure and freedom, which are crucial elements in any form of meaningful moral development. In a society where women were expected to be submissive, respectable, and confined within the household, Austen emphasizes that real virtue is not demonstrated through conformity, but rather through a developed conscience gained through experience. Fanny Price, who was a neglected girl, and at the same time the main moral conscience of *Mansfield Park*, demonstrates this deep belief that authority alone does not develop virtues

II. Education and Formation in *Mansfield Park*: An Example of Fanny Price

A. Education of Fanny Price: From Emotional Neglect to Authoritarian Upbringing

The entry of Fanny Price to the *Mansfield Park* becomes an understated occasion, even a secret one, in keeping with the place Fanny have in the Bertram family. A young girl of perhaps ten years of age, Fanny stands on the threshold of becoming who she is, a period during which she carries with her any impressions made upon her. With exquisite psychological insight, Austen creates Fanny out of this very foundation of neglect.

This is particularly evident in the case of the Prices in Portsmouth, who are presented as an anti-educational model family. Indeed, unlike the perfect family model that was promoted by the educational literature of the time, such as that of Hannah More or Maria Edgeworth, the Price family is portrayed as a place of material disorder and affective poverty. Indeed, the father, a half-pay lieutenant in the navy, is described as a man of "vulgar manners," essentially unconcerned with the emotional needs of his children.

In the same vein, the mother, sister of Lady Bertram, appears to have adapted to the new context, abandoning all pretense to order and affection. According to the novel, she is a woman "devoured by her concerns" and who leaves the education of her children to the servants, while she reserves her rare acts of kindness for the wildest of her offspring. Indeed, Fanny, the oldest daughter, is described as "quiet and shy," a girl who very soon

realizes that speaking about her needs is not met with anything other than irritation or disregard.

The movement from Portsmouth to *Mansfield Park* should have rectified this problem, but in fact, it only brought about another kind of deprivation. Indeed, Sir Thomas Bertram, a perfect representation of the patriarchal character, follows his paternal responsibilities rather than his personal feelings towards the heroine. For him, Fanny is not an adopted daughter but a "protégée" who thus becomes inferior to the other members of the family. Her education consists in learning how to play the piano, speak French, do geography and have access to the books of the library. However, while this intellectual training is indeed advanced, it totally lacks emotional education.

Sir Thomas is benign only in appearance, but his paternal authority is stern and detached. He never discusses anything with the children, he explains principles, and the children must submit to them unconditionally. The historian of education Lawrence Stone points out that in the patriarchal family of the end of the eighteenth century, there was an ambivalence between "companionate" love and stern authority (1977).

In the Bertrams' family, stern authority dominates. Fan first; it makes Fanny acutely aware of the values of duty, order, and morality. It offers her a firm frame of reference. Second, it deprives her of all ability to make her voice heard. In a way, she has developed an exceptionally strong "superegoic conscience," the internal voice of Sir Thomas, whereas her ego remains weak. In other words, she has trouble asserting her personal desires.

In this regard, the split experience that Fanny goes through—the rejection by the Price family on the one side and the harsh authoritarianism of the Bertrams on the other—is the source of neither a shattered psyche nor of immorality but of exceptional moral righteousness, despite the social repression. Fanny is able to form definite and highly discerning moral conclusions, although she conveys them in silence, by avoiding discussions, or by enduring pain. This explains why she was so vulnerable to the superior skill of Mary Crawford in conversation or the charisma of Henry Crawford.

B. Moral Values in the Novel: Virtue as Passive Resistance**

The morals of Fanny Price are not based on any predetermined moral code, but rather result from the psychological upbringing of the heroine and are the primary motive for her actions in the novel. In contrast to Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice*, who changes and learns to

make proper evaluations during the course of time, Fanny already has developed moral values at the very beginning. The constant morals of Fanny, which some people consider a lack of life and spirit in her, become her primary heroic feature since the universe that surrounds her is a relative one regarding morality.

The crucial point of her moral manifestation is the scene of performing the play. For the Bertrams and their new acquaintances, the Crawfords, the play is just another amusing pastime; however, for Fanny, this episode bears numerous implications. Firstly, it is a violation of authority. Sir Thomas is absent, but he still holds all the power. By transforming the billiard room, which can be considered an exclusively masculine and public area into a theatre, they violate the rules of patriarchal society. Only Fanny expresses her disapproval of the act itself despite all the temptations. It should be noted that her objections are not only associated with religious considerations, but also are rather the manifestation of her devotion to the authority that shaped her values.

Secondly, the play is a direct transgression against the boundary of morality. It shows disrespect to the elders, adultery, and class differences, brings in moral concepts that would destabilize the stability of the household morally. This means that staging the play in the household creates unrest internally by forcing the characters into roles that go against their morals. Fanny's resistance to playing the part of Amelia, the unfaithful wife, is not simply because she is shy but rather because she does not want to engage in a moral charade that mixes up appearance with substance. In an essay about *Mansfield Park*, Tony Tanner argues that theater in Jane Austen's novels symbolizes an even greater danger of separating the identity of the character from its appearance (1986).

The most peculiar aspect of Fanny's virtue lies in its nature, not in the act itself. It is neither victorious nor didactic in character. Fanny opposes actively but quietly and internally. Her opposition is protected by her physical frailty (the migraines). In addition, it is Edmund who acts as her mouthpiece defending her stance, turning Fanny into an indirect heroine. This passivity is usually viewed as a sign of weakness of the narrative technique; however, it is the best demonstration of the heroine's psychological state – her morality is unbreakable, her social independence is practically non-existent.

Another key moment of the heroine's life is Fanny's rejection of Henry Crawford. In this instance, she demonstrates a level of her moral consciousness, which none of the characters possesses. While perceiving

Crawford's hypocrisy in his charming mask, which is quite contrary to the upbringing, which she was receiving, Fanny refuses to accept his marriage proposal despite the great pressure exerted by Sir Thomas and despite public dissatisfaction. This rejection is the most decisive act of her life, and it comes at a great personal cost: she is banished to Portsmouth, where she is forced to confront once again her chaotic upbringing. Only through the ordeal of this punishment does Fanny's defiance gain recognition from the text when Crawford's true character is finally unveiled.

In this manner, Austen creates a subtle illustration: for virtue to be true and genuine, it must be born out of personal integrity, yet it requires a solid social foundation for its growth. While Fanny has the former attribute, she lacks the latter due to the conditions of her upbringing.

C. Education and Formation in Mansfield Park: A Comparative Study**

Apart from being a story about the individual formation of Fanny Price, *Mansfield Park* can also be regarded as an educational tract criticizing certain models of education prevalent among the upper classes at that time. The comparison of the fates of three girls—Fanny, Maria, and Julia—serves as a basis for a critique of these models of education.

C.1 Maria and Julia Bertram: The Sour Grapes of Triviality**

While the education of Fanny was poor but still based on firm principles, the education of Maria and Julia turned out to be miserable. Raised by Sir Thomas and his sister-in- law, Mrs. Norris, Maria and Julia are products of such a system, which Mary Wollstonecraft in A Vindication of the Rights of Woman has criticized so harshly; an education aimed at formation of "accomplished ladies" rather than mind or character of people (1792).

The characterization of Mrs. Norris is critical to this analysis. She is stingy and ambitious for power, representing the nature of the educational system, which lacks any ethical foundation. She is more interested in the social hierarchy of her nieces than in nurturing their moral development. Through her instruction, Maria and Julia learn the importance of class and social status. In other words, the achievements of Maria and Julia—musical abilities, drawing skills, and good manners—were only skin-deep. According to Marilyn Butler, they have learned the art of socialization

rather than true education; hence, they lack any preparation to deal with their passion.

C1.1 Maria Bertram: Rebellious Spirit through Individuality**

Maria is the one most influenced by such education. Being the oldest sister, she grows up feeling herself superior to others and thinking that her charms and beauty would work wonders for her on the marriage market. It is therefore natural that her marriage with Mr. Rushworth—an ignorant and rich gentleman—follows as a consequence.

The arrival of Henry Crawford is the catalyst. His charm, wit, and libertinism symbolize everything that Rushworth fails to be. Yet beyond the desire for love, what compels Maria is the assertion of independence. By courting Crawford, she not only breaks societal conventions but rebels against her father and education. The final act of rebellion—an elopement with Crawford—is more a reaction against a society that turned her into nothing more than an economic asset. Unfortunately, for her, the rebellion was not guided by morality since she had failed to develop one within herself and ends up at a social impasse. The fate that awaits her of exile and abandonment can be seen because of a sin without any moral grounds.

C.1.2 Julia Bertram: Rebellion by Constraint and Opportunism**

Julia can be seen as the quiet side of the same phenomenon. Unnaturally constrained by beauty and confidence of her sister, Julia always found it harder to draw attention and live in her shadow. The societal pressure they both were under is similar, but its impacts are quite different.

Julia's romance with Mr. Yates, who she met while she was undergoing rehearsals for the play, provides insight into her character as well. While Maria wants to seduce Crawford, Julia wishes to move out of her marginalized state through marriage – though hastily made, this one is less scandalous than the elopement of her sister. Her "elopement" from the family through marriage with Yates is not really a great passion; rather, it is a last resort. This comes from the fact that Julia has had no opportunity

within her education to develop principles or introspection to comprehend herself, thus making this a pragmatic response on her part.

The difference between Fanny and her cousins provides insight into how it is education and not character that influences morality in this case. While she has been left neglected and disciplined, she has developed a sense of inner moral strength. In the same way, Julia and Maria, raised in a world of status-consciousness, have developed either self-destructive rebelliousness or principle-less opportunism, respectively. The brilliance of Austen's writing lies in its ability to depict the impact of education, not just on the mind but also on the heart and will.

D. *Mansfield Park* or Moral Education Defense**

Finally, *Mansfield Park* is a powerful reflection on the purpose of education. Rather than a conventional novel of manners, it contributes to the key ideological concerns of its age regarding the issue of individual's construction. Through Fanny's evolution, Austen promotes the idea that genuine education implies not merely skill-building, but moral instruction, which involves learning to distinguish right from wrong.

Fanny does not stand out through wit and charm because she lacks both of those qualities; rather, her strength is her principle. It is nurtured by the hardship of her childhood years and the rigorous yet consistent environment, which becomes Fanny's only support amid the moral bankruptcy of the world around her. Consequently, *Mansfield Park* is probably the author's most tragic and dark work since it poses an essential question of what it takes to turn into a moral creature in the immoral world. The solution to this question is presented in Fanny Price, the untraditional heroine of moral defiance.

E. The Microcosm of *Mansfield Park*: Authority, Rebellion, and Contradictions in the Social Structure of Early Nineteenth Century Britain

For Jane Austen, the private sphere can never be trivialized. Far from restricting herself to a simple account of social etiquette, *Mansfield Park* (1814) explores in great depth how family ties reflect the social structure of early nineteenth century Britain. In this respect, the novel

extends far beyond its family narrative to become a criticism of the social and cultural system of Regency Britain. The novel revolves around the character of Sir Thomas Bertram, who not only represents authority but the very principles of stability in British society. In her use of this character, Austen goes beyond a mere depiction of authority to examine issues of social power, their validity, and their contradictions.

E.1 Sir Thomas Bertram: Paternal Power as a Basis for Social System**

In literary criticism, there is an absolute consensus on Sir Thomas Bertram being a multiple metaphorical image. As it is noted in *the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, he is the epitome of paternalism not in its family context but as an example of social authority and class order that ruled Great Britain at that epoch. Being a landowner, a judge of the peace, and even the owner of plantations in the West Indies, he enjoys a type of authority based on wealth that is inseparable from the sense of moral obligation. This kind of paternalistic figure does not rule over his family alone; on the contrary, his existence guarantees the integrity of an entire social system based on moral integrity and preservation of social hierarchy.

The reading is further enhanced by the academic articles available in *Taylor & Francis Online*, which explore the significance of the character within the institutional framework. His obsession with absolute obedience and propriety not only indicates that Sir Thomas is not concerned with disciplining his children but continuously seeks to reinforce the legitimacy of an institutional arrangement in which peace can only be secured through absolute reverence for hierarchy and convention. This is because Sir Thomas's authority is not limited to disciplinary punishment but extends to the institution as a whole in which class, wealth, and discourse are intricately connected in maintaining the status quo.

In other words, this clarifies the connection between the crisis within the Bertram family and Sir Thomas's prolonged stay away from Antigua in addition to his temporary loss of authoritarian gaze. Upon his return, he endeavors to restore order not only to defend the reputation of his family but also to reconstruct a social order in which everyone play their designated part.

E.2 Violation of Social Norms: Threat to Existence**

Since there is no distinction between paternal power and social order, the violation of any norm leads to a threat to existence. Maria

Bertram's sexual escapades with Henry Crawford may be purely personal affairs, but for the narrative itself, they are viewed as a calamity with consequences for the social community. As described by the source from *link.springer.com*, this affair is not just about a failed marriage; it can be considered a severe violation of social norms, which is viewed as a serious breach of the rigid moral code maintained by Sir Thomas.

Maria's scandal is not merely destructive to her future but also to the entire institution of marriage as well as property and family honor. Thus, the affair highlights the repressive nature of such a system that considers morality synonymous with social order. Therefore, in the light of this scandalous deed, not only is moral condemnation called for, but also something has to be done to patch up this rupture in the order of things.

F. The Emergence of the Core Paradox of the Novel: Criticism without Resolution**

In presenting the notion of transgression, we find a core paradox of the entire work. While Maria's actions receive total condemnation, Jane Austen does not let the world of Sir Thomas prevail unequivocally. Instead of suggesting an alternative to the patriarchal system described, the book unveils the key contradiction of this world. Sir Thomas, the guardian of virtue, is himself the lord whose prosperity relies on colonization and exploitation in Antigua—this makes his own world morally inconsistent, as he is unable to remain consistent with his values.

Furthermore, the educational program of Sir Thomas himself, based on strictness and fear, cannot produce true virtue in his offspring: by caring more about appearance and benefit (in advising his daughter to marry the unsuitable man just because of their family lineage), Sir Thomas fails to raise his children in true morality.

In the absence of any obvious guiding principle in the novel, it is rather the strict, yet unspoken principles of Fanny Price, the silent and marginal member of the family, that form the actual moral values. Hence, it seems that the novel draws attention to the disjunction between power (Sir Thomas' power) and moral principles. The limited success of the baronet in reforming his family upon returning shows the inefficacy of the system in which power is perceived in terms of ethics. Thus, the novel leaves no obvious way out of the conflict between the two.

In addition to that, even if Fanny marries her cousin, Edmund, and hence is accepted into the *Mansfield Park* establishment, nothing is changed in the existing social system – it appears only purified from corruption in

light of Fanny's presence there. In such terms, *Mansfield Park* should be regarded as an inherently ambivalent work. While it criticizes the deficiencies of the patriarchal authority as well as class system that puts material value above virtue, it also shows that the hierarchical order, provided it is sustained by genuine ethical values (as in Fanny's case, and later in Edmund's one), may serve as a basis for stability.

Consequently, *Mansfield Park* is not only a portrayal of the authoritarian image of the father but also its transformation into a symbol of a socio-cultural system undergoing a crisis. By using the character of Sir Thomas Bertram, the author criticizes the system of authority that claims to ensure the moral stability of society yet is based on vulnerable foundations. However, instead of providing a solution to the hidden conflict, Austen manages to uncover skillfully the inner contradictions of the existing socio-cultural system.

Conclusion

This research proves that *Mansfield Park* is a unique example of how parents affect their children psychologically and morally through the mechanism of authority. Having analyzed the parenting styles introduced by Diana Baumrind, one can assert that Sir Thomas Bertram is a typical representative of an authoritarian parenting style characterized by rigidness, remoteness, and prioritizing external submission over the internal moral conscience.

The fate of each young woman reflects the influence of this system on them in different ways. For instance, Maria Bertram and Julia Bertram were brought up in a superficial manner without any moral education. Thus, their behavior is based on destructive rebellion and submissive acceptance, respectively. In turn, Fanny Price was educated under the same conditions but managed to cultivate an unusual sense of moral autonomy. Thus, her decision not to participate in the play and refuse marriage with Henry Crawford is a result of conscious choice based on independent moral conscience.

In addition to the psychological analysis of the plot, *Mansfield Park* also contains a profound socio-political one. Sir Thomas is not just an authoritative father but also rather a representative of the society that earns its money through exploitation of other people in Antigua. Thus, it is possible to notice a paradox: a moral authority is based upon morally ambiguous grounds.

Hence, Austen's novel becomes an embodiment of the necessity of authentic education conditions. According to Jane Austen, the only way for a person to receive proper moral upbringing is to keep the balance between authority and empathy, i.e., social discipline and personal liberty. The character of Fanny Price is a good example. In other words, genuine moral development cannot be attained both through obedient following the established moral codes and their aggressive violation.

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