

# Mansfield park; empire and orientalism from edward said essay

[History](#), [Empires](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Edward Said's analysis of Jane Austen's narrative in her 3rd fresh 'Mansfield Park' (1814) is based on his own surveys of 'orientalism'. This term is defined by Said as a assortment of false premises /depictions of Eastern people within Western attitudes. This is achieved, he argues, through the literary discourse provided by post-enlightenment, post-colonial American/European (Western) writers. Said draws our attention to an implicit in subject of 'Mansfield Park', which is imperialism. Said recycles his reading of stereotypic Muslims, Arabs & Egyptians and applies it once more to a different societal group. He does so by analyzing the novel's representation of the Atlantic slave trade (in the West Indies), and in the end concludes that Austen must back up British values of imperialism and imperialism. He points out the easiness with which Austen's characters refer to Antigua, and convinces us that Austen's infrequent usage of this word is grounds of her personal support of the debasement of slaves.

In his analysis of the text, Said starts at the beginning, and relies to a great extent on the nescient manner in which Sir Thomas's settlement is isolated from his household and legal residence, which remains proudly on English land, situated across the Earth. He implies that the little mentions to Antigua make no justice to its own beauty, history, and the fact that it is, in comparing, a Eden island. However Austen does really back up this claim herself, as Lady Bertram does no justice to India, desiring merely the trade goods it can offer: "I may hold a shawl. I think I will hold two shawls" His ultimate point is that the 'Antigua' seen in Mansfield Park is no more than a topographic point for work, necessary for obtaining personal luxuries and luck for the locals of Britain. Austen doesn't deny this in her novel, but she

doesn't cry about it either. Said's composing merely reminds us of how unjust the state of affairs was. by indicating out the geographical infinite in between Mansfield Park ( where the money is spent and enjoyed ) and the Antiguan sugar plantation ( where the money is produced ) .

His review of " the easiness with which the family's demands are met by a visit in the Caribbean" is unneeded and useless in explicating his point. it simply serves to foreground the fact that the slave trade was. at its extremum. really successfully organised and achieved. due to the political military force. " Sir Thomas's means will be instead straitened. if the Antigua estate is to do such hapless returns" . Mrs Norris's remark proves that Austen is cognizant of the dependance of the household on their slave trade income. as is Lady Bertram. because her answer is: " Oh! that will shortly be settled! " . Although his married woman is unwilling to pass clip speaking on the topic. this type of nescient attitude seems to be a convention of pragmatism which Austen applies to her characters systemically. in hopes that their concluding results will explicate her ain temperament on the topic. Said invariably alludes to Austen's deficiency of concern for the slave trade. because her narrative lacks the description which is needed to decently exemplify the topic. and the scene.

Said argues that without the slave trade. the Bertram's could non hold been possible. but once more. I believe Austen is to the full cognizant of the fact that bondage enables the Bertram's to boom in Mansfield Park. Otherwise. she merely would non hold written so much about wealth and category in relation to the success of adult females. for illustration in the terminal of

Pride & A ; Prejudice ( 1813 ) Lizzie chose love over money. and Mr Darcy chose love over category. Furthermore Austen includes the ruin of the slave industry within her narrative. and in bend she shows the ruin of Sir Thomas because of the latter. Sir Thomas is depicted ( in the terminal ) as holding compunction for his actions. and holding learned his lesson through salvation. Jane Austen is stereotyped by Said as a typical euro-centric academic. naive towards the REAL menaces. inequalities and unfairness's of the universe. Just like the slaves Sir Thomas had the advantage of having. Fanny becomes the lone slave who is able to brood in Mansfield Park. I believe Austen's hopes were that she would be seen as the prototype of the slave: " She could barely believe it.

To be placed above so many elegant immature adult females! It was handling her like her cousins! " Austen explains. from the really first chapter how the class/background thoughts of the epoch are a hinderance to her success. at place and in society. Overall she is treated as below criterion. but by the terminal of the novel she is happy. moderately comfy and is married to the 1 whom she was meant to be deserving less than. She was invariably referred to as from a different category. background. and topographic point. Those impressions of ' breeding' compare her to a mere puppy: " breed her up with them from this clip. and suppose her even to hold the beauty of an angel. and she will ne'er be more to either than a sister" . Fanny herself remarked upon the " dead silence" which followed from her uncle. after her questions about the slave trade. She concluded that because she showed " a wonder and pleasance in his information which he must wish his ain girls

feel” she regretted inquiring about the slave settlement. as if she merely re-realised that she isn’t tantrum to make certain things.

Her character reflects thoughts of rank and persecution and subjugation ; she is the ultimate realist of the novel. With respect to the character of Sir Thomas and his silence on the topic of his work. Said would most likely argue that he is selfish and nescient and hence doesn’t license any clip being wasted on the topic. However. Austen is more likely handling the topic with the shame and embarrassment it deserves. It is my position that Austen would hold been sympathetic towards these slaves and could non certainly excuse such hegemony. subjugation and imperium? After all she herself was a victim of subjugation. being a female writer unable to take recognition and receive congratulations for her ain work within society. Austen ended her life as a old maid. holding ne’er married a adult male. demoing that she didn’t conform. for whatever ground ( s ) . to societal outlooks of adult females. Furthermore. her life was dependent on the males within her household. as per the UK’s Torahs sing rights. heritage and belongings. because she had nil of her ain.

Therefore she would be hypocritical to back up the forced labor of slaves for the benefit of the state she slightly rejects. Supposing Austen was supportive of Britain’s imperialist venture for imperium. certainly person with such precedences would hold settled and married. merely for wealth and security? This is summarised in Susan Fraiman’s authorship: “ Lacking the franchise. basking few belongings rights ( and these because she was individual ) . life as a dependant at the border of her brother’s estate. and printing her work

anonymously. Austen was arguably a sort of expatriate in her ain country” In decision I wholly refute Edward Said’s claims toward Austen – his statements are judgemental and a small baffled. Furthermore. his attending to item is missing in research. as Fraiman smartly states here: “ So ready is Said to offer Austen as ‘ Exhibit A’ in the instance for culture’s indorsement of empire” .

Indeed the debasement of slaves was clearly fact. nevertheless. if Austen herself is an foreigner to Mansfield Park and its narrative. so her sentiments would be channelled through her characters’ destiny. In my sentiment. Said fails to take into history the destiny of such characters. and the possibility that worlds can exert compunction and rehabilitation. Said draws the decision that Austen is lazily doing fiddling mentions to other of import alterations from this period. one being the Napoleonic revolution. However. I think that in the period and topographic point she lived. it would hold been absurd to openly review the powers of the authorities. being that it truly WAS un-just ; it would hold been excessively unsafe to make so.

## Bibliography

Austen. Jane. *Mansfield Park* ( Oxford World’s Classics. London: 1814 )

Said. Edward. ‘ Jane Austen and Empire’ . *Culture and Imperialism* ( Knopf.

New York: 1993 ) [ hypertext transfer protocol: //www. scribd.

com/doc/57070252/3-Edward-Said-Austen-and-Empire ] accessed

19/10/2012 Fraiman. Susan. ‘Jane Austen and Edward Said: Gender. Culture.

and Imperialism’ . *Janeites: Austen’s Disciples and Devotees* – edited by

<https://assignbuster.com/mansfield-park-empire-orientalism-from-edward-said-essay/>

Deidre Lynch ( Princeton. Princeton: 2000 ) [ hypertext transfer protocol:  
//blogs. parks. Georgetown. edu/orientalism-spring2011/files/Fraiman0001.  
pdf ] accessed 19/10/2012