

"WHAT GENTLEMAN AMONG YOU AM I TO HAVE
THE PLEASURE OF MAKING LOVE TO ?": COMMODIFICATION OF
WOMEN IN JANE AUSTEN'S MANSFIELD PARK

HALEY F. FISHBURN

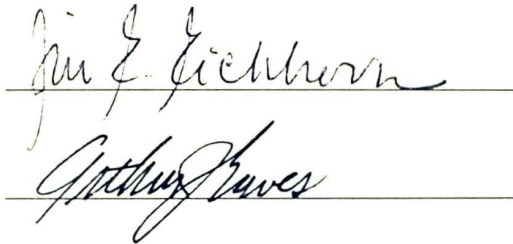
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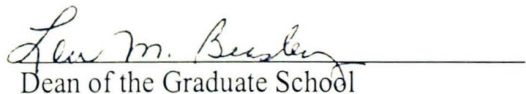
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**“WHAT GENTLEMAN AMONG YOU AM I TO HAVE
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WOMEN IN JANE AUSTEN’S *MANSFIELD PARK***

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Arts Degree
Austin Peay State University

Haley F. Fishburn

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DEDICATION

This thesis, and all the sweat, tears, giggles, and energy it represents, is dedicated to the love of my life, my reason for getting out of bed each morning, my heart, my soul, my muse, and my daughter, Ashlea Hope. Without Lea I never would have decided to do what I love instead of what is “lucrative” or “best.”

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to prove women's status as commodity within Jane Austen's most morally admired (though otherwise despised) novel *Mansfield Park*. Though almost unanimously admitted to be the moral center of the novel, Fanny Price, *Mansfield Park*'s heroine, is otherwise reviled by critics. This essay first compares Fanny Price to other Austen heroines (Anne Eliot, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, Emma Woodhouse, and Elizabeth Bennet) in an attempt to prove that Fanny is not substantively different from other heroines and therefore does not deserve the revulsion of critics. Once Fanny's position among Austen heroines has been equalized, the essay discusses the objectification of women through education within *Mansfield Park*, especially through the use of parallels between the novel and the play the novel's characters perform, Elizabeth Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows*. The idea of objectification is carried through a discussion of the sexualization of Mary Crawford and Fanny Price. The essay concludes that women are indeed commodified in *Mansfield Park*, which may account for critical disapproval of the novel. Furthermore, links can be made which would show that women are also objectified, sexualized, and, ultimately, commodified in other Austen novels though they are given some "veil" (i.e. wit, rank, money) to hide their final status of commodity. Since Fanny Price has none of these accoutrements, her status is obvious, so critics for the most part avoid discussing such points of the novel so as to circumvent the truth that women are portrayed as objects for sale on the marriage market.

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I. Introduction

As Jane Austen circulated the manuscript of *Mansfield Park* among her friends and relations, she scrupulously chronicled each reader's reaction to the novel. Interestingly, she recorded "Opinions" for only two novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, which could indicate that these were the two novels about whose reception she was most concerned. She revealed such feelings when she wrote of "hop[ing] on the credit of P. & P. [*Mansfield Park*] will sell well, tho' not half so entertaining" (L 146).¹ Any anxiety was unwarranted since *Mansfield Park* became one of only two of Austen's novels to go into a second edition during her lifetime (the other being *Sense and Sensibility*), yet though it was obviously popular with the public at the time of its release, Austen's recorded "Opinions of *Mansfield Park*" were mixed. Most of Austen's acquaintances did not like it as well as the almost unanimous favorite *Pride and Prejudice*; however, almost one-half of the recorded opinions placed *Mansfield Park* above *Sense and Sensibility* in the hierarchy of favorites (MW 431-435). Almost all of the unofficial reviewers agreed with Austen's publisher, Mr. Egerton, who "praised [*Mansfield Park*] for it's Morality," (MW 433).

More varied were the responses to other aspects of the novel, especially regarding the novel's heroine, Fanny Price. Austen's mother "thought Fanny insipid," and Austen's niece, Anne Lefroy, "could not bear Fanny" (MW 432). Yet others, like Mr. Benjamin Lefroy (Anne Lefroy's youngest son), liked Fanny so much that they were "angry with Edmund for not

¹ Works by Jane Austen quoted within this essay will be parenthetically cited as follows: *Emma* as E, *Selected Letters* as L, *Mansfield Park* as MP, *Minor Works* as MW, *Persuasion* as P, *Pride and Prejudice* as PP, and *Sense and Sensibility* as SS. Bibliographic information is contained in the Works Cited.

being in love with her” (MW 432). There was just as much controversy over Fanny and Edmund’s relationship. Another of Austen’s nieces, Fanny Knight, “was not satisfied with the end—wanting more love between [Fanny] & Edmund—& could not think it natural that Edmund should be so much attached to a woman without Principle like Mary C.—or promote Fanny’s marrying Henry,” while Mary Cooke, Austen’s second cousin, “thought [Fanny] ought to have been more determined on overcoming her own feelings, when she saw Edmund’s attachment to Mary Crawford” (MW 432, 433).

Modern critics continue this disagreement concerning *Mansfield Park*’s place in the hierarchy of Austen novels; however, though still Austen’s most morally admired novel, *Mansfield Park* has always been detested by modern critics for its heroine who “do[es] nothing” but “sit,” “wait,” and “endure” while never “put[ting] a foot wrong” (Tanner 143). Kingsley Amis goes so far as to call Fanny “a monster of complacency and pride under a cloak of cringing self-abasement” (Amis 144). Nonetheless, I maintain that Fanny is not substantively different from other Austen women. Upon investigating the women of other Austen novels, it can be discerned that Fanny does indeed share similar characteristics with other Austen heroines.

II. Fanny and Other Austen Women

The heroine most closely resembling Fanny Price is Anne Eliot from *Persuasion*.

Though often considered Austen's most feminist novel, *Persuasion* also has a very meek and mild heroine who is treated as an outsider within her own family. Anne is "never considered by the others" excepting Lady Russell (P 12). Furthermore, she resembles Fanny in appearance being "faded and thin" and "nothing...to excite...esteem" (P 6). Anne is also often influenced by others (reminiscent of Edmund's influence over Fanny), as is obvious in her past renunciation of her engagement with Captain Wentworth: "She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing—indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success" (P 27). Anne, like Fanny, pines and waits for the one she loves to acknowledge her, and her comment to Captain Harville near the end of the novel encapsulates both heroines, "All the privilege I claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one, you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone" (P 235). Fanny is by no means the only heroine to "do nothing" but "sit," "wait," and "endure" as can be seen above (Tanner 143).

Elinor and Marianne Dashwood are evicted from their home at the beginning of *Sense and Sensibility*—evidence of the patriarchal system at work. Elinor recognizes their position when she answers Marianne's cry, "What have wealth or grandeur to do with happiness?" with "Grandeur has but little, but wealth has much to do with it" (SS 91). Furthermore, when Colonel Brandon questions Elinor whether Willoughby's betrothal to Miss Grey is truth, Elinor replies, "It is. But have you likewise heard that Miss Grey has fifty thousand pounds? In that, if in any thing, we may find an explanation" (SS 199). Elinor understands that a

marriage without money will not succeed, and she further realizes that she and Marianne have “not either a great fortune or high rank” which means they must wed well in order to survive (SS 22). Marianne considers such a marriage would be “only a commercial exchange, in which each wished to be benefited at the expense of the other” (SS 38). However, Marianne “was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims” (SS 378). She, like Fanny, becomes “by general consent...the reward of all,” and in the same manner as Edmund from *Mansfield Park* is described, Marianne’s “whole heart became, *in time*, as much devoted to her husband, as it had once been to Willoughby” (emphasis added) (SS 378, 379). Marianne did not love her husband—such a love took time to develop, and in the meantime, while that love was growing, she “found her happiness in forming his” much as Fanny’s happiness comes from creating happiness for Edmund (SS 379). Many critics have commented how repulsed readers are when Marianne is paired with Col. Brandon, and some have noted that such a pairing is indicative of the societal norms, yet this has not stifled critical approval of the novel, and critics have not commented that Elinor’s situation in every way matches Marianne’s. Elinor, too, must watch and wait like Fanny since Edward is secretly engaged to Lucy Steele, and even after Edward has broken the engagement, “he is not the kind of young man...who could seriously attach my sister,” as Marianne notes (SS 17). Elinor, like Marianne, must settle in marriage though she is allowed to marry for love.

Even Emma Woodhouse, without her money and position, would again be similar to Fanny Price. Emma notes such a situation when she speaks of old maids, “It is poverty only

which makes celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! the proper sport of boys and girls; but a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else” (E 85). Yet even Emma’s fortune cannot entirely protect her from unwanted proposals, as is indicated by Mr. Elton’s proposal. Mr. Elton, in all his pomposity, “need not so totally despair of an equal alliance as to be addressing [him]self to Miss Smith” as Emma had thought and hoped; instead, “[his] visits to Hartfield ha[d] been for [Emma] only; and the encouragement [he] received,” or thought he received, from her (E 132). Emma replies, “Encouragement!—I give you encouragement!—sir, you have been entirely mistaken in supposing it. I have seen you only as the admirer of my friend” (E 132). This shows that Emma, too, is a woman on the market, and moreover, that others perceive her as such. Mr. Elton cannot fathom a woman not wishing to wed, and so when Emma grants him attention, for whatever misunderstood reason, he assumes she is interested in marrying him. Such an assumption reveals what society thought of single women—all are in want of a husband.

Even the vivacious and much-beloved Elizabeth Bennet is comparable to Fanny Price. Elizabeth Bennet is praised by critics and Austen herself for being “as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print” and “more clearly possessed of intelligence and warm affections” than other Austen heroines, and it has been adamantly argued by many that she is Austen’s epitome of feminism as she shows a “disregard for male opinion” and “is in the best position to educate [men]” (L 132, Kirkham 92, Cohen 225, Cohen 225). However, if Elizabeth is silenced, as Fanny Price must be since she is not “a gentleman’s daughter,” her situation

equals Fanny's (PP 356). She, too, is subjugated by a patriarchal society (even her family's home will not be hers since she refused Mr. Collins) and must wed to survive.

Mr. Collins states the situation plainly when he warns Elizabeth after she rejects his offer of marriage, "You should take it into farther consideration that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications" (PP 108). Mr. Collins makes obvious that an "unhappily small portion" of inheritance even for a woman with "manifold attractions" will do little to tempt men into marriage. Colonel Fitzwilliam continues this reasoning later in the novel when he notes to Elizabeth, "There are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money" (PP 183). Men of small fortune must marry for money more than for love in order to survive, just as women of small fortune.

Elizabeth's aunt, Mrs. Gardiner, discusses the naïveté involved in matches lacking money when she warns Elizabeth, "Be on your guard. Do not involve yourself, or endeavor to involve [Wickham] in an affection which the want of fortune would make so very imprudent" (PP 144). Mrs. Gardiner sees the growing attraction between Elizabeth and Wickham and wishes to save her niece from a match which would not be in her best interest. Even Jane acknowledges the need for money in relationships when she writes to Elizabeth of Lydia and Wickham's elopement and supposed marriage, "Such an imprudent match on both sides!...His choice is disinterested at least, for he must know my father can give her nothing," and Elizabeth, confiding the situation to Darcy, recognized that Lydia "has no money, no

connections, nothing that can tempt” Wickham (PP 273, 277). Elizabeth is unable to marry completely for love, she must also take fortune into account. However, if Elizabeth has little to “recommend her[self]” to men, Mrs. Bennet touches upon an even graver subject when she comments after discovering Elizabeth has refused Mr. Collins, “If you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all—and I am sure I do not know who is to maintain you when your father is dead.—*I shall not be able to keep you*” (PP 35, 113). Elizabeth must marry well in order to survive, thus making her, too, merely a barter-able good sold on the marriage market.

Fanny Price is like other Austen heroines which raises the question: why, then, does no one like her? Fanny Price is devoid of all veils of her predicament—she has not Elizabeth’s wit nor Emma’s station nor Marianne’s spirit nor Elinor and Anne’s assurance of true love. Without the coverings the other heroines are given shrouding the true situation, which is the same in all novels, the reader is left with no outlet but must fully face the often unpleasant reality of Romantic society—that women are for sale. Austen’s other novels defer this realization because the subplots are more pleasant. We do not realize Elizabeth’s predicament because we like her as a character; we do not comprehend Emma’s dilemma because she is wealthy and therefore need not wed to ensure her future stability; we do not recognize Elinor and Anne’s (along with Elizabeth and Emma’s) situation because they are allowed to marry their true love who also loves them in return; however, in *Mansfield Park*, we are given no safety nets. Fanny does marry her true love, but the reader is uncertain of the level of his attachment to her. Furthermore, since she has no qualities that endear her to the

reader, she cannot be literarily saved from her from misfortune, and the reader is left with no choice but to accept the fact that the marriage market and a woman's commodification as a result of it are not good.

Perhaps for this reason, *Mansfield Park* has generated more pages of scholarly criticism than other Austen novel while its heroine has received less pages of criticism than any other Austen character. It is interesting though, that no one has yet combined the two most popular Austen topics, the marriage market and women's education, both indicators of the commodification of women, with the least popular Austen topic, eroticism, since the three directly interrelate. In fact, since 1975, only seven articles consider the possibility of sex in Austen. The first article to suggest Austen's use of sexual language or innuendo—Alice Chandler's "'A Pair of Fine Eyes': Jane Austen's Treatment of Sex"—evoked little response from critics until the appearance (in 2000) of Jill Heydt-Stevenson's article, "'Slipping into the Ha-Ha': Bawdy Humor and Body Politics in Jane Austen's Novels." Heydt-Stevenson's controversial article attempts to prove that Austen knew, understood, and used erotic imagery by describing short, unconnected scenes containing sexual language from various Austen novels. Heydt-Stevenson details a variety of situations using erotic innuendo (such as Garrick's riddle, "Kitty, a fair, but frozen maid," in *Emma* and Anne's description of well-hung curtains as suggestive of Wentworth's masculinity in *Persuasion*), yet she neglects to analyze the situations and connect the interspersed scenes to trace the development of eroticism throughout a given novel or to connect the eroticism to other plotlines within the novel.

Though several have attempted to defend the fact that Austen is capable of including erotic body language in her novels, no one has yet clearly analyzed the implications of erotic metaphors throughout a given novel. Additionally, no one has discussed how such eroticisation is indicative of the commodification of women. Women's education and the marriage market are two motifs common to all Austen novels, so this essay will attempt to examine these two entities as a means of commodifying women within Austen's critically proclaimed (by contemporary and modern critics) most morally upright novel, *Mansfield Park*.

III. Commodification through Eroticized Education

Mansfield Park is Marvin Mudrick's "shrine of sexual taboo," Kingsley Amis's "palace of prudery," and Giulia Giuffre's "symbol of conservatism and decorum" (Amis 339-40, Giuffre 92). However, for it to be thus described, *Mansfield Park* is curiously rich in sex symbols, perhaps because it is, as Chandler declares, "a hot-house instead of a refrigerator" (93). To use Jill Heydt-Stevenson's phrase, *Mansfield Park* is full of bawdy body language.

Most disconcerting within the novel is the fact that the character most like the "traditional" Austen heroine is the very character we are led to find immoral and inappropriate. Mary Crawford is one of Austen's most sexualized figures, and Heydt-Stevenson discusses some of the scenes in which Mary Crawford makes sexual comments, such as when she states, "Of *Rears* and *Vices*, I saw enough. Now, do not be suspecting me of a pun, I entreat" (MP 44). The pun, referencing two ranks of Admiral, also coyly alludes to the Navy's reputation for sodomy. Since the focus of Heydt-Stevenson's article is more to prove that Austen uses erotic metaphors than to discuss the import those metaphors throughout a novel, she necessarily excludes discussing that Miss Crawford's bold declaration of her knowledge of this reputation in the form of a bawdy jibe and her final clarification that it was in fact a pun serve to provide an insight into her character. First of all, she is willing to engage in bawdiness for the sheer sake of sensationalism, regardless of what such a statement says about her character. Secondly, she is eager to ensure that her listeners understand the pun (i.e. she wishes to guarantee that a sensation is in fact created), even if she must frankly state that a pun has just been made. Both invite Miss Crawford's listeners and the reader to infer

that she did intend the pun and added the last statement as false piety to veil her true intention while actually bringing attention to it; furthermore, this comment allows the reader to begin associating sexual promiscuity with Mary Crawford. Miss Crawford shows that she understands sexual innuendo, uses it, and wishes to ensure her listeners infer the reference.

The hero and heroine of the novel set the example of how the reader should feel about Mary Crawford's crudeness. Such a remark, along with other comments about her uncle, makes even Edmund "fe[el] grave" and think something "not quite right" and other characters less forgiving of Mary's obvious faults than Edmund are taken aback (MP 44, 46). Fanny is "quite astonished" thinking Mary "ought not have spoken ... as she did," and Edmund must admit, "It was very wrong—very indecorous," to which Fanny adds, "And very ungrateful" (MP 46). Obviously neither is impressed by nor accepting of Miss Crawford's coarseness until Edmund remembers his feelings for her. Then, Edmund begins his rationalization of Mary's faults declaring, "The right of a lively mind, Fanny, seizing whatever may contribute to its own amusement or that of others; perfectly allowable, when untinctured by ill humour or roughness; and there is not a shadow of either in the countenance or manner of Miss Crawford, nothing sharp, or loud, or coarse. She is perfectly feminine, except in the instances we have been speaking of. *There* she cannot be justified" (MP 47). Edmund now fails to see the coarseness of Mary's comments, though Fanny is still conscious of Mary's impropriety. In reference to his assumption of Fanny's dealings for Miss Crawford, Edmund states, "I am glad you saw it all as I did," implying that he and Fanny were of like mind concerning Mary Crawford (MP 47). However, the narrator informs the reader of the true situation, "Having

formed her mind and gained her affections [Edmund] had a good chance of thinking [Fanny] like him; though at this period, and on this subject, there began now to be some danger of dissimilarity, for he was in a line of admiration of Miss Crawford, which might lead him where Fanny could not follow” (MP 47). This quote also foreshadows the scene at Sotherton where Mary leads Edmund into the wilderness, representative of the Shakespearean green world or the Renaissance *la selva d’amore* “always understood as a dark maze in which one loses one’s way,” leaving Fanny behind (Tanner 160).

However, perhaps the most pungent example of Miss Crawford’s erotic language, and hitherto unmentioned in criticism, is her comment, “Who is to be Anhalt? What gentleman among you am I to have the pleasure of making love to?” which she queries upon discovering she is to play Amelia in the private performance of Elizabeth Inchbald’s *Lovers’ Vows*. (MP 101). Miss Crawford boldly mentions sex in mixed (i.e. male and female) company, moreover in the company of acquaintances. She declares herself a sexual object, ready, willing, and happy to play a questionable woman who delights in seduction. Inchbald’s play, considered by Fanny and Edmund inappropriate for performance, details the education of a young tutor, Mr. Anhalt, by his charge, Amelia, in many ways paralleling Mary Crawford’s instruction of Edmund. However, by including a play involving sexual education between the sexes, Austen adds an erotic layer to her education motif. The “education scene” between Amelia and Anhalt in *Lovers’ Vows* becomes the model for the educational exchange between Mary and Edmund (and also Edmund and Fanny) central to the plot of the novel.

Inchbald's play creates a frame through which readers can view the concept of women's education. Amelia, in love with her tutor Anhalt, overtly attempts to school him in love, saying, "You have for a long time instructed me, why should not I now begin to teach you?" (Inchbald 352). Amelia undertakes the traditionally male role of pursuer, even revealing fatigue with Anhalt for proceeding so cautiously and carefully, traditionally feminine traits. She is anxious to begin a relationship with Anhalt, and since he will not speak of it, she intends to teach him the proper way to behave when courting a beloved. Anhalt, becoming the coy and elusive mistress, replies, "There are some things, I had rather never know," implying he either does not understand her proposal of promiscuity or does not wish to engage in inappropriate behavior with her (Inchbald 352). His response causes Amelia to answer:

"So you may remember I said, when you began to teach me mathematics. I said, I had rather not know it—But now I have learnt it, it gives me a great deal of pleasure—and perhaps, who can tell, but that I might teach something as pleasant to you as resolving a problem is to me." (Inchbald 352)

The sexual ramifications of "pleasure" coupled with "teach" and "pleasant" should alert Anhalt that Amelia means to school him not only in the classroom but also in bed. Aside from the fact that such straightforward language would be deemed highly scandalous from a lady's mouth, Amelia further reveals that her intentions are not completely honorable. Anhalt, though unbeknownst to him, has been pleasuring Amelia through his instruction of her, but she now wishes to take this simple stimulation one step further "teach[ing]" Anhalt "the

science of herself' and promising to be "agreeable for a tutoress" (Inchbald 352). She does, in fact, wish to wed Anhalt; however, more prominent is her desire to bed Anhalt. Though this may be appealing to most men, Anhalt informs Amelia, "This is nothing to the subject," which should be "love," not education (Inchbald 352). Amelia replies, "Come, then, teach it me—teach it me as you taught me geography, languages, and other important things [...] Ah! you won't—You know you have already taught me that, and you won't begin again" (Inchbald 352). Amelia seductively relinquishes to Anhalt the role of teacher, if he will only take part in the lesson. Anhalt responds, "You misconstrue—you misconceive every thing, I say or do. The subject I came to you upon was marriage," meaning her father's desire for her to marry the Count (Inchbald 352). Amelia answers, "A very proper subject for the man, who has taught me love, and I accept the proposal" (Inchbald 352). Anhalt proves his admirable, chaste nature; however, Amelia will allow no chastity in this conversation. The entire dialogue has been fraught with sexual innuendo, beginning with Amelia informing Anhalt he "is welcome at all hours," then promising to help him "make her out," and finally "exposing" her feelings to her father (Inchbald 350, 352, 353). She once again distorts and manipulates Anhalt's words, implying he had proposed. Anhalt claims he is once again "misconceive[d] and confound[ed]" (Inchbald 352).

The idea of "misconceiv[ing]," or mis-conceiving as in an irregular conception, implies that the sexual nature of the relationship is in some way wrong. This in many ways can correspond to the relationship between Mary Crawford and Edmund Bertram, since she is symbolic of what Edmund as a clergyman should be against. Amelia, with all her explicitness,

is paralleled in the character of Mary Crawford. Miss Crawford, saddened to hear that no Anhalt has yet been found, decides, “Amelia deserves no better. Such a forward young lady may well frighten the men,” thereby setting up a dare for Edmund, who refused to participate in the theatrical and was sitting nearby (MP 101). Miss Crawford becomes the “forward young lady” in her overt courting of Edmund thus parodying Amelia’s attempts to seduce Mr. Anhalt and lure him into a declaration of his love for her. Mary further challenges Edmund by proclaiming, “They do not want me at all...Mr. Edmund Bertram...I apply to *you*. What shall we do for an Anhalt?” (MP 102). By alluding to her conquest of Edmund under the guise of the play, Miss Crawford persuades Edmund to accept the part of Anhalt under the pretense of hoping to avoid “an evil of such magnitude as must, *if possible*, be prevented,” such as bringing an outsider into their private circle to play the controversial Anhalt, which, of course, might prove awkward for Miss Crawford (MP 108). Much as Mr. Anhalt is finally, after much pressure from his beloved Amelia, coerced into admitting his affection for Amelia and desire to marry her, Edmund also submits under the force of Mary’s desire to act with him and her seductive comments alluding to the plot of the play and their own encounters together. Afterwards, Mary grants Edmund such attention that Edmund is ““glad he had determined to do it”” (MP 111).

The “education scene,” the only scene in Inchbald’s play featuring only Amelia and Anhalt, is the very scene Edmund and Mary Crawford practice before Fanny, causing Fanny to be “inclined to believe their performance would, indeed, have such nature and feeling in it, as must ensure their credit, and make it a very suffering exhibition to herself” (MP 119).

Fanny, always meek, does not speak of her feelings for Edmund, and instead watches his growing attraction for Mary with heavy, yet willing, heart. The fact that Edmund and Miss Crawford perform the scene with “such nature and feeling” implies that they also understand the import of the scene. Furthermore, they may realize that Amelia’s instruction of Anhalt parallels Mary Crawford’s “instruction” of Edmund, for it is only after Mary Crawford’s arrival at Mansfield that Edmund begins to unfold as a sexual being capable of intimate feelings.

IV. Commodification through Sexualization

The sexual progression of Edmund, Fanny, and Mary can be best traced through the use of riding in the novel. Riding, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, already had sexual connotations during the Romantic period as it was inferred both that riding brings physical pleasure and that the act of sex involves a riding motion. After Fanny's old gray pony died, Fanny "was in danger of feeling the loss in her health as well as in her affections" since no arrangements were made to find her another means of riding (MP 27). However, Edmund, feeling a fraternal obligation to improve her health, decides, "Fanny must have a horse," and buys one (MP 27). Using the sexual implications of Fanny's means of "exercise," Edmund is the first to teach Fanny of sexual pleasure which follows the Freudian model of the acquisition of gender identity (in which a child's first means of sexual pleasure/gratification is initiated by sexual thoughts of close relation of the opposite sex). Nonetheless, when Mary Crawford decides to learn to ride, Edmund offers the very horse he bought Fanny, thus shirking his former fraternal tie in favor of a more sensual (and more appropriate since they are unrelated) relationship with Miss Crawford. He takes pleasure in teaching Miss Crawford to ride, "encouraging" her and "presid[ing]" over all of her attempts whereas the old coachman had accompanied Fanny (MP 48). His passive role in Fanny's exercise shows he is unaware of her sexual feelings for him, yet his active role in Miss Crawford's exercise implies that he realizes Mary's feelings for him, condones these feelings, and even encourages the growth and deepening of these feelings. Miss Crawford's pleasure is apparent when she says, "No part of [riding] fatigues me but getting off this horse, I assure you," and Edmund enjoys

this time with Mary so much that he forgets about the inconvenience to Fanny (MP 50). When he notices Fanny's deteriorating strength and health, Edmund is "ashamed to think that for four days together [Fanny] has not had the power of riding, and very seriously resolved, however unwilling he must be to check a pleasure of Miss Crawford's, that it should never happen again" (MP 54). This quote reveals Edmund's inner struggle concerning the two women in his life. While he is "Unwilling...to check a pleasure of Miss Crawford's," he realizes that Fanny should not, and would not again by him, be neglected (MP 54).

The act of riding also shows the contrast between Mary's sexual awareness and Fanny's unconsciousness of her sexual appeal. Mary is quite a different horsewoman from Fanny which is shown in the old coachman's remark, "It is a pleasure to see a lady with such a good heart for riding. I never see one sit a horse better" (MP 50). This is a very telling remark about her sexuality. Her "good heart for riding" is indicative, when the reader considers the sexual reference, of her desire to be a sexual object. Furthermore, the coachman continues, revealing the disparity between Mary and Fanny, when he says, "Very different from you, miss [Fanny], when you first began...how you did tremble when Sir Thomas first had you put on!" (MP 50). If the reader is to continue the metaphor of riding as a sexual act, Fanny's response is all that an innocent girl's should be—the idea of sexual exploration frightens her. Mary Crawford, on the other hand, embraces the chance to be daring and erotic with a "good heart" for it and never tiring of it.

However, Mary Crawford is not the only sexualized female in the novel. The entire scene at Sotherton is fraught with sexual metaphors which Heydt-Stevenson details to some

extent in her article. Henry Crawford helps the engaged Maria Bertram skirt the gate while Mr. Rushworth, the rightful proprietor, goes off for the key. Crawford censures Maria, “And for the world you would not get out without the key and without Mr. Rushworth’s authority and protection, or I think you might with little difficulty pass round the edge of the gate, here,...if you really wished to be more at large, and could allow yourself to think it not prohibited” (MP 71). Metaphorically, Rushworth has the right to unlock that gate, which is symbolic of Maria’s sexual chastity, yet Crawford forgoes the key and goes straight to the prize. Tony Tanner has pointed out the sexual significance of the locked garden at Sotherton, and Gerald Gould has explored the scene further and showed how the various sexual relationships among the characters are foreshadowed by the symbolic use of gates, keys, gardens, wilderness, and pointed spikes.² Answering Henry Crawford’s taunting of Maria, Fanny warns Maria, “You will hurt yourself against those spikes—you will tear your gown—you will be in danger of slipping into the ha-ha” (MP 71). Fanny’s reply does foreshadow Maria’s loss of sexual virtue as critics declare, but no one has discussed that Fanny’s reply also reveals that she understands the sexual innuendo.

Even when critics discuss sex in *Mansfield Park*, they have very little to say about the novel’s heroine, Fanny Price. Instead, Fanny is almost uniformly seen as “perfect femininity in a patriarchal society,” as Jane McDonnell notes (201). In fact, only Chandler and Heydt-Stevenson go beyond the implication of her name. Fanny, though a common enough name, is

² Tony Tanner, “Jane Austen and the Quiet Thing,” *Critical Essays on Jane Austen*, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) & Gerald Gould, “The Gate Scene at Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*,” *Literature and Psychology*, 20 (1970), 76-8.

slang for a female's genitalia at least since John Cleland's 1749 novel *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* starring the infamous Fanny Hill (OED). However, in *Mansfield Park*, Austen even further links the name with sex by giving her the surname Price. The implication of Fanny's name, then, is that women are simply sex objects for sale, very like the common prostitutes who are scorned by society. This is a pungent comment on the marriage market and women's role in it.

Despite these clear indications of erotic wordplay, no one has yet analyzed other metaphors regarding Fanny even though her very name oozes eroticism which should invite readings of *Mansfield Park* with Fanny as the center of sexuality. At the beginning of the novel, Fanny is colorless and unnoticeable. She is described virginally—pale with light eyes and wearing white both on her first outing to the Grants and to her first ball. Her bedroom is a little white attic, and her favorite ornament is a simplistic, nun-like amber cross. She is “somewhat delicate and puny,” “exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice” with “an obliging, yielding temper” (MP 9, 9, 14). Giuffre even remarks how symbolically virginal Fanny is (77).

It is only when Fanny is embarrassed that anyone notices her—when she blushes, usually because of heightened sexual tension, she becomes beautiful. For example, Mary Crawford makes “Fanny colour” when she paints an interesting sketch of Sunday morning church services (MP 62). Mary details that ““the young Mrs. Eleanors and Mrs. Bridgets—starched up into seeming piety, but with heads full of something very different—especially if the poor chaplain were not worth looking at”” (MP 62). Interestingly, these women are

married implying that their thoughts are erotic, and Fanny understands this implication which accounts for her discomfort. Another example of Fanny's blushing is when Edmund delivers his father's compliments to Fanny saying, "'Your uncle thinks you very pretty, dear Fanny...Anybody but myself would have made something more of it, and anybody but you would resent that you had not been thought very pretty before,'" and he is led to praise her himself with "'Your complexion is so improved! —and you have gained so much countenance!'" (MP 136). Yet this commendation has such an effect on Fanny that Edmund instructs her, "'—Nay, Fanny, do turn away about it...You must really begin to harden yourself to the idea of being worth looking at. —You must try not to mind growing up into a pretty woman'" (MP 136). Edmund's comment that Fanny should "harden" herself to being "worth looking at" implies that the marriage market is something inherently offensive to women, but also that it is something to which women should learn to submit. Furthermore, his comments suggest that Fanny's changing complexion is indicative of her maturation.

Blushing becomes a sign of the commodification of women within *Mansfield Park* since it is indicative of a mature, sexualized, available woman. David Southward comments, "Austen frequently uses a benign form of embarrassment, the innocent's blush, to point out modesty in favored characters" (766). However, Southward also admits, "The wicked are nearly as prone to guilty blushing" (766). In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny takes the former observation to an extreme—she not only blushes out of her own modesty, such as in the passage detailed above in which Edmund compliments her complexion, but she also blushes on behalf of others. Mary Crawford, after the great faux pas in the chapel at Sotherton

sketched above, is informed Edmund will soon enter the clergy she had just been satirizing. Fanny “coloured” on Mary’s behalf “but felt too angry for speech” and later even “pitie[s]” Mary who “rally[ing] her spirits, and recovering her complexion, replied only, ‘If I had known this before, I would have spoken of the cloth with more respect,’ and turned the subject” (MP 63-4). However, I would argue that neither Fanny’s “colour[ing]” nor Mary’s “recovering her complexion” are the blush of innocence. Fanny understands the sexual (or lack thereof) allegations with which Mary is charging the clergy in her scenarios (either being too attractive to be able to give a sermon since they inspire lustful thoughts in the female part of their congregation or else too plain to warrant attention and thus leaving the congregation to consider their own unholy and impure thoughts), and this knowledge, coupled with the knowledge of Edmund’s impending ordination, results in a guilty blush. Likewise, it is only when Mary begins to think of her indecent insinuations in relation to Edmund that she becomes affected. The joke was acceptable when presented only in vague terms, but when the unnamed clergyman who possibly inspires lustful thoughts is given the name and appearance of Edmund Bertram, Mary realizes how true her statements were and blushes.

All of these accounts of blushing are brought about by heightened sexual tension which can be used to create the metaphor of the blush as representative of vaginal stimulation. Such bodily descriptions signify the very Irigarayan terms in which Fanny develops as a character. Fanny very literally embodies men’s expectations. Luce Irigaray states, “The virginal woman...is pure exchange value. She is nothing but the possibility, the place, the sign of relations among men...she is a simple envelope veiling what is really at stake in social

exchange" (186). Irigaray's critique of a capitalist patriarchy is well suited for my discussion of commodification. The male characters in the novel understand Fanny's value as a pure and virginal woman. In fact, Henry Crawford, in language implying rape, seeks "glory as well as the felicity, of forcing [Fanny] to love him" (MP 326). According to Henry Crawford, Fanny has no choice in this attachment as it is up to him to "force" her to accept his proposal. Even her beloved Edmund realizes Henry's goal and urges Fanny to allow Henry to win his conquest of her when Edmund says, "Let [Henry] succeed at last, Fanny, let him succeed at last" (MP 209). The men understand the marriage market—men "succeed" while women submit. Furthermore, Fanny only blushes when others notice her bodily (again implying a kind of stimulation) or when sexual thoughts or the act of sex itself is referenced. It is thus fitting that Fanny becomes beautiful when she blushes for blushing signifies her ripeness.

Though perhaps disturbing, this objectification of Fanny is not completely negative as it is only through her relationship with Henry Crawford that Fanny begins to accept and become accustomed to her sexualized state. Before Henry begins courting her, Fanny tries to blend in with the scenery and averts her eyes so as not to meet anyone's gaze. She is described upon coming to Mansfield Park, "Fanny, whether near or from her cousins, whether in the schoolroom, the drawing-room, or the shrubbery, was equally forlorn, finding something to fear in every person and place," and upon returning from his ride with Miss Crawford, Edmund does not even notice her in the room. He asks, "But where is Fanny?—Is she gone to bed?" but "her own gentle voice" answered him "from the other end of the room" (MP 12, 51, 51). Only when Henry comes to Portsmouth does she begin to unfold as a

character—and a woman at that—instead of a piece of scenery. She becomes accustomed to the outdoors and masculine company, walking about and conversing with Crawford and even “laugh[ing] off” his compliments and allowing him to “press her hand” (MP 279, 280).

Furthermore, it is through Henry Crawford that Fanny becomes most sexually objectified, such as in his statement which is full of sexual insinuations, “It is ‘Fanny’ that I think of all day, and dream of all night. —You have given the name such a sweetness, that nothing else can now be descriptive of you” (MP 233). Henry’s comment further supports the vaginal metaphor (described earlier through the use of blushing) in connection with the novel’s heroine. Even though the novel does not indicate that any sexual misconduct took place, the insinuation remains that Fanny is stimulated by the attention of men, which though disconcerting if our heroine is to be a paragon of virginity, follows the Irigarayan model of feminine development in a capitalist patriarchy.

Perhaps as a result of her objectified state, Fanny is the only of Austen’s heroines to accept a second-rate marriage. Every other leading lady turns down the proposal of the man with no money. Elizabeth Bennett rejects Mr. Collins, and Emma Woodhouse rejects Mr. Elton, both of whom were clergy. Additionally, the other clergyman who proposed to one of Austen’s heroines, Edward to Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*, had a previously broken secret engagement which insinuates possible promiscuity since sexual restrictions were generally relaxed for engaged couples in this period. Thus the repertoire of the clergy is not very admirable, and even Edmund is not fully upright. He is overcome by Mary’s sex appeal even

to the point of rationalizing away her glaring faults by blaming her friends or thinking she must not understand what she is saying.

However, Edmund's most glaring fault is his likeness to Henry Crawford, and it is quite disturbing that Fanny marries someone very like the person she refused to marry. It is not only Edmund's aforementioned lack of judgment that parallels him with Henry Crawford. Edmund, like Henry, quite literally objectifies Fanny. Edmund "would not have the shadow of coolness arise...between the two dearest objects [he] has on earth," the two objects being Fanny and Mary (MP 181). And even the narrator barely views Fanny as a person. The narrator states that Fanny "must have been a happy creature in spite of all that she felt or thought she felt, for the distress of those around her" (MP 312). Our narrator refers to Fanny as "creature," denoting either an animal or someone in a despairing and despondent state (OED).

V. Conclusion

“Nobody falls in love with Fanny Price,” Tony Tanner cautions, and it seems in fact that no one does (143). Crawford (and possibly Sir Thomas) lusts after her, Edmund “regards” her, but no one loves her. In every other novel, there is a declaration of love by the hero for the heroine. Darcy has two proposal scenes in which he declares his love for Elizabeth, Edward Ferrars returns to the cottage and declares his love to Elinor before Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood, Captain Wentworth writes a stirring letter to Anne full of his longing and love, and Mr. Knightley declares his love to Emma in the garden. But Edmund has the pleasure of no such scene. The narrator gives us only, “Exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier, Edmund did cease to care about Miss Crawford, and became as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire” (MP 319). Edmund’s true motivation for marrying Fanny is then revealed:

With such regard for her, indeed, as his had long been, a regard founded on the most endearing claims of innocence and helplessness, and completed by every recommendation of growing worth, what could be more natural than the change? Loving, guiding, protecting her, as he had been doing ever since her being ten years old, her mind in so great a degree formed by his care, and her comfort depending on his kindness, an object to him of such close and particular interest, dearer by all his own importance with her than any one else at Mansfield, what was there now to add, but that he should learn to prefer soft light eyes to sparkling dark ones (MP 319).

According to the quotation, Edmund “regards” Fanny; he does not love her. Additionally, he made her who she is: an “object” compatible with his desires. She is not his first choice, but when Mary Crawford proves unredeemable, Edmund settles for Fanny since she was “formed by his care” and “depend[ent] on his kindness” and therefore similar in temperament and sexually safe. Edmund finds a good companion, not an independent lover. Furthermore, she is still, in Edmund’s mind at least, what Henry described her as earlier, “ ‘dependent, helpless, friendless, neglected, forgotten’ ” (MP 203). She is always a sex object or simply the only marriageable person left, and ultimately, she is a prime example of a commodified woman thrust upon the Romantic marriage market.

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Bildungsroman in *Mansfield Park*." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. Spring 1984 (17): 197-214.

Morgan, Susan. "Why There's No Sex in Jane Austen's Fiction." *Studies in the Novel*. Fall 1987 (19): 346-356.

Mudrick, Marvin. *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*. Berkeley: U of CA P, 1974.

North, Julian. "Conservative Austen, Radical Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* from Text to Screen." *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. London and New York: Routledge: 1999.

Southward, David. "Jane Austen and the Riches of Embarrassment." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. Autumn 1996 (36): 763-85.

Tanner, Tony. *Jane Austen*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U P, 1986.

Weldon, Fay. "Star of Age and Screen." *Guardian: Section 2*. 12 April 1995: 2-3, 12.

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Austen Criticism:

Amis, Kingsley. "What Became of Jane Austen?" *Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Ian Watt. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. 141-4. Amis is representative of those critics, among them Lionel Trilling, who despise *Mansfield Park*. Amis declares that Austen has been "corrupted" into being the "slave" of "conventional notions" in *Mansfield Park* whereas before she "set out bravely to correct" those notions of desirability and virtuousness, and he furthermore calls Fanny "a monster of complacency and pride under a cloak of cringing self-abasement" (Amis 144). This article was helpful in establishing a speculum of critical responses to *Mansfield Park*.

Brenner, Gerry. "*Mansfield Park*: Reading for 'Improvement.'" *Studies in the Novel* 97 (Winter 1975): 24-32.

Brenner discusses the analogy between physical improvement of property in the novel and characters seeking to improve their social positions setting up a metaphor of improvement throughout the novel. This article helped by revealing the ways in which characters seek improvement throughout the novel (i.e. socially, maritally, religiously) and ways in which they succeed to not.

Chandler, Alice. "'A Pair of Fine Eyes': Jane Austen's Treatment of Sex." *Studies in the Novel*. 7 (Winter 1975): 88-103.

Chandler mentions several unconnected scenes displaying sexual imagery, but mainly focusing on *Pride and Prejudice* as the center of Austen's sex metaphors. This was the first article to discuss sex in Jane Austen's work.

Dickson, Rebecca. "Misrepresenting Jane Austen's Ladies: Revising Texts (and History) to Sell Films." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: UP of KY, 2001. 44-57.

Dickson is irritated by the tendency of recent screenwriters of Austen films to discount women's history, societal norms during Austen's life, and Austen's own protofeminism focusing mainly on Dear's "Persuasion" and Thompson's "Sense and Sensibility." Her identification of inconsistencies allows for readers to recognize motifs within the novels (such as behavior of eldest daughters, acceptance of "feminine traits," etc.) not discussed in other criticism.

Giuffre, Giulia. "Sex, Self and Society in *Mansfield Park*." *Sydney Studies in English* 9 (1983-4): 76-93.

Describes *Mansfield Park* as a conservative and decorous place—thus suiting for Fanny—while contrasting Fanny's colorlessness with the Crawfords' vibrance and sex appeal. This article allowed for the application of Irigaray and Kristeva to the novel.

Heydt-Stevenson, Jill. "Slipping into the Ha-Ha': Bawdy Humor and Body Politics in Jane Austen's Novels." *Nineteenth-Century Literature*. December 2000. http://web2.infotrac.galegroup.com/itw/infomark/38/760/23085697w2/purl=rc1EAIM_0_A71885283&dyn=7!xm_1_0_A71885283?sw_aep=tel_a_apsu. 41 pars. 31 December 2001.

Heydt-Stevenson details unconnected scenes containing bawdy body language from various Austen novels without thoroughly analyzing any particular novel and without analyzing in detail the scenes she presents within the article. This article confirmed for me that there is a critical way to discuss eroticism in Austen without bordering on pornography.

Hopkins, Lisa. "Mr. Darcy's Body: Privileging the Female Gaze." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: U P of KY, 2001. 111-121.

Hopkins insists, "It is, traditionally, men who are possessors of the gaze in viewing on screen and film. *Pride and Prejudice*, however, is unashamed about appealing to women—and in particular about fetishizing and framing Darcy and offering him up to the female gaze" (Hopkins 112). Though Hopkins' article focuses on the screen version of a different novel from my concentration, her ideas about the feminine gaze are applicable to *Mansfield Park* as it is Fanny who is drawn to Edmund and not vice versa (and even Mary Crawford pursues Edmund before Edmund is aware of an attraction for Mary).

Kaplan, Deborah. "Mass Marketing Jane Austen: Men, Women, and Courtship in Two Film Adaptations." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: The U P of KY, 2001. 177-187.

Kaplan details the "harlequinization," or romantic formulaic-ness, of Austen in that Austen's romantic plot line (especially *Pride and Prejudice*) has become the "tip sheet" for modern romance novels and screenplays (Kaplan 178). This article made me wish to contradict Austen's critically perceived intentions.

Kirkham, Margaret. *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*. Sussex: The Harvester P, 1983. Kirkham divides her book into four parts: "Feminism and Fiction: 1694-1798" which helped define a frame for feminism at the time Austen was writing, "The Publication and Reception of Jane Austen's Novels, 1797-1818" which aided in identifying Austen's audience, influence, and acceptance, "Allusion, Irony and Feminism in Austen Novels" which discussed scenes from each novel containing feminism, and "Feminist Criticism of Society and Literature in the Later Novels" which gave a feminist theoretical framework surrounding *Mansfield Park* for me to pursue.

Looser, Devoney. "Feminist Implications of the Silver Screen Austen." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: U P of

KY, 2001. 159-176.

Looser's article details that the popularity of screen adaptations of Austen is reflective of current societal feminist trends. My converse application of her theory reveals that the feminism in the original text (from which these current adaptations draw) is reflective of the developing Feminist Movement of Austen's own time.

McDonnell, Jane. "'A Little Spirit of Independence': Sexual Politics and the Bildungsroman in *Mansfield Park*." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 17 (Spring 1984): 197-214.

McDonnell describes Fanny as an admirable character—"Perfect femininity in a patriarchal society"—while detailing other characters moral faults (201). This article upheld my original view that critics fail to realize the sexual implications surrounding *Mansfield Park*'s heroine.

Morgan, Susan. "Why There's No Sex in Jane Austen's Fiction." *Studies in the Novel* 19 (Fall 1987): 346-356.

Morgan defends Austen for having no sex in her work going so far as to write, "The romantic encounters between Austen's leading characters are not sexual, not literally sexual, but also not metaphorically sexual" (351). Morgan compares Austen's works to other works she considers overtly sexual in an attempt to prove that "Austen has none of this" (350). This article is representative of the "purists" in Austen criticism who I refute.

Morgan, Susan and Susan Kneeder. "Austen's Sexual Politics." *Persuasions* 12 (December 1990): 19-23.

This low-brow article attempts attempt to prove that Austen makes sexual puns, especially in *Mansfield Park*. Morgan and Kneeder served to provide a measure for Austen criticism ranging from popular criticism (which this article is) for non-scholars and the more high-brow criticism of Austen scholars.

Mudrick, Marvin. *Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery*. Berkeley: U of CA P, 1974.

Mudrick discusses, mainly in reference to *Pride and Prejudice*, the use of pride and discrimination in characters as a means of irony. I used this book, especially to the chapter on "Irony as Discrimination," in relation to *Mansfield Park* to understand how irony and discrimination play into the novel (for example, Mary shunning the clergy until she discovers it is Edmund's future occupation).

Murray, Douglas. "Spectatorship in *Mansfield Park*: Looking and Overlooking." *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 52 (June 1997): 1-26.

Murray discusses spectatorship in relation to landscapes and characters, especially Fanny. Murray attempts to draw comparisons between Fanny's discomfort in

being an object of observation and Austen's own "feelings of horror" at being in the public eye. His article was helpful in creating my embarrassment/Irigaray argument.

North, Julian. "Conservative Austen, Radical Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* from Text to Screen." *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. London and New York: Routledge: 1999.

North, while berates the Thompson screen version of *Sense and Sensibility* for changing the text in order to sell Austen to the public, also makes many statements indicative of critics' responses to Austen. This article is representative of the "purist" Austen critics.

Palmer, Sally. "Austen's *Mansfield Park*." *The Explicator* 56 (Summer 1998): 181-4.

Palmer correlates different breeds of horses to different breeds of characters in the novel. Palmer asserts that the family amounts to a controlled domestic breeding program where only the morally well-bred are selected to reproduce and perpetuate the family lineage. I refute this article since Edmund is not consistently steadfast throughout the novel.

Pedley, Colin. "'Terrific and Unprincipled Compositions': The Reception of *Lovers' Vows* and *Mansfield Park*." *Philological Quarterly* 74 (Summer 1995): 297-317.

This article discusses Austen's use of the play within the novel as a means of attacking democracy and individual freedom associated with the French Revolution (since the play originated in France). Though I use *Lovers' Vows* in a different way by citing it as proof of eroticism within the novel, Pedley's article helped frame the criticism of *Lover's Vows*.

Preus, Nicholas E. "Sexuality in *Emma*: A Case History." *Studies in the Novel* 23 (Summer 1991): 196-216.

Preus "examine[s] the way in which the discourse of sex situates itself as the fundamental concern of the novel of manners generally and Jane Austen's *Emma* specifically" while discussing the necessity of sex in a good marriage (196). This was a trail blazing article for its blatancy of language and gave me a frame (his article vs. Heydt-Stevenson's) to fir within when discussing eroticism.

Samuelian, Kristin Fliieger. "'Piracy Is Our Only Option': Postfeminist Intervention in *Sense and Sensibility*." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: U P of KY, 2001. 148-158.

Samuelian discusses patriarchy and its refusal of feminism, particularly in Thompson's screenplay "*Sense and Sensibility*" which interpolates feminist dialogue. This article was most helpful while constructing my argument centering on Fanny as an object of exchange (which follows the Irigarayan model).

- Southward, David. "Jane Austen and the Riches of Embarrassment." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 36 (Autumn 1996): 763-85.
 Southward traces moments of social embarrassment throughout Austen's novels in an attempt to provide insight into the social values of the 19th-Century English society in which, Southward claims, embarrassment functions as a social equalizer for both sexes. I use this article because *Mansfield Park* breaks this norm in that Fanny and Mary are the only characters to blush, color, lose complexion, or otherwise show signs of embarrassment. I used this article most in the construction of my ideas of the commodification of women as indicated by blushing.
- Tanner, Tony. *Jane Austen*. Cambridge, MA : Harvard U P, 1986.
 Chapter 5 of Tanner's novel, entitled "The Quiet Thing: Mansfield Park," details Fanny's unlikeness to other Austen heroines, even attempting to show that since Fanny is Austen most disliked heroine, Mansfield Park is Austen's most profound book (thus compensating for the shortcomings of the heroine). I refute this article but used it as representative of the critical comments on Fanny in relation to other Austen heroines.
- Trilling, Lionel. "Mansfield Park." *Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Ian Watt. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963. 124-140.
 Trilling upholds that *Mansfield Park*, in particular its heroine, is a model of morality. Though I personally refute this article, it does not enter my thesis; however, it was instrumental in my discovery of what type of criticism my work is up against.
- Troost, Linda and Sayre Greenfield. "The Mouse that Roared: Patricia Rozema's Mansfield Park." *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. Lexington: U P of KY, 2001. 188-204.
 This article discusses the recent *Mansfield Park* adaptation as concerned with a large segment of society than Jane's normal small country aristocracy, detailing critics' responses to the film. This article was useful in setting boundaries—Troost and Greenfield cite the purists and the liberals, so I could more easily set a frame for Austen criticism.
- Weldon, Fay. "Star of Age and Screen." *Guardian*: Section 2. 12 April 1995: 2-3, 12.
 Weldon's article describing Austen's current return to popularity. Not a very substantive article, since for a newspaper, but it contained good material which I used in my introduction.
- Wiltshire, John. *Jane Austen and the Body: "The picture of health."* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge U P, 1992.

Chapter 2 of Wiltshire's text, entitled "'Eloquent blood': the coming out of Fanny Price" details *Mansfield Park* as a rite of passage story centered upon Fanny Price. Wiltshire discusses Fanny's development in psychological terms which helped lead my thoughts toward the French Feminist theorists.

Background and Feminist Criticism:

Brazier, Jana Evans. "Dualism and French Feminist Thought." *ACLANet Documents*. U of MA. 19 March 2002. <http://www.umass.edu/complit/aclanet/DualFFem.html>
A discussion of the idea of dualism in relation to the development of Feminist thought giving particular emphasis to Cixous and Irigaray. It was helpful in connecting the two theorists' ideas and in understanding the relationships of the opposites, called "mirrors" by Irigaray and "binary oppositions" by Cixous.

Cixous, Hélène. *Hélène Cixous Reader*. Ed. Susan Sellers. New York: Routledge, 1994.
This text compiles selections from the essays, fiction, lectures, and drama of Cixous with helpful introductions to each piece. The *Reader* gave me a nice background and overview of Cixous which then allowed me to apply her ideas to other feminist criticism.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Derrida Reader*. Ed. Julian Wolfeys. Edinburgh: Edinburgh U P, 1998.
<http://www.netlibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=9615>.
This web-text consists of previously published essays and fragments, mostly translated from French. Especially important are the two chapters on metaphors which were influential to both Cixous and me in deciphering sexual metaphors and allegories contained within texts.

Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1978.
This text discusses the ambivalent and hierarchical nature of language. It was influential to Cixous and also helpful in the section where I discuss Fanny's objectification.

Euripides. *Electra*. Ed. J.D. Denniston. Oxford: The Clarendon P, 1939 (1968 printing).
This is the drama upon which Freud bases his analogy of the "Electra Complex."
Reading the drama allowed for further understanding of the allusion and thus greater understanding of Freud's description of the complex which is also discussed by Irigaray, Kristeva, and Gilbert and Gubar.

Feminist Theory Website: Julia Kristeva. Ed. Kristin Switala. 1999. Center for Digital Discourse and Culture at VA Technical U. 22 March 2002.
<http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/Kristeva.html>

Switala's website contains a critical article, "Kristeva and Feminism" by Kelly Oliver, detailing Kristeva's major theories and their application within Feminism and also includes an interview with Kristeva in which she discusses her theory of the origin of language. This site provided a useful simplification and overview of Kristeva's work I could then apply to other feminist theory.

Freud, Sigmund. *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Trans. and Ed. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books, 2000.

This text is a compilation of essays detailing Freud's major theories involving sexuality and the development of genderized behavior providing a survey of Freudian analysis regarding sexual ideologies in relation to women. Freud's work regarding sexualization was extremely influential to Irigaray and Cixous both of whom refuted many of Freud's arguments.

Hirsh, Elizabeth and Gary A. Olson. *A Meeting with Luce Irigaray*. Trans. by Elizabeth Hirsh and Gaëtan Brulotte. 13 November 1998. U of South FL College of Arts and Sciences. 20 March 2002. <http://www.cas.usf.edu/JAC/163/irigaray.html>
This site contains the transcript of an interview with Irigaray in which Irigaray details and explains many of her theories and views. This overview to Irigaray's ideas gave me the foundation to allow for further research into her theories.

Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter. New York: Cornell U P, 1985.

This text elaborates on the status of woman in Western philosophical discourse and in psychoanalytic theory. The entire work, especially the chapter entitled "Women on the Market," helped develop the idea of sexual commodification and relate it to *Mansfield Park* through the use of sexualized imagery and discourse within the novel.

Kristeva, Julia. *The Portable Kristeva*. Ed. Kelly Oliver. New York: Columbia U P, 1997.
This is a compilation of Kristeva's most important writings. Reading her work allowed me to understand and apply her theories to other feminist criticism.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Anthony Wilden. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins P, 1968.
In this text, Lacan discusses psychoanalysis and psycholinguistics. His work greatly influenced Kristeva in her analysis of "body language" and sexual metaphors relating to the female body which I later draw upon through Irigaray when discussing Fanny's objectification.

Robbins, Ruth. *Literary Feminisms*. New York: St. Martin's P, 2000.
This text provides a map of feminist theories in literary studies by showing the reasons for the development of literary critiques, explaining the difficulties, and

exposing the shortcomings of feminism. It allowed me to put feminism into perspective and it directed me as to which theorists to pursue in my research.

Sophocles. *Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra*. Trans. H.D.F. Kitto. Ed. Edith Hall. Oxford and New York: Oxford U P, 1998.

Oedipus the King is the drama upon which Freud bases his analogy of the "Oedipus Complex." Reading the drama allowed for further understanding of the allusion and thus greater understanding of Freud's description of the complex which is countered by Irigaray, Kristeva, and Gilbert and Gubar. Sophocles' *Electra* also allows for an alternate reading (i.e. to Euripides' *Electra*) of Freud's "Electra Complex."

STATEMENT OF CRITICAL INFLUENCES

Though always having loved romanticism (and Romanticism) and Austin film adaptations, I had only read *Pride and Prejudice* before taking a 4000-level English course focusing on Jane Austen in the summer of 2000. Then, I did not realize that the course would mark the beginning of a two-year obsession with Austen's works. It was during that Austen course that I first began to notice sexual imagery in Austen's novels, in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* in particular. I was interested, and as I read Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*, I noticed ways that Austen refuted the "traditional" roles of women endorsed by Rousseau and others. I spoke with the instructor of the Austen course, Dr. Susan Calovini, who encouraged my pursuits, and I continued to uncover eroticisation and feminism within the two novels throughout the remainder of the course.

In December 2000, Jill Heydt-Stevenson's article, "'Slipping into the Ha-Ha': Bawdy Humor and Body Politics in Jane Austen's Novels," emerged. For the first time, I realized that there is a critical place within academia for what up to that point I had considered nothing more than a mere, yet intellectually healthy, undergraduate fancy. I began seeking erotic metaphors in the other Austen novels with which I was familiar, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Northanger Abby*, and *Persuasion*. Then in Spring 2002, I had a course with Dr. Ann Hawkins in which we were required to read *Mansfield Park*. I had never read *Mansfield Park* before, so I sat down one weekend in February and completed the task. I was completely shocked and dismayed. I did not like the novel, and I always loved Austen's work. I began wondering why—both why I did not like the novel and

why Austen would write a novel I did not like. I had always enjoyed Austen's wit and humor along with her feministic characters defying male stereotypes. Why had she suddenly, toward the end of her career, altered her views? I was confused.

Dr. Hawkins understood my frustration and suggested I read Luce Irigaray. Irigaray was quite complex—much more than a weekend read. For weeks I muddled through her book *The Sex Which Is Not One*. I would read ten or twenty pages and then come across some theory with which I was unfamiliar. That would direct me backwards to Freud or Lacan (which sometimes led even farther back to Sophocles and Euripides), or laterally to Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous, or forward to Alice Chandler and Heydt-Stevenson. I began writing my thesis, documenting all the ideas stemming from the incompleteness in the field of Austen and eroticism. I decided to focus on *Mansfield Park* since something intrigued me, even though I did not enjoy the novel, since there was so much no one had discussed. Finally, in late May, I understood why I did not like *Mansfield Park*. Irigaray's discussion of women on the market directly corresponded to what I disliked in the novel—the commodification of women. My focus was found, and the thesis began to develop. I decided to answer my own questions within the essay.

Once I knew the concentration of the essay, I returned to criticism in my original passion, Austen on film, and discovered much assistance in interpreting women's roles through articles by Lisa Hopkins, Julian North, Kristin Flieger Samuelian, and others. The film critics spoke about embarrassment and gaze in ways that literary critics did not. This, of course, can be attributed to the visual nature of film contrasted with the imaginary nature of literature; however, I found that the more concrete descriptions and

interpretations were more useful as I expanded upon my discussion of Irigaray.

Additionally, such Austen critics as Kinsley Amis and Tony Tanner were helpful as I established a framework for the essay. Finally, critics like David Southward, with his discussion of ungended embarrassment, and Nicholas E. Preus, who manages to walk the thin line between eroticized literature and pornography in his article, facilitated me as I strove to find a way to discuss my ideas on paper.

VITA

Haley Fishburn is a Master's candidate at Austin Peay State University where she received the William McClure Drane Award conferred upon the outstanding member of the graduating class for her undergraduate work. She has had a longstanding love of Austen, especially of "unpopular" Austen topics such as eroticism and commodification, and she hopes to continue working on the ideas presented in this thesis in order to submit an article for publication on the topic of the commodification of Austen's women. Upon completion of her M.A., she will pursue graduate work in law.