



Austen's Fanny Price, Grateful Negroes, and the Stockholm Syndrome

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POST-COLONIAL CRITICS have long recognized that Austen's *Mansfield Park* constitutes a profound engagement with the discourses surrounding the slave-trade, British slavery in the West Indian colonies, and emancipation. In 1989 and again in 1993, Edward Said famously argued that Austen was "implicated in the rationale for western imperialism" by promoting in *Mansfield Park* a Christian "patronage" that depended upon and domesticated the wealth produced by Sir Thomas's slave plantations in Antigua.¹ And in 1991 Moira Ferguson analyzed in detail the ways the novel represented, however anxiously, a benevolent paternalism, in which Sir Thomas functions as the humanitarian planter who treats his slaves, including Fanny Price, with firmness but compassion. In this essay, we want both to extend and to contest these interpretations by reading *Mansfield Park* through the lens of Maria Edgeworth's powerful and broadly circulated novella, "The Grateful Negro." We wish to argue that Austen by drawing an analogy between Fanny Price and the "grateful Negro" is not endorsing an ameliorationist program of benevolent slavery or a self-regulating Christian imperialism, but rather *exposing* the abject subjectivity produced by such a program. While the enslavement of Africans in the West Indian colonies was certainly a greater historical horror than the domestic oppression of poor English women, the psychological responses of Edgeworth's black slave and Fanny Price are strikingly similar. In other words, in this essay we want to focus, not so much on the structure of race relations invoked by the "Negro" of our title, as on the dynamics of gratitude illuminated by Edgeworth's text.

First, for those who may not know Edgeworth's widely read moral tale published in 1804 in her *Popular Tales*,² a brief synopsis. "The Grateful Negro" is a didactic story that promotes the ameliorationist argument that the slaves in the West Indies, if treated well, are better off than in the barbaric conditions of their native Africa. Edgeworth contrasts the thoughtless indifference of the slave-owner Jeffries and the relentless cruelty of his overseer Durant to the benevolent practices of the enlightened Mr. Edwards and his humanitarian manager Abraham Bayley (whose wife runs a school for the youngest slave-children). When Jeffries decides to sell the wife of one of his slaves, Caesar, Mr. Edwards generously buys both Caesar and his wife Clara, gives them a cottage of their own, and even entrusts Caesar with a knife to trim his plantings; Caesar, overwhelmed, cannot even speak his "gratitude" (549). Meanwhile, Caesar's closest friend Hector is plotting a slave-rebellion against Jeffries, with the help of the Obeah woman Esther: the power of Obeah religious practices over the African mind is documented in a footnote longer than the page. When Caesar, indebted to Mr. Edwards, refuses to participate in this rebellion, Esther drugs Clara, threatening to kill her. Caesar returns home, avowedly to get his knife in order to join the revolt, but in fact to warn Edwards, for as Edgeworth writes, "his sense of gratitude and duty could not be shaken by hope, fear, or ambition; nor could it be vanquished by love" (554). Edwards and his men surround Esther's cottage just as the rebel slaves take their oaths of revenge. Hector then stabs Caesar; but Edwards calms most of the rebels, though a few succeed in killing Durant and burning Jeffries's plantation. Caesar recovers, Clara emerges from her drug-induced trance, Jeffries flees the islands, and Edwards remains in firm control of his plantation, happily supported by his grateful Negro Caesar.

There is much one could say about this tale.³ Edgeworth's concept of a rationally governed slave-plantation in which the slaves are assigned fixed daily tasks, paid for their overtime, allowed free use of their leisure time and given one day off to cultivate their own gardens and sell their produce, all under the guidance of a humane estate manager, is in fact a defense of her own family's treatment of the Irish tenant-serfs on her Anglo-Irish estate at Edgeworthstown. Her ameliorationist program looks forward to the substitution of wage-labor for slave labor, once the workers have learned the disciplines of capitalist production. The role of the knife in her tale is particularly telling: given to Caesar by Edwards, it then participates in black-on-black violence (when Hector stabs Caesar), black-on-white violence (when the rebels

kill Durant), white-on-black violence (when Durant flogs Hector's friends), but *never* in white-on-white violence. On the other hand, Edgeworth's tale is perhaps unique among the pro-Planter discourses of the day in giving at least a minimal voice to the subaltern—both in the form of a lengthy footnote detailing the practices of Obeah and in a telling question. When Jeffries asserts that his slaves “are a thousand times happier here, than they ever were in their own country,” Mr. Edwards asks, “Did the negroes tell you so themselves?” (548).

Here we want to focus on the echoes of this tale in *Mansfield Park*. We might begin with the obvious parallels: Sir Thomas is the slave-owner who exerts “absolute power” (326) over both Fanny and his daughters; by the end of the novel, he has learned that such tyranny is “grievous mismanagement” (535) and transforms himself into a benevolent planter or “master” (427). He is married to a stereotypical West Indian planter's wife, the languorous, slow-moving, and self-indulgent Lady Bertram.⁴ He delegates his authority to his often cruel and morally unscrupulous overseer Mrs. Norris (who lives in the “White” house and whose name echoes that of the notorious Liverpool slaver's agent, John Norris); she is eventually replaced by his more “useful . . . , steady and quiet” estate manager, Tom (whose rule is reinforced by the chastened, ordained Anglican Edmund) (534). The role of the rebellious slave is here played by Mary Crawford, who, the narrator tells us, “is not the slave of opportunity” (412), and who is exorcised from the novel as a woman with “a corrupted, vitiated mind” who is little better than a prostitute, beckoning seductively with a “saucy, playful smile” from her open doorway (528, 531).

The novel is set in 1810–1813, coinciding with the slave-rebellions—or what the novel calls the “[u]nfavourable circumstances” (43)—in the colonies of 1809, 1810, and 1811, all reported, along with the fall in the price of sugar, in Sir Thomas's favorite journal, the anti-Jacobin *Quarterly Review*. The slaves on Sir Thomas's Antiguan plantations are, apparently, resisting his overseer to such a degree that Sir Thomas himself must spend two years there re-establishing order.⁵ The slave-revolt at home in England is of course located first in the private rehearsals of *Lovers' Vows*—in which the players indulge in a “riot” of gratification (144), perhaps an allusion to the 1737 slave-rebellion in Antigua in which the slaves came together under the pretense of putting on a play, a “military Dance and Shew,” in “open Day-light” (*Genuine Narrative* 1). This riot inspires the further rebellion of Maria Bertram against the “prison” of Sotherton (62) and her marriage to Rushforth, when she elopes with Henry Crawford, and her final punishment, her life-long incarceration with Mrs. Norris. Henry Crawford himself serves to remind us of the irresponsible,

self-indulgent, amoral West Indian planter, whose “improvements” are anything but. The end of the novel re-establishes the discipline of the benevolent planter under the “perfect” “view and patronage” of Mansfield Park (548), whose very name of course ironically echoes Lord Mansfield’s 1772 legal decision that “the air of England is too pure for slaves to breathe in.”⁶

And Fanny Price? She can be aligned emotionally with Caesar, the grateful Negro, the devoted house-slave, perpetually loyal to her master. Let us track the ways in which this “delicate and puny” young girl (12) is disciplined into an obedient, even enthusiastic supporter of the Mansfield plantations, before we comment on the implications of this “education.” Taken from the bad air and noisy chaos of the Price household, in effect “sold away” from her native country, “longing for the home she had left” (14), Fanny Price creeps around Mansfield Park, “forlorn” and in “constant terror” (16). When Edmund alone takes pity on her, offering to mail a letter to her beloved brother William, she is filled with “gratitude and delight” (18). Edmund immediately recognizes that she is a tractable being, with “an obliging, yielding temper” (19), “an affectionate heart, and a strong desire of doing right” (18), which in this novel will mean doing what Edmund tells her to do, reading his books, thinking his thoughts. From this moment on, Fanny’s over-riding emotion is gratitude—the word is used, along with *grateful*, *ungrateful* and *ingratitude*, 41 times in this novel.⁷ Under the tyrannical oversight of Mrs. Norris, who constantly reminds Fanny that she is the “lowest and last” (258), her life is one of excessive deprivation: Fanny is consigned to the subaltern’s small “East” Room, without a fire throughout the winter months. She wears unfashionable, old clothes, never leaves the estate, and gets little fresh air or exercise. Most important, she has no friends beyond her absent brother. As a result the smallest attention produces overpowering feelings of gratitude, as when Edmund first offers her a horse to ride (to replace the pony she lost) and then “ask[s] her leave” (78) to take it away again, for Mary Crawford’s use. When she is allowed to accompany the family to Sotherton, her “gratitude . . . was in fact much greater than her pleasure” (93). And when Sir Thomas sends her to a dinner party not on foot but in a coach, she is overwhelmed with “tears of gratitude” (259).

It should not surprise us that the character who actually owns black slaves in a colony, Sir Thomas, does *not* want to talk about his slaves. Brian Southam suggests that the “dead silence” that follows Fanny’s request for more information about the slave trade indicates that Sir Thomas’s “loquacity may have dried up at the mention of slaves” (495). Sir Thomas’s silence might suggest either that he considers it inappropriate to discuss slavery with his family, the

evils of which were unsuitable for a Regency drawing room, or it might register his shame or even his implicit acknowledgement of the criminality of his participation in the by-now outlawed trade. The Parliamentary Abolition Act of 1807 prohibited the slave trade: it was “hereby utterly abolished, prohibited, and declared to be unlawful” (47 Geo III Sess.1.c.36). Austen forces her readers to imagine a place that her character refuses to describe, one into which Sir Thomas and his eldest son must disappear for two years in order to secure the family’s financial comfort. Despite Sir Thomas’s silence on the matter, the success of his slave plantation determines the quality of life and the sustenance of the next generation of Bertrams at Mansfield Park. The existence of these unnamed slaves working on the Bertram plantation in Antigua alerts the reader to the other forms of slavery and submission represented in Austen’s text.

Fanny endures brutal treatment at the hands of those upon whom she depends, and the language that describes her submission is the language of slavery. Just as the slavery of Sir Thomas’s plantation goes unacknowledged, so does the slavery of Sir Thomas’s English household. The discussion between Edmund and Fanny that follows Sir Thomas’s silence encapsulates this relationship between masters and their slave laborers. Edmund, genuinely concerned for Fanny’s survival within the Bertram household, urges her to assert herself, “I only wish you would talk to him more.—You are one of those who are too silent in the evening circle” (231). Fanny responds, saying,

“And I longed to [ask more questions]—but there was such a dead silence! And while my cousins were sitting by without speaking a word, or seeming at all interested in the subject, I did not like—I thought it would appear as if I wanted to set myself off at their expense, by shewing a curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel.” (231–32)

Here, Fanny and Edmund significantly misapprehend each other. Edmund encourages Fanny to ask his father questions—*not* in order to glean information about slavery, but in order to compensate his father for his hospitality with attention and interest. In other words, Edmund delineates to Fanny what sort of service she owes his father in exchange for his benevolence. Fanny is genuinely interested in the substance of her uncle’s stories from abroad and longs for further information; Edmund interprets that interest as a performance of duty. His instructions here—“I only wish you would,” “[I] was in hopes the question . . .,” “It would have pleased your uncle” (231)—are bent on maintaining his father’s happiness, not on satisfying Fanny’s curiosity.

Fanny’s interest in the details of her uncle’s West Indian experiences

further places her in opposition to Julia and Maria Bertram. Fanny understands that her questions about her uncle's travels make her cousins look self-centered in comparison. She must therefore repress her own desires for knowledge in order to maintain her inferiority. Her acute awareness that her curiosity might "set myself off at their expense" indicates that she does not need Edmund's instructions to intensify her efforts to "please."

Fanny registers only two significant moments of resistance in the novel, both worthy of examination. She refuses to "act" in the private theatricals (171). But since in the reading we are proposing, these performances of *Lovers' Vows* are manifestations of rebellion,⁸ a liberation of the erotic desires so long "repressed" (22) under Sir Thomas's tyrannical regime, Fanny's refusal to participate may signal her loyalty to that very regime, a loyalty so intense that it causes her to distance herself even from Edmund. Second, Fanny refuses to accept Henry Crawford's marriage proposal. But note that his proposal follows upon a ball given by Sir Thomas to introduce or display Fanny's "remarkably good looks" (316) to the public eye. This ball is specifically associated by Sir Thomas, in a conversation with William Price, with the "balls of Antigua" (292), balls that—as K. Dian Kriz has documented—often functioned as slave-markets in which well-dressed African and mixed-race women were surreptitiously bought and sold by the local white planters. Preparing for the ball, Fanny is distraught, not because of the ball itself—although she fears that she will not be able to dance well enough—but because for the first time in her life she has the opportunity to make a choice, to exert agency, to *act*. But the choice she has to make is, literally, which chain she should wear—that of Henry Crawford (the "showy" filigree chain) or that of Edmund (the simple, more subtle chain). Fanny chooses Edmund's chain (although she finally wears both to the ball). She is thus prepared to endure the treatment both of Sir Thomas's "medicinal project" (425) of sending her back to Portsmouth, "the abode of noise, disorder, and impropriety" (450), in other words, the site of uncivilized barbarism, as well as the sustained sexual harassment of Henry Crawford's more subtle exercise of power, his gaining of a promotion for her brother William, for which, she feels, "she *must* have a strong feeling of gratitude" (378, our italics).

Fanny's so-called "ingratitude" for refusing Crawford's offer of marriage is thus an expression of a more profound gratitude, a total subservience to the disciplined, self-regulating and oppressive ethical system of Mansfield Park. From Sir Thomas's final perspective, she is "a great acquisition" (546), the perfect daughter, one schooled above all in "self-denial and humility" (536), a pearl beyond price who embodies the "sterling good of principle and temper" (545). She is therefore rewarded, if that is the right word, with a life-long marriage

to the man who has dominated her mind and heart since she was first brought to Mansfield Park and thus completely incorporated into the “patronage” of Sir Thomas Bertram and his “livings.”

Fanny’s enduring lack of self-esteem and perhaps unmerited admiration for Edmund surfaces tellingly in her response to her sister Susan’s education at Portsmouth:

[Fanny’s] greatest wonder on the subject soon became—not that Susan should have been provoked into disrespect and impatience against her better knowledge—but that so much better knowledge, so many good notions, should have been hers at all; and that, brought up in the midst of negligence and error, she should have formed such proper opinions of what ought to be—she, who had had no cousin Edmund to direct her thoughts or fix her principles. (460)

Here Austen’s free indirect discourse reveals how fully Fanny has absorbed Edmund’s view of her intelligence. In Susan, Fanny has clear proof that a person *can* develop an astute, if imperfect, moral compass *without* the intervention of a master to guide her. Instead of drawing the logical conclusion, that a person does not need a “cousin Edmund” to have “knowledge” and “good notions,” Fanny feels only confusion and “wonder.” The verbs used in this passage to describe Edmund’s style of educating Fanny—that he “directs” her thoughts and that he “fixes” her principles—remind us how effectively he has dominated her mind. Not only does he “direct” and “fix” her perceptions of the world, but he also has convinced Fanny that she cannot have “proper” opinions that differ from his own.

But what of Fanny’s own feelings? Throughout the novel, Fanny has displayed the subjectivity of powerless abjection, namely, an intense masochism: she is happy in her cold, cheerless East Room, content to suffer and be still. In her, this masochism unites, not with sadism—Fanny never has an opportunity to exert domination over another person (except perhaps her sister Susan, whom she trains for a similar life of grateful servitude)—but with a persistent *schadenfreude*, the pleasure she takes in the suffering of others. When Edmund and Mary part at the end of the ball “with mutual vexation” (324), Fanny “had seen enough to be tolerably satisfied. It was barbarous to be happy when Edmund was suffering. Yet some happiness must and would arise, from the very conviction, that he did suffer” (324). And when the entire Bertram household is in distress over Maria’s elopement and Fanny is summoned back to Mansfield Park, “She was, she felt she was, in the greatest danger of being exquisitely happy, while so many were miserable” (513).

We can see Fanny as Edgeworth's grateful Negro, a disciplined, obedient slave who identifies not with her own family but with the slave-owner who has acquired and educated her, transforming her from an "uncivilized" field slave into a cleaner, better-dressed house-slave: "Portsmouth was Portsmouth; Mansfield was home" (499). But we would like to push this analogy one step further, into a more contemporary arena. We would like to suggest that we might also see Fanny as someone who is suffering from what today we would call the Stockholm Syndrome, the psychological response of those abducted hostages or prisoners who develop an intense loyalty to their captors, regardless of the danger or risk in which they have been placed.

The FBI's July 2007 *Law Enforcement Bulletin* describes the typical symptoms found in victims of Stockholm Syndrome in terms surprisingly resonant with Austen's own:

- 1) Hostages have positive feelings towards their captors.
- 2) Victims show fear, distrust, and anger toward the [law enforcement] authorities.
- 3) Perpetrators display positive feelings toward captives as they begin to see them as human beings. (De Fabrique et al. 13)

Recent research into the conditions of the syndrome has altered the way in which crisis negotiators now manage captive-situations:

Crisis negotiators no longer consider the bonding that occurs between captive and captor detrimental. They encourage its development because it improves the chances of hostage survival, despite the fact that it sometimes means authorities no longer can count on the cooperation of victims in working for their release or later prosecuting the offenders. (13)

These developments in hostage negotiation might offer us further insight into Fanny's finely-tuned sensitivity towards Edward's proclivities and tastes:

[Captives] must become highly attuned to the pleasure and displeasure reactions of their captors. As a result, victims seem more concerned about their perpetrator's feelings than their own. . . . Victims are overwhelmingly *grateful* to their captors for giving them life and focus on their kindness rather than their brutality. (14, our italics)

Forensic psychologist Scott Allen Johnson, in *Physical Abusers and Sexual Offenders*, further explores the similarities between the victims of the Stockholm Syndrome and the mental condition of battered women (294). Joan Ray has provocatively discussed Fanny as a battered child. Here we would go one step further to suggest that Fanny's behavior strikingly resembles the classic pattern of Stockholm Syndrome sufferers.

Stockholm Syndrome was named after the robbery of the Kreditbanken at Norrmalmstorg, Stockholm, in August 1973, during which the robber held four bank employees (three women and one man) hostage in the vault with him for six days. The victims became emotionally attached to their captor, defending him vigorously against the police after they were freed from their ordeal.⁹ Psychoanalysts have attributed this syndrome to the strategy evolved in newborn babies whereby they form a deep emotional attachment to the nearest powerful adult in order to maximize the probability that this adult will help them to survive, even if the adult is not a good parental figure. Perhaps the most famous sufferer from the Stockholm Syndrome is Patty Hearst, the millionaire heiress who was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army in 1974, converted to their political ideology, and then took active part in an armed robbery. After her conviction and Presidential pardon, she married her former body guard, Bernard Shaw.

No scene better depicts the extent to which Fanny suffers from the condition now known as Stockholm Syndrome than the one in which she and her sister Susan sit upstairs in the Price household in Portsmouth. Austen here emphasizes the pleasure Fanny feels in sitting in a cold room only because that cold room reminds her of her life back at Mansfield Park: Fanny and Susan “sat without a fire; but *that* was a privation familiar even to Fanny, and she suffered the less because reminded by it of the east-room” (461). That privation gives comfort to Fanny, reminding her of the home she now greatly misses, suggests that she has “positive feelings” towards her “captors.” She associates pleasure with discomfort—a true indication of a “dissociative disorder,” given that her perception of pain has been aligned with a feeling of pleasure.

We believe that Austen intends us to read this passage, and the following, as an indication of the insidious effects of a lifetime of cruelty. As Fanny finds ways to pass time in the cold room with Susan, she remembers how much she loves to read: “wealth is luxurious and daring—and some of hers found its way to a circulating library. She became a subscriber—amazed at being any thing *in propria persona*, amazed at her own doings in every way; to be a renter, a chuser of books!” (461). This passage can be read as poking fun at Fanny’s provincialism. Austen describes Fanny’s self-assigned title as “a renter, a chuser of books!” as if a “renter,” like a “land-owner,” deserves a formal designation. The Latin tag also ironically formalizes the moment. Fanny’s use of her ten-pound allowance, hardly “wealth,” on books is decidedly *not* “luxurious and daring.” The humor of this passage would not be lost on any reader who acquired his or her copy of this very book from a lending library and who had *chosen* to read the book for herself. The levity of the passage, however, but thinly disguises its darker meaning: Fanny has been deprived.

Classifying Fanny's feelings towards her own subordination as the condition known as Stockholm Syndrome helps to explain the unnatural way in which she embraces her deprivations of comfort and freedom in the novel. In "The Grateful Negro," Caesar's knife symbolizes the way in which slaves become accustomed to doing without the necessities of life. The slave Caesar finishes his work for the day and returns home to find his master, the "benevolent" Edwards, trimming a tamarind tree overhanging the thatched roof of his cottage. As when Thomas visits Fanny's room in his house for the first time after ten years and asks her, "Why have you no fire to-day?" (360), Edwards turns to Caesar and asks, "How comes it, Caesar, . . . that you have not pruned these branches?" (552). That Caesar lives in a thatched-roof hut reveals his rustic lifestyle—a lifestyle that would be improved considerably by the use of a knife. Yet it never occurs to Caesar to complain.

When Fanny returns to her room and finds a fire lit in it for the first time, her response is a cry of gratitude: "I must be a brute indeed, if I can be really ungrateful!" said she in soliloquy; 'Heaven defend me from being ungrateful!' (372). Caesar responds to the gift of a knife in a strikingly similar way: "no sooner was Mr. Edwards out of sight, than he knelt down, and, in a transport of gratitude, swore that, with the knife, he would stab himself to the heart, sooner than betray his master!" (552). The subordinates' reactions to their masters' generosity occur when they are alone, out of sight of the persons to whom they feel grateful. That these two characters express this gratitude when alone, and not in front of a master as a performance of duty, indicates that their sense of inferiority and of deserved deprivation is genuine: they are convinced that they are inferior to those who are above them in the social hierarchy. But Austen and Edgeworth differ in purpose: Edgeworth is persuading her readers that the kind master inspires loyalty in his slaves and that this loyalty is a beneficial consequence of benevolence. Austen is indicating, through her ironic depictions of Fanny's enthusiasm ("A fire! it seemed too much" [372]), the degree to which Sir Thomas is ignorant of the needs of those who serve and depend on him. The way in which he phrases his question—as if it were just "to-day" that Fanny has no fire—indicates his unfitness to command a household of people, let alone a plantation of slaves in another part of the world.

If we take this suggestion seriously, that Fanny is suffering from what today we would recognize as the Stockholm Syndrome, then we might read the conclusion of *Mansfield Park* differently. Rather than the affirmation of colonial imperialism that Edward Said saw, rather than the endorsement of a

benevolent paternalism that Moira Ferguson and George Boulukos see, rather than the promotion of a self-regulating Christian evangelicalism or female patriotism that Ruth Yeazell (143–68), Saree Makdisi and Jon Mee see,¹⁰ we might instead read it as an extremely perceptive psychological and political analysis of the subjectivity produced by such a system of “evangelical imperialism.” Fanny Price is an unlikable heroine, and for good reason. She is the very embodiment of a servile mentality, of the subjectivity of abject gratitude, which Jane Austen here displays and calls into question by exposing its complex registers of masochism and delight in the sufferings of others. After all, gratitude is what we feel when we get something we have not earned—a gift, the affection and support of a parent or friend: that is why Elizabeth Bennet’s overwhelming feeling for Darcy is gratitude. But we also feel gratitude when we are not punished when we could or should have been: that is why Fanny feels such enduring gratitude to Edmund and then to Sir Thomas. By revealing the limitations of such an abject subjectivity, of such servile dependency, Austen undermines the entire regulatory system of capitalist exchange, colonial slavery, and benevolent paternalism that inevitably produces a Fanny Price, a grateful Negro.

Given our reading of *Mansfield Park*, a reader should be reluctant, in these last pages of the novel, to endorse Fanny’s own estimation of her condition. Edmund was “as anxious to marry Fanny, as Fanny herself could desire” (544). If the past is any indication of the present, the reader can safely assume that Fanny’s “desire” has been effectively regulated, even repressed. Austen leaves her reader with a terse but telling summary of her heroine’s destiny: upon the death of Dr. Grant, Fanny and Edmund move to the parsonage, “which under each of its two former owners, Fanny had never been able to approach but with some painful sensation of restraint or alarm,” but which “soon grew as dear to her heart, and as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as every thing else, within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park, had long been” (547–48). Fanny may live quite happily in her condition, but it is important to remember how distorted her “eyes” are. Read within the context of Fanny’s suffering, this conclusion enables us to see the degree to which Fanny’s interiorization of the cruelties inflicted upon her has led her into a lifetime of eager subservience. Her marriage to Edmund merely prolongs her sentence as a slave on the Bertram estate. The purview of “the view and patronage of Mansfield Park,” after all, includes a profitable slave-plantation in Antigua.

Fanny’s emotional subservience has deeply distorted her vision—a distortion that Austen depicts with such accuracy and precision that it perfectly presages the Stockholm Syndrome, even though this condition was not officially

acknowledged as a mental disease until 1973. Austen's subtle rhetorical maneuverings have led critics to overlook how radical a statement she makes here about the condition of women in her day—a mental condition perhaps not far removed psychologically from the battered women of ours. When read alongside “The Grateful Negro,” which uses the same master-narrative to justify slavery, *Mansfield Park* stands as a powerful revelation of the insidious forms of enslavement that wear the mask of benevolence. *Mansfield Park* is finally a novel, not so much of “ordination,” as of *subordination*. Fanny's abjection is written, of course, not only on her mind but also on her body, expressed through her recurrent headaches, fatigue, trembling, and “delicate and nervous” frame.¹¹ In these last lines of her novel, perhaps her most brilliant piece of ironic indirect discourse, Austen forces her readers to inhabit, if only for a moment, this abject subjectivity.

NOTES

1. Said's analysis of *Mansfield Park* has been much criticized, both by traditional Janeites (see Southam, Wiltshire) and by liberal feminist critics (see Fraiman). It has also garnered a great deal of supportive criticism (see Malone, Lew, Mee, Tuite, Perry, Perkins, among many others). Kenyon Jones has drawn parallels between Fanny Price and Lord Mansfield's own bi-racial grand-niece, Dido Elizabeth Lindsay. The financial condition of Sir Thomas's estate has been definitively analyzed by Lloyd. Austen's knowledge of the slave-trade has been supported by Harris and Kaplan.

2. Edgeworth's *Popular Tales* was widely distributed, especially through the circulating libraries; by 1811, it had reached a third edition, and by 1827, an eighth.

3. For insightful readings of Edgeworth's politics and “The Grateful Negro,” see Hurst, McBride (42–54), Boulukos, Corbett, and Kim.

4. In her novel *Belinda*, Maria Edgeworth refers to the stereotype of the Creole women as languorous, pale, and slow in their movements (219). Deirdre Coleman also draws this connection between Lady Bertram and the West Indian planter's wife (354).

5. We have many quarrels with John Wiltshire's attack on post-colonial readings in “Decolonising Mansfield Park”; here we would note that if Sir Thomas's estate-income relied so little on his Antiguan returns as Wiltshire suggests, he would hardly spend two years away from home overseeing them. His suggestion that Antiguan planters were more benevolent than their counterparts on other West Indian islands only reinforces our argument.

6. For Lord Mansfield's decision, see *The English Reports* 98 (King's Bench Division 27), Easter Term, 12 Geo. 3, 1772: K. B. SOMERSET *against* STEWART, May 14, 1772.

7. Only *Pride and Prejudice* uses the cognates of gratitude more often—42 times—which throws an interesting light on Elizabeth Bennet, who may well be closer to a “grateful negro” than critics have acknowledged (see Mellor's *Romanticism and Gender*).

8. Michael Karounos shrewdly sees the conversion of the estate from a “place of order (reading) to one of disorder (acting)” as Jane Austen's “parable of revolution within the estate” (721).

9. The term “Stockholm Syndrome” was coined during a news broadcast by Nils Bejerot, a medical

professor who specialized in research on addiction and who served as a psychiatric consultant to the Swedish police during the standoff; it is also known as Survival Identification Syndrome.

10. For other readings that define Fanny as finally the voice of Christian virtue in the novel, see Karounos, Waldron, and Jager (who more precisely describes the system of latitudinarian Whig theology, which the novel putatively endorses).

11. John Wiltshire has discussed the implications of this “somatization” of Fanny’s character through her body, and the ways in which it associates her daily tasks, “standing and stooping in the sun” as she gathers roses and runs errands for Mrs. Norris, with the lives of West Indian slaves (*Jane Austen and the Body* 72–73, ch. 2 passim).

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