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**Politics of Irony in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park***

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**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Hem Kumar Lamichhane has completed his thesis entitled "Politics of Irony in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from December, 2010, to May, 2011 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled "*Politics of Irony in Jane Austen's Mansfield Park*" by Hem Kumar Lamichhane has been submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

Jane Austen as a novelist of early nineteenth century gives a vivid picture of contemporary society in her novel *Mansfield Park*. She raises some of the sociopolitical issues to depict the social reality of the time. *Mansfield Park* is about the threat to an existing ideologies and its reform. Herein Austen uses irony to dramatize the crisis and failure of the so-called patriarchy on the one hand and the failure of the colonial motive of white man's civilizing mission in the Caribbean Island on the other. Her politics of irony is most subversive one in that it reveals her inner thought about women's emancipation and individual freedom. It is an artistic quality and craftsmanship of Austen who has successfully deviated from conventional thought of looking at female as inferior. Her heroine violates the conventional boundaries, and the norm of Austen's irony follows from this very violation which she supports.

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## Chapter One

### **Jane Austen and Politics of Irony in *Mansfield Park*: An Introduction**

Jane Austen is a well known woman novelist of early nineteenth century period. In her works she portrayed the contemporary social, economic and political condition of the upper-middle class society, which was essential in the period. However, her novels display an ambiguity about emotions and appreciation for intelligence and natural beauty that aligns with romanticism. In the awareness of the condition of modernity and city life and the consequences of family structure and individual character, Austen plays vital role in literary field. Most of Austen's novels are based on the social, political and domestic background, where she has raised the issues of gender, race, class, ethnicity, culture, religion, politics and others.

*Mansfield Park* is Jane Austen's third novel published in 1814. It is an even more socially aware novel than others. It focuses on the complex and unusual aspects of sociopolitical condition as it does in the slave trade and the roots of British upper crust's wealth in corruption and exploitation. It is probably least romantic, ironical and most pragmatic of Austen's novels as its abrupt and rather matter of fact shows.

*Mansfield Park* is Austen's most oppressive novel in its dominant emotional atmosphere which induces certain vertigo evident in the apparent rock-like society and also the true and hopeless elusiveness of the world. It is a "canon of great literary masterpieces" which concern with the failure of great authority of contradictory patriarchal ideology and broad expanse of domestic imperial motive even without which Britain's subsequent acquisition of territory which would not have been possible.

*Mansfield Park* is one of the best examples of political irony which dramatizes and threatens upon the dominant existing ideologies like hegemonic patriarchy

conventional notion of thought, so-called sophisticated and highly fashionable life: belief on money, marriage, life, liberty, property and existing colonial as well as imperial motive of British people. Austen is attacking on asocial and immoral structure of the time through this novel. Such unusual aspects create instability through characters' different activities like incest between Edmund and Fanny, sophisticated manner and hypocritical behavior of Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris and then the stereotypical attitude towards Fanny Price and her resistance against conventional patriarchal domination and unsuccessful colonial intention and moral failure of Sir Thomas Bertram in his Caribbean Island.

Jane Austen uses irony to depict the instability, complexity, ambiguity, virtues and vices and of the contemporary British culture and also to resist those unusual aspects. In surface level *Mansfield Park* doesn't seem to have the presence of irony but in deeper level this novel is not untouched by ironical representation. Mostly, it is full of political irony. Austen uses irony as a political tool which relates with social, historical, cultural and political evidences. Irony functions here as a discursive strategy which adds the said and unsaid meaning of certain context. In this respect one of the famous critics Claudial L. Johnson in *Jane Austen and Mansfield Park* argues:

The most unsettling irony of *Mansfield Park* then is that the failures of conservative ideology, not exclusively, but still most heavily [...] on the only member of the household to believe and act by it fully to the very end. From the squalor of Portsmouth it seems to Fanny that all preceded in regular course of cheerful orderliness at Mansfield that everybody had their due importance and everybody's feelings were consulted. (266)

Austen's political use of irony shows the failure of so called traditional and conservative ideology that is the moral failure of patriarchy and colonial motive of British people. *Mansfield Park* provides the structures of modern society based on conservative ideologies, most subversively and in some ways most obliquely of all, in its representation. Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris's contradictory patriarchal ideology morally becomes failure after Fanny's innocent movement in the Mansfield society. Sir Thomas and Mrs. Norris's thinking is modern but their behavior is too much conservative. It is an ironical representation but politics of irony subverts such conservative ideology.

Jane Austen ironically sets up uncomplicated moral oppositions: good ideologies and bad ideologies, good girls and bad girls, good marriages and bad marriages and moral and immoral attitudes to reinforce the socio-political ideas. To the extent, that the illicit liaison between Henry and Maria, Edmund and Fanny contrast with the lawful marriage. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram's nature towards Fanny goes beyond the morality of good parents and Sir Thomas's corrupted colonial motive on a Caribbean Island contrast with contemporary British government's moral policy. Politics of irony throws the feminist as well as anti-authoritarian message to equate all the internal dialectical contradictions among the characters in *Mansfield Park*. Jane Austen's heroine quietly undercuts the so-called conventional boundaries in an ironic way. The central instability no longer remains in its existence after her movement. Fanny Price becomes a theatrical champion in self-dramatizing way. She fights against her own gender and class, and its groundless patriarchal ideology that of Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram who are the female owners of Mansfield Park society. It is an ironical aspect of Jane Austen, where female is fighting against her own gender and class.

Austen inspires women and their position in society. Her particular female character plays crucial role for social change. Brain C. Southam in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage* says: “Austen was enrolled in many causes and seen in conflicting roles sometimes as affirmable heroine, sometimes as a champion of domestic value” (16). According to Southam, her ironical strategy is for socio-political ground.

Southam remarks:

The serious debate about women’s education and role in marriage and society in progress is her ironic strategy. While *Sesame and Wilef* spoke desperately of the ‘mission’ and ‘rights of woman’ reminds its readers of what womanly mind and power are in office; of the dignity of woman and of woman’s true queenly power. Not in their households merely, but overall within their spheres. Irony in her writing for the relationship between male and female that constitutes a direct social complication. (11)

As a woman writer Austen used her irony about woman and their experiences as individuals in their relationship with man. Her irony is for social evolution and subversion of power politics. She also has explored some sociopolitical issues of her time that is the slavery and British imperial movement in its territories despite being she herself a British writer.

Austen's *Mansfield Park* uses irony to reduce the social anarchy that is domination, adultery, betrayal, hypocrisy, dominant hegemonic ideology and unusual social and political scenario. In *Mansfield Park*, irony functions as a discursive strategy which policy is to resist the sociopolitical complexities, ambiguities, follies and vices. Discursive communities make irony possible in interpreting whether arising from ironist's intention or from the interpreter's responses. The social

circumstances of irony make its politics inevitable of the said meaning with unsaid one. Irony has its discursive presence in the aesthetics, social, ethical, cultural religious, economic, ideological and historical aspects of contexts of use and interpretation. Irony emerges out of the contrast between what is implied by action what are the actual consequences, what is stated, what is expected to happen and what actually occurs.

Irony in *Mansfield Park* is a speech act, which involves the broader political and social frame to come to being. It is used as an involving disjunction between intended and explicit meaning to put it clearly in different term. Joseph Litvak in *English Romantic Irony* talks about:

Irony is used to both great and small effect. Mrs. Grant for instance, constantly states her own wishes and aversions in terms of others advantages rather than her own attempt to manipulate everyone around her (and until the end of the novel largely succeeding) in the passive progressive way. (37)

Irony is used to show both great and small effects in *Mansfield Park*. Most of the character's attitudes are complex and ambiguous. These attitudes are the true representation of eighteenth and nineteenth century British society. Austen sets her irony for domestic to broad political activities. She starts from household activities than reaches to political issues that are upon domination and exploitation of patriarchy and the expansion of British Colonialism. Her irony is mostly subversive one which challenges and subverts the ideological confrontation of the contemporary society.

Irony happens in discourse, its semantic and syntactic dimensions cannot be considered separately from the social historical and cultural aspects of its contexts of deployment and attributions. *Mansfield Park* is enormously complicated novel even

by the standards of Jane Austen who creates characters and situations of unusual complexity. It is one of the best of Austen's novels, where politics of irony is most subversive as well as radical.

Jane Austen's characters instead of being prime and colorless as they are look new and use to be outspoken, dangerous and headstrong in the early nineteenth century economy, authorial independence and the awareness of gender politics.

Another critic Jan Fergus in *New Casebook of Austen* writes:

Irony for a sense of power that radiates through *Mansfield Park* and attributes this to Austen's new-found professional confidence. This approach to Austen's life has implications for an understanding of the revolution in Austen studies generally since the 1970s revolution in which socio-politically based and feminist critics have played crucial parts. (8)

Irony is to reveal the power or to show the sense of power. There seems something more sparkingly incomprehensible in the power, the failures of the inequalities of memories than in any other intelligence. The memory is sometimes so retentive, so serviceable, and so obedient at others, so bewildered and so weak, so tyrannical and beyond control. Austen's use of irony indirectly the signal of revolution of the contemporary base. Her irony concerns with the female experiences and feelings. Thus, feminist critics take irony as a weapon to critique the oppositional discourses. Among these discourses one tries to dominate and other tries to resist the domination like feminine and male discourses in *Mansfield Park*, where male discourse tries to dominate and feminine discourse tries to resist it.

Irony has the larger sense of certain background. It focuses upon the misplaced and misguided practices. The ironists have the intention to avoid such

practices and create comfortable environment. Jane Austen also wants to create a peaceful environment avoiding such unusual practices. Her ironical strategy is somehow distinct from others. It's because her irony is directed not only upon characters but also upon the readers also. In this response R.M. Brownstein in *Jane Austen: Irony and Authority* remarks:

In irony, even in the large derived sense of the world, there is a kind of malice. The ironist has the intention of practicing upon the misplaced confidence of the literal mind, of the disappointing comfortable expectation. Jane Austen's malice of irony is directed not only upon certain of the characters in her novels but also upon the reader himself.

(34)

Jane Austen questions the contemporary unusual norms and values through *Mansfield Park*. She upside downs such established traditional and conservative structures. Her advocacy of liberal and revolutionary mind questions the rigidity of ideologies of socio-political phenomena. Her ironical appraisal challenges the groundless existence of rigid patriarchal ideology. It is the politics of irony, which functions as a modern rhetorical tool to maintain status quo. In this regard talking about her approach Judy Simons in her essay "Jane Austen and Her Politics" quotes:

Austen emerges as a prominent of liberalism by virtue of the fact that she exposes the ideology of the family and country and lays bare the cracks of in the structure of establishment [...] thus questioning the conventional aristocracy's fitness for society. (9)

*Mansfield Park* not only is the story of a girl who triumphs by doing nothing but it is a story which questions upon the established so many so called and civilized norms and values of the eighteenth and nineteenth century period. It uses irony to question those

so-called and civilized norms and values as well as the virtues and vices of that period. It is like a serious comedy, which is concerned with the serious subject matters. Mary Lascelles a critic, in her book *Jane Austen and Her Art* appreciates Austen as well as her work *Mansfield Park*:

*Mansfield Park* is a comedy, with a great interdependence humbly unrealized or willfully ignored until too late and as Lady Bertram is unreflective response to events serves to register their pressure. So her perverse reaction on each of the family to the thrust and strains of the human relationship is used in making understand their force. Austen plays with irony as narrative opacity for sociopolitical issues in historical context. (164)

Austen in her novel depicts the vivid picture of the contemporary sociopolitical issues that comes with an evil and villainous character. The characters carry self-deception, virtues, vices and snobbery, which are essential feature of her period. Sir Thomas Bertram and Mrs. Norris's evil nature upon Fanny's pure innocence is revealed by the politics of irony to show the moral and immoral representations.

*Mansfield Park* reflects the social immobility for more than just the setting of social status. Fanny and her siblings Mary and Henry Crawford are ambiguous figures in this regard. All of them are shuttled between different households growing up and it is never clear whether it is that undergoing personalities or their situations that have made than what they are. *Mansfield Park* captures the dominant ideology of the time. It is one of the most progressive social criticisms. It critiques upon inherent social dogmas and moral difficulties, where politics of irony tries to undermine the patriarchal propensity and create new feminine realm that is full of freedom, equality and justice. It not only functions as self realization for the marginalized but even

brings them to the worldly consciousness. Austen tries to make conscious about how ideology functions in the system of priorities, practices and attitudes by the different social behaviors. These social behaviors prevail actually in the novel as a whole assails the ideological contradiction of its time for privileging the greedy, mean-spirited and pedestrian.

Austen's act of cynicism and iconoclasm in *Mansfield Park* is important to posit the stability, authority, costume sobriety and staunch morality. Edmund and Fanny are attractive, sensible and sympathetic despite their passing flaws. The footless Crawfords are patently unfeeling amoral and materialistic; and the novel as a whole rigorously moral in meting out its rewards to the deserving and its punishments to the undeserving. Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram's rootless ideology and Sir Thomas's endangered authority remain in crisis after Fanny's slow action.

Austen's use of irony on Fanny's most distinctive act of courageous humility is to challenge both the unshared purposes: inferiority and superiority through the cultivation of her own strong desire to do right. Thus, to challenge immoral and unshared purposes on moral instead of personal, self serving ground she uses irony for social affirmation. Avrom Fieldsman in this regard asserts:

Austen's use of irony in Fanny's rejection of Henry is an act of courageous humility and threat to the patriarchal ideology. Accepting his proposal would have been an affirmation of her fears of inferiority. It would have been a submission to the dominant opinion that Henry was a good match and an accession to the implicit suggestion that she was not a moral agent. (43)

Fanny as a woman character of lower class rejects Henry's proposal that is her courageous humility. Ironically it is an opposition of patriarchal authority of

Mansfield society. Fanny departs from patriarchal ideology and starts to create her own ideology. Austen uses irony to resist the ideology of upper class society because Henry is from sophisticated manner. Fanny's Rejection of Henry's proposal is the rejection of patriarchal order.

The brilliant ironic effect of Austen's fiction asserts *Mansfield Park* opposition in social conventions and individual passion to transform the literary stereotypes on moral sophistication in which characters represent antithetical temperaments. The story contains much social satire, targeted particularly at four members, Mrs. Norris, Lady Bertram and Sir Thomas Bertram and Fanny Price as well. It is perhaps the most socially realistic novel, with Fanny's family of origin coming from a much lower echelon of society than most of other characters.

In *Mansfield Park* Austen implicitly affirms the legitimacy of Sir Thomas Bertram's rule despite moral failures accounting for irreparable evil. Consistently with her belief in the moral acceptability of the current leadership of the nation, she means to give Sir Thomas's credit for seeing the enormity of his feelings, and for achieving some success to reform himself. So irony lies through her narration of Sir Thomas's failure: in his colonial mission and to make Fanny's life unhappy and unsuccessful.

Since, this dissertation explores politics of irony in *Mansfield Park*. It will be worthwhile to discuss the theoretical modality briefly. Politics of irony is embedded with the birth of discourse. Discourse analysis is an ironic analysis, which in cultural studies, concern the matter of representation. In the consequences of interpreting the texts it is essential to know the scene of irony which appears its recognition, its situation that would mean of irony, its distinction from other rhetorical tropes and transideological politics of irony. In the study of the discursive politics of irony we might well expect to find a concentration of examples of irony focused on issues of

gender, race, class or sexuality. About the textual complexities of gender and sexual politics involved in studying discursive strategies in specific texts by both men and women: and postcolonial analyses have explored at great length the textual specificities and particularities of the colonial and postcolonial condition. Therefore, it would be almost impossible to do justice to any of these specific complexities and their political intricacies in a book that offers a generalized theory of irony.

Irony has often been used to reinforce rather than to question established attitudes, as the history of satire illustrates so well. And this transideological nature of irony is the main focus. Irony can and does function tactically in service of wide range of political position, legitimating or undercutting a wide variety of interest. It is this focus that has determined the scene of irony. Irony is considered as a rhetorical trope that concerns with the discursive communities and their interpretation. These discursive communities cannot exist on own; it has its wider relationship with the socio-historical milieu and includes people of heterogeneous identities.

It is the overlapping of some of the communities of ironist and interpreter that sets the stage for the transmission and reception of intended ironies. Here the textual markers (which may also vary from community to community) function in communicative ways offering implicit signals and information about how the relationship between the participants should work within this interpretive frame called irony. In certain contexts then incongruities or seemingly appropriate details are not interpreted as signaling deception or error, there are our normal default assumptions but as making ironies to be inferred.

For some theorists it is clearly positive for an ironist or for an interpreter to have real standers in which to ground moral outrage. But today, others appear to be increasingly suspicious of a stand like this: to presume such a position of authority

and truth, they argue, might will itself be a folly if not a vice. "Both evaluative stands are responding to here, though, are the 'militancy' of irony that is seen to function in a corrective way: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured" (Hutcheon 23).

In an ironic discourse the process of communication is not always distorted but sometimes made possible by those worlds, which from our assumptions and preconceptions with which each of us, by this or that way are related. Irony is not just a simple decoding of an inverted message; it is a complex semantic process in which the combination of said and unsaid coverage in a cultural shape. It is an interpretative community that enables the happening of irony. The politics of irony here comes to analyze the socio historical contexts. In this sense Hutcheon argues:

However you might choose to talk about the difference between irony that is seen to exclude and finalize and irony that is seen to relate and, the politics of irony is never simple and never single. Unlike most other discursive strategies irony explicitly sets up a relationship between ironist and audiences that is political in nature. In that sense even while provoking laughter, irony invokes notions of hierarchy and subordination, judgment and perhaps even moral superiority. And more is at stake here than may be the case with other discursive strategies; and that more has a lot to do with power. (17)

Irony sets up in the relationship between ironist and audiences. Such relationship between ironist and audiences may be political one. It relates with the sociopolitical context. It depicts the hierarchical notion within different discourses. Irony has discursive power, sometimes it emerges laughter and sometimes it creates so many serious conditions. "Irony has the most subversive power. Because of this subversive

power it has become the most appropriate mode not only for politically suppressed groups, but more generally for those with the divided allegiance that comes from the dominant norms of race, ethnicity, gender or sexual choice" (qtd in Hutcheon 31). Irony functions as a tool to revise the white discourse and this allows negotiation along the axes of power, the social and mental and the public cover. Hutcheon argues:

The marginalized to be heard by the center and yet keep its critical distance to unbalance and undermine, where irony concerns. The complexity and multimodality or signifying are seen as a means of critique of the metaphysical presupposition of western culture or any of the transcendental [marginalized] subject, integral and whole. (31)

The political use of irony is to advocate all of the marginalized as well as centralized aspects. Irony can function as a deconstructive tool which brings the consciousness of marginal group into the centre and subverts the boundary between centre and margin that is "revolutionary or deconstructive irony" in Hutcheon's words (41). That's why, feminist writers use irony as a deconstructive strategy to subvert the so-called hegemonic patriarchal ideology. Feminist writers who have realized the power of irony to destabilize the established discourses and to avoid ideological contradictions. Irony in its political nature avoids the ambiguities and decenters the patriarchal discourses.

Austen's ironic voice is the voice of the marginalized woman in nineteenth century England. This dissertation explores how Jane Austen looks at the nineteenth century patriarchal British society from the perspective of a woman, and how her ironic appraisal of the society subverts the prevailing patriarchal view of British woman of the time.

## Chapter Two

### Politics of Irony in *Mansfield Park*

This research is a focus upon Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* from the perspective of irony. The goal of the research is to analyze the novel to show what Austen has used the subversive political irony to depict the complex ideological contradiction, domination and its resistance and inherent imperial as well as colonial intention of British people during early nineteenth century. The study argues that irony happens as a part of communicative process. It is not a static rhetorical tool to be deployed, but itself comes into being in the relations between meanings, between people's utterances and sometimes between intentions and interpretations. Unlike other rhetorical tropes it provides the possible consequences of the complex examples from our daily lives that vary from misfired quips to serious puzzlement over say or to exhibit.

Irony has become a pervasive discursive strategy for the study of culture and its dominance. It has sparked debates whether it should be lauded as a vehicle for political or social commentary and whether it's political or social function essentially conservative or subversive. Needless to say, irony can be provocative when its politics is conservative or authoritarian as easily as oppositional and subversive but it depends on who is using it and seen to be such as the transideological politics of irony. Since this is the focus of entire study, that gives some examples and overview of the different ways in which irony can be considered transideological in its politics.

*Mansfield Park* we may conceive is the effort to encompass the grace of uncertainty and difficulty. The idea of morality is achieved as grace of ease is not likely over to be relinquished merely, because some writers will always assert it as a new. Morality itself will always insist on it at a certain point in its development.

Morality seeks to express its independence of the grinding necessity by which it is engendered, and to claim for itself the autonomy and graciousness of art. Yet the idea is one that may easily deteriorate or to be prevented which expresses the innermost truth of any creation or action. It is in this sense of the world that we speak *Mansfield Park* proposes to us the possibility of the deception. If we perceive this, we cannot say that the novel is without irony. We can indeed say that its irony is more profound than that of any Jane Austen's novels. It is an irony directed against irony itself.

Massimiliano Morini asserts that: "Irony pervades if it does not dominate the presentation of Fanny Price" (7). Then Andrew Wright, on the other hand says: "Character is presented straightforwardly, entirely with contradiction of any kind" (15). Finally Lionel Trilling discovers in Jane Austen's attitude toward characters: "An irony directed against irony itself" (11), and G.B. Stern argues that: "*Mansfield Park* is simultaneously ironic and unironic" (8). Even in these brief examinations of the responses we can discern that, the critic can only distrust the foundation supplied by the predecessors. Irony in *Mansfield Park* is used to reflect or to refute the patriarchal male discourse from the female's point of view and also to show the failure of colonial discourse of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain.

The novel begins with a brief but pointed summary of the fortunes in marriage of three sisters from a gentry's family. Maria Ward, with an inheritance of seven thousand pounds, weds a baronet of six thousand pounds who had a large income, and becomes Lady Bertram. The other two sisters do not fare so well. The second becomes Mrs. Norris as weds to an Anglican priest who becomes the baronet's parson on an income of a thousand pounds per year. The third fares worst of all. She marries a lieutenant of the Royal marines, a man with no money and no connections or in other words beneath the gentry class. This humiliates her family and results in her

isolation from her parents and sisters. Irony initiates here upon the fortunes of marriage and money. They marry for money not for other things. Austen narrates:

About thirty years ago Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon with only seven thousand pounds had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in county of Northampton, and to be there by raised to the rank of a baronets lady, with all the comforts and consequences of an handsome house and large income. (1)

Austen states, despite being human as a superior creative power is forced to determine his own fortune on a common social act like marriage. In conventional patriarchal society marriage is the greater opportunity to female for their social standard. But that is covered by the hollow belief on money and property. Money determines their ideology. It is the materialistic view of patriarchal society. Seven thousand pounds had played vital role to captivate Sir Thomas but Maria herself did not get the chance to captivate him. Patriarchal society determines marriage as a hunting campaign for female class. Miss. Maria Ward thinks herself as a superior and lucky to marry Sir Thomas Bertram. But Sir Thomas does not marry for her beauty rather for her seven thousand pounds. She is not suitable for him but suitable for money. It is one of the humorous events for Miss. Maria Ward that she is not suitable for Sir Thomas but suitable for money.

Though there are so many ironies in *Mansfield Park* but the main concern of study is to show the ideological confrontation from the perspective of irony, which is the transideological politics of irony. This politics of irony concerns with the main characters like Sir Thomas Bertram, Lady Bertram, Mrs. Norrish and Fanny Price. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram take Fanny as their own daughter but they fail to behave Fanny as their daughter, they treat her as an inferior member in the family. Sir

Thomas's behavior remains opposite and he starts to show his authoritarian practice towards Fanny Price. Austen narrates:

Sir Thomas could not get so instance and qualified consent. He debated and hesitated: it was a serious charge; girl so brought up must be adequately provided for, or their; be cruelty instead of kindness in talking her from her family. My uncle! Repeated Fanny, with the frightened look. Yes, when you have written the letter, I will take it to my father to from. (31)

Sir Thomas seems to be so qualified and ideal but his ideology is governed by Mrs. Norris, because he is forced to dominate Fanny by Mrs. Norris. His own authority can not function according to his own intention. Irony lies here between the said and unsaid behavior of Sir Thomas and other members in the Bertram family as Hutcheon says: "Irony arises from the space between said and unsaid" (35).

There is difference between appearance and reality. The Bertram family says one thing and act differently. Lady Bertram and Mrs. Norris seem to be morally civilized but in reality they are too much brutal and corrupted. They seem to see Fanny as their own daughter but in reality they dominate and curse her. Mrs. Norris acts as a spy. She intends to show Fanny as stupid among others and says:

Yes I know there is, till I am seventeen. But I must tell you another thing of Fanny, so odd and so stupid. Do you know, she says she doesn't want to learn their music or drawing? To be sure my dear that is very stupid indeed, and shows a great want of genius and evolution. But all things considered, I do not know whether it is not as well that it should be so, for though, you know (owing me) your papa and mamma are so good as to bring her up with you. It is not at all necessary that

she should be as accomplished as you are: on the contrary, it is much more desirable that there should be a difference. (33)

Mrs. Norris's attitude to show other as hypocrite and herself a simple contrasts the reality. She herself is hypocrite and culturally degraded. Her morality is going to be lost. Here the target of irony is Mrs. Norris, who fuels on patriarchal domination wearing the cloth of a woman or an aunt of Fanny Price. Irony functions here as a tool to reveal the attitude of upper class people upon lower class. Mrs. Norris being an upper class treats Fanny as second class lady because Fanny is from a poor family. But actually Mrs. Norris's behavior reveals herself as a second class woman because of her immoral behavior.

Fanny's refusal of Henry's proposal and Sir Thomas's curse towards her arouse the conflict in *Mansfield Park*. Fanny as a lady of lower status refuses Henry's proposal because Henry is from upper class. Fanny says herself: "I poor girl, will not accept him for my convenience" (85). Fanny was dominated by both Bertram family and Crawford family except Henry Crawford. She cannot tolerate that domination and exploitation. That's why as a resistance she refuses Henry's proposal. It is the violation of conventional boundaries of Mansfield society. Most of the members in Mansfield society look Fanny as an inferior lady. Fanny's refusal invites her own suffering in her rest of life. As a result she is forced to leave the Mansfield house. It is an ironical situation that Fanny is inviting her own suffering because she wants to fight against Sir Thomas's authority rejecting Henry's proposal. Sir Thomas, Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram's curse towards Fanny is the true reflection of domination and exploitation. Irony functions as a tool to depict such situation:

Fanny! Repeated Mrs. Norris; my dear Edmund, there is no idea of her going with us: she stays with her parents, still she staying with her

uncle. I told you to follow orders but without ignorance, I will not care for her. You are very kind, you are all kindness, my dear madam said Edmund; but as to Fanny, she will have opportunities in plenty of seeing Sotherton. She has time enough before her: and going her now is quit out of the question. (80)

Austen's use of irony portrays an unusual dimension that is the domination and corruption of patriarchal society. Though, Mrs. Norris herself cannot give any protection to her own children then how she care for Fanny? It is an ironical situation to show the reality of social dimension. Here, conflict is the space of politics of irony because the context determines what is to be irony and what is not. Moreover, the power relation makes the scene of irony happen. Mrs. Norris despite being a villainous character, Edmund says her very kind madam. Irony initiates on Mrs. Norris's attitude. It is said that in patriarchal society only males are the exploiter but here male and female both are the exploiter. Women themselves are the exploiter of women. It is the best example of Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram's attitude towards Fanny Price. Jane Austen first uses her irony to depict such unusual aspects then she herself uses irony to refute or avoid those types of situation. It is her distinct types of politics of irony. That's why it is said that Austen's irony in *Mansfield Park* is directed against irony itself.

Austen's irony is directed to refute the domination and exploitation of so-called civilized and sophisticated society. Fanny as a representative of marginalized woman tries to resist the brutality which was imposed upon her. For resistance Austen narrates her answer for Mrs. Norris:

You have no reason, I imagine, madam: said Fanny addressing Mrs. Norris. Fanny ignored the party organized by Bertram family. Mrs.

Norris was too much vexed to submit with a very good grace, and would say, very well just as you choose; settle it your again. I am sure, I don't care about it. (80-81)

Irony here used to resist the dominant patriarchal ideology. Fanny's denial of party and Mrs. Norris's order is the subversion of so-called and sophisticated manner. Mrs. Norris humorously represents the patriarchal authority. Though there is no any option for Fanny instead of accepting Mrs. Norris and Bertram family's order but she refuses both of them. Irony lies here from Fanny's perspective to violet Mrs. Norris's groundless patriarchal boundary as Hutcheon says: "Irony has been seen as serious play as both rhetorical strategy and a political method deconstructs and decenters the patriarchal discourses" (30). Austen's politics is to subvert the unusual aspect of society. She wants to look society from marginalized woman's perspective. There is the tension between patriarchal ideology and marginalized female ideology. That is the transideological politics of irony.

There is no any affection of Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram towards Fanny. They look Fanny stereotypically as a lower status. Jane Austen attacks upon Mrs. Norris and Bertram family to show their attitude towards Fanny Price. Jane Austen narrates directing on Mrs. Norris:

She had none of Fanny's delicacy of taste, of mind, of feeling; she saw nature in inanimate with little observation; her attention was all for men and women, her talents for the light and lively. In looking back after Edmund, however when there was any stretch of road behind them, or when he gained on them in ascending a considerable will, they were united and there he is broke at the some moment from them once. (83)

Jane Austen attacks upon upper class British people who want to impose authority toward other. Her politics is to refute the immoral aspect of nineteenth century conventional society. Here, Mrs. Norris is seeking other's beauty and talent. Though she herself is not a woman of delicacy and beauty, then how she can look for others' delicate beauty and talent? It is an ironical situation that Jane Austen tries to focus from Mrs. Norris's behaviour. People think themselves as highly civilized but their reality goes beyond their behavior. Mrs. Norris is trying to show Fanny as evil lady despite being herself is an evil. Mrs. Norris and Sir Thomas Bertram seek inner peace and harmony but their mentality always follows the materialistic life. It is the critical point of patriarchal ideology, where irony arises from the difference between appearance and reality. This is clarified by their attitude towards Fanny Price. Irony here concerns with the suppressed group Fanny Price such as that of what Hutcheon says: "Politics of irony is a social dimension, which concerns with the marginalized: feminist, postcolonial, lesbian and gay in particular" (38).

All of the complex and ambiguous activities reflect the asocial and immoral activities of nineteenth century British culture. Jane Austen relates her ironical strategy with the sociopolitical and historical evidences. After the rejection of Mansfield Family Fanny is left to her solitude and with no increase of pleasant feelings that she was sorry for almost all members of Mansfield society. They were very soon going beyond her eye; and some minutes longer, she remained without sight and sound of any companion. She could almost have thought about Edmund. But that is also impossible for Edmund to forget her so entirely.

Sir Thomas's order not to give any chance to talk to Fanny with him is an evidence of patriarchal authority. Fanny's intention to talk to Edmund and Sir Thomas's restriction brings the great conflict among the Family. Despite their

prohibition to talk Fanny tries to say something them. Irony is concerned with Fanny's struggle against Sir Thomas's restriction.

Fanny struggled for speech and said: I am very sorry that anything has occurred to distress you. This ought to be a day of pleasure; my uncle meant it so. And oh! Yes, yes, it will be a day of pleasure, it will all and right I am only vexed for a moment. (225)

These lines tell us about how Fanny is spending a miserable life in Bertram family. She had to struggle also for speech she had to wait much more time to talk Edmund and others. She is here double marginalized both from man as well as women. Despite getting lots of suffering Fanny says that day is the day of the pleasure. Jane Austen has used irony from feminist point of view to question the hegemonic ideology as Hutcheon says: "Irony questions the hegemonic ideology in deconstructive way" (112). Fanny as a female character seems happy also in her suffering but ironically her happiness questions the existence of Bertram family's patriarchal ideology.

Fanny's enjoyment with Edmund is not wholly innocent but it is strategy to involve in most of the political intrigues among the Mansfield society. She seems innocent in her outer reality but actually she wants to know the politics of Mansfield society. Austen narrates the relationship between Fanny and Edmund:

Fanny began and joined in which the idea of representing Edmund was so strongly calculated to inspire; but with looks and voice so truly feminine as to be no any picture of man. She could be equally warmth with Edmund. They must rehearse together, fanny proposed, urged with increasing spirit of Edmund's manner. (150)

Fanny's politics is to involve in the most of political activities of Mansfield society with Edmund. Through the relationship with Edmund, Fanny is trying to enter into the

higher social position of patriarchal society. Entering into the high position of Mansfield society she wants to reform the so-called patriarchal ideology of Sir Thomas Bertram and other authoritative members of Mansfield house. Austen's politics of irony to use in Hutcheon's word has a social dimension:

Irony is the relational strategy in the sense that it appears not only between ironic meaning; comes into being as the consequence of a relationship, as dynamic, performative bringing together of different meaning makers. That [...] but also of different meaning in order to create something: new and then as to endow it with the critical edge; of judgment. The social dimension of this relational aspect of irony is the subject of [...] on the discursive communities and their role in enabling and comprehending of irony. (59)

Irony is related with the various sociopolitical aspects like: culture religion tradition and others. Irony may not be meaningful without these issues. It depends upon its meaning makers. These meaning makers are the discursive communities which enables the politics of irony.

Sir Thomas's belief that Fanny should obey all his order remains meaningless, When Fanny innocently starts to revolt against him. It is an ironic situation that Sir Thomas himself is inviting his own downfall. Though, Sir Thomas thinks himself an ideal and knows everything but unable to distinguish his own son's antagonistic practice towards him. When he curses Fanny in the context of her relation with Edmund, Edmund himself follows Fanny despite being Sir Thomas's own son. Side by side Fanny's innocent reaction to Lady Bertram's behavior is another ironical representation of revolt against the conservative patriarchal ideology. Fanny

innocently tries to oppose the authority imposed upon her. Her function is the best suggested by the exclamation with which her aunt Bertram falls upon her neck:

Dear Fanny, now I shall be comfortable. To be a comfort, that has always been Fanny Price's rare privilege, and she imparts to the readers something of consolation; she brings to all the people in the story who need the help of her sympathy. (78)

Irony here gets more heated when Lady Bertram tries to import her authority towards Fanny in lovely manner and Fanny tries to reveal her authority as an innocent girl. The conflict is the space of politics of irony because the context determines what is to be irony and what is not. Moreover, their power relation makes the scene of irony happen as Hutcheon states:

Both of them say something (they) don't actually expect people to understand not only what (they) actually do mean but also their attitude toward it [...] the scene of irony involves relation of power based on relations of communication. It unavoidably involves touchy issues such as exclusion and inclusion, intervention and evasion. (21)

Irony emerges from the activities of people, what they seem and what they actually are. It would surely harm that Lady Bertram's reputation, her comfort and even her so called sophisticated manner thereby negates the British upper class's prejudices. Austen's irony is a relational strategy both to impose authority and to reveal it. Lady Bertram's strategy is to impose her authority upon Fanny in lovely manner and Fanny's strategy is to reveal that authority innocently.

Sir Thomas in his absence thinks that if Fanny will miss Henry and attracts with Edmund then his authority will remain in crisis. Then He orders Fanny not to engage with Edmund because he wants Fanny and Henry would marry. He is against

Edmund and Fanny's relationship. But at last the reality remains opposite. Opposing Henry's proposal Fanny starts to love with Edmund. Fanny rejecting Henry accepts Edmund who only loves her for physical satisfaction. Irony lies in Fanny's action. Her politics of irony is to threaten upon Sir Thomas's patriarchal ideology accepting Edmund. Edmund being the son of Sir Thomas did not accept his father's order. Sir Thomas becomes angry with both of Edmund and Fanny. Then he starts to curse them.

Sir Thomas's authority remains in crisis when Henry and Maria really engaged each others .Then Fanny is invited in Mansfield Park. It would sure that Fanny would win against domination. Sir Thomas realizes Fanny's enormous moral principle and righteousness and self confidence for which she is ready to sacrifice her chances of worldly happiness rather than to compromise her basic values, her constant emphasis on unselfish love and awareness of the limitations and mystery of human mind and personality. He regrets on his wrong judgment and misunderstanding. Claudial L. Johnson in his essay "Mansfield Park: Confusion of Guilt and Revolution of Mind" remarks:

All worst crimes pursuant female immodesty, illicit sex and adultery come to pass in *Mansfield Park*. But here such effects proceed from causes contrary to what conservative writer conceived. The only character in *Mansfield Park* whose hands remain clean has to think herself to defy the figureheads of social religious authority in order to remain guiltless. (15-16)

Since, Austen is fascinated to depict themes and materials of her novel about existing social cultural and political values. She has given the description of so-called and civilized patriarchal ideology and its moral failure in *Mansfield Park*. Although the

society is confined within the limited places, families and characters, it gives a clear picture of social structure and women's condition.

Austen sets her irony on Lady Bertram's conventional sophisticated manner when she thinks the superior education of her daughter but does not pay much attention. She spends her time in an unprogressive way, when it did not put herself to inconveniency guided in everything important by Sir Thomas and in smaller concern by her sister. When Fanny meets her, she does not try to comfort her rather terrify her with her dead silence. She expresses pity for Fanny's ignorance and says: "[...] but some people were stupid" (18). Gradually she becomes her companion whom she dislikes first. Politics of irony is to show the hypocrite behavior of upper class woman. Though, Lady Bertram gives much more focus upon superior education but did not educate her daughter like what she thought.

Maria's engagement with Rushworth, an incredibly wealthy but stupid young man to spend happy and sophisticated life and his deceive to her is an ironic representation. Maria praises herself because she is going to marry a rich and prestigious man Rushworth without knowing his reality that Rushworth is betrayal and idiot. Actually Rushworth is trying to deceive her. He is also the representative of patriarchy. Rushworth's intention to marry with Mary becomes failure when Mary and Tom get engaged. His patriarchal authority did not function so well and he himself becomes failure. In Mary Crawford we have the first brilliant example of distinctively modern type, the person who cultivates the style of sensitivity, virtue and intelligence. But her reality is opposite. She is not a highly positioned woman in the Mansfield Society. She is hypocritical and coquetry. Austen makes ironical representation of Mary and Tom commenting on Mary:

She had not waited her arrival to look out for a suitable match for her; she had fixed on Tom Bertram; the eldest son of a baronet was not so good for a girl of twenty thousand pounds, with all the elegance and accomplishments which Mrs. Grant foresaw in her; and being a warm hearted unreserved woman, Marry had not been three hours in the house before she told her what she had planned. (51)

Here, irony initiates that Marry is suitable for Tom but Tom is not suitable for Marry and her twenty thousand pounds. Politics of irony is to reveal the materialistic attitude of British upper class society. It is an ironical situation of British people that they think ideally but their behaviors remains materialistic. Jane Austen's strategy connects the style and the ideology. Her narrative politically shows the ideological confrontation among the peoples of contemporary time. Irony for her functions as an interactive term as Hutcheon would put in her book *Irony's Edge*:

Irony arises from the interaction of terms upon one another; all integrally affecting one another; even if the unsaid is sort of primus interprets weighting the evaluative force of irony's edge to what is unstated even what is stated as possible way without of the conceptual meaning and see what might happen if we found a new way of talking about ironic meaning as instead relational; inclusive and differential.

(34)

Irony is an interactive process which arises from one another's view. It emerges from the difference between said and unsaid one. This ironic framework is conceptual and interactive on certain discourses. Irony comes through the interaction of two different dimensions. Ironic meaning is always relational and inclusive.

Most of the ironical strategies concerned with the feminist assumptions.

Female writers use irony to equate themselves with males in the domestic to political intrigues as Hutcheon labels: “The feminist writer’s deployment of irony as ‘iron’ [...] the familiar household pressing and something device because of the appropriation of irony’s transgressive provocative and subversive potentialities into women’s domains” (36). Jane Austen’s ironic strategy is also for female equality and rights in the social activities.

When Fanny falls ill, Edmund partially shocked back to his senses. Because Fanny and Edmund has fallen in love despite being Edmund Fanny’s cousin. Austen narrates her story to clarify Edmund’s perspective towards Fanny:

Mrs. Norris has no affection for Fanny and no wish for procuring her pleasure at any time; but in Mrs. Norris’s opposition Edmund now arose more from partiality for her own scheme, because it was her own then from anything else. Fanny has arranged everything extremely well, for him and Fanny fell well and quite as grateful the occasion requires; was Edmunds on her reply. (81)

Austen uses irony to show Edmund and Fanny’s incest love relationship. Her politics is to warn us about an ideal form of love. But actually such incest love relationship cannot exist in the society. That relation skirts dangerously close to incest that they were after all raised brother and sisters. Perhaps the close kinship of Fanny and Edmund is meant to reflect their essential similarity to one another’s people. Austen’s heroine Fanny loves Edmund her own cousin-brother to resist the conventional thought of love. It is an ironical representation of Jane Austen to threat the old culture of the time. Here, love as a social interaction where irony is theorized from the point of view of the interpreter or the ironist. Thus, Hutcheon states:

Since irony involves social interactions; there is no reason for it to be less implicated in questions of hierarchy and power than any other form of discourse. It can resolve the notion that unnecessary complexity and ambiguity, confusion or simply impression and lack of clarity in communication. (38)

Irony has its perceived politics that is determined by particular social dimensions. It is a matter of interpretation as much as of intentions which lies in different domains. It avoids the unnecessary complexities, ambiguities and other unusual social as well as moral aspects. It replaces the contextual vices and weaknesses to depict the oppositional evidence between appearance and reality.

Austen has taken money ironically as a weapon to measure the culture and its standard. Though, money is an essential thing in human life but her character has taken that money as great affection. Most of the female character themselves are exploited by the money. They get marry by the attraction of money but when their money starts to finish they get exploited. In this regard B. Austen Smith *Into the Heart of Irony* argues:

In context to money Austen describes her characters rationalizations with bristling irony. [W] hat on earth can women want for more than that? They will live so cheap! Their house keeping will be nothing; at they will keep no company, and can have no expense of any kind!

Only conceive how comfortable they will be. (13)

People marry for money; do something for money and everything for money, prestige and marriage. They had taken money as everything for life. Money determines their social position. That was the reality of so-called and civilized British culture. Irony in *Mansfield Park* is not for social freedom but for the depiction of contemporary social

stasis. It takes full notice of spiritedness, vivacity, clarity, and likeness but only to reject them as having nothing to do with virtue and happiness, as being indeed, determines the good life.

Sir Thomas's Antigua state and Fanny's question of slavery represents the merely top and larger political context that goes beyond explicitly moral issues. Sir Thomas goes Antigua with great ambition but he returns empty hand. Fanny says his return is poor return. Irony lies here on Fanny's such expression. His Antigua visit is not for civilization and development but for commercial purpose and expansion of slave trade that is the exploitation and domination. But Fanny goes beyond his visit. In context of Sir Thomas's Antigua visit Fanny asks some questions with Edmund:

Did not you hear me ask him about the slave trade last night?

I did – and was in hopes the question would have followed up by others. It would have pleased your uncle to be inquired of father. Why you know Sir Thomas will be rather straitened if the Antigua estate to make such poor return. (42)

Sir Thomas's Antigua visit manifests the moral and social corruption in Caribbean Island. Here irony emerges from the post-colonial perspective. It relates with some of the colonial and post-colonial situations as Hutcheon says: "What might be reads as irony or ambiguity becomes from a postcolonial perspective and potential evasion" (191). This section discusses a few significant stages in the development of multifaceted theories concerning corruption and exploitation. Sir Thomas needs to be a modification of the stereotype of the returned planter.

It is the political intention of British imperialism that Sir Thomas manifests in his visit. Though he seems to be an ideal man but actually himself reveals his corrupted activities in his Antigua voyage. His imperial vision remains unsuccessful.

In that task he becomes a moral failure. Austin's politics of irony conflates the unsuccessful colonial motive of Britain or in Hutcheon's word: "Ironic meaning is frequently confrontational, judgmental and even unpleasant in its openly anti-colonial dealings with racist attitudes" (192). Sir Thomas as a British agent ironically becomes moral failure in Caribbean Island, a territory of British colony. This episode relates with the contextual evidences of eighteenth and nineteenth century England's colonial evils that was corruption, domination and others. This is the historical relationship of irony with certain discourses as Hutcheon further states:

The ironic meaning that might happen here, in other words might not be single or simply contradictory in certain context. Nor might it operate to raise only issues of aesthetic form or only problems of spectator's response: it might do both. Furthermore while irony in this example; can be seen happening in the difference between what can be represented on stage (and in words) and what can be shown to a film audience the specific thematic content of the discussion of war and patriotisms- itself inevitably implicated in the ironic meaning. (95)

Ironic meaning can not be simple. It also may be complex. It may clarify with some relational strategy. In aesthetics it may come with the spectator's response. In performance it arises through the performative and unperformative actions. It relates with the various issues like: struggle, war, patriotism and others.

In Sir Thomas's Antigua visit and his task to manage slave plantation, Austen shows a part of morally corrupt system of slavery insofar as she robustly criticizes the institution from a modern moral viewpoint. This line of criticism obviously involves the difficulty of holding past ages to an account against later ethical structures that

they could hardly have anticipated. The single mention of slavery made by Austen in some of her characters like Edmund tries to hide his father's motive on slavery.

The novel gives that point where Austen is most ironically presented and her critics are most negligent. Her Antigua is therefore not just a slight but a definite way of mocking the outer limits of what is called domestic improvements or a quick allusion to the mercantile venture. Some of acquiring overseas dominions as a source for local fortunes or one reference among money attesting to a historical sensibility suffused not just with manners and courtesies but with context of ideas struggles with Napoleonic France and awareness of seismic, economic and social change during a revolutionary period in world history.

Sir Thomas's practice upon the legalization of British imperialism reflects the British anarchic process which was familiar to eighteenth and early nineteenth century period about commercial enterprise. Edward Said gives an insight into Bertram's world of imperial view in *Austen: Culture and Imperialism*:

Sir Thomas's Antigua visit is the consolidation of British capitalism and imperialism well beyond the old plantation monopolies as well as to; have seen a powerful oriental and ideological system whose original connection to special economic interests may have gave, but whose effects continued for decades. (15)

Sir Thomas's Antigua visit is the politically motivated task. The political as well as moral ideas of the age are to be examined in the closest relation to the economic development and outworn interest. Ironically his Antigua mission is the legalization of British imperialism. "It had previously rendered and the entrenchment previously gained the political ideas built on those interests continue long, after the interest have been destroyed and work their old mischief, which is all the more mischievous

because the interest to which they correspond no longer exist" (qtd. in Said 12). Irony combines circumstantial, textual and inter-textual context indicators. In the case of ironies; it may well be that it is something in their surroundings, and it is usually something merely implicit in their place that gives them away. But the contexts can be discerned more precisely than this would suggest by taking into account of the frames.

The morally conflicted business of Sir Thomas is the traditional family structure in Mansfield society. Fanny's question with Edmund about Sir Thomas's slave trading ironically concerns with the sociopolitical context that certain discourses are the combination of ironical representation. Joseph Law in this regard states:

*Mansfield Park* ironically dramatizes that an author Austen 'loved' called the "slavery and commerce" of the human species. The novel's opening sentence describes "all Huntingdon's reaction to the attainment, by Miss Maria Ward, of a husband" title and stable to which her uncle, the lawyer himself allowed her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim. (5)

Austen's ironic voice also focuses upon the exploitation on slavery and commerce by Sir Thomas's Antigua visit. It dramatizes the evolution of slavery and its exploitation in history. The novel itself ironical, which gives the picture of slavery and its evils that, is totally opposite of moral issues.

The question of slavery and slave trade appear obliquely in the novel through references to Sir Thomas's Antigua estate and Fanny's question about slave trade. More than merely topical, these allusions underscore the larger political context that goes beyond the explicitly gendered issues portrayed. Political irony here functions as a tool to reflect the continuation of debate over slavery and legalization of British

imperialism and women's political rights. Nina Auerback in *Austen's Dangerous Charm* talks about the hidden politics of Sir Thomas's Antigua visit:

Irony in *Mansfield Park* to convey the sexual brutalization of planters are the political contamination with which the residency of new world saints [...] the character of European love of uncontrolled power over individual's morality; Sir Thomas as an oriental agent assumes to be a brutal and corrupt British representatives. (15)

Sir Thomas and his unsuccessful colonial intension in Caribbean Island is the depiction of degeneration of English man's moral character. That was the failure of contemporary British imperial motives and slave transportation. When Sir Thomas sees a Caribbean woman at that time he remembers Lady Bertram and expresses his emotional event. He is sexually corrupted man and he reflects all colonialists' immoral nature. Irony becomes here a critique of colonialism as Hutcheon states: "The question of irony's appropriateness is raised often and well advised to consider whether there is really a need to couch a critique of colonialism in ironic term but is question that haunted the history of irony and but that consistently points to the transideological nature of irony's politics" (194). Austen narrates:

With solemn kindness Sir Thomas addressed her; told her features, inquired into her wishes, entreated her to be open and sincere and assured her that every inconvenient should be braved and the connection entirely given up. If she felt herself unhappy in the prospect of it, he would act for her and release her. (172)

Austen's irony here is to reflect the stereotypical attitude of British colonizer towards its territories. Sir Thomas's emotional moment here talks about such view when he was in the Caribbean Island, Antigua. Sir Thomas as a British imperial agent keeps

stereotypical attitude towards Caribbean people as he is brutal and sexual exploiter. Mostly colonialist exploit women sexually. Fanny as a woman dislikes Sir Thomas's Antigua mission because there is the certainty of domination and exploitation upon female class in colonizing mission. It is reflected by Sir Thomas's gaze upon one indigenous woman. Sir Thomas's return also carries a conflict in *Mansfield Park*. He carries a traditional family structure in Mansfield. When he became failure in Antigua for that response he became more authoritative. He seems some liberal and a good owner towards Fanny but actually he remains more authoritative than past.

Irony also seems with Edmund's skirmishes with Mary over his future as clergy man is telling. Edmund views clergy man as a powerful and moral example for their parishioners, he feels that by knowing those to whom he preaches he can do good in their lives. The younger son of Sir Thomas Bertram; Edmund is about six years older than Fanny. He is intended for the ministry, not for financial reason as was the case with so many younger sons of aristocrats. But out of true religious and moral conviction, as he explains to Miss Crawford when she belittles the importance of the clergy:

A clergy man can not be high, in state or fashion. He must not head mobs, or set the tone in dress. But I can not call that situation nothing, which was the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or correctively considered temporally and eternally which has the guardianship of religion and moral, and consequently of the manner which result from their influence. (85)

Edmund is the only member of Fanny's new found relation to directly engage her and to make any contact with her interior self. Though Edmund is a heir of Mansfield and a clergyman he is engaged with his own cousin-sister, Fanny. The politics of irony is

to show the complex morality and religious contradiction of British culture. Edmund is responsible for high moral position but he is always thinking about marriage and fulfillment of his passion. He himself is engaging with his own uncle's daughter.

Austen stresses repeatedly that while Maria and her sister Julia give an outward appearance of morality and gentle manners, these facets cover a hollow core. A typical example occurs when their father leaves for Antigua:

The Miss Bertrams were much to be pitied on the occasion; not for their sorrow but their want of it. Their father was no object of love to them. He had never seen the friend of their pleasures, and his absence was unhappily most welcome, they were relieved by it from all restraint; and without aiming at one gratification that would probably have been forbidden by Sir Thomas. They felt themselves, immediately at their own disposal, and to have every indulgence within their reach. (93)

Irony lays here Julia and Maria's attitude upon their father Sir Thomas. Though Sir Thomas denies them to meet with Fanny but they meet Fanny in his absence. This situation would be easier for Fanny to revolt against Sir Thomas's authority. Austen's ironic effect functions as the modern political tool to reveal the social mobility and staticity during her time. She shows the humorous and ambiguous nature of Mrs. Grant that is innocence over experience. Though she is attempting to wish for others but actually she wants to take much more benefit from her act. Irony does not only lie in the ironist's intension nor is it solely found in text without the participation of the interpreters. The irony instead comes out of:

Dynamic and plural relations among the context or utterance (and its context), the so called ironist, the interpreters, and the circumstances surrounding the discursive situation. It is that mess up heat theories of

ironies that see the task of the interpreter; simply as one of decoding or reconstructing some real meaning [...] a meaning that is hidden, deemed accessible behind the stated one. (Hutcheon 11)

The major participants in bringing about the ironic meaning in this game are the interpreter and the ironist. Clarifying the distinction between an interpreter and the victim of irony, Hutcheon again delineates that: “ The interpreter may or may not be the intended addressee of the ironist, but she/ he is the one who attributes irony and then interprets it [...] the one who decides whether the utterance is ironic ( or not), and then what particular irony it might have.” (11)

*Mansfield Park* is governed by an authority all too fallible. Yet, Fanny thinks of all that comes within the view and patronage of *Mansfield Park* as dear to her heart and thoroughly perfect in her eyes. The judgment is ironical, for the author as well as the readers. Ironically *Mansfield Park* is the great good place. It is just like the house where all accustomed, ceremonious, and beautiful controlled by cruelty and blind morality. Joel C. Weinsheimer in his essay "Mansfield Park: Three Problems" makes an ironical representation of the *Mansfield Park*:

To the extent, *Mansfield Park* represents the house of ceremonious and beauty. Sir Thomas' materialistic view and Mrs. Norris's groundless patriarchy is ironic on their hollow idealism. Fanny's troubled representation for contradictory harmony and Edmund's selfish passion for Fanny encompasses the false beauty of *Mansfield* society. Austen's irony negates the difficult dichotomy of complex social and political values. (11)

Weinsheimer's perspective in the novel is appreciable that portrays the novel more romantic and ironical. Yet, Fanny loves praise of *Mansfield* which makes the novel's

last word, does glance at ironies and encompasses ironies. "Soon, grew as dear to her heart, and as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as everything else within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park had long been" (383). Of these ironies the chief is Lady Bertram who becomes a part of the perfection in more critical and convincing way as Abrams writes: "In the modern critical uses of the irony there remains the root sense of dissembling or of hiding what is actually the use, not however, in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects" (142). All of Mansfield's life makes reference and obeisance to Sir Thomas's wife who is gentle and without spite but mindless and moveless, concerning with nothing but the indulgence of her mild inexorable wants. Middle aged stupid maternal persons are favorite butts for Jane Austen, but Lady Bertram is teased here by writer for her conventional sophisticated manner. Sir Thomas's authority must be qualified and tutored by the principled intelligence. The religious intelligence of Fanny is effective but Lady Bertram's permission to live unregenerate life ironizes the situation. Lionel Trilling in *Jane Austen and Mansfield Park* in this regard asserts:

I am never quite able to resist the notion that in her attitude to Lady Bertram Jane Austen teasing herself, that says turning her irony upon her own fantasy of ideal existence as it presented itself to her at this time. It is scarcely possible to observe how *Mansfield Park* differs from work that had gone before and from her work that was to come after without supposing that different point to a crisis of author's spiritual life. In that crisis fatigue plays great part [...] we are drawn to believe that for the moment she wants to withdrew from the exigent energies of her actual self, that she claims in fancy that to be rich and fat and smooth and dull like Lady Bertram, to sin on a cushion, to be

creature of habit and an object of ritual difference not to be conscious herself. (56)

Lady Bertram is herself mocking for the representation of her wish to escape from the requirements of personality. For the person of Lady Bertram, *Mansfield Park* affirms, with due irony. The bliss of being able to remain unconscious of the demand of personality, it shuts out the world and judgment of the world. Jane Austen first represented the specifically modern personality and the culture in which it had its being. Never before had politically the moral life been shown as she shows it to be complex and difficult exhausting personality. Trilling again asserts:

The sanctions upon which it relies are not those of culture or quality of being of personality but precisely those which, the new conception of the moral life minimizes [...] the sanctions of principle and it discovers in the path to the wholeness of the self which is peace. When we have exhausted our anger at the offence which *Mansfield Park* offers to our conscious pieties, we find it possible to perceive how ironically it speaks to our secret inexpressible hopes. (45)

Austen shows the social stasis of *Mansfield Park*, that is the representative of British culture of the time. That social stasis minimizes the moral life and social morality. Morality itself is going to be degraded through the different behavior of characters. Austen has used her irony to show the minimization of moral life in *Mansfield Park*.

Tom and Mrs. Norris's behavior toward Fanny demonstrates the blurring of boundaries between acting and reality. Fanny had never been subjected to aggression before Mrs. Norris states Fanny's situation without any necessities that normally accompany it. Mrs. Norris did not act as a moral woman her actual reality is corrupted, she always wants to have enjoyment spending other's money:

Well and if they were you, I should not think of the expense Sotherton court deserve everything that taste and money can do; I please in that money. Dear Lady Bertram, what am I fit for but solitude? Now and then I shall hope to have a friend in my little cottage; but the most part of my future days will be spent in utter seclusion. If I can but make both ends meet, that's all I ask for. (39)

Politics of irony in *Mansfield Park* is that the only character who consistently upholds the proper character of the house and is Fanny Price, both initially and again during her expulsion to Portsmouth an outsider. So much has been written about Fanny's debility; is necessary to insist upon the firmness of her determination. Fanny can not be an active instrument of cultural presentation or improvement. But her refusal to act in *Lover's Vows* in the first volume and refusal to Marry Crawford in the third marks her as the guardian of an endangered heritage only, when those at Mansfield recognize the quality of Fanny's resistance. Lady Bertram's wish for Fanny's return from Portsmouth is largely selfish, but Sir Thomas find that she is indeed what he wanted.

Irony comes here in the discursive communities. Austen wants to show the historical periphery of British culture. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram want to take Fanny as a house maid in this context. The irony also lies upon the relationship between Fanny and Edmund. Edmund seems to love Fanny spiritually but he did not do so. He loves her for physical satisfaction. His artificial love towards Fanny conflicts the romantic love affair. Edmund loves Fanny for pleasure. He says:

She is an interesting object, she full of pleasure, the general elegance of her appearance, and her being in remarkably good looks, her all body is attractive, and it may own property. As soon as her eagerness

could rest in silence, she is as happy as she could and a conversation followed almost as deeply interesting to her. Her beauty of face and figure, her grace of manner and goodness of heart, were the exustless theme. The gentleness modesty and sweetness of her character were warmly expatiated on that sweetness which makes so essential a part of every woman's judgment for man where he can believe on. (276)

Irony here shows the actual reality of Edmund's love toward Fanny that is an artificial love affair. Such love shows the sexual exploitation of Edmund towards Fanny. Edmund is also corrupted like his father Sir Thomas Bertram. In her love affair also Fanny is dominated by patriarchal authority. Edmund seems some liberal than his father but actually he also smells his father's patriarchal genetics. He only tries to get Physical satisfaction from Fanny. He takes her as a means of pleasure.

Fanny's return to Portsmouth is an implicit punishment for her disobedience of Sir Thomas. It is a direct reminder that he has made her and that she can be returned to misery if she chooses to disobey him. At the time of Fanny's return Sir Thomas talks about Fanny:

Poor Fanny! Though going as she did willingly and eagerly, the last evening at Mansfield Park must still be wretchedness. She tears for every room in the house, much more for every beloved inhabitant. My dear little creature, if I had you here, how I would talk you! You should listen to me till you were tired and advise me till were tired still more; but it is impossible to put a hundredth part of my great mind on paper. So I will abstain altogether and leave you to guess what you like. I have no news for you. You have politics of course; and it would

be too bad to plague you with names of people and parties that fill up my time. (36)

Sir Thomas exposes his stereotypical attitude towards Fanny. Though, he exploits her too much but at last seems to express sympathy through his word “Poor Fanny”. His politics is to show himself innocence despite being an authoritative and an exploiter.

Irony employs the conflicted history of British culture in *Mansfield Park*. The pain of Marry and Edmund’s parting is counteracted but not negated by Fanny’s victorious tenacity. Austen uses irony to counteract it by presenting the novel almost exclusively through Fanny’s consciousness. Henry persists on his pursuit of Fanny in the face of her opposition. His task to separate Fanny and Edmund remains unsuccessful rather it becomes his own downfall. Henry’s morality here remains on suspense. His unfulfilled intention is an attack upon Edmund’s and Fanny’s relationship to critique the contemporary British society. Gillian Dooley in *The Moral Vocabulary of Mansfield Park* states:

Austen certainly undercuts Fanny’s internal monologue with quit irony, but Fanny's quivering sensibility is consistently present to the reader. Mary Crawford insist on seeing her alone to reprove her for her refusal of Henry’s proposal in words, that Fanny felt all over her, in all her pulses and all her nerves. Fanny’s suffering patient if not virtue is rewarded and she is presented with her prize at the close of the novel. (215)

The use of irony with Austen’s beliefs are tested and further complicated by the fact that Fanny’s beliefs are watered-down on the fanciful version of Edmund as the key of love. It is this similarity of views that allows manipulating them into their disastrous affair. Maria and Rushworth are even more faulty character in *Mansfield*

*Park*. Austen's politics of irony unveils us to believe that the love of Edmund and Fanny is not enough to prevent their foolish and vicious behaviors, which remain as a source of moral improvement. Fanny loves politically with blank faith, when love is just hope and faith.

Austen's willingness to allow Fanny, a sexual life is further impressive testimony to an authorial interest that most have denied or ignored. On the second day of Mary's riding lessons, the waiting Fanny is forgotten, and she walks to where she can see the cheerful group admiring the riding of the physically intrepid Marry:

Fanny could not turn her eyes from the meadow, she could not help watching all the passed. Edmund was close to Mary, he was speaking to her, and he was evidently directing to her management of the bridle, he had hold of her hand; she saw it, or the imagination supplied what the eye could not reach. (67)

Austen explores more complex issues through politics of irony: whether with Fanny's particular combination of interrelated weaknesses and strengths; she lives an independent moral life, or the relationship with Edmund is advantageous to both and whether she will share Edmund's ambivalent attitude toward sex, where irony is to reveal the sexual politics. Edmund remains in confusion whether to love Fanny or to love Mary for his sexual satisfaction.

In *Mansfield Park* irony performs distinct and sometimes contradictory criteria of moral judgment. As guided by social standard, it becomes the disruption of domestic order and tranquility. *Mansfield Park* most explicitly shows the social standard of Fanny and Edmund, when they achieve the ethical fact of depersonalizing feeling by their devotion to society in general and Sir Thomas in particular as the representative of viable social order.

Fanny's quasi-religious awe and dead silence of Sir Thomas in Antigua estate provide the basis for contradictory situation. This discursive strategy of irony in *Mansfield Park* makes this novel its most controversial one. Its hero is a clergyman, heroine is well principled and religious, Maria's adultery is termed as sin and the misconduct of the Bertram daughters is ascribed in part of their being instructed threatens in their religious practice. This ironical representation in *Mansfield Park* reveals exact sociopolitical condition of contemporary British society. Most of the character's behaviors are different from what they are in actual life.

As a critique of the eighteenth and nineteenth century British culture *Mansfield Park* blurs the boundary between appearance and reality. Politics of irony subverts the so-called and dominant patriarchal ideology from the feminist point of view. At last Fanny as marginalized lady wins and creates her own position and Sir Thomas as a representative of both patriarchal ideology and colonial venture becomes failure in his tasks. Politics of irony is to reduce the sociopolitical and cultural stereotype that is the exploitation and domination upon Fanny Price by Sir Thomas Bertram and other members, political corruption by Sir Thomas Bertram through his imperial motive, cultural degradation by Mrs. Norris, Lady Bertram and Mr. Rushworth and the complex and ambiguous relation and suspicious morality between Edmund, Fanny, Henry, Mary, Rushworth, Maria and others. Jane Austen's politics is use irony to show the contextual evidences, which concern with certain discourse as Hutcheon says: "Irony is a discursive strategy with certain context" (45). The politics of irony works in a positive and constructively affirmative way which is usually held by those who see as a powerful weapon to fight against the oppressive authority. Most recently it is feminist, post-colonial, gay and lesbian writers and theorists who concern with irony.

## Chapter Three

### Conclusion

Reading a text from the perspective of irony is what the present research is concerned with. Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* neatly shows the connection between style and ideology where she raises some of the sociopolitical issues from her ironical strategy. She uses irony to dramatize the crisis and failure of so-called patriarchal ideology in one hand and the failure of inherent colonial motive on the other. Her politics of irony is most subversive one that reveals her inner thought about woman's emancipation and individual freedom. It subverts the conventional patriarchal ideology and brings women's consciousness at the center.

The tension between patriarchal discourses and feminine ideology that is the materialistic and idealistic view is skillfully presented in the *Mansfield Park*. Sir Thomas represents the conservative patriarch who wants to impose his authority with dramatic creed. But Fanny as a feminine character ironically undercuts his all authority. Along with Sir Thomas Bertram some of the women characters like: Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram also practice the patriarchal authority. Fanny's resistance is not only for Sir Thomas but also directed against Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram's authority. Here politics of irony is not only for male patriarchy but also for female patriarchy. First she uses irony to reflect the unusual aspects of society then she again uses irony to reduce that very unusual aspects. Her politics of irony is most distinct one. That's why Austen's irony is directed against the irony itself. Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram whom Fanny regards very much as a guardian accuses her and says that she is selfish, obstinate, independence of spirit and willful girl. But she does not change her mind and says that it is her individual rights and freedom to choose her life

partner on the base of moral position and commercial value. As a result, she receives heavy social pressure but remains adamant.

Sir Thomas and Fanny's discursive forms are complex configuration of shared knowledge, beliefs values and communicative strategies but that is the gap between feminine and male discourses. Sir Thomas' practice to impose his patriarchal authority upon Fanny Price remains opposite when Henry and Maria get married and Edmund and Fanny get chance to unite each other. In *Mansfield Park* not only men are patriarchal or in other words not only males are exploiter but females are also exploiter. Fanny is dominated by both male and female. She is double marginalized here. To explore and refute such complexity Jane Austen uses irony as a political tool. Fanny's refusal to enter into the wave of marriage with Henry produces a crisis which qualitatively invites the conflict between patriarchal authority and female modesty. Her that refusal threats upon the hegemonic patriarchal ideology through feminine venture. Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram's eagle eyed perspective towards Fanny also comes into normal because of Sir Thomas's moral failure. Fanny did not accept the tyrannical ruling system of Bertram owners. As a result, she is exiled from Mansfield Park society. In the early nineteenth century's strict and conventional society woman either has to be limited within the social boundaries or has to alienated and exile herself from it. But Fanny prefers her exile to violate the social boundaries.

Austen's political irony also highlights the failure of contradictory colonial practice of Britain upon its territory. Sir Thomas's Antigua state is not for civilizing mission and management of plantation. It is for expansion of Britain's colonial mission and to take lots of benefit from commercial industry and natural resources. But when Sir Thomas returns very soon he cannot manage his plantation properly. His poor return is an ironical representation of Britain's unsuccessful colonial motive.

Most of critics take this task as a moral failure of white man's civilizing mission.

Irony functions here as a discursive strategy to reveal the colonial discourse.

When Fanny increased her movement in the Mansfield Park as a result she banished from Mansfield society where she has been spiritually attached. Her banishment is the banishment of an innocent girl from the patriarchal society. It is an ironical situation for Fanny Price that she herself chooses her banishment despite being no one for of her instead of Mansfield society. All the old traditional norms and values ironically became failure after her resistance. It is the real craftsmanship of Jane Austen's ironical strategy that who tried to deviate from the conventional pattern of showing that females are not always weak as they are. They also have genuine power to struggle with domination and exploitation. It is her revolutionary idea to take underprivileged woman at the centre.

Austen's representation of early nineteenth century British society is highly appreciable. The representations of character's antithetical temperaments notice the ideological confrontation between good and evil. Along with the failure of so-called patriarchal ideology and colonial/imperial motive of Sir Thomas Bertram, other unusual and contradictory aspects are also not less important. The instability among British culture is reflected by character's various activities like: incest love relationship between Fanny and Edmund despite being both themselves is cousin as well as sister and brother. The tripartite love wave among Henry, Maria, Edmund, Tom, Marry, Julia and others makes the situation complex. The sophisticated and hypocrite manner among Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram warns us about the unusual and complex situation of British society. In this regard Jane Austen uses irony to reveal such conditions which were prevalent in the contemporary time. Her politics of irony is to reduce such complex ambiguous and unusual aspects of the time.

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