

## Assignment 1

Total Marks: 20

19 March 2024

Each question is worth 10 marks (guideline: 400 words each).

1. Answer any ONE of the following:

- a. What role do the visit to Sotherton and the theatricals play in advancing the plot of *Mansfield Park*? In other words, how does each character's trajectory either advance or change as a result of the events that take place in these locations? And what role do the characters themselves play in pushing their agenda or desires or aspirations forward?

OR

- b. What do the young women in the novel aspire to or hope to obtain through love and marriage? What does marriage signify to them? Are their aspirations and hopes matched by the aspirations and hopes of the men around them on the same subjects?

2. Answer any ONE of the following:

- a. "I *should* have thought ... that every woman must have felt the possibility of a man's not being approved, not being loved by some one of her sex at least, let him be ever so generally agreeable. Let him have all the perfections in the world, I think it ought not to be set down as certain that a man must be acceptable to every woman he may happen to like himself. But, even supposing it is so, allowing Mr. Crawford to have all the claims which his sisters think he has, how was I to be prepared to meet him with any feeling answerable to his own? He took me wholly by surprise. I had not an idea that his behaviour to me before had any meaning; and surely I was not to be teaching myself to like him only because he was taking what seemed very idle notice of me. In my situation, it would have been the extreme of vanity to be forming expectations on Mr. Crawford. I am sure his sisters, rating him as they do, must have thought it so, supposing he had meant nothing. How, then, was I to be—to be in love with him the moment he said he was with me? How was I to have an attachment at his service, as soon as it was asked for? His sisters should consider me as well as him. The higher his deserts, the more improper for me ever to have thought of him. And, and—we think very differently of the nature of women, if they can imagine a woman so very soon capable of returning an affection as this seems to imply."

Who is the speaker? What issue is the speaker referring to? Explain how the speaker defends their own decision. Do you agree with the speaker? Take a position and defend your response.

OR

- b. "It was a busy morning with him. Conversation with any of them occupied but a small part of it. He had to reinstate himself in all the wonted concerns of his *Mansfield* life: to see his steward and his bailiff; to examine and compute, and,

in the intervals of business, to walk into his stables and his gardens, and nearest plantations; but active and methodical, he had not only done all this before he resumed his seat as master of the house at dinner, he had also set the carpenter to work in pulling down what had been so lately put up in the billiard-room, and given the scene-painter his dismissal long enough to justify the pleasing belief of his being then at least as far off as Northampton. The scene-painter was gone, having spoilt only the floor of one room, ruined all the coachman's sponges, and made five of the under-servants idle and dissatisfied; and Sir Thomas was in hopes that another day or two would suffice to wipe away every outward memento of what had been, even to the destruction of every unbound copy of *Lovers' Vows* in the house, for he was burning all that met his eye."

What is Sir Thomas' approach to taking charge of Mansfield Park upon his return from Antigua? How does Austen implicitly connect this approach to his business interests in Antigua? Why do you think Austen chooses to depict his return to Mansfield Park in this manner?

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NOTE:

1. This assignment calls for you to answer only two out of a total four questions. If you attempt more than two, only one option per question will be read and graded.
2. Do not use bullet points. Write in full sentences and paragraphs.
3. Explain your ideas and examples fully and remember to connect your examples clearly to the point you are trying to make.
4. Do not summarize the plot of a literary text. This adds nothing new. Your response should focus on your ideas and interpretations of the text.