



Mansfield Park and the Moral Empire

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ON SUNDAY, 24 JANUARY 1813, while she was writing *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra,

I am reading . . . an Essay on the Military Police & Institutions of the British Empire, by Capt. Pasley of the Engineers, a book which I protested against at first, but which upon trial I find delightfully written & highly entertaining. I am as much in love with the Author as I ever was with Clarkson or Buchanan, or even the two M^r Smiths of the city. The first soldier I ever sighed for; but he does write with extraordinary force & spirit.

The other works Austen was reading at this time include Spanish travel, colonial American life, and amusing parodies of contemporary verse, the kinds of writing one expects a lady to be interested in, but these sentences make clear that Austen also read contemporary political works—Clarkson's *History of . . . the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, Pasley's *Essay*, and Claudius Buchanan's campaigning essays for the Christianization of "British" India.¹ Such rare survivors in Austen's correspondence invite the question how many testimonies to the range of her intellectual interests disappeared when Cassandra burned her letters. Whether Austen was ever in love with Clarkson and Buchanan is not entirely clear—her putting them on a level with the two Mr. Smiths who wrote those amusing parodies adds a degree of irony—but her approval of Pasley and Buchanan does imply that she approved of their frankly imperialist arguments, as did the Austen family's close personal friend Warren Hastings (Carson, *East*

India 144). Pasley's *Essay* was published in November 1810, a time of deep despair two months after Wellington had retreated from Talavera in Spain and four months after the battle of Wagram had forced Austria to sue for peace. By the time of Austen's letter, Napoleon's army was dying in the Russian snow, giving hope to Britain and her allies, but Pasley's militancy seemed no less urgent: he argues for an imperialist moral regeneration and urges Britain to stop paying its allies to fight Napoleon and commit its own troops to the continental war so that it can by right hold the lands they conquer. Citing the East India Company's conquests as the example to follow, Pasley recommends that Britain turn Switzerland, Italy, Holland, Sicily, and Prussia into British colonies (368–78) and have them pay the expenses of a British garrison “as proper security for . . . not again infamously betraying us” (385).

Pasley's arguments resonated so well with his contemporaries that the *Essay* was reprinted thrice in 1811–1812.² In March 1811, William Wordsworth offered an unsolicited and lengthy paean of praise that concludes thus: “No insults, no indignities, no vile stooping, no despondency, will your politics admit of; and, therefore . . . I congratulate my country on the appearance of a book, which, resting . . . our national safety upon the purity of our national character, . . . will (I trust) help materially to make us . . . a more powerful and a more high-minded nation” (2:482). Such sentiments show us how widespread was the support for empire at this time. In 1783, when Austen was eight years old, Britain's traumatic loss of thirteen American colonies had inaugurated a desperate search for replacements in what Linda Colley has called “one of the most formative and violent periods in the making of modern Britain and in the making of the modern world” (149). Under the guise of the French wars, Britain fought to extend its empire in the Mediterranean (Malta, Sicily and Naples, Tripoli and Egypt), North America, the Caribbean (Trinidad, Tobago, Guyana, St. Lucia, Dominica), Africa (Cape and Sierra Leone), South Asia (annexation of Madras and Bombay in 1803; four major wars with Mysore and the Marathas; Mauritius and Ceylon), and East Asia (Java, Singapore). By 1815, it had established “the Second British Empire” and furnished itself with the “great and philosophic view” of its right to imperial dominion that had been lacking in the first decade of the century. These words had prefaced G. A. Leckie's *Historical Survey*, another British imperial tract with many similarities to Pasley's. Leckie argues, “We must . . . Britannize every part of insular Europe which suits our purpose” (115), and he has Gibraltar, Sicily, Malta, Crete, and Cyprus in mind (119).³

The jewel in the imperial crown was of course India, the largest economy in the world at the beginning of the eighteenth century (Maddison 112–18,

263). From India, Britain exported food (flour and rice), raw materials (cotton, copper, iron), soldiers, sailors, ships, and ordnance and muskets for the war effort against France, and India became a primary market for British manufactures. The British East India trade contributed 24% of customs duties, the British government's primary source of income (Knight 393). In 1814 Patrick Colquhoun listed the military strength of the Empire at just over one million men, 160,000 of whom were East India Company personnel, and estimated the total value of the Empire at over £4,000 million, one-quarter of which derived from territories conquered by the Company. By 1820 the Empire would govern a quarter of the world's population (Colquhoun 7; Bayly 3–6).

In common with much of the English gentry, the Austen family derived personal benefits from the development of Britain's East-Asian empire, primarily through the marriage of George Austen's sister Philadelphia in 1753 to Tysoe Saul Hancock, Surgeon of the East India Company, from whom George received packets of diamonds for trade (Nokes 33) and whose daughter, Eliza, received £10,000 from her godfather, Warren Hastings, Governor-General of India. Hastings remained a family friend, receiving from Henry a copy of *Pride and Prejudice* and expressing his appreciation of the work in September 1813 as Austen finished *Mansfield Park* (15 September 1813). These connections are yet more germane to *Mansfield Park* since Eliza's glamour, wit, and love of theatricals are presumed represented in the character of Mary Crawford, and it is possible that some of Henry Austen's dash inspires the representation of Henry Crawford.

There were also naval connections with India: Austen's younger brother Frank served from 1788 to 1793 in the Bay of Bengal and Malabar Coast under Commodore Cornwallis, brother of another Governor-General of India, and during this time Frank was in charge of East-Indiamen (Southam 41–47). Jane Austen's ears must have been filled with his tales when he returned to Steventon on 14 November 1793 after an absence of five and a half years. As a homecoming gift she gave him "Jack and Alice," "dedicated to Francis William Austen, Esq., Midshipman on board his Majesty's Ship *the Perseverance*" (*Minor Works* 12). In 1808–1810 Francis Austen undertook convoy duties for the East India Company, receiving £2000 in "Treasure Money and Freight Money" (Southam 98), about £2 million (\$3 million) in today's money.⁴ As Jane's relationship with Frank provides material for that of Fanny and William Price in *Mansfield Park*, we notice another East Indian underpinning for the novel.⁵

With this contextual information in mind, the reference to "Buchanan" in Austen's letter becomes salient. Claudius Buchanan shared Clarkson's zeal

for moral reform and Pasley's conviction that Britain should rule the world. He made a very important contribution to the ideological construction of Britain as an exemplary moral nation through his sermons, lectures, and publications, among them the often-reprinted "The Star of the East" (1809), his *Christian Researches in Asia* (1811), and *Sermons on Interesting Subjects* (1812). Born in 1766, Buchanan came under the influence of Henry Thornton, the Evangelical banker, who paid for him to study at Cambridge under Charles Simeon, a friend of the Rev. John Venn, the foremost spiritual guide of the Clapham Sect. Simeon, Venn, and Thornton were among the founders of the Church Missionary Society in 1797 and actively supported the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the Colonial and Continental Church Society, and the Church Mission to the Jews (Cowie; Embrée 272–74). In 1788 Simeon's Evangelicalism had led to a friendship with Charles Grant, the wealthy East India Company merchant who campaigned assiduously for the moral reformation of India and joined the East India Company Board in 1805.

Under this important patronage, Claudius Buchanan had been appointed East India Company chaplain in 1797 and in May 1799 had delivered a jingoistic sermon of thanksgiving for the British victory over Tippoo Tib, Sultan of Mysore, a campaign in which Frank Austen assisted (Southam 42–43). The sermon brought Buchanan to the notice of Richard Wellesley, Governor-General of Bengal, who was pursuing a new policy of "establishing complete British suzerainty in southern Asia" (Carson, "Buchanan"; Bayly, "Wellesley"). Wellesley had Buchanan's sermon circulated throughout India and soon appointed Buchanan Vice-President of the East India Company College at Fort William, recently established, in the wake of the impeachment proceedings against Warren Hastings, to ensure the moral probity and technical efficiency of the Company's administrative cadre. Buchanan's role was to be "moral censor" and to lecture on Greek, Persian, and English literature, but he was primarily there to preach the Evangelical doctrine that India was sunk in despotic barbarism and needed to be rescued by British power and dominion.

Having struggled to gain traction in the 1790s, this campaign began to become official ideology in the early 1800s, notably being supported by the Rev. Charles Manners-Sutton, who was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1805 and gladly accepted the dedication of (and possibly funded) Buchanan's *Memoir of the Expediency of an Ecclesiastical Establishment for British India* (1805). In this memoir, written from Fort St. George in Madras (Chennai), Buchanan recalls that at the last renewal of the East India Company Charter

in 1793 Parliament had resolved to create an establishment for “civilising the natives of India” but deferred implementation until a more “auspicious time,” the country having just declared war on France. Now, however,

The French revolution has imposed on us the duty of using new means for extending and establishing Christian principles. Our territorial possessions in the East have been nearly doubled in extent; and thence arises the duty of cherishing the religion and morals of the increased number of our countrymen, who occupy these possessions; as well as of promoting the civilization of our native subjects by every rational means. (22)

This paragraph melds arguments and pragmatic concerns in a manner typical of its time: Britain’s global ideological competition with France necessitates the moral empire; the expansion of imperial dominions necessitates the Christianization and civilization of the natives; the need to ensure good governance by an expanding corps of company servants (widely known for their moral dissolution) creates a need for their Christian moral (re)education, which allies with the need to Christianize the natives. Buchanan goes on to join imperial pragmatism to his cause, arguing that inculcating Christian beliefs will attach “the governed to their governors” and “facilitate our intercourse with the natives” (29). These arguments will be reiterated in most discussions of imperial policy throughout the century.

The *Memoir* established Buchanan’s reputation in political and ecclesiastical circles, but Austen is more likely to have read his populist volume *Christian Researches in Asia*, which went through nine editions in the years 1811–1813. The popularity of this work owed not a little to its opening essay, an account of Buchanan’s visit to the temple of Juggernaut at Orissa in May 1806, in which he regales the reader with salacious and lurid images of the suttee and human sacrifices. The pilgrims who have travelled from far and wide are famished and unkempt, numbers of them dying on the roadside, their corpses devoured by vultures, dogs, and jackals, while cattle feed richly on the human ordure deposited along the way. During the ceremony a young boy and an old priest seem involved in public onanism, and the zealous infidels throw themselves under the wheels of the massive Juggernaut to gain immediate entry to nirvana (23–24). Buchanan’s pornographic vignettes thus depict the Hindu religion as “criminal superstition” (33–34) and indict the East India Company for deriving tax revenues from such abhorrent practices.⁶

Buchanan’s *Christian Researches* was published as part of the campaign to secure changes in the East India Company Charter when it came up for renewal in

1813, and—happily for those interested in the Antiguan dimensions of *Mansfield Park*—this campaign had the enthusiastic support of the Evangelicals, who had for many years seen the Christianization of India as second only to their desire to abolish the slave trade. The Evangelicals wanted not just a moral nation but also a moral empire and had founded a raft of societies to influence popular education at home and spread the gospel overseas. William Wilberforce, the Yorkshire MP who led the anti-slavery campaign, opined in a letter written 15 February 1812, “Next to the slave trade, the foulest blot on the moral character of this country was the willingness of Parliament and the people to permit our fellow-subjects . . . in the East Indies to remain . . . under the grossest, the darkest and the most degrading system of idolatrous superstition that almost ever existed upon earth” (qtd. in Embrée 273). On 23 March 1813, shortly after Austen read Buchanan, we find Wilberforce writing to Hannah More: “you have read Buchanan. You will agree with me, that now the Slave Trade is abolished, this is by far the greatest of our national sins. . . . [P]rudent . . . endeavours to improve and Christianise our East Indian population, would strengthen our hold on that country, and render it more securely ours” (Gray 103).

In this view Wilberforce enjoyed the support of Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister from October 1809 until his assassination in May 1812, whose support for anti-slavery while he was Chancellor of the Exchequer had been crucial to the passage of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade through the Lords, as well as to providing the naval funding and the legal framework that ensured that the Royal Navy was equipped to police it. Perceval was a national by-word for leading the kind of exemplary personal life we are to expect of Fanny and Edmund in *Mansfield Park*. He thought adultery was a criminal offence; he would go home from Parliament to say prayers at suppertime with his children; and he famously stood up to the Prince Regent in the “Delicate Investigation,” at one point risking his political future by printing at his own expense five thousand copies of a formal report on the Prince of Wales’s conduct and threatening to publish it if the Prince did not cease his efforts to exclude the Princess from Court. Perceval also opposed clerical pluralism and clerical non-residence and tried to pass an act ensuring curates a decent minimum wage of £200 per year (Gray 22–25), issues highly relevant to *Mansfield Park*. Indeed Perceval would have been perfectly in agreement with Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram on just about everything, notably Edmund Bertram’s expostulation to Mary Crawford in chapter 9 on the need for the clergy to act as moral exemplars for the country: “as the clergy are, or are not what they ought to be, so are the rest of the nation” (93).

These echoes of Perceval may very well have been based on more than popular report since Perceval and the Austens had a common friend in William Chute, MP for Hampshire, with whom James Austen regularly dined and hunted: Austen's nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh records that Chute had been Spencer Perceval's fag at Harrow and "always kept up as much intimacy with the Perceval family as their different courses through life permitted." Chute was a political ally and friend of the Prime Minister and of his elder brother Charles, Lord Arden, whose son, the distinguished High Church clergyman Arthur Perceval, ministered to him in his last illness in 1824 (Austen-Leigh 71). Perhaps of even greater importance, Chute's wife, Elizabeth, was the sister-in-law of Perceval's political patron, the Earl of Northampton (Gray 106). Altogether the multi-stranded web of connection between the Chutes and Percevals may very well have given the Austens a sense of intimate engagement with the causes they championed.

As the renewal of the East India Company Charter approached, Perceval advised Wilberforce on how to get the "Pious Clause" requiring the Company to fund missionary work and education in India written into its new Charter (R. and S. Wilberforce 1:14). To this end they created a campaign at least as significant as that against slavery and succeeded in obtaining over half a million signatures on 908 petitions received between 15 February and 12 April 1813 from hundreds of different groups (Carson, *East India* 139). The campaign converted a hostile House of Commons to support inclusion of a clause that stated it as "the duty of this country . . . to promote the religious and moral improvement" of the Indians. While this statement was less than the Evangelicals had desired, it nonetheless laid a duty on the Company to propagate Christian values and thus, in effect, signed up the whole nation to the idea that Britain had been abusing its trust in India (Embrée 273; Hilton 232).⁷ The Evangelicals transformed their own standing in the national culture and succeeded in putting at its center a self-righteous moralism that would survive at least until the 1960s.

Appreciating the scale and prominence of the Evangelical campaign provides a new context for understanding the moral tone of *Mansfield Park* and of Jane Austen's changing views of the Evangelicals. As all Austen scholars know, in January 1809 Austen expressed her dislike of the Evangelicals in a quip to Cassandra about Hannah More's just-published *Cælebs in Search of a Wife*: "You have by no means raised my curiosity after Caleb;—My disinclination for it before was affected, but now it is real; I do not like the Evangelicals.—Of course I shall be delighted when I read it, like other people, but till I do, I dislike it"

(24 January 1809). Later, in November 1814, Austen wrote to her niece Fanny Knight about her suitor, Mr. John Plumtre, toward whom Fanny's feelings were cooling: "And as to there being any objection from his *Goodness*, from the danger of his becoming even Evangelical, I cannot admit *that*. I am by no means convinced that we ought not all to be Evangelicals, & am at least persuaded that they who are so from Reason & Feeling, must be happiest & safest" (18 November 1814).

Austen's change of heart was in phase with the changing views of the Anglican hierarchy which, desiring an episcopal establishment in India, and recognizing the popular support for the forty or so Evangelicals and fellow travellers in Parliament, had decided to yield to the new, popular mood, "the better to ensure that the Church was in a position to control Dissenting activities if necessary" (Carson, *East India Company* 146). Wilberforce had been careful to ensure that the petitions came from all shades of Christian opinion: Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist (Embrée 274; Hilton 232–33; Carson, "British Raj" 55–56; Brown 35–39). Indeed it is quite possible that Austen signed one herself since, as Jocelyn Harris has pointed out, on 26 August 1813, five weeks after the Charter Act received the Royal Assent, Austen donated half a guinea toward the formation of a Basingstoke branch of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which supported overseas missions through its affiliate, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Unfortunately Spencer Perceval did not live to see the triumph of his views: he was assassinated by John Bellingham in May 1812, one year before *Mansfield Park* was published, an assassination that Andro Linklater has recently suggested was supported by the Liverpool slavers and merchants whose fortunes Perceval had wrecked.

Having described the political context, we can now see that Austen's sympathetic reading of Buchanan and Pasley implies her awareness that the Evangelical moral reformation of the Mansfield Park estate echoes the national struggle to vindicate ideas of British moral superiority and imperial right in the years when the novel was conceived and written. It is possible to adopt strong or weak interpretations of this recognition: a strong version would suggest that Austen is consciously interested in writing a political novel; a weak version would suggest that her writing merely reflects cultural trends.

The strong version can recruit a later letter by Jane Austen to its case, for on 2 September 1814, when British and American representatives were meeting in Ghent to agree to terms for the end of the war of 1812–1814, she wrote to Martha Lloyd that she placed her "hope of better things on a claim

to the protection of Heaven, as a Religious Nation, a Nation inspite of much Evil improving in Religion." This remark seems to indicate a reversion to her earlier antipathy toward Evangelicalism, but it also indicates her belief that Britain had a Providentialist, moral claim to world dominion, and it therefore strengthens the suggestion that she saw her narrative of the moral reformation of Mansfield Park as resonating with this far-reaching reconstruction of Britain's political image. Indeed, Austen and Wilberforce seem to have thought identically on this point, for in his speeches arguing for the insertion of the Pious Clause into the Company charter, Wilberforce had opined that the "monstrous system of follies and superstitions . . . under the yoke of which the natives of Hindostan now groan" could only be removed because "Providence has provided sufficient means for rescuing them from the depths in which they are now sunk" (*Substance* 37). The means were Britain's "religious and moral superiority," for "the influence of Christianity is greater in this country than in any other upon earth" (39).

If Britain has this moral superiority, it must then be exemplified above all in the conduct of its officers and in its ruling institutions. The English country house, standing at the center of its productive estate, had for centuries before Austen symbolized an ideal national political order. Across the eighteenth century the country house had increasingly come to symbolize an ideal imperial order, but as this idea gained force, so it required two changes: first, it required that the nobility conform to their ideological image; second, it required that Britain's colonial subjects be seen as morally inferior or backward (Bayly 109–11). In this respect India, with its sophisticated, learned, and elaborate culture, posed a problem not presented by slave plantations or so-called "backward" populations. India had to be reduced to cultural inferiority, an idea that had been deeply offensive to Edmund Burke and Warren Hastings and to such intellectuals as Sir William Jones, who pioneered the study of Sanskrit, translated Muslim property law, and founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784. Indian inferiority, however, had long had its creators and supporters, notably the Evangelical and Company director Charles Grant, mentioned above, whose *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* was first written to support the 1792–1793 attempt to insert the Pious Clause into the East India Company charter. Wilberforce, Buchanan, and Wellesley drew upon its ideas; after twenty years of ideological struggle, through the petition campaign of 1812–1813 the Pious Clause finally became part of the dominant ideology of Britain (Embrée 140–41, 270). Thereafter it runs through James Mill's monumental *History of India*⁸ in 1817–1819 and

becomes part of the general ideology of the country, even shaping the teaching of English literature: in 1832 Mill would make one of the first arguments about the hegemonic value of English literature in the Indian sub-continent, contending that while there was little point in teaching Indians the English language, since they would be working primarily in their native languages, “by becoming better acquainted with English literature, they would have the chance of having their understandings better enlightened” (*Parliamentary Papers* 21 February 1832, qtd. in Viswanathan 91). Twelve years later, Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India from 1844 to 1848, passed a resolution assuring Indians who had distinguished themselves in European literature preference in the selection for public office. As Gauri Viswanathan has shown, those who had read and understood *Mansfield Park* would find their chances for employment in the British imperial service much improved (89).

The relationship between *Mansfield Park* and the campaign for the moral reform of India has yet another important tangent. In the 1780s the Commissioners for Examining the Public Accounts had begun trying to create the cultural assumption of an impartial civil service by replacing fees and patronage with a salaried, rational, uniform, accountable, and pensioned state bureaucracy. Its impetus, forced to the margins by the French wars, returned to prominence in 1808 (Hilton 119–24). Similarly, where Company “writers” under Robert Clive and Warren Hastings had operated a mixed economy, trading in part for themselves and in part for the Company, these practices ceased to be tolerated in the first decade of the nineteenth century: in 1805–1808 the creation of the Company colleges at Haileybury and Fort William was inspired by the desire to have done with such moral dubiety and to train a bureaucratic cadre of high-minded, Christian, moral, and impartial gentlemen. The East India Company succeeded where domestic initiatives had failed (Bayly 106–20) and eventually became the example that the Home Civil Service would seek to emulate and a model around which nineteenth-century conceptions of the British gentleman would be elaborated.

In his realization of Mary Crawford’s venality and his growing love for Fanny, Edmund signals this long-lasting transformation of the British (landed) gentleman into a type described by the historian F. M. L. Thompson as “the aristocrat as devoted family man, leading an exemplary private life of comfortable domesticity, sincerely religious, scrupulous, and painstaking in attending to business affairs, abhorring debt, drink, or gambling, and liberal in supporting good causes” (30). To legitimate the moral empire, its key personnel had to be possessed of moral control over the impulses of the self. Fanny is

naturally eligible for such a role since she is governed by “the sweetness of her temper, the purity of her mind, and the excellence of her principles” (468), but Edmund, seduced by Mary, has to suffer and “talk his mind into submission” (467) in order for his love to follow real Christian ends. Tom’s suffering cures him of his “thoughtlessness and selfishness” so that he becomes “what he ought to be, useful to his father, steady and quiet, and not living merely for himself” (462), whereas Henry Crawford had “indulged in the freaks of a cold-blooded vanity a little too long” (467) and yielded to the “temptation of immediate pleasure [which] was too strong for a mind unused to make any sacrifice to right” (467). He is therefore lost for the imperial cause.

The Bertram daughters and Mary Crawford are similarly left to their own well-earned damnation, but the language of Mary Crawford’s dismissal is most germane, for when Edmund upbraids her over her willingness to condone Henry’s adultery, she acerbically remarks, “A pretty good lecture upon my word. Was it part of your last sermon? At this rate, you will soon reform every body at Mansfield and Thornton Lacey; and when I hear of you next, it may be as a celebrated preacher in some great society of Methodists, or as a missionary into foreign parts” (458).

In the contemporary context, these are sharply focused words, for the damnation of Mary, the conversion of Tom, and the failure of Henry make for the kind of moral argument that runs throughout Evangelical doctrine and Wilberforce’s writings. For example, in his *A Practical View . . . of Christianity* (1811), Wilberforce had argued that Britain was in a dire state of moral corruption—the contradiction between this view and that expressed above in 1812 did not seem to trouble him—and that this corruption had been brought on by its very prosperity and a consequent cult of selfishness. While selfishness infects all citizens, the “great and the wealthy” were notably “given over to “luxury, pomp and parade” and “the frivolities of a sickly and depraved imagination” (336). Wilberforce’s proposed cure was very like that represented in *Mansfield Park*: a wholesale conversion to “real Religion” (a term also loved by Buchanan), which would lead everyone to disregard immediate personal gain, “act from pure principle,” and leave the outcome of events to God. The reformed man

would possess the true secret of a life at the same time useful and happy. . . . [H]e would naturally be loved and respected and beloved by others, and be in himself free from the annoyance of those bad passions, by which they who are actuated by world principles are commonly corroded. If any country were indeed filled with

men, each thus diligently discharging his duties of his own station without breaking in upon the rights of others, but on the contrary endeavouring so far as he might be able, to forward their views and promote their happiness; all would be active and harmonious in the goodly frame of human society. There would be no jarrings, no discord. The whole machine of civil life would work without obstruction or disorder, and the course of its movements would be like the harmony of the spheres. (350–51)

Wilberforce's ideal social machine, staffed by men whose conduct was guided by honest Christian principle, stood in direct contrast to most social conduct in the previous century, whether of government servants taking personal profits from public office, Company writers trading on their own behalf, or a hedonistic and politically irresponsible nobility. Rather, what was needed was something very much more modern, something resembling a perfect capitalist factory, a disciplined and impartial civil service, an ethical finance system and stock exchange.

What Wilberforce means by “real Christianity” sits comfortably with the supervenient concept of duty and self-sacrifice in Britain's imperial cause, allied to a strong sense of paternalist responsibility for those less civilized, or less economically advanced. It was indeed the modern British moral nation state that was born during Austen's lifetime (Torrance; Roseveare 118–21, 132–36). The commercial trading companies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had to give ground to a trusteeship principle, as had become apparent through the trial of Warren Hastings (Porter 200). Burke's critique of Hastings and the East India Company as “one of the most corrupt and destructive tyrannies that probably ever existed” was grounded on the assumption that we should respect traditional Hindu and Muslim customs because they were traditional and therefore venerable—the same argument he would later use in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (385). The modernizers, on the other hand, wanted to make it possible for Indians to be like Brits—honest, rational, impartial, Christian, individualized free-traders—precisely because they did not believe the colony could be administered unless the minds of Asian subjects were brought into conformity with the mission. Until their maturity in Christian values was assured, the British would remain their trustees.

The educational and administrative ideals of the East India College, rearticulated through James Mill's *History of India*, with its desire to teach English literature to the natives, were its *summa*, and they set the imperial agenda for the next hundred and thirty years. The world created by this

ideological revolution is one in which *Mansfield Park* sits very comfortably because the concerns it expresses were formed during the Evangelical campaign to enlist the entire population in the mission to Christianize the Empire. Ironically perhaps, E. M. Forster, whose *Passage to India* represents the imperitance of this mission, learned it at Tonbridge School, where George Austen studied and then taught before becoming the Rector of Steventon. Today, Tonbridge boasts a wonderful theater named in Forster's honor.

NOTES

1. Austen's reading of Pasley and Clarkson has been discussed in two fine essays by Ruth Perry and Moreland Perkins. The argument developed here might be read as an addendum to those and to Roger Sales's account of the Mansfield estate as symbolic of the State at the time of the Regency Crisis (87–106). This essay is also indebted to the account of changes in imperial attitudes developed in Sir Christopher Bayly's magisterial *Imperial Meridian*. After completing this essay, I found a recently published and compelling reading of *Mansfield Park* by Saree Makdisi (134–36), which complements many of the suggestions made here.

2. Pasley's *Essay* was later reprinted in 1847, 1912, and 1914. The 1914 edition has a lengthy preface by Colonel B. R. Ward that evidences Pasley's enduring reputation in military circles.

3. Leckie wrote his tracts while visiting these islands in 1807, around the time when, as calculated by Ellen Moody, William Price was in similar waters and buying his amber cross for Fanny in Sicily.

4. As calculated by www.measuringworth.com.

5. Much later, in 1852, aged seventy-three, her brother Charles would lead the attack on Rangoon in the Second Burma War, dying there of cholera in the same year.

6. The salacious account of Juggernaut occasioned a critique by Charles Buller, MP for West Looe, previously a judge in Company service at Patna. The critique was summarily dismissed in the House of Commons by William Wilberforce during the Charter renewal debates (Pearson 484). This Buller was of the powerful Devon-Cornwall family known to the Austens and described by Le Faye (503).

7. The most complete account of the debates is found in Carson's *The East India Company and Religion* (130–50).

8. See especially Mill's elaborate argument for Hindu depravity, backwardness, and despotism (1:429–80).

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