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AUSTENMANIA* IN THE 21ST CENTURY: HOW ADAPTATIONS WIDEN
THE FEMINIST READING OF JANE AUSTEN?

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**Austenmania* In The 21st Century: How Adaptations Widen The Feminist
Reading of Jane Austen?**

**21. Yüzyılda Austenmania*: Adaptasyonlar Jane Austen Okumasını Nasıl
Derinleřtirdi?**

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Abstract

Pride and Prejudice, one of the most famous novel of all times, has also been a cornerstone in English literature, narrating social restrictions of English middle class, portraying the limited and heavily defined existence of women in society. It is already a common practice to make feminist readings of Regency period literary pieces to illustrate the gender struggle; yet for the purpose of this thesis, television and media adaptations of the novel have been chosen to further delve into the question whether adaptations, based on both time period and cultural background elaborated in the feminist reading of *Pride and Prejudice* or not. Different types of adaptations have been picked and accordingly compared to illustrate the point that even though adaptations have widened the audience, they have been far from adding anything to the feminist reading; more so, as the adaptation gets closer to modernity, it further strays away from feminism, simply adding into consumer culture.

Özet

Bütün zamanların en ünlü romanlarından biri olan *Aşk ve Gurur*, İngiliz orta sınıfının sosyal kısıtlamalarını ve kadının toplumun içindeki varoluşunun taşıdığı ağır sosyal yükleri anlatarak İngiliz Edebiyatı'nın köşe taşlarından biri olmuştur. Regency döneminin pek çok edebi eserinin feminist okumasını yapmak halihazırda yaygın bir uygulama olsa da, bu tezin amacı için, eserin televizyon ve medya adaptasyonları seçilerek, eserin dönemine ve kültürel arka planına bağlı olarak, feminist okumayı derinleştirip derinleştirmedikleri incelenmiştir. Farklı adaptasyonlar araştırmaya uygun şekilde seçilmiş ve karşılaştırılmış; ve eserin ulaştığı kitleyi genişletmiş olsalar da feminist okumaya bir katkıda bulunmadıkları; aksine adaptasyonlar modern zamanlara yakınlaştıkça feminizmden daha da uzaklaştıkları ve basitçe tüketim kültürünün aracı haline geldikleri gözlemlenmiştir.

INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that once you read a Jane Austen novel, it does not abandon you. It gets a hold on you and plays havoc with your assumptions. While each reading enriches your understanding, something always escapes from a reading. Like Lyme in *Persuasion*, the novels “should be visited and again visited”. Not having seen an Austen adaptation and wondering whether an adaptation would add into the essence of the novel; inspired this thesis. As a true Austen admirer, first impressions are quite important.

Austen’s novels are over two hundred years old today; however, they are still the most read in contemporary times. (bustle.com) Jane Austen achieved “academic and social status: the object of scholarly analysis and cult enthusiasm” (Todd 1). The first question to explore was why we are still reading Austen novels, talking about them, and creating more content for them, but most importantly how the books managed to stay relevant. This last question was my primary concern. In 1944, Edmund Wilson suggested:

There have been several revolutions of taste during the last century and a quarter of English literature, and through them all perhaps only two reputations have never been affected by the shifts of fashion: Shakespeare and Jane Austen.

Every following generation wanted to connect themselves with the author and her works, since the struggle she narrated, and the social portrayal of women did not change today. She became a new commodity with every new era, with her work being emphasized by women worldwide. According to Janet Todd, throughout the 19th century, she was a kindly spinster, then she became a romantic,

and now we identify her as a striving author of her time. (2) Jane Austen had been writing delicious, sometimes surreal stories and parodies from the age of eleven, likely earlier, to amuse her family – or, as Virginia Woolf said, 'everybody' – since even at that early age. “Whatever she writes is finished and turned and set in its relation, not to the parsonage, but to the universe.”

Jane Austen novels are more than just conventional love stories. A careful and informed reading presents you with opportunities to explore a historical period, women’s domestic lives as well as politics and economy of marriage. This wide spectrum of issues is one of the reasons why Austen novels find themselves to be the raw material for numerous adaptations.

As Ariane Hudelet, the forthcoming academic for British literature and adaptation theories in visual arts suggests:

“The function of cinema and television in providing access to literary works today cannot be ignored. Jane Austen, in this regard, occupies a very special position, since her works have always called for recreation, interpretation, performance, [...] a phenomenon that has been increased tremendously by the plethora of cinematic adaptations since the 1990s.” (149)

Lydia Hutcheon, on the other hand, the author of *A Theory of Adaptation*, defines adaptation “as repetition, but repetition without replication” (7). This quote states that every adaptation contributes something specific to the original product. Adaptations are always new even though the source is always the same. When looking at an adaptation, the time it was created, who created it, and what was their particular perspective should be under examination. Adaptations for this particular

issue have one specific question to answer: have they, or have they not broadened the feminist reading of *Pride and Prejudice*? Did they change anything at all? Has *Pride and Prejudice* itself been enough for concluding what the chosen adaptations did?

After reading *Pride and Prejudice* probably for the tenth time, it is still striking to see Jane Austen's unique ability to create characters that are authentic and self-reflecting. Her stories are not about love between two lead characters; they are more than that. They are stories of the self, focusing on the female self mostly, the intertwined relationship between sense and sensibility, the duality of memory and the present, and the conflict between an individual's desire and society.

Almost twenty years before Austen published her first novel; Mary Wollstonecraft's famous treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* had been published. In the early 19th century, women with access to this book were well aware of the new possibilities in the description of womanhood. The problem was too complicated to solve immediately, however as Austen mentioned in one of her letters to her friend, Fanny Knight: "Single women have a dreadful propensity for being poor, which is one very strong argument in favour of matrimony." (Austen) Marriage was a necessity and women were not smart enough to achieve anything by themselves anyways as various social figures commented on. Dr. John Gregory said in 1774 said: "Men have a larger share of reason bestowed on them." In addition, writing in our time David Monaghan says, "Women can rarely have been held in lower esteem than they were at the end of the 18th century."

Austen was most certainly aware of these facts. A close reading of Austen's novels shows that she was mindful that marriage was largely an economic transaction. Austen was also aware that it was crucial to see women as rational

creatures. In *Pride and Prejudice* when Elizabeth declines the marriage offer of Mr. Collins she says, “Do not consider me now as an elegant female, intending to plague you, but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from her heart.” (Austen 88) In her stories, Austen focuses on the reality in which early 19th century women lived, instead of focusing on hypotheticals. She was aware that women had to marry a gentleman to survive comfortably in their world.

It is still discussed whether Jane Austen was a feminist or not - in the context, a feminist being “a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.” (Adichie). Concluding that Austen was not, a feminist is the result of judging her by the standards of the 21st century. The opening line of *Pride and Prejudice* describes what women think a man wants, but the marriage was equally important for a woman, if not more so. The men in her novels bear mobility and “freedom” compared to the women who are confined to their homes, victims of decorum and the environment. In *Persuasion*, Austen tells the reader what she thinks about being perceived through a man’s eyes by making a male character say the following:

“... I do not think I ever opened a book in my life, which had not something to say upon woman’s inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman’s fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men.” (Austen 187)

The female character answers, however:

“... Men have had every advantage of us in telling their story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.” (Austen 187)

Following these concerns, this study will look at Adaptation Theory in hopes of discovering whether various contemporary adaptations of the original novel managed to say something new when it comes to the feminist reading: marriage was a transaction and women were a commodity to establish and propagate status quo. What else? Adaptation theory was a new area to work on, to inquire whether an adaptation can add into the original context or not. The following chapters discuss the context of both feminist critic theory and adaptation theory, accordingly, followed by close readings of relevant adaptations with keeping the main issue of the novel in mind. Every adaptation in this thesis will be under evaluation for these critical questions.

The focus will be on four different adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, beginning with the oldest, and concluded with the most recent. They are the 1980 and 1995 BBC adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*; *Pride and Prejudice* the Movie (2005), and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012). The study will focus on ways in which these different adaptations contribute to our understanding of women and try to see how the subsequent years after the publication of the novel both changed and did not change perspectives of gender issues.

Pride and Prejudice (1980) is chosen as the scriptwriter is Fay Weldon and considering that the novel is written by a female author, seeing an adaptation by a female scriptwriter may provide an alternative perspective. BBC's 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice* was the biggest trigger in the revival of what Austen created,

since various scenes and commentary have been added, raising the popularity of the narrative by feeding into a sense of romanticism. From casting to adding extra scenes that are not normally in, the novel helped to make it more popular. While Jane Austen has always been a popular author, this production helped to move Austen into a different level of popularity, in a place where the created material started to become an entity for many people. *Pride and Prejudice* was made into cinema movie in 2005, further flesh out the sense of romanticism observed in previous adaptations. The most recent adaptation to be analyzed is a web blog series created by Hank Green and Bernie Su, titled *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*; the show started on YouTube in 2012 and ended in 2013. In this adaptation, the viewer experiences the narrative through Elizabeth Bennet's eyes, and the story takes place in the 21st century United States, marking it as a modern interpretation rather than an authentic adaptation.

After every adaptation is evaluated from the lense of the feminist reading, the dynamics of the Bennet family are detailedly observed. The nature of the Bennet family in the novel depicts why Elizabeth stands out. The Bennets are socially positioned to be an average family. Mr. Bennet is a man who keeps his nose clean in all the situations. He does not consideres the effects of his actions. Mrs. Bennet, on the other hand, is a woman who only focuses for her daughter's marital status. She is not an intellectual, but she acts upon her sincerity rather than expected decorum. Hence, it is critical to observe how the four adaptations commented on the Bennet family, establishing character background for all sisters involved.

Since there are five daughters in the Bennet family, it creates room to have multiple feminist readings considering these different women with different characteristics. Austen depicts two singularly different sisters; Lydia and Mary. Both of them stand outside of the expectations of the society, and yet adaptations seem to miss that completely. The last chapter explores each of these two characters

keeping the adaptations commentaries in mind – and this is where the feminist connotation of most adaptations does fail.

With the question whether Jane Austen was a feminist or not still in mind, an analysis of for how these adaptations reinterpret the original story will be made, and how they contribute to a feminist interpretation, being mindful that the original text itself was one of the earliest novels to look realistically and critically at women's world.



PART I

ADAPTATION AND FEMINISM

1.1. What Does Adaptation Theory Tell Us on *Pride and Prejudice*?

Pride and Prejudice starts with a memorable quote that every Jane Austen fan knows: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." (Austen 5) Moreover, as Austen puts it, it can be said that it is also an acknowledged truth that a Jane Austen novel in possession of adaptations must be in want of some more adaptations. (Grahame-Smith 7)

In this part, Lydia Hutcheon's adaptation theories will be considered as the main source, and the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* will be analyzed in the following chapters, accordingly. Keeping in mind Hutcheon's comment on adaptation being repetition, yet not replication: every adaptation that we see of *Pride and Prejudice* has to offer something new and unknown to its audience.

For Leitch, even though there are many adaptations of different novels, adaptation studies were not very popular amongst academia. (63) Adaptation studies are gaining in popularity between the academic fields, however, adding into the context of original works furthermore. The reason for this is when we think of an adaptation of a novel to a big screen or television, no matter how successful an adaptation is as cliché as it sounds most people would say, "The book was better." The original source, in our case the book, will feel better as it is more detailed and longer in content than the adaptations we watch. It is also open to the interpretation, since written narrative will always be primarily based on imagination, so it is expected to feel disappointed when in the face of an adaptation that failed to serve

the expectation. The aim of the adaptations is not to stick to the novel or the story completely, but to underline possibilities or angles that were missed before.

To be able to understand why the adaptations are important, and to discover a new perspective towards *Pride and Prejudice*, it is necessary to understand the development of this new field. According to Simone Murray, in her book *The Adaptation Industry*, there were three "major waves of innovation" to help the adaptation studies to develop since the 1950s. These 'waves' are not restrictive of one another, and generally mean extra bits of knowledge for the adaptation and strengthen its status as a field of studies. The first wave of innovation in adaptation studies was "outright rejection of fidelity [to the source material] as directorial goal or critical norm" (Murray 8). Fidelity then transformed into a word that had a negative connotation. The second wave, in the late 1970s comprised of bringing structuralist components and narratology into adaptation studies, in this manner, acquiring textual analysis of the source text as a technique for examining adaptations. The biggest change happened after the "third major wave." Adaptations studies started to show itself in the humanities as a respectable field when key themes like feminism, cultural studies, and post-colonial theory became involved in the field. According to Murray, this approach "opened the adaptation studies up." (8) The issue of "fidelity" in the first wave was a step further:

"Fidelity criticism was deemed not only a woefully blunt instrument with which to examine adaptations, but willful infidelity was in fact the very point: adaptations interrogated the political and ideological underpinnings of their source texts, translating works across cultural, gender, racial, and sexual boundaries to secure cultural space for marginalized discourses." (Murray 10)

With the third wave opening up new ways to consider adaptation studies, the scholars in this field were not just looking at the fidelity or infidelity, but how

the adaptation used the source text to clarify its own message. Vice versa, the walk into postmodernism by the humanities and arts likewise ended up vital for adapters to think about the source material they were adjusting onto the screen, arrangement, or other medium.

Adaptations are vital, as they retell a story from the perspective of the creator of that adaptation. As a two-hundred-year-old novel, *Pride and Prejudice* no matter how many years passes or how many adaptations it has, seems that will be adapted more and more. The question is why adapt *Pride and Prejudice*?

Jane Austen and her most famous novel *Pride and Prejudice* did not survive all these years by pure luck. The circumstances of the marketing of Austen and her novel created such impact that she stopped belonging to just a small community. She stopped being a secret and a hidden pleasure, enjoyed by a limited academic circle. It was not merely to adore and appreciate an author and her works anymore. It got bigger and turned into something else. There were the ones who were admiring her and idealizing everything. What she has done with her work, in this case not only her novels, was being treated as an idol in the sense of being a voice for a community. Moreover, her life was idolized as well, and these people had a name: The Janeites. A literary scholar George Saintsbury first used the term “Janeite” in an 1894 edition of *Pride and Prejudice*; he used this word in the introduction of the 94 edition. (Lynch 24) This movement of Janeites, however, started earlier than Saintsbury, with the publication of *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, published in 1870, and written by Austen’s nephew. According to Johnson, after the publication of the memoir, literary elite of Britain felt that they should distinguish their classic taste for Austen than the common interest. (Johnson 221) Claudia Johnson, a contemporary Austen scholar, defines Janeitism as “the self-consciously idolatrous enthusiasm for ‘Jane’ and every detail relative to her,” and

this definition is relevant for the modern admirers of Jane, as it is for the early admirers as well. (211) As Austen does not belong to elite scholars, it can be deduced that she is not merely an author, but “a commercial phenomenon and a cultural figure.” (Johnson 232)

Despite being considered highly essential, *Pride and Prejudice* was not deemed as a worthy piece of literature by her contemporaries. Mark Twain commented that:

“I often want to criticize Jane Austen, but her books madden me so that I can’t conceal my frenzy from the reader; and therefore, I have to stop every time I begin. Every time I read *Pride and Prejudice* I want to dig her up and beat her over the skull with her own shin bone!”

It was not just Mark Twain, who disliked the novel. Charlotte Brontë also found *Pride and Prejudice* with “no glance of a bright, vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny beck.”

It does not matter if people consider *Pride and Prejudice* as an old novel. After all these years, a spark captures the sight of the adaptation area. That is why it gets adapted no matter what happens. Austen tells a love story, which captures everyone's heart. It is easy to consider *Pride and Prejudice* as a basic marriage plot and nothing else. If it is just a novel that tells a story about how a boy and a girl meet and get married, why does it have a huge effect on the younger generation of the 21st century? How can an adaptation of a shallow plot could get \$121,147,947 gross worldwide? (boxofficemojo.com) Brenda Weber, in *For the Love of Jane: Austen, Adaptation, and Celebrity*, proposes that Austen sparks feelings of “recognition and personal ownership—the ideas which she renders are so close to each of us who read her... That we can make no separation between her thoughts

and our own” (188). This deduction of Weber could sum up the reason why Austen is often adapted. The adaptations are successful, as the original text is prosperous in itself to allow others to enrich the original work for further interpretation.

It is not just the plot that makes *Pride and Prejudice* captivating; it is the way that Austen depicts still events in her meticulous writing, making the reader easily visualize the scene when reading. She does this as if she is writing a script or a theatre play. She most of the time puts us in a room of a house and makes us watch the story unfold in an indoor setting, as if the reader is a silent spectator. She is highly talented at portraying the events in a condensed environment. For Penny Gay, this might be a gift from her young age, as when she was little her family would create theatre plays to act in the house. (1)

Being able to observe what has been happening behind the closed doors acts as a mirror for the society. Austen shows us how an evening in a drawing room can be a guide to perceive and crack the deficiencies of the 19th century England. When politeness becomes a necessity and when the thoughts in your mind becomes voices that should be silenced, everything feels more condensed. That feeling of being condensed and the feeling that you need to do what the society asks of you obviously captured so many directors and scriptwriters. There are seventeen adaptations in the form of both film and TV series. (pastemagazine.com) Some of them are completely rewritten and some of them are as loyal to the original text as possible. Four adaptations helped to create the thesis question for this study. The first one is the *Pride and Prejudice* miniseries from 1980, aired on the BBC as five episodes. The 1980's *Pride and Prejudice* caught my attention because of the way that the original text was handled. The scriptwriter Fay Weldon adapted the story focusing on the female gaze and stationed the story on a feminist perspective then the original. This adaptation preserves the fidelity for the original text, mostly devoid of commentary for the sake of authenticity.

"The adaptation" that captured the audience with its version of Mr. Darcy was the 1995 BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice*. The 1995 version intentionally or unintentionally changed the way we perceived Mr. Darcy so far. In her article, Cheryl L. Nixon "Balancing the Courtship Hero: Masculine Emotional Display in Film Adaptations of Austen's Novels," introduces the idea that Louis Menand also shares, that "the added scenes... gave Darcy a physical presence that Austen has not," and "the film adaptation succeeds because it has given Darcy 'a body'" (23). The notion of Mr. Darcy changes into something women desire, from being just an idea of the regency period egoistic gentleman.

As mentioned, after unstoppable Austenmania begins, it propagates other adaptations to be created. In 2005, Joe Wright produced *Pride and Prejudice* as a movie. Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet reminded viewers how scenery, wealth, good looks and candid shyness can have an effect on love. This version also focuses on how two people that are alienated in their own circle – Darcy because of his pride and stubbornness, and Elizabeth because of her satirical stand and wittiness – creates the need for both of them to be there for each other.

The one that is the most exciting when it comes to the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* is *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* on YouTube. YouTube has far replaced TV for so many years now, becoming an alternative approach to fiction, news, gaming, and adaptations. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a modern interpretation of *Pride and Prejudice* and being contemporary, it is highly relatable in many ways. Aired in 2013, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* opened a new medium for adaptations to exist. It accomplished suspense and focused on what mattered for the 21st-century generation. As a contemporary version of *Pride and Prejudice*, it needed to engage with audience, create a suspense for the both knowing and unknowing audience and

as an adaptation of two-hundred-year-old novel stay related. Because it is a modern interpretation of an 18th century novel, it achieved huge success, and was highly praised in the adaptation world. It is highly interesting to see how *Pride and Prejudice* can have this kind of impact through the centuries. On the other hand, it is not that shocking, as the story of Elizabeth and Darcy is not just an epic love story, but it is a story of two young people discovering themselves in an atmosphere that constrains them both.

1.2. What Does Feminist Criticism Tell Us on *Pride and Prejudice*?

When looking at the chosen adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, we can easily say that a novel, which was written two hundred years ago, can still find common areas to affect people who live in the twenty-first century. Lloyd Brown says so far, Austen scholars are still discussing if *Pride and Prejudice* was feminist or not. It is difficult to answer this question as a "yes" or a "no." (321)

To understand if the adaptations widen the feminist view on *Pride and Prejudice*, it is essential to look at the feminist critique. Toril Moi, in her essay "Feminist Literary Criticism," defines feminist criticism as "a specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism." (117) Moi suggests feminist criticism tries to look beneath gender, race, and class, and sees behind the biases that have been created over the centuries by phallogentrism, that is putting phallus as the source of the power. (125)

The struggle to gain equality between men and women has been going for many centuries. Especially women in the Western cultures tried to overcome this by raising their voices to this issue, like Sappho, Virginia Woolf, George Sand, Simone de Beauvoir. The activism started with Mary Wollstonecraft, though, who wrote what she thought about the system women were subjected to and tried to

change it by using her language. In the 18th century, she published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), saying that women must define what it means to be a woman, and change their roles in society by rejecting the assumption of the patriarchal society that everyone lived by. When looking at Austen's novels, it is hard to pin them down as solely "feminist" novels. (Brown 323) As in Austen's time, feminism was not a political discourse, even though there were feminist considerations regarding the situation of women in the society.

One of the cornerstones that expanded Austen novels was Marilyn Butler's *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, where she says Austen's novels, show opinions about the time she lived, and the controversy it had. These opinions were not to liberalize the current situation but to react to them. In conclusion, according to Butler, Jane Austen was not a feminist:

“Jane Austen's novels belong decisively to one class of partisan novels, the conservative. Intellectually, she is orthodox. ... Her important innovations are technical and stylistic modifications within a clearly defined and accepted genre.” (3)

Critics use many methods when it comes to feminist criticism. According to Charles Bressler, we are living in the postmodernist era of this criticism that starts from the 1990s to the present day. (170) When we are looking at a literary piece to decide if that piece carries the feminist components, there are some questions to consider. When reading *Pride and Prejudice*, we can ask these questions below to understand the feminine voice inside:

"Is the author male or female?"

"Is the text narrated by a male or female?"

"What types of roles do women have in the text?"

"Are the female characters the protagonists or secondary and minor characters?"

"Do any stereotypical characterizations of women appear?"

"What are the attitudes toward women held by the male characters?"

"What is the author's attitude toward women in society?"

"How does the author's attitude, culture influence her or his attitude?"

"Is feminine imagery used? If so, what is the significance of such imagery?"

"Do the female characters speak differently than the male characters? In your investigation, compare the frequency of speech for the male characters to the frequency of speech for the female characters?" (Bressler 184)

Regarding these questions as a way of finding out if *Pride and Prejudice* is a feminist novel, one can start by answering them all. We know that the author of this piece is female. The novel is narrated from the third person perspective, and since our author is female, we can say that narrative tone is inclined towards being female. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the women we see are mostly from the gentry's class. They are not servants, and we see a lady as well. The protagonist is female, and there are secondary female characters. As we can observe from the book, the tone is set by emphasizing how a woman in the society must marry a gentleman who is financially better than her.

As the novel progresses, we witness a conversation between Elizabeth and Darcy regarding what an "accomplished" woman should be. Ms. Bingley explains what an accomplished lady must be like, that;

"a woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved."(Austen 33)

Darcy also adds, "And to this, entire she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading." Elizabeth rejects this idea and protests by saying she has never seen such a woman. (Austen 33) Austen, however, does not try to praise this common idea of the society; she shows the impossibility of these demands by rejecting through Elizabeth. When it comes to the attitudes of the males in the book towards females, Darcy is the main one who creates a woman that does not exist. Mr. Bennet is also responsible for acting highly critical towards his daughters, excluding Elizabeth, he says, "... they are all silly and ignorant, *like other girls* but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters." (Austen 6) One of the most critical scenes in the novel is when Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth. This scene speaks in volumes in the way that males perceive females. This conversation between Mr. Collins and Elizabeth is proof of that perception. Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins' proposal. Mr. Collins does not seem to be rejected by that answer, though. He thinks "... that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept..." Elizabeth gives a rational explanation to Mr. Collins by saying "I do assure you that I am not one of those young ladies (if such young ladies there are) who are so daring as to risk their happiness on the chance of being asked a second time. I am perfectly serious in my refusal." This conversation continues a little bit more as Mr. Collins pressures Elizabeth to accept his proposal and denying that she is refusing at all. Albeit, it ends when Elizabeth says, "Do not consider me now as an elegant female..., but as a rational creature, speaking the truth from my heart." (Austen 88) This moment in the novel will be visited multiple times in the thesis.

In Susan Fraiman quotes from Edward Said, who claims that Austen seemed to be an exile within her own country since she had few property rights, was unmarried, dependent on her brother's estate, and anonymously published her works. (809) The problem here, as Austen shows throughout the conversations and

examples from the daily life of a woman who lived in that time, is understandable. Women are considered creatures that do not mean what they say and do not want to say the things they are saying. Today though, it may sound like such perceptions of women has ended – or did they?

On the contrary, it did not end at all. That is the sole reason that this thesis focuses on how these perceptions changed by observing the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*. Because the rights of women are still debated all over the world, the discussion of the position of women is still not specific. There are some changes and improvements, but where there are changes, there are also more and new problems added to this equation.



PART II

THE FOUR ADAPTATIONS OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

2.1. *Pride and Prejudice*, 1980

The *Pride and Prejudice* 1980 adaptation is a BBC mini-series that ran for five episodes. Before the 1980 version, several *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations had already aired. (imdb.com) Before 1980 BBC series aired there were six different adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*. These were; 1938, 1940, 1949, 1952, 1958 and 1967. With Fay Weldon's screenplay, this version of *Pride and Prejudice* accomplished a feminist approach to the story. Keeping in mind the connotations of adaptation studies, this version protects the fidelity of the original text, and adds more to it; it is both commentary and transposition. The feminist background of Weldon glows through the series and emphasizes the novel's different facets. Despite emphasizing modern feminist qualities, Weldon also underlines the characters traditional femininity by juxtaposing character strength and opinions with the weakness of their physicality and emotions. In Deborah Cartmell's *Screen Adaptations: Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice*, she states that "Mrs. Bennet... in this adaptation becomes the unsung heroine of the piece... having to do all the work and take over in conducting the girls to the Assembly ball" (63). Cartmell also adds, "that it's a female-focused adaptation is evident from the video/DVD cover which positions Elizabeth and Jane in the foreground, with a smaller Elizabeth and Darcy a few paces behind" (64).

In this version of *Pride and Prejudice*, the first episode opens with Charlotte and Elizabeth talking about the new tenant at the Netherfield. This time the famous opening line of the novel is uttered as a statement from Elizabeth, which positions Elizabeth as the narrator of the story. Elizabeth's wit and headstrong attitude are emphasized in this version with the help of her tongue. In the first ball scene where Bingley and her friends are introduced, we watch as observers of their coming into

the ballroom. All we learn about Bingley and his company is through the Bennet women. We hear nothing but their talk, gossip, and remarks about Bingley and Darcy. The order of the events does not change but how these events are perceived and shown change.

The camera angles in this adaptation are the most significant element. From the very beginning, this adaptation forces us to watch the events from the eyes of the Bennet women. The men in this version are staying as secondary figures, instead of being in focus. Even the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy is not taking much of the screen time. When all the characters step into the frame to shake hands and introduce themselves to Sir William Lucas, we hear two lines about each character, one stating who they are.

When Darcy enters the frame, the girls are precocious in evaluating him, and describe him as “far handsomer than Mr. Bingley.” (Pride and Prejudice, 1980, Episode 1, 13:29) Elizabeth also puts attention on his proud conduct. He quickly excuses himself and returns to his party after Sir William Lucas starts leading Darcy towards the dance floor and the rest of the attendants. Despite seeing this happen, Mrs. Bennet's shocked remark is the audio we get in this event. She right away comments on his actions and claims that he thinks "above his company and his friend's unworthy." The exchange gossip women of Longbourn dominate the first half of the scene. We do not hear a male talking until halfway through the scene. This speaker limit allows Weldon to identify women as the primary characters and the perspective through which the audience receives the information.

The first time we hear a male talking about the company in the room is the quick exchange between Bingley and Darcy. Weldon, remaining in line with the novel, includes the insulting comment of Darcy on Elizabeth. The feminine point

of view is quickly restored as Elizabeth walks over to her mother and quietly recounts the story of the amazing slight of Darcy. Mrs. Bennet immediately comes to Elizabeth's defense and convinces her not to worry and Darcy's attentions are not needed. Because of Mr. Bennet's disinterest in attending the Assembly, Mrs. Bennet is bound to protect her daughters and rescue them from unfavorable asides. Cartmell implies that the role of Mrs. Bennet in this scene is honorable when she "gallantly stands up for Elizabeth when Darcy slights her, ' You lose nothing,' she chirps" (64). Her character seems to be transformed from her usual depiction as a small gossip. As in the novel, Mrs. Bennet is an example of a stereotyped woman who has a little education yet great expectation. In the adaptations discussed in the further chapters, this stereotypification is focused more than her civility or her sincere interest on her daughters' economical future. This character renovation allows Weldon to place focus on women and make the exchange of Darcy and Bingley powerless. The response from Mrs. Bennet shows the power of women and the incapacity of men to take control of women. This interpretation of the novel presents a society in which women intellectually exceed men but agree to submit.

The emphasis on the situation of the Bennet family and their misfortunes are highly on sight in Feldon's version. Ms. Bingley does not hinder herself by not speaking about the Bennet family. Martha Bailey suggests, when choosing a partner in the Regency Period, one must never look behind the situation of a family. The importance of connections and status is highlighted when in the novel as Mr. Bingley has to listen over and over how the Bennet family is not sufficient enough with their connections. No matter the situation of a family, there was one truth above any of these: marriage was considered to be the only option for well-educated young women of a small fortune. The problem with this was if the family was not well situated, the girl in the family was bound to stay poor, as poor girls could not marry either rich or poor men. (Bailey)

Since everyone needs to get married, the entailment problem hits the Bennets as well. After Mr. Collins comes to Longbourn, the issue of entailment comes up, and Weldon does not forget to show interest to show how wrong the system is. With the arrival of Mr. Collins, the Bennet family do not feel comfortable. And Mr. Collins being the way he is, chatty, proud and very sharing about his patroness Lady Catherine d'Bourgh, the Bennet family's reactions become hard to miss. When Mr. Collins talks and tells things that nobody, except Mary she seems very fond of Mr. Collins; we watch how the mimics of the Bennet sisters give away their thoughts about him.

When looking at the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth, Darcy's feelings towards Elizabeth is not easy to understand. Some scenes show us long stares that come from Darcy to Elizabeth, but we do not understand the intentions of these stares. The audience, however, can see how Elizabeth does not like these stares and tries to avoid them. After Darcy proposes to Elizabeth and is rejected, we hear the chain of thoughts that go through her mind. Elizabeth's inner voice talks to us by saying that she feels gratified because of this proposal and she feels surprised that all these months he had feelings for her at the stage of wanting to get married to her. Hearing Elizabeth's thoughts is an exciting approach to the events, and when she smiles as she is thinking all these things, it leaves a door open for their relationship. It also shows how strong Elizabeth's pride is when it gets in the way of the gratification that flattered her.

At the end, when Elizabeth visits Pemberley, we watch the scene that they meet. In this scene, it is evident that Elizabeth keeps her composure and acts cool; on the contrary, Darcy cannot control himself and asks the same question twice. This scene also shows how females were able to keep themselves together in an uncomfortable situation rather than men. We see how Elizabeth feels vexed about this meeting when she talks with Mrs. Gardner. She later comes to herself again when Mr. Gardner approaches. Weldon puts out the contrast of how men and

women deal with the situations and how women are more superior than men concerning social connotations.

In the scene where Elizabeth and Darcy get together, Weldon does not forget the original work. Elizabeth reads a letter after the stage changes to show Elizabeth and Darcy walking, and talking about each other. In that scene, “Weldon combines dialogue from chapters 16 and 18 of Book III” (Parrill 75). When Elizabeth asks about Darcy's feelings when they had started, Darcy answers by saying he was in the middle of it before it began. After he announces this, Elizabeth takes control of their conversation and tells him how and why he had fallen for her. This conversation is taken out of two different chapters. Letter by letter it shows Weldon's feminist reading on Austen's original work. Elizabeth says it was her impertinence and lack of interest in him that attracted him. This approach manifests the point where Weldon also stands. Elizabeth differentiates herself from Ms. Bingley and Ms. Hurts by her indifference towards Darcy.

This adaptation closes with the scene of Mr. And Mrs. Bennet conversing, so Weldon changes the view to familial rather than romantic. As known in the novel, Austen uses an objective perspective that is either male or female. We read the novel through the eyes of someone who is equally far from all the characters and subjective to the events. Weldon enacts a feminist perspective upon her screenplay and focuses on the attributes of the women characters. She uses male characters as a support, rather than making them the object of the focus. With this perspective, we see heroine Elizabeth Bennet almost having somewhat feminist characteristics. Elizabeth always takes the side of her family, and her loyalty is admirable through the eyes of others as well. This adaptation stays true to the original text, and it adds a specific commentary in favor of feminist reading. Fay Weldon makes sure that we see the story through the eyes of the women who have significant power over men.

2.1.1. The Bennet Family

Mrs. Bennet runs the Bennets in this version. Mr. Bennet is not active and does not have any voice but has a supportive presence to enhance the female display. Mrs. Bennet manages her daughters, manages the social interactions and the family when they are in Loungbourn. She is protective, lively and energetic. Like most of the representations of Mrs. Bennet, she is impolite and obsessed about getting her daughters married. In this version, she is more highlighted than Mr. Bennet is. In some scenes, she takes the part of where originally Mr. Bennet is. The time when Mary plays the piano at the Netherfield Ball, Mrs. Bennet interrupts her. Originally, Mr. Bennet should have been the one that does this. In other adaptations, it is always Mr. Bennet. Neither Mrs. Bennet nor Mr. Bennet have first names, as if they are simply included to be placeholders for parental figures.

Mrs. Bennet is always pushed aside by Mr. Bennet's clever remarks. She is the only one that wants her children to be safe thus; she is the only one who thinks pragmatically, however, Mr. Bennet only criticizes Mrs. Bennet on her slow understanding. He does not care what would happen to his children and because of that, he could be count as the biggest reason why Lydia runs away with Wickham. Without proper supervision, five girls who are out in the society is difficult to handle and Mr. Bennet cannot do his job as a protective and caring father. The script bears markings of men being incapable on the manner of directly affecting events or personal revelations in that manner.

The author of the script being female; and Fay Weldon having experience in feminist literary theory contributes to the text to have more feminist cinematography. The way that camera angles always show the perspective of the Bennet girls is a clear sign of it. Elizabeth is always Elizabeth no matter who takes the novel and decides to create an adaptation, being the vocal and controversial

female protagonist, she is portrayed to be. Jane is a little bit naiver in this version. After Mrs. Bennet, Mary is also highlighted frequently, and this is the only part we will be discussing Mary as a highlighted character. As in the future adaptations, Mary will start to lose her voice completely.

Although Austen's narration is told from an unspecified women's perspective, she tends to be more objective when it comes to her events than the way in which the audience receives information in the film. Austen's unexplored narrator relates the events, which take place from a particular perspective of women or men. In the meantime, the script of Weldon concentrates almost exclusively on the female perspective. This feminist attention makes a feminist reading of the novel possible. As stated by Cartmell, Weldon's current compromise-feminism brand, typified by her off-hand comment,

“It’s easier to pick up your husband’s socks and clean the loo’ than make a fuss, sums up this adaptation of Austen’s novel where the women, clearly superior to the men, succumb resignedly to the pressures of a flawed patriarchal society.”
(62)

Weldon assigns Elizabeth, Mrs. Bennet, and Mary and a few other female feminist characteristics while keeping them submissive. The women significantly steal the focus for the whole performance, being the dominant force in both events and narrative. On this manner, the 1980 adaptation bears the marking of the relatively most feminist adaptation amongs the ones studied here.

2.2. *Pride and Prejudice*, 1995

In 1995, BBC aired what became the most successful TV adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, reaching an 8.9 rating in Internet Movie Database. Andrew Davies wrote the screenplay, and Simon Langton was the director. This version of *Pride and Prejudice* was a success in multiple ways. It was not the first adaptation, but it proved itself the first in multiple aspects, particularly the focus on Darcy. What lacks in the 1980 version, is compensated in the 1995 version. Davies creates a Darcy to the audience that has a physical being, capable of attraction and instinct. In Cheryl L. Nixon's article "Balancing the Courtship Hero: Masculine Emotional Display in Film Adaptations of Austen's Novels," she shares the concurring opinion by Louis Menand that "the added scenes... give Darcy a physical presence that Austen has not" and that "the film adaptation succeeds because it has given Darcy a body" (23). Looking at this TV series from the standpoint of adaptation theory, this version can be called both a transposition and a commentary, as it reads some scenes through masculinity, and because it stays faithful to the original text most of the time.

The figure of Darcy plays a vital role in this adaptation. The sexual tension between Elizabeth and Darcy becomes visible. That is the attraction of this adaptation for most of the audience. Two different displays ensure sexual tension; exposing Darcy as a man that has a body, exerting attractive qualities, defining the character as alluring and often irresistible (in this version, Colin Firth was William Darcy). The gazes in this version makes the audience conclude that Darcy's feelings towards Elizabeth has started long before his first proposal to her. The 1980 adaptation and the 1995 version are different in the way that the 1995 version positions itself around what the modern audience would want instead of what the Regency period was. They do not deter from the manners and decorum of the Regency period, but they add scenes for the 20th century audience.

In this version of *Pride and Prejudice*, the significant events of the novel move with the dynamics of Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship. The focus point of this adaptation is to capture the sexual tension between Darcy and Elizabeth, placing them at the center of the story. How their relationship developed and changed through the story is highlighted by using the secondary characters. The dynamics that would arise from Elizabeth's liveliness and Darcy's lesser arrogance presents an affectionable conflict, making this adaptation attractive on the screen.

Everyone who watched BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* of 1995 would agree on one thing. In making the creative choice of putting almighty Fitzwilliam Darcy in a wet shirt, Davies renders him an objectified figure, open to consummation of the female audience. In the novel, there are not any risqué scenes. Especially the ones that include wet see through shirts. There are not any points that we hear the Bennet sisters talk about kissing or God forbid any other sexual interactions that involve the other sex.

Comparing the event flow of the novel to this particular adaptation, some scenes are omitted and/or altered drastically to propagate the sense of physicality. The unspoken transactions of the Regency Period are openly turned into passionate and even carnal displays of affection between parties. For example, in chapter 43, after Darcy gives Elizabeth his letter where he explains the truth about Wickham, Elizabeth realizes how wrong and blind she was. Her rejection of Mr. Darcy, when both of them insulted each other heavily, is still new in this chapter of the book.

Following the letter, Elizabeth, and Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner stroll through Pemberley. Elizabeth's field trip with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner to Pemberley makes her reminiscence; where she accused Mr. Darcy of putting an end to Jane and

Bingley's relationship, being ruthless towards Mr. Wickham, rejecting his proposal and reading his letter in which he explains himself, frankly, come back to her. This realization creates such an overwhelming feeling in Elizabeth's mind. When walking around in Pemberley, she understands what she had said no to and thinks, "I might have been mistress!" referring to Pemberley. (Austen 188) Her feelings and her understanding of Darcy changes with each step she takes in Pemberley. When she enters the gallery of the family portraits, she looks at the picture of Mr. Darcy with rather retrospective decisions on her mind. Mrs. Reynolds, who is the loving servant of Darcy's, speaks highly of Mr. Darcy, and there is no doubt that Elizabeth, encounters a completely different side of Darcy she has never seen before. She lets herself think about her decisions about Darcy. Elizabeth and the Gardiners are comfortable strolling around Pemberley, as according to Mrs. Reynolds, Mr. Darcy will not be there until tomorrow. This is crucial for Elizabeth. After all the things that had happened between Darcy and herself, the last thing she needs is to see him, seeing her walking around his house. (Austen 188)

When the tension is high in this chapter of the novel, the inevitable happens where Mr. Darcy comes early and runs into Elizabeth who just happens to be there with her aunt and uncle. The moment where they have to address each other is silenced in the novel. We do not read the conversations between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. It is a scene where the reader observes what is going on by reading the scene as if watching the scene on the television when it is mute. By mute, I mean not reading the actual conversations but to read their feelings at that moment. When Mr. Darcy speaks to Elizabeth, she "scarcely dared lift her eyes to his face and knew not what answer she returned to his civil inquiries after her family." (Austen 192) And this situation is not helping Mr. Darcy at all, even though he is doing most of the talking "when he spoke, his accent had none of its usual sedateness; and he repeated his inquiries as to the time of her having left Longbourn, and of her stay in Derbyshire, so often, and in so hurried a way, as plainly spoke the distraction of his thoughts." (Austen 193) This scene is designed to create an uneasiness between

these characters. The same scene with Darcy being soaked wet becomes more perplexing for both Elizabeth and Darcy. Davies says, "... I just thought it was a funny scene. It was about Darcy being a bloke, diving in his lake on a hot day, not having to be polite – and then he suddenly finds himself in a situation where he does have to be polite. So, you have two people having a stilted conversation and politely ignoring the fact that one of them is soaking wet..." (bbc.com)

Davies also acknowledges what he did "for putting Mr. Darcy in a wet shirt" (Cartmell 9). It fitted in the story so well that some of the viewers who were watching the adaptation without reading or remembering everything about the novel were "...often shocked to discover that the lake sequence is not in the novel" (Cartmell 76). The question is, what was the point of creating such a scene and adding something that would never be in an Austen novel? In an interview, Davies stated, "I've been telling it rather as if it's a story about Mr. Darcy, whereas the book is definitely a book about Elizabeth. [...] I suppose in showing that his desire for Elizabeth is the motivation of the plot, I've perhaps pushed it a bit more to be a story about Elizabeth and Darcy, rather than a story about Elizabeth" (Davies in Birtwistle and Conklin 3-4). "It's almost usurped the original novel in the minds of the public," says DeMonford University's Professor Deborah Cartmell, author of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice: The Relationship Between Text and Screen*. "Since it came out, every cultural reference to Jane Austen, and every adaptation, has had as much to do with Andrew Davies as it does to Austen." (Barber) The adaptations that came after Davies all had references to the Davies' version. Two comedies could be examples for that. One of them is 2008 series *Lost in Austen*, and the other is 2013 movie *Austenland*. These comedies both revolve around the addicts of *Pride and Prejudice*, but the one Mr. Darcy they dream of is the one that Firth played. The impact of Davies was so huge that Professor Cartmell says "I've taught the lake scene so many times, and when my students read the novel for the first time, they are absolutely shocked that that scene isn't in it." In her book, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: from Aeschylus to Bollywood*, Professor Kathryn Sutherland

analyzes the adaptation of Davies. For her, its combination of cinematic visuals and televisual pacing is the key to the appeal of the program. She adds, “It has the same qualities that we associate with the big-screen Austen adaptations of the time, Ang Lee’s *Sense and Sensibility* and Douglas McGrath’s *Emma*, with Gwyneth Paltrow. Like them, it has moving cameras, quick cuts, open landscapes, and the emotional intensity of a strong musical score. But because it was broadcast over six weeks, it could keep us waiting for the happy ending, so there was a cumulative excitement and a public participation in it that you can’t get from a two-hour film.” (Barber)

Adding scenes that showed the physical activity and attractiveness of Darcy, Davies creates a man who was “...discovered to be proud; to be above his company and above being pleased...” (Austen 10) to someone who is defeated with the rejection that he receives from Elizabeth and forced to self-awareness. Davies does not only focus on the physicality of Darcy. He also focuses on Elizabeth and the women on the show. When he is talking about what he wanted to create for this adaptation with the producer Sue Birtwistle he says, “We wanted lots of energy in the show, and the book justifies it, because Elizabeth is always running about and going on long country walks and getting all flushed and sweaty and getting the bottom of her petticoat muddy, which seems to be quite a turn-on for Darcy. (...) Let’s remind the audience that this isn’t just a social comedy – it’s about desire and young people and their hormones...” (Barber) Everything that Davies adds to the adaptation or even considering these kinds of scenes, as he says are thanks to the book itself. There are not many moments where someone feels squeezed in a drawing room. We read Elizabeth outdoors; she is always somewhere. Davies does not miss the subtext when he sends Elizabeth jumping, running, skipping to the Netherfield when Jane gets sick. In the novel, her activity is described as such, “crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity, ..., with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face with warmth of exercise.” (Austen 28) After all of these exercise for 3 miles, Darcy’s view on it is even more meaningful. In the novel, Mr. Darcy is explained

as “divided between admiration of the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion, and doubt as to the occasions’ justifying her coming so far alone.” (Austen 28) Thus, when Davies suggests that the mud on Elizabeth’s ankles is a turn on for Darcy, he is not exaggerating at all.

When it comes to how Darcy changed himself, one should go to the moment when he first proposes to Elizabeth. His first proposal and his rejection proves Darcy one thing that he needs to know about himself. He needs and wants to correct the opinion Elizabeth has about him, and he wants to be able to wipe away the feelings he has towards her. His fight on this subject is shown through the added scenes in the adaptation, as in the book we are not sure how Darcy feels, or what he does after the first proposal until Elizabeth visits Pemberley. In his physical struggle to overcome his feelings that he cannot reveal in society, he says, "I shall conquer this, I shall" (Davies 1995). By saying, he shall conquer this, rather than suppressing the feelings that he has towards Elizabeth, he is trying to conquer himself and his character in order to change and be better for her. Darcy knows that Elizabeth’s family and her connections are not equal to his. Albeit, he is evolving, and is pursuing the feelings he has as seeing Elizabeth as an equal. Darcy “was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit” (Austen 284), but Elizabeth’s presence and impact on his being drives him to fulfill his potential, “he learns his lesson when he falls in love with [her] and realizes that she’s at least his equal, if not his superior, in terms of wit, intellectual agility, and sense of personal dignity. She so profoundly challenges him that his old prejudices cannot be upheld” (Firth in Birtwistle and Conklin 105).

The 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice* did not only affect the adaptations after the 1995 version, but also the actors who were in it. This adaptation changed the life of Colin Firth who played Darcy. This character was stuck with him so that he also played Mark Darcy as another *Pride and Prejudice* inspired movie (it was

a book first) *Bridget Jones's Diary*. (imdb.com) Everyone knows that that scene in the lake helped Colin Firth a lot, while he became one of the most famous actors in Hollywood. Jennifer Ehle, who was Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, was not visible on the white screen as Colin Firth, but she continued to be a noted actor in Royal Shakespeare Company. The reason why Elizabeth Bennet did not give Jennifer Ehle the attention that Firth got could be due to Elizabeth Bennet staying original in the show rather than having Davies' touch to create a comment on it. "Elizabeth is so perfectly done in the book, there isn't very much to do really, besides let her be herself" (Birtwistle and Conklin 4). Ehle herself affirms: "She manages to be a free spirit in a society that doesn't encourage free-spiritedness, which is something that I think appeals to young women today because they can sympathize with her. Therefore, she is quite easy to identify with. I love her wit and her intelligence. There aren't that many female role models in literature or film who are as bright as she is" (Ehle in Birtwistle and Conklin 21). Darcy would have been a dull and conceited character and might not have a chance to shine if Davies was not there to change his image to be more approachable and humane.

This adaptation is an essential example in the way that it changed the novel so cleverly for the audience of the 20th century that it did not even concern the Janeites. Austen gives that tension so cordially and so well placed that all of the questions of "What if?" are left for the reader. The conversations that we do not read but observe with the narrator are a good example to create such a question. It is difficult to stay elegant, amiable and cordial, and write a love story that includes lots of passion and sexual aggression. Even though we do not read about any physical displays of affection or carnal illustrations of forms, the passion between Elizabeth and Darcy is still predictable.

Austen manages to give us this environment by using private talks, balls and dances. Where there was no direct approach or a chance to flirt outside the expected

politeness, there was one place where young people could flirt and get to know one another, through balls and dances. Balls were the most important event that could occur in the residential areas. Balls would last up to eight hours, and they would end at dawn on the next day. Dancing at a ball was quite significant, as it was a chance to spend time with your future partner. Most dances at a ball would last twenty to thirty minutes. Thus, these dances would give that person a chance to spend almost an hour with them. (janeaustensworld.wordpress.com)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the importance of a ball and dancing is shown to the reader when Mr. Darcy does not dance with anyone, declining to be introduced to any woman in the room when he attends the Meryton assembly ball. He is only going to dance with the women he already knows, the baleful sisters of Bingley. Not only is he too proud to mix with the vulgar locals, but he's also tired as a rich young man of being the husband hunters target. As mentioned, balls were considered social experiences, and gentlemen were tasked to dance with as many ladies as they could. This is one reason why the behavior of Mr. Darcy at the Meryton Ball was considered rude. As Elizabeth pointed out to him and Colonel Fitzwilliam at Rosings, who had to sit out the dance, where there were several ladies without partners. For Darcy, Elizabeth states, "He danced only four dances, though gentlemen were scarce; and, to my certain knowledge, more than one young lady was sitting down in want of a partner." (Austen 137) In order to dance with a lady, a gentleman must be introduced to her. Since Darcy did not want to be introduced with anyone, he chose the company of Bingley sisters instead of anyone else's.

A dance could be a statement for your relationship with your partner. In the ballroom, there are watchers of the dance and it is important who you dance with and how you dance. (janeaustensworld.wordpress.com) When Mr. Collins asks Elizabeth to dance, prior to his proposal, Elizabeth has to say yes. The code of behavior for balls were strict, if you said no to a gentleman who asked you to dance,

you had to sit during the ball. (janeaustensworld.wordpress.com) That is why in the Netherfield Ball, Elizabeth could not delay or say no to Mr. Collins as he asked for the first two dances and Elizabeth wanted to have a chance to dance with Mr. Wickham at the Netherfield Ball. Their dance with Mr. Collins caused mortification and distress. Also, dancing well was extremely important for a gentleman, for such a talent reflected on his character and abilities. His inability to dance well was also considered inability for sexual attractiveness.(janeaustensworld.wordpress.com) When Mr. Bingley arrives at the Meryton ball and danced all the dances we can infer that he has quite the agility. Darcy did not dance at the Meryton ball, he just watched the people who did. For John Mullan, those standing by are removed from performance's sexually charged pleasures. Therefore, when Darcy asks Elizabeth to dance with him at the Netherfield Ball and when Elizabeth unconsciously says yes to his invitation, their ultimate flirtation begins on the dance floor. When Elizabeth and Darcy finally dance together in *Pride and Prejudice*, they also have their most erotically charged conversation, a sort of verbal fencing match. Parallel to their physical closeness is verbal intimacy. Everything appears to narrow these two people in the crowded room. They are destined for each other once they have danced together. It should have been seen by anyone in that ballroom, even if they did not see it on his or her own. Austen writes, “and reading in her neighbors’ looks, their equal amazement beholding it.” (Austen 73) Mr. Darcy with his income and connections is superior to Elizabeth. When he asks her to dance with him twice, it certainly gives a message to the people in the room. He does not dance with anyone but her. This is a significant turning point in their relationship.

When it comes to an audience of young, educated, sexually conscious working women in the 1990s, the 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice* “endow[s] Austen’s courtship romance protagonists with emotional displays emphasizing our current notions of ‘romance’ rather than late eighteenth century understandings of ‘courtship’” (Nixon 25). Being a miniseries mostly watched by females was not a problem for the producers. “*Pride and Prejudice* ... is unashamed about appealing

to women—and in particular about fetishizing and framing Darcy and offering him up to the female gaze” (Hopkins 112). The social interactions between men and women in the 1990’s was significantly more achievable and comfortable comparing the Regency Period flirting through the decorum of the balls. Hence, the reason to rewrite particular scenes to keep the audience relevant to the context was necessary for the producers and the scriptwriters who expanded the plot flow of the novel.

Even though *Pride and Prejudice* has always been used as source material, it changed each time it was adapted. This is because it is made for the audience of the time that the adaptation was made, and not for the original audience of the novel by Jane Austen in 1813. Each adjustment is an interpretation, and Sue Birtwistle says the novel is there for everybody to read. (Birtwistle and Conklin 3) As Deborah Kaplan states: “a film of a book will always be different from the book itself, but let us also acknowledge that film has the power to show us aspects of Jane Austen’s novels in new and revitalizing ways” (Kaplan 179). Applying this to this adaptation, thanks to Davies’ script we saw a new way to interpret Darcy. We saw how important physical activity is in Elizabeth’s life. We also saw an ending that is clear to show us how the current state of everyone is in *Pride and Prejudice* world. The novel can give us many things that we cannot feel when watching an adaptation. It cannot give us new things that we have never seen before when reading, however.

2.2.1. The Bennet Family

In this version, the Bennet family is shown as energetic and connected to each other. The relationship between Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth is shown like in the book, favoring Lizzie over other sisters. Mr. Bennet, who is played by Benjamin Whitrow, is satiric, fatherly and flawed. However, he is rather more likeable considering the character of the Mr. Bennet. In the novel, Mr. Bennet is described as someone who is mean to his wife, mean to his daughters from time to time and unconcerned towards them.

Mrs. Bennet is portrayed as obnoxiously annoying. Mrs. Bennet, who was played by Alison Steadman, shows the humor that the book has and reflects it in the adaptation. She is quite pushy, loud and vulgar. She puts out what is on her mind without sugar coating. This causes stressful moments especially when Darcy is around. Elizabeth and Jane need to warn her every time she says something blunt. She does not strike one as the smartest woman in the world. In the novel, we know that she is not as bright as Mr. Bennet wants her to be; but she is caring for her daughters. She is more interested in the salary of the men who will marry her daughters instead of the happiness or her daughters' positions.

There is no significant connection between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. They seem to grow apart in the adaptation. They still respect each other, but Mr. Bennet is mostly in his room reading and staying away from the household. The sisters are also not connected. Elizabeth and Jane are close to each other as they are in the novel. Kitty and Lydia fight amongst each other when trying to get a man and Mary is Mary, the textbook introvert who is engulfed with her books. She is usually alone reading or playing the piano. There are not many changes that were made in the adaptation regarding the family. The story is made different by focusing Darcy and upgrading him instead of focusing the Bennets.

As the concluding argument; In the 1995 version, the scriptwriter is Andrew Davies. The script has the perspective of a male writer. The novel is narrated by a female; however, the adaptation has two narrators. One of them is Elizabeth, as this is her story after all, and the second narrator is undoubtedly Darcy. The 1995 adaptation of the *Pride and Prejudice* is the only one with the sense that has Darcy's perspective. In the 1980 adaptation, the focus is solely on the women, and in the 2005 and 2012 versions, we do not experience Darcy's view as we do in this adaptation.

Davies has a different perspective on the Austen novels. He did not adapt *Pride and Prejudice* alone, he also adapted *Emma* and *Sense and Sensibility*. Because he is adapting classics like every other adaptation, the audience might expect full fidelity from the adaptation. Thankfully, Davies does not commit all of himself.

Davies looks at the novel as a novel of love and youth. After all, Elizabeth is 19 and Darcy is 27 years old. Even though the decorum and the society expect civility at all times, Davies knows that these characters are young and driven by something more powerful than the civility or the norms of the society. In an interview for the Guardian, Davies says, "Sex is particularly important in *Pride and Prejudice*. The engine of the plot is Darcy's desire for Elizabeth. In addition, I thought 'let's emphasize this people and not just stuffed shirts' ..." (Guardian Culture) One of the differences with this adaptation that Davies sets is making this adaptation "pro-Darcy." In Jane Austen novels, there is not a scene where two men talk to each other alone without any females. If there are men in the conversation, it is with women in them. In the 1995 adaptation, we see Darcy alone minding his business quite a lot than the other adaptations. We even see Darcy bathing in his

room. Davies is also not afraid to add scenes. In this interview, Davies mentions that there are many scenes that should be added in order to show the seductions and the meaningful looks between the characters. (Guarding Culture)

The 1995 adaptation may not be the most feminist adaptation; however, it could be the best adaptation when it comes to protecting the fidelity of the source, but also exploring it further. The 1995 version is bold, young and dynamic. Davies does a bold and admirable job of creating a Darcy that everyone can see, not just Elizabeth. The adaptation might be more sexually charged; though it is not erotic. It may not be female centered, but it does not belittle women. On the contrary, Elizabeth is quite self-aware and sure of herself. Moreover, Darcy is not just a figure of money and wealth, but he is also a man who has feelings, thoughts and a body of his own.

2.3. *Pride and Prejudice*, 2005

This version of *Pride and Prejudice* is somewhat different than the others in respect to its visual choices, and also being aired after the 1995 version puts it under a lot of pressure. Joe Wright is the director of 2005 version. He tries to create a distinct atmosphere by putting all of the *Pride and Prejudice* characters we love in a more realistic and more romantic 19th-century setting, compared to prior adaptations. He does not only create an environment in a more realistic way, but he also puts the context in consideration of a romantic gaze. Just as Sarah Ailwood says, “the 2005 Focus Features adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*... is an insightfully Romantic interpretation of Austen’s novel” (1). With the adaptation theory approach, it can be said that this version is mostly commentary as it has interpretations and sticks with them rather than the fidelity.

Austen's novels are usually read as realist novels, and they are considered critics of the social condition of the time. Even though her novels were considered realistic and critical, it can be said that romanticism and Austen were not far away from each other. Even though Jane Austen was not deemed to be a romantic writer, researches show that it was not so. For further consideration of the relationship between Jane Austen and Romanticism, one can read Anne Mellor's *Romanticism and Gender*.

In this version of *Pride and Prejudice*, Joe Wright focuses on the romantic poetry of the novel and emphasizes this with the reflection to the white screen. Conventionally, Romantic period of understanding and constructing of a self consisted of being detached from the society and being autonomous. On Romantic poets, Peter Thorslev comments “one article of faith in every Romantic’s creed was that the artist was solitary and superior, a hero and a leader above the common herd” (18). Romantic heroes were self-aware, detached from the society that surrounded

them on purpose. It was a conscious choice that romantics were giving at that moment to achieve their self-fulfillment.

When Mr. Bingley and his company enters the ball, they instantly become the center of attention. Mr. Darcy, as he is more handsome than Mr. Bingley is and richer, catches the crowd's consideration. In this scene, "Darcy's social reluctance... [stems from] his dislike of social forms and practices" as he never partakes in the proud and contemptuous conduct that Miss Bingley begins (Ailwood 7). As an extra touch made in the script, we hear Elizabeth saying "he looks miserable, poor soul" as recognition of Darcy's "body language and facial expressions" he is not comfortable with his surroundings. According to Sarah Ailwood, Darcy's character is similar to a Romantic hero in that "he finds the forms and practices of social interaction offered by his society unfulfilling" (7).

Elizabeth does not react the way Mr. Darcy reacts. He separates himself from the society where Elizabeth still actively participates in the society's rules. Elizabeth does not react in the way that she has asked to act. She is straightforward where her opinions are concerned. The moment where Charlotte and Elizabeth are under the benches far from everyone else suggests how she is similar to Mr. Darcy, staying disconnected from the society like him. When they were sitting together with Charlotte, Elizabeth hears Darcy addressing to her as "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt" him. (Austen 11) Elizabeth after hearing Darcy's comment about her responds to him in the adaptation. This creates the first spark between them and in other scenes, we see how gradually Darcy seems more interested in Elizabeth in the novel, there is not a chance for her to show her discontent about this until she, Colonel Fitzwilliam and Darcy chats together around the pianoforte. (Austen 137)

In the ball scene, Wright paints a realistic approach to how events could have happened if they were real. When Mr. Bingley and his party enter the ballroom, the room stays quiet and full of wonder for the new people that walked into the room. The town was expecting Mr. Bingley so when he walks in, not alone but with a friend, a male friend that is, the whole attention shifts to them. The wonder for them is obviously for the reasons that Austen herself mentions in the novel. Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy both belong to the society as a commodity. Elizabeth puts down her opinions somewhat satiric way by saying, “so which of the painted peacocks is *our* Mr. Bingley?” (Moggach 2005) to Charlotte. This shows that Elizabeth is highly aware of the situation of her day. According to Ailwood, this presentation “cleverly reflects Austen’s concern with the commodification of men in the early nineteenth-century marriage market” (6). The film illustrates this phenomenon by revealing how the residents of the neighborhood react to their arrival.

In addition, although Mr. Bingley does not come to the ball alone, he does not enter solely with Mr. Darcy. Ms. Bingley also arrives with them. Her attendance is not mentioned inside the community. This points that the inhabitants are not interested in the females but rather their interests consist of men only. This insignificance towards Miss Bingley stresses “the social perception of men as marriage commodities” that existed at that time (7). This deliberate adjustment to the movie thanks to Wright reflects the difficulties that both women and men were going through. Men could not be away from considered as possessions of the society and women even worse; considered as “nothing” to bother society in any way.

In this adaptation, Darcy is portrayed as more uptight and shyer than proud. Elizabeth when he declares her “tolerable” and when he separates Mr. Bingley from Jane reveal his proudness. However, when Elizabeth is not aware how she affects

Mr. Darcy, he gives a couple of signals that he thinks more highly of her. When Jane gets sick and has to stay in Netherfield, Elizabeth walks to check up on her. In the Netherfield, the scene where Elizabeth tries to find something about Darcy to laugh at, has been kept the same way in the adaptation. The interesting part happens when Jane feels better and a carriage comes to take them with the other Bennets, Darcy holds Elizabeth's hand and helps her to get on the carriage. Elizabeth cannot understand the reason why he would do that as we understand from her look afterwards. There is a close shot to Darcy's hand where he stretches his fingers as if he is also shocked about what just happened. Darcy in this version tries to show his affection towards Elizabeth.

Darcy and Elizabeth cannot discover each other without experiencing some traumatizing events. The first proposal from Darcy, no matter how romantically Darcy puts his feelings into words, hurts Elizabeth's pride and her emotions more than anything. When Darcy proposes, his proposal sounds more of a criticism of the things that Elizabeth never is. In his proposal, Darcy says, "I've fought against my better judgement, my family's expectation... The inferiority of your birth...my rank and circumstance...all those things...but I'm willing to put them aside..." (Moggach 2005) He tries to say that in spite of all these things he wants Elizabeth, which is quite extraordinary for the way that a high-class gentry gentleman would act at the time. The ranking of Elizabeth is far lower when comparing to Darcy. Both may belong to gentry class. However, Darcy's connections and his income are superior to Elizabeth's. As such, Darcy puts every social norm aside to declare his love for Elizabeth. It is the only way for him to realize himself as a romantic hero.

As for Elizabeth, she changes her feelings about him only after she enters Pemberley. In 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, Pemberley has many sculptures. This choice is intended to be that way; as Darcy as a romantic hero also shows the appreciation for Greek art. Moreover, Deborah Cartmell claims

that the transition from portrait to sculpture “simultaneously evokes erotic awakening, through the sexual posturing of the figures, and mourning” (89). The modification, from painted to sculpted works, supports the adaptation and allusions of Wright and Moggach to the Romantic.

Wright's perspective on how Elizabeth changed her mind about Darcy and how she tried to understand his complex character after seeing Pemberley, has a deep connection with the mundane opportunities that Elizabeth had no idea that she could have. According to Laurie Kaplan, “Elizabeth appears to be interested only in material objects” (7). Kaplan suggests that Elizabeth's interest is solely for the materials. From her view, Wright's approach is more realistic considering other adaptations; since it indicates Elizabeth's feelings might have begun to develop only after she had seen what she could have owned if she had said yes to Darcy's proposal. Kaplan says, “Wright has used the interior space to project a vision of Darcy's (and his class's) acquisitiveness and Elizabeth's (and her class's) greed” (7).

That is to say; this reveals the way that higher gentry class; Darcy's class, and their way of living, owning many exceptional and luxurious items in a household, the gentry class; Elizabeth's class, and its hunger towards owning such objects and richness. Austen also puts this idea to the reader's mind by saying Elizabeth's judgment on Mr. Darcy changed upon her “first seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley” (Austen 356). Although Austen never implies that it is the sole reason why Elizabeth changed her mind about Mr. Darcy, she puts a hint there for us to notice. Wright does precisely that, he notices this hint, and he builds a scene that shows the importance of the materialism concerning the culture of the time.

After Pemberley visit with the Gardiners, Elizabeth assumes Mr. Darcy will be coming home the next day. When Elizabeth hears a piano playing in one of the rooms, she gets curious and goes to the room to see who is playing it. There she sees a girl playing the pianoforte, but she also sees Mr. Darcy and they see her. She tries to get away but, unfortunately, Darcy catches up with her where they have a “meaningful” conversation. Both of them are quite surprised to see each other but especially Elizabeth feels shy and ashamed. After their separation when Darcy gives her a letter to explain, what has happened between him and Mr. Wickham, and why he has decided it would be better for Mr. Bingley to separate from Jane, this is the first time they see each other. Darcy seems happy to see Elizabeth as he smiles but Elizabeth just wants to get out of there as soon as possible. Their interaction rather shows that Elizabeth’s feelings have also improved towards him. This improvement does not have to be love. It can be the improvement of Elizabeth’s changed opinion on Darcy.

For the next day, Darcy invites them to have dinner at Pemberley where he also wants Elizabeth to meet with his sister. After a very pleasant day in Pemberley, they go back to the inn together. Elizabeth gets a letter from Jane. After she reads it, she starts to turn about the room. Darcy waits with the Gardiners, and every time she goes into the same room as him, he gets up to salute her and then sits down again. Elizabeth feeling overwhelmed and helpless tells everyone about Lydia’s elopement to Wickham. At that moment, Darcy approaches Elizabeth and says, “This is my fault - if only I had exposed Wickham when I should.” (Maggoch, lines 93-94) However, Elizabeth rejects and says, “No, this is my fault. I might have prevented all of it by merely being open with my sisters rather than too proud with my knowledge.” (Maggoch, lines 95-98) For the first time they agree with each other, admitting that this situation might be caused by them. The realization of Elizabeth’s own proudness hits her and at that moment, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth understand each other.

Fortunately, after all of these adaptations we know the ending. 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice* has two separate endings. One for the British audience and one for the American audience. The British and the European version finishes after Mr. Bennet (Donald Sutherland) gives his blessing to Elizabeth and says, "If any young men come for Mary or Kitty, send them in, for I am quite at leisure." (Maggoch) The American version has an eight-minute extra scene. The audience sees Mr. Darcy and Mrs. Darcy sitting under the moonlight while Elizabeth perfectly makes romantic suggestions from Elizabeth to Darcy on how to address her on different occasions. It finishes with a kiss and the movie ends like so. Neither version discusses the "final circumstances and arrangements of the novel" however and prefers "instead to show the Bennet family as an attractive but static entity rather than a complex evolving character" (Palmer 6). According to Palmer, this simplifying "showcase[s] more pointedly the Elizabeth/Darcy relationship as the main focus of change and development" in the movie (6). Palmer connects this with the modern emphasis we have towards individuality by stating, "it is perhaps an appropriate elision for our era, given the twenty-first century's emphasis on the individual" (7).

In this version, individuality and personal aspirations towards happiness and self-realization play an essential role. It is what puts Darcy and Elizabeth to the center, and it is the same reason that they are on the focus of this adaptation. When Elizabeth cannot sleep after she denies what Lady Catherine de Bourgh wants to hear and goes out for a walk with her nightgown on, she meets with Darcy who also does not wear proper clothes but a shirt and a coat. Sarah Ailwood claims that neither Darcy nor Elizabeth is appropriately dressed and that this encounter would be deemed socially surreptitious strengthens the fact that their relationship was negotiated exclusively on their terms, mostly in disconnection from social structures and customs. From Ailwood's words, it can be deduced that, when thinking about Elizabeth's and Darcy's meeting, their relationship was "arranged"

without the interference of the society and its rules. By doing so, Ailwood indicates that Wright depicts their relationship as being between “two Romantic figures” that “co-exist as individuals in a society with which they are both fundamentally incompatible” (Ailwood 10).

Wright, by putting out a more realistic version, recognizes the complexity of Austen novels and he creates questions for the audience to read more between the lines of the life of the lower gentry class that seems tranquil and unproblematic.

Rather than integrating analyzes into the mainly true narrative, Wright and Moggach place their fidelity to the backburner and focus on making a film that comments on the text. Wright and Moggach redefine Mr. Darcy by emphasizing and changing certain aspects of the scenes. Darcy and Elizabeth were exiled from their different points of view as individuals in their society. Their alienation from their society is what makes them different and unique. It is also the reason that they found a place to hide from all of this, by choosing to be with each other instead of abiding the rules of the pre-set conditions that were chosen for them.

2.3.1. The Bennet Family

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet is emphasized in this adaptation. Mrs. Bennet is portrayed rather more sympathetic than annoying. She is still Mrs. Bennet of course; she pushes her daughters to get married however, she is also caring. Mrs. Bennet also acts as a mirror for the gentry class. At the Netherfield Ball, she is not good-mannered; eats a lot, talks a lot, and even spills some food on some people while she continuous to eat. The way that she speaks with the ladies at the ball and suggesting that Jane and Bingley's marriage will be "the most advantageous marriage" does not escape from Darcy's attention when he walks down the stairs. It sets the start for him to break Bingley and Jane apart. Her impertinent manner almost causes a disastrous end for Jane. However, uneducated as she may be, she is not a bad person and the adaptation is making us sure about why she does what she does. When Lydia runs away, and her news of marriage arrives at Loungbourn Elizabeth and Mrs. Bennet have the conversation that sums up Mrs. Bennet's behavior:

Mrs. Bennet: Daughter married!

Elizabeth: Is that all you think about?

Mrs. Bennet: When you have five daughters Lizzie, tell me what else will occupy your thoughts. And then perhaps you will understand. (Pride & Prejudice 2005 - 01:34:58-01:35:06)

She is not wrong at all. At the time, where there is an entailment system, when marriage, status and money is the only thing that could save women to have a roof over their head, it becomes more difficult to blame Mrs. Bennet for trying so hard to get her daughters married in a most advantageous way.

Mr. Bennet, played by Donald Sutherland, is portrayed as a passive and charming father. Even though he has a sharp-tongued manner, he is not mean to his wife or her daughters. We see him usually sitting on a sofa or chair and having

meaningful/sarcastic eye contact with Elizabeth. His carelessness towards Lydia is portrayed as it was in the novel. He does not listen to Elizabeth and he returns Loungbourn his head down. In the 2005 adaptation, Mr. Bennet is more emotional, and his connection with Mrs. Bennet shows there is still love and affection between them. He does not strike as a Mr. Bennet who reads a lot and humiliates Mrs. Bennet at every chance he gets, but as a father and a husband who is just trying to survive among six women.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's relationship is shown many times as a close one. In the opening scene, where Mr. Bennet announces that he had already met with Mr. Bingley, we see Mrs. Bennet kiss Mr. Bennet, which does not happen in any other adaptations. In the novel, Austen emphasize that their marriage was a marriage of love and passion. Therefore, it is nice that Wright shows a genuine side of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet rather than keeping them as just side characters of the story.

The 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice* is shorter than the adaptations that were selected for this thesis. It is the only movie version that is included. Because adapting a novel to a movie, which usually last two hours, is rather difficult, the director and the scriptwriter have to do a concise job to show all the feelings and the scenery of the novel to the audience.

The author of the script for *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) is Deborah Maggoch. It is not the first time she has created a script from a book and converted it to a series or a movie. As she is aware of the culture, and being an author herself, in an interview she says she wanted to focus on Elizabeth in the story and kept the scenes in which Elizabeth was always there. As it is a two hour long movie, it would be difficult to capture other character's points of view, and since Elizabeth is in the

middle of the story it makes sense to follow her throughout the movie instead of other characters.

In the adaptation, there is an emphasis on women; particularly female characters who are protagonist or minor are shown longer on the screen. There are scenes where handmaidens walk around the house doing their daily works while Elizabeth and Jane get ready for the Netherfield Ball. (Pride and Prejudice, 2005. 33:27-33:49) The Bennet family belongs to a gentry class. Even though the Bingley's and Darcy are from the same class as Elizabeth, their financial status is higher than hers is. We also see women who are richer than Elizabeth is, but when it comes to obligations of women no matter how rich they are, their roles are the same. Catherine de Bourgh, who is a lady, has the same roles as someone in the gentry class; learning modern languages, knitting, drawing, playing the piano, and subdued to her husband. Although the level of wealth changes, the expectations of women from society does not change.

Pride and Prejudice is a novel about women, which the female characters are protagonists. In the movie it does not change moreover, again women steal the light. Austen wants to create an alternative story about the concept of marriage and how women were understood. That is why the novel itself has stereotypes. In the novel, the stereotypical aspect is of Mrs. Bennet, Lydia, Kitty and Charlotte. Mrs. Bennet is presented as a stereotype of mothers who have nothing to do but get her daughters married. Lydia and Kitty are stereotypical examples of women who do not enhance their intellectual capacity, but only have a goal to find someone with a little bit of fortune in order to marry. That moment for them is the moment is when they think they will feel completed. Charlotte is another stereotype that marries only for financial security and who does not care about love in a marriage. She accepts Mr. Collins's proposal immediately as she is afraid that she would not get another opportunity. These women were not created by the adaptation; they already existed

in Austen's world. Therefore, if an adaptation includes these characters as they are, they are not creating something or using stereotypical imagery for women. They would be just using the author's own view on women in her time.

The best thing (or the worst thing depending on your point view) of the Regency Period are the manners and decorum that force people into certain acceptable patterns of behavior. Even insulting someone is made with delicacy. When everything is so polished and refined, the approach of the male characters to the female characters are in such a gentleman way. Of course, men like Mr. Collins and Mr. Wickham exist in every century. However, men are usually quite polite towards women. As this adaptation was aired in 2005, the director shapes the perspective and the attitude towards women. Men might have been in the middle of the attention but where were the women? The director tries to show the reality towards women in the society with the Meryton Ball scene where Mr. and Ms. Bingley also Mr. Darcy arrives at the ball. There is not any discussion about Ms. Bingley at all. As it is mentioned, the importance is not on the women at all. Caroline Bingley is a woman who has a financial stability even though she is not the nicest person on the planet she is richer than most of the ladies we see in the novel. However, there is no mention about her suitors; not in the novel and not in the movie. Either there are no suitors for her, which is ridiculous because as book mentions quite a few times, men are looking for someone to marry, Caroline's suitors are not a big issue as Mr. Bingley or Mr. Darcy looking for the one for themselves.

In the 2005 adaptation, the frequency of women's speech is more than the male characters. On average, every character speaks in a respect of their society, time and culture. The one who speaks different in the movie is only Elizabeth as she is straightforward when comparing to her sisters and her mother. She even shouts to her parents, which would not happen in the novel. (Pride and Prejudice,

2005. 1:51:15) She also has an intense conversation with Mr. Darcy when he proposes and even then, she raises her voice. Her manners are somewhat aggressive. Of course, it is the interpretation of the director and the actor Keira Knightley. Every Elizabeth is different from the other in style, manners and looks. In the 2005 adaptation, Elizabeth's aggressiveness is not a surprise for the audience since women were allowed to show their feelings in public or show them when they were alone with someone around 2000s. The changed social spectrum of the culture is shown through the feminist waves that affected the way women represented themselves in the patriarchal society. That is why for the women who live in the 2000s could be considered rather comfortable showing their sincere feelings and ideas towards the situations presented. Comparing the 1980 and 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice* with the 2005 version can create a way to observe that fact.


As a result, this adaptation manages to heighten the relationship, the scenery and the romantic element between Elizabeth and Darcy. When it comes to broadening the novel to a feminist one, I could not see any elements that were added to make it more distinctive. Everything that was answered for the feminist criticism were already in the novel and the scenes were from the novel as well. In an interview Deborah Moggach, when narrating the story, she says, "All I remember is that Jane Austen's is so wonderful we didn't jettison much, we just pulled a comb through it and shortened it of course..." For this adaptation, the extra scenes were not about how strong and independent women were but it was about the changing environment and emotions of Darcy and Elizabeth. The scenes that had a feminist element were already there thanks to the novel.

2.4. The Lizzie Bennet Diaries, 2012

Among all the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is the one that is the most interesting and creative. The reason for it being as such is because it combines a two-hundred-year-old novel with the context of vlogs- the web blogs will be called vlogs in the thesis-through YouTube. The *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was a popular YouTube series in 2012, created by Hank Green and Bernie Su, and aired one hundred episodes. The main channel is about Lizzie Bennet (Elizabeth Bennet), and her life. She makes commentaries about everyone who is involved in her life. Her channel focuses on what happens in her family as well as her older sister Jane's love life. In this adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, we can also take a glance at other characters, such as Lydia and Georgiana (aka Gigi), who have their own YouTube channels to communicate with their audience. Hearing the character's opinions in this adaptation widens the opportunity for reading *Pride and Prejudice* from a different perspective. In the novel, we cannot read what Lydia is thinking while everyone rushes to rescue her when she "has left all her friends--has eloped; --has thrown herself into the power of-- Mr. Wickham" (Austen 211). Despite the misfortune that Lydia went through in the novel, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* has changed that situation to a different incident for Lydia. Lydia gradually throws herself into the power of Wickham, and thanks to her vlogs we can observe how she ends up where she is and how everything becomes deadlock. In the question of whether this was a feminist approach to the novel or not, is difficult to decide.

There is an advantage this adaptation has that others do not. It is the advantage of the social media and its rise to dominance. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube may be considered today's most popular social media networks and exploring these networks to create an adaptation of literature worked positively. It allowed the adaptation to branch out and use all the mediums on hand. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* can interact with the audience and engage with them through

comments on YouTube. The show uses Twitter as another outlet to communicate with their audience. This meta-adaptation opens up a new way for the “knowing audience” and the “unknowing audience” to submerge (Hutcheon 120). The knowing audience consist of the ones who read *Pride and Prejudice* before bumping into the adaptation whereas the unknowing audience is the one who met the text through adaptations. YouTube provides a way to create metafictional moments through the episodes. In the Q&A (Question and Answer) videos of the series, and sometimes referring to the comments, Lizzie separates the knowing and unknowing viewers of *Pride and Prejudice*.



The Lizzie Bennet Diaries makes a compelling case study, especially when examined under the lens of the ever-developing field of adaptation studies. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* criticizes the position of women in the 19th century. It also criticizes the complications that women have to deal with today. During the Regency Period, the biggest problem from the feminist point of view might have been the economical positioning of women in the society. Even though we are in 2019 and we assume that most things have changed since the 19th century, it is no use denying that there are still miles to go to create the world for women that we want and deserve. Women are still employed less than men, they are employed in lower-paid sectors, they work more than men, and most of the time they do not even get paid the same as men do. They take more career breaks and they get fewer promotions at a slower rate. Other issues, such as sexual harassment, rape, domestic violence, or forced marriages, are not included. (European Commission)

By examining this adaptation, one should shed light on many things. The title of the adaptation is the first step of comparing the differences the novel and the adaptation have. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* tells the story of Lizzie Bennet from her perspective. Jane Austen called her novel *Pride and Prejudice* and she emphasized these two "sins" that are to be the center of all the incidents happening in the world of Elizabeth and Darcy. The creators changed the name to *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

and constructed the adaptation as a Bildungsroman, making it about Lizzie and her development through the vlogs.

The vlogs continue under her control, and when she introduces others (her family, the third parties, etc.) to the viewers, she does so through Costume Theater. Using Costume Theater always causes the viewers to stay in Lizzie's range and to perceive the story through her eyes. In *Pride and Prejudice*, even though the story focuses on how Elizabeth feels and thinks, we read the story in the third-person view. One of the touches that the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* adds is disguising the real appearance of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. It gives us room to imagine how they could be like and puts them into the perspective only by seeing them through Lizzie. Through Lizzie's theater, we can deduce that Lizzie's mother is from the Southern United States. This nice touch of changing Lizzie's mother to someone with a heavy Southern accent makes Mrs. Bennet's wish for marriage more relatable to the audience, who is mostly American. Why is it important that Lizzie's mom has a Southern accent? The Southern family tradition in the United States is different from that of the northern states. According to Rupert Vance, Southern families are dedicated to their family values and it is important for them to carry on those values. As Southern families are also patriarchal, it puts a necessary emphasis on why Lizzie and Jane are trying to so hard to prove themselves in their workspace. As the Bennet's have roots in the South, Lizzie's reactions to Lydia and her attitude towards men and parties could be an element of how she perceives her little sister. The difference in culture and time makes the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* a relatable adaptation for the 21st-century audience. (Vance)

In the novel, along with the other adaptations in this thesis, the characters belong to the English gentry. There is no change regarding the setting of the novel. In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the characters are racially diverse, and the Bennet family is American. The Lucases change into the Lus, who are from Asia; the

Bingleys into the Lees; Colonel Fitzwilliam is black, and gay. This setting is closer to the 21st century viewer, as it is acceptable to be friends with anyone who has a different racial and sexual background. Today, in the Western world people can openly admit that they are gay without persecution and considering these changes, involving them in the story that is filmed in the United States seems like the correct choice.

In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the storyline is parallel with *Pride and Prejudice*. The 2012 version is quite modernized, as Lizzie has many opportunities that Elizabeth never had. First, Lizzie- when talking about the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, I will address Elizabeth, as Lizzie to avoid confusion- is a master's student. Lizzie is also older than Elizabeth is. In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Lizzie is 24 years old. Elizabeth, however, is 19 years old. Changing Lizzie's age and making her older than the original character is another change that this adaptation has. This shows how the age difference changed over the years. When women started to pursue academic careers like Lizzie, automatically the age of women started to shift.


As it is known, during the Regency period, women did not have any of the educational privileges that men had. Lizzie is a master student in debt. Lizzie also criticizes the way that her mother – we do not see Lizzie's mother at all in the series, we see her representation through Lizzie's costume theater - as if the only thing that matters for her daughters is for them to get married to a young rich man. In response to her mother's desires, Lizzie states, "I have got other things to worry about. It is not like we are going to put our lives on hold because a single rich guy dropped from the sky." ("My name is Lizzie Bennet"- Ep:1) Lizzie is a romantic girl, though she is also pragmatic and because she is a girl living in 21st century United States, she is in the capitalist system.

In the novel, Charlotte and Elizabeth are not equal, in both age as well as their financial situation. Charlotte is 27 and Elizabeth 19. Naturally, the entailment situation is becoming much more compelling to Charlotte. In Jane Austen's time, being 27 years old is a rather late age to be unmarried. At that age, the women who stayed home were seen as a spinster. Charlotte is quite aware of this situation. She wants to get married as soon as possible. Darryl Jones points out Charlotte's decision of being engaged to Mr. Collins as not wanting so much a *rich* husband, but *any* kind of husband. (106) At the same time she wants to relieve herself from the hardship of her social and economic situation. Elizabeth's status remains in good shape compared to Charlotte's. Elizabeth approaches marriage in a more romantic and fantastic way. As the Bennet family has more financial comfort than Lucas' and being in better condition, the subject of marriage is not perceived as a duty for Elizabeth. Elizabeth's personality is more idealistic; hence, she feels shocked when she hears about Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins. Elizabeth cannot get her mind around the fact that Charlotte was engaged to Mr. Collins, because she simply needed to be engaged, also. In the novel, Elizabeth exclaims, "Engaged to Mr. Collins! My dear Charlotte, --- impossible!" Charlotte keeps her composure by answering Elizabeth:

"I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering the Collin's character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state." (Austen 101)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the only occupation that a young lady can have is to find a husband to secure her future. As time changes over the years, so do expectations. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* makes the shift from priorities of women to get married to find a job. Jane, Lizzie, and Charlotte concentrate on their careers above anything else. As it is a modern adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, women

work, and they need to work. Lizzie is an idealist; she does not want to do a job where she feels uncomfortable. Jane also likes her career, and further along in the series, her job takes the center stage before she makes any decision about her life. Charlotte is in the same line of work as Lizzie. As mentioned above, even though Charlotte and Elizabeth are close friends both in the book and in the adaptation, Charlotte's point of view is different from Lizzie's. In the chapter "Friends Forever," Charlotte takes a job offer that Lizzie does not approve of. Even though Lizzie needs a job, she refuses it, as the job does not fit her expectations. Charlotte is not in an advantageous position as Lizzie is; therefore, she does not have the time to wait for the perfect job. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the immediate need for Elizabeth and Charlotte is to marry and have financial stability. In *the Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the importance of marriage shifts to the need to have a job. The effect of capitalism and the idea of every man for himself is made quite apparent in the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Lizzie puts her education and her career first.



The focus of having a career that is fruitful seems to be the most critical thing for Jane and Lizzie. It is evident that Lizzie underrates having a relationship or focusing on one. In the second episode of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, after Lizzie introduces herself and her older sister, Jane, Lizzie expresses her frustration with how her mom is not happy that Jane is still unmarried. Lizzie says, "It frustrates our mom to no end that Jane hasn't snatched up a husband yet. She's doing so much more with her life than prancing around as some trophy wife." ("My Sisters – Ep: 2 – The Lizzie Bennet Diaries") Jane has a job and she works a lot, putting much effort into her work. In one particular episode, ("Cats and Chinchillas" – Ep: 10) Lizzie thinks Jane should be paid more. As Jane is focused on her job, she does not seem interested in any other distraction such as looking for a future husband.

The career development in this series, however, is a little bit unrealistic in means of pace. Of course, the storyline is fictional, but when watching *The Lizzie*

Bennet Diaries, some things cannot be overlooked. The improvement of Lizzie and Jane's career in this series seems almost fantastical. Under all of the story and adapted text, the series is virtually trying to emphasize that if you make all the right feminist-oriented decisions in the 21st century, you will have your dream job in your ideal location. This utopic transition first happens to Jane within seven minutes, forty-five-second episode. ("Snickerdoodles - Ep: 48 - The Lizzie Bennet Diaries") After Bing Lee (aka Bingley) leaves for Los Angeles without saying anything, Lizzie encourages Jane to go after him for closure. In the novel, Jane goes after Bingley to London after the Gardiners invite her. In the adaptation, Lizzie encourages Jane to go after Bingley by saying "Maybe you should go to him (...) It is the 21st century. We are strong, proactive women." ("Snickerdoodles - Ep 48 – The Lizzie Bennet Diaries" (04:59))

As understood from the cuts of the video, the video-taking process for Lizzie did not take seven minutes. It was probably more. However, we only see the seven-minute version of that take. At the end of it, Jane manages to transfer to a new and better position in her current company, which is conveniently located in Los Angeles. As stated above, it is understandable that the scriptwriters would change and dramatize some of the events to follow to the main plot of Austen's novel. However, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* claims to emphasize the struggles that modern women have; they certainly put the emphasis on Jane and Lizzie's need for work and on Lizzie's student loans. Therefore, when miraculous job opportunities arise and can be achieved almost immediately, one cannot help but wonder if this portrayed world is even close to the one that we live in.


While about job opportunities, Lizzie also has her moment to prove herself as an independent and driven young woman. In the episode "Future Talk," when Darcy and Lizzie eventually get back together, they talk about plans. Lizzie decides to move to San Francisco and declines Darcy's offer to work in Pemberley Digitals.

She refuses this proposal by saying, "I don't want to be the girl who dates the boss." (Future Talk – Ep. 99- The Lizzie Bennet Diaries) Lizzie does not accept to become “a trophy wife” as she mentioned in her first video. At the end of the series, she chooses to build her own career without Darcy’s financial help. Of course, not getting his help financially is an option in the 21st century where there is no entailment, and where there are opportunities for women. She decides to move to San Francisco to be closer to Darcy and because the media sector is located there. We learn that Lizzie gets an investor for her vlogs. Moreover, this young woman talks about her life on the Internet and gets investors because of it. According to Forbes, “about 5% of total venture investment goes to women-led businesses.” (MacBride) Therefore, it is a slim chance that a woman could get an investment where she just talks about her life.

Besides the approach to the character’s employment status, there is one more thing that this series needs to focus on. The series does not carry the original name of the source material. Its focus is primarily on Lizzie and her growth. As the story focuses on the maturation and growth of Lizzie Bennet, the relationship that she has with Darcy stays behind. As Susan Greenfield states, “Darcy is an important character in the story she tells (...) but his actual appearance is irrelevant.” Lizzie does not start her vlogs to show her love life, but rather Jane’s. Lizzie’s focus does not seem to be romantic relationships. Her focus is mostly on her master program and her future financial status. This adaptation seems to undermine the effect that Darcy has on Elizabeth in the novel. In *Pride and Prejudice*, both Darcy and Elizabeth change together. At the end of the novel, where Darcy and Elizabeth share their mutual feelings, Darcy admits it was Elizabeth who “properly humbled” him (Austen 284). They go through the best and the worst in their relationship, which brings them closer and allows them to understand each other better. Eventually, they even get to marry each other. In *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, even though Darcy has a part in Lizzie’s life, Lizzie’s focus is more on her sisters and

her best friend. Lizzie's sisters and Charlotte contribute to her growth more than Darcy does.

Darcy does not appear in the series until the 60th episode of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. That suspense of not being able to see Darcy is created beautifully as the audience anticipates Darcy, thus creating the necessary excitement to be able to see Darcy. William Darcy is a phenomenon, maybe not entirely because of the novel, but also because of the adaptations that created "Darcymania," which we have the 1995 BBC series to thank for.



The Lizzie Bennet Diaries was able to create a lasting adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Integrating the language of the young and modern audience, it again proved how valuable and relatable *Pride and Prejudice* is for us. Hank Green and Bernie Su created a world where Lizzie Bennet could be a real person who tweets, vlogs, and can achieve her goals by experiencing romance, opportunity, and personal growth. Although it is refreshing to see *Pride and Prejudice* in a 21st century setting, there are some questions that we should keep in mind. In *Pride and Prejudice*, both because of the culture and time, family issues were mostly kept as a secret. The lives of others were not as openly discussed. Lizzie openly shares her and her family's life in front of millions of people. Because she shares it with many details, Lydia's unfortunate experience does not stay between the families, but it becomes a public humiliation.

One of the major differences between Elizabeth and Lizzie could be the change in their level of narcissism. The novel's Elizabeth is not a person who sees herself better than anyone. She is rather humble, as opposed to Lizzie. Lizzie is more arrogant when it comes to her truths. In this adaptation, Lizzie has a lot more growing up to do. Overall, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is showing an alternate

universe of “What if Bennet’s were American and lived in the 21st century?” This is an innovative approach for the classic novel and this theme is repeated by other adaptations of *The Pemberley Digitals*. There are many elements in the show that one can consider feminist. However, it is essential to keep in mind those two men created the flow of the series. No matter how modern we assume ourselves now, can an adaptation or a work sincerely demonstrate women without a woman in it?

2.4.1. The Bennet Family

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries chooses to cooperate the Bennet family by simply avoiding showing them. We never meet the real Mr. and Mrs. Bennet on the show. We see reflections of them through the custom theater. Since we cannot actually see them utter the words that Lizzie does in the vlogs, we are only left with what she wants us to see and hear from her parents. Considering the format of the adaptation, showing Lizzie’s parents in her vlogs could be a challenge. However, the choice of not showing them might not have been all-technical.

Lizzie shows her parents as an oddly matched couple. Mr. Bennet has bonsai gardens and Mrs. Bennet’s only focus is getting her daughters married. As mentioned, Mrs. Bennet has a Southern accent. In order to show why Mrs. Bennet would want to focus on getting her daughters married in the 21st century (thinking that most modern Western countries are over it) they have chosen to make her more traditional. The exceptions are not included. Cultures all over the world may change. This commentary is just focussing on the 21st century American made adaptation of the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. It fits the context although it might be a little judgmental towards Southern American people.

Mr. Bennet, on the other hand, is described as a person who enjoys playing with model trains, reading books and vexing his wife. It is almost the same pattern of Mr. Bennet in the novel. Of course, in the novel we notice how insufficient decisions Mr. Bennet makes when it comes to be a parent to five daughters. He is negligent towards his wife and her daughters. We cannot see that side of him on *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Intentionally, “adults” and their decisions over the children are omitted. Therefore, everything that is going on in the Bennet sister’s life are their choices and their responsibility. This gives the show relatable view since almost no Americans who are over twenty years old seriously experience parental pressure. Not every family is the same but regarding all the movies and TV shows that represents American lifestyle it is not hard to come to this conclusion.

The secondary characters are important in the novel. Adaptations may cut them out or give them less appearance on the screen. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* chooses to revolve the story around three sisters who are different in character and age. This can suggest that the way that young adults live today, is not like the 19th century. People usually become independent at a young age, and parents generally do not seriously push their children for anything. It seems that they have done an accurate job when representing 21st century young American women and their attitudes towards life.

In order to decide if this adaptation can be considered feminist, we have to assess the feminist criticism approach checklist. When watching *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* without prior research on feminism, it seems to have a feminist approach for the ones who know feminism through movies or news. It is difficult to decide without exploiting the series a bit further.

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries had two creators, but it had more than two writers. Bernie Su, Margaret Dunlap, Rachel Kiley, Jay Bushman, Kate Rorick and Anne Toole were the scriptwriters of the show. As it is not just one person's job, we can look the number of male and female writers. In that group, there are two male writers and four female writers. However, it is hard to say how much influence the female writers had on the show.

Fortunately, only females narrate the adaptation. Even when they need to introduce male characters on the show, the females do it. The male characters do have their chance in front of the camera but not as often as the female characters. The show focuses on the females and their story of the events rather than male characters and their perspectives.

In *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the female characters are all represented as strong, independent, educated and ambitious. Lizzie starts to show how Jane does not need a man in her life to identify who she is. Lizzie also focuses on her education and hopes for the best when it comes to a romantic involvement but does not make it a center for her life. Lydia is a headstrong girl who enjoys living to the fullest, but she is also a college student. Charlotte is as academically and professionally driven as Lizzie. Jane, as the oldest of the sisters, has a stable job where she can transit between company's branches and make a good living. We do not see Mrs. Bennet; however, her qualities are not different from those in the novel. Overall, the Bennet sisters and the secondary characters are shown as fierce females who have everything under control. They make decisions considering their life and they are not ashamed to admit when they are wrong.

As all of the female characters are in the center of the series, it is easy to suggest that they are protagonists. Lizzie is in the middle of everything; however, other characters like Jane and Lydia act as protagonists rather than secondary characters. There are secondary characters in the story who are females; Georgiana “Gigi” Darcy and Charlotte Lee. They may not be protagonists of the story, but that is not an issue when looking at the bigger picture that this adaptation has accomplished.

It is hard to avoid stereotypes when it comes to a story. Even in the novel, the story starts with a stereotypical mother who wants her daughters to marry a wealthy man. This does not change in adaptations. Mrs. Bennet is shown as a stereotypical Southern mother whose primary concern is to but find eligible men for her kids. It is okay to create duality between her daughters and Mrs. Bennet. Lizzie separates herself from her mother’s thoughts and it creates an invisible line between generations as well. We do not hear what Jane and Lydia thinks about her mother often, but we mostly hear Lizzie’s thoughts since she is performing them in front of the vlogs.

It is not just Mrs. Bennet who is a stereotypical representation. Lydia shows herself as a “hyperactive” – or simply a “slut” as Lizzie calls her - college student who enjoys parties and flirting. She is the energetic Lydia we also see in the novel. Of course, in the novel, Lydia is not as free as she is in the adaptation. She is depicted as a shallow twenty-year-old American when compared to Lizzie. Therefore, there is a stereotypical approach to some of the characters on the show however it is not as damaging as making them stereotypical as Mr. Collins does to Elizabeth in the novel where he proposes. (Austen 88)

There are not many male characters that we see on the show as protagonists. As such, their approach to women is told to us through Lizzie or Jane. A significant moment in the show would be where Mr. Collins proposes to Lizzie. This proposal is rather different from the proposal in the novel. Mr. Collins in the adaptation is engaged to another person. And since there is no problem of entailment, Mr. Collins is accepted with positive attitude, especially from Mrs. Bennet. As Mr. Collins's attitudes towards Lizzie is almost the same when it comes to bothering her in every chance he gets, both in the novel and the adaptation. When Mr. Collins interrupts Lizzie again, she is in her bedroom recording a vlog. He offers her to be a partner in his company where he makes instructional videos. This company is one of the branches that Catherine de Bourgh (who is the VC) owns. Like in the novel, Lizzie cannot stand how inappropriate Mr. Collins is and declines his offer. However, Mr. Collins in the adaptation who carries the characteristics of the Mr. Collins in the novel does not take no for an answer and he pushes his chances by offering her benefits and offers for the position. Close to the ending of the vlog, Lizzie cannot hold her words inside and harshly declines his offer, again. This is where we see Mr. Collins's attitude towards Lizzie and what he really thinks about her in perspective to her career. He says, "As charming as you are, you are unlikely to ever be offered anything comparable with your connections and degree." (The Insistent Proposal - Ep: 39- 04:42) He thinks lowly of her because she has not worked before, and she has not graduated yet. Almost as Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth and, in the novel, suggest that she might not get a marriage proposal ever again (Austen 88), the same thing happens with the proposal of Mr. Collins in the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

The authors of the adaptation have positive interpretations when it comes to women. We can observe that there are quite changes since the novel first published in 1813. Being in the 21st century and seeing an American adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* is different. There are so many grounds to cover when adapting a text from the 19th century to the 21st century. The authors try to show those differences

by using a modernized language comparing to the Regency period and giving the heroine a chance to write her own story in front of the internet. After all, *Pride and Prejudice* is a book about Elizabeth. Jane Austen creates a strong and mentally independent character in the novel. Therefore, adaptations are not creating a notion that was not there. They just enhance the characters. Elizabeth is still Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*. She is witty, headstrong, and clever enough to deal with the system that surrounded her.

There are many writers for this adaptation. A different writer writes each episode. It is hard to determine every author's background on culture however; they are all American. As such, the umbrella culture that covers *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is that of 21st century American culture. It is obvious that the changes for the Bennet sisters are made according to the modern American culture that we all see in the movies or in the TV series. The women are sexually open, they are not shy or silent when there is an injustice, and they are essentially freer than some of the cultures in the world. One of the cultural aspects can be observed with the accent of Mrs. Bennet. A subtle touch considers American culture. If a person cannot understand the difference in accent, or why Mrs. Bennet is intentionally represented as Southern, that touch will not be an important part for the audience. Since the adaptation was uploaded to YouTube, there were many different cultures, ages and English levels watching this adaptation.

The most relatable part of this adaptation is that we hear women from women. The first male character entering the show is Ricky Collins (aka Mr. Collins). ("Vidcon Interruption": Ep-25) Before and after that there are many custom theatres by Lizzie, which shows the male characters. Male characters come and go in the show, but it is certain that female characters have much more screen time and lines comparing to male characters, considering even the appearance of male characters is in scarcity. In the novel, the story is not about the male characters.

It is about the Bennet sisters especially about Elizabeth. Therefore, it is convenient that in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* they focus on the females instead of the males of the story. Darcy is important; though delaying Darcy's appearance on the show creates suspense and more screen time for Lizzie. Because the adaptation is in a vlog format, it is difficult to incorporate characters real time on the screen. As such, most of the time they are there because, they jump into the video or they are being represented through Lizzie.

Overall, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* shows itself to be a feminist adaptation, albeit it has some flaws. It focuses on women and their perspectives on life. It does not put male characters under focus. Even though it sometimes narrows down topics to having a financial stability or showing the big decisions that Lizzie and Jane make only based on their careers, it manages to adapt the story to a 21st century environment. Changing culture from British to American also seems to work as it gives a different setting for the storyline. The crux is, *Pride and Prejudice* can be adapted in the 21st century for a different culture and it would still create the perfect relatability for the audience. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is proof of how to merge modern media and a two hundred-year-old novel.

Even though, this adaptation is successful considering it achieved its success through transmedia, for the feminist reading of the adaptation it is not quite, what it should be. The comments that Lizzie makes through out the series are usually about economical worries and contradictions between men and women. She is mostly harsh for her sex as well, especially through Lydia. Although there are some valid points about not wanting to get married for the sake of economical security it is not enough to put the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* as a revolutionary feminist commentary for the novel.

PART III

LYDIA AND MARY

Pride and Prejudice has many secondary characters. Maybe the secondary characters needed to be shown more in depth or they needed a chance to grow and change like Elizabeth does. Thanks to the adaptations, there are characters that go through a change. From the Bennet sisters, Lydia and Mary were the most interesting since in the novel Austen does not elaborate their motives or aspirations, as each adaptation of the novel had their own commentary on Lydia and Mary.

3.1. Lydia in the Novel

The Bennet family has five daughters. The youngest of these sisters is Lydia Bennet. Lydia is young, and fifteen years old. She is energetic and flirtatious. Like her mother, her only goal is to find a husband and get married. She loves to flirt with the soldiers that are in town. She is always competitive with her sister Kitty, who claims to be two years older than Lydia.

In the family, there are different pairings. Elizabeth and Jane seem to be one pair, Kitty and Lydia seem to be another pair. Kitty is not as reactive as Lydia. Lydia is almost like a ticking bomb. Her decorum is nowhere to be found. She describes her personality with this quote:

“Look here, I have bought this bonnet. I do not think it is very pretty, but I thought I might as well buy it as not. I shall pull it to pieces as soon as I get home and see if I can make it up any better.” (Austen 170)

She sees something, and her first impulse is to get what she sees and then decide what to do with it later. Unfortunately, neither her mother nor her father is responsible enough to discover her nature and hinder what has to come. Elizabeth is the one who understands her folly and she tries to stop her father to send Lydia to Brighton alone with Colonel and Mrs. Forster. Elizabeth, being the sensible one in the family, warns her father not to leave Lydia alone with Mrs. Forster. “She presented to him all the improprieties of Lydia’s general behavior, the little advantage she could derive from the friendship of such a woman Mrs. Forster, and the probability of her being yet more imprudent with such a companion at Brighton, where the temptations must be greater than at home.” (Austen 179) Unfortunately, she cannot persuade her father to forbid her going to Brighton. For Mr. Bennet, the only importance is peace at home, and he thinks he cannot be at peace if he does not let Lydia go.

This decision of one man causes the family’s reputation to be put in the ultimate jeopardy. Lydia runs away with Wickham, destroying the family and the chance of other daughters who are not yet married. Even though in the novel there is no indication that Lydia and Wickham had sex, it is a high possibility since it causes such a scene to find Lydia when she disappears with him. That is why finding them is imperative, and finally Mr. Bennet tries to do something about a situation, which could have been avoided in the first place.

After her discovery, and when Wickham is persuaded to marry her with some initiative from Darcy, her reputation and the family’s reputation is saved to a degree. When she comes home, there are different reactions to her. Mr. Bennet does not welcome either Lydia or Wickham. Mrs. Bennet is highly content about the situation. Lydia does not care less about her actions before and accepts her as a married woman. Jane, Kitty, and Mary are silent while Elizabeth does not withhold

her tongue towards her. She does not understand the consequences of her actions. In Chapter 51, Elizabeth states how she feels about her behavior:

“You and papa, and my sisters, must come down and see us. We shall be at Newcastle all the winter and I dare say there will be some balls, and I will take care to get good partners for them all.”

“I should like it beyond anything!” said her mother.

“And then, when you go away, you may leave one or two of my sisters behind you; and I dare say I shall get husbands for them before the winter is over.”

“I thank you for my share of the favor,” said Elizabeth; “but I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands.” (Austen 243)

In the novel, Lydia does not mature or evolve as a character while Elizabeth does. And the only two characters who seriously have a change of heart are Darcy and Elizabeth. So, it is natural not to observe any change in Lydia’s character. The unlimited support of her mother, even though she knows as well that Lydia almost ruined everything, does not stop. Lydia feels proud to be married at fifteen. She does not feel guilty of her action thus she does not accept the responsibility of what she did.

3.2. Lydia in the 1980, 95, 05 Adaptations

Lydia is the most sexually open character in *Pride and Prejudice*. In the novel, there might be no mention about sex as an act, but Jane Austen was not blind. (Parill 70) In *Pride and Prejudice*, before Lydia goes to Brighton her father does not worry that something would happen to her. He thinks, “she is luckily too poor to be an object of prey to anybody. At Brighton, she will be of less importance even as a common flirt than she has been here. The officers will find women better worth their notice. Let us hope, therefore, that her being there may teach her own insignificance.” (Austen 180) He fails to understand the sexually charged side of Lydia and he thinks money is the only thing that grasps men’s attention.

Natalie Ogle (1980) and Julia Sawahla (1995) represent Lydia as the girl she is in the novel. They both have the sexually charged air and they are showing the giggly nature of Lydia with her unthoughtful outspokenness. In the 1980 version, Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Lucas discuss Lydia in front of the other girls before the Assembly Ball. Lydia’s sexuality is shown through the “tucker” she supposed to wear on her bosom. Mrs. Bennet points out that she needs to wear her tucker to her bosom and Mrs. Lucas agrees that she should. (Parill 70)

In the 1995 version, Lydia’s chest is always open. Her bosom is quite distracting even when she is talking. When Mr. Collins comes to stay at Loungbourn, he bumps into Lydia in the hallway. Mr. Collins is shocked, and her laugh can be heard all over the house. Lydia and Kitty often go to Meryton to meet with the officers who are in town. On the day that when Elizabeth wants to walk to Netherfield, Lydia suggests that Kitty and she should also go to Meryton to catch Lieutenant Denny before he is dressed up. At the Netherfield Ball, Lydia takes the sword of Lieutenant Denny and starts running with it. It is a memory that Elizabeth remembers when she reads the letter from Mr. Darcy where he explains why he was

reluctant to have connections to them. Overall, it is not surprising that Lydia did not feel embarrassed or in the wrong after her running away with Wickham. The intention of Wickham was not known to any of them. The first thought was they would get married since they have eloped. However, when talking to Wickham Lydia says, “Lord it makes me want to burst out laughing when I think that *I have done none of my sisters has* and I the youngest of them all.” (“Episode #1.5”) Since they were not married yet, we understand that they are not married because Lydia fantasizes about making her sisters her bridesmaids, the thing that she could have done before her sisters is having sex. Moreover, from the looks of Mr. Wickham, it is not hard to deduce from the scene.

In the 2005 version, Jena Malone portrayed Lydia. Lydia is loud and energetic in the modern adaptation by Joe Wright. She is young, untamable and flirtatious like in the previous adaptations. In the Netherfield ball scene, Kitty and Lydia appear to have a glass of wine in their hands. They are strolling around the house while laughing aloud and enjoying themselves when doing so. After the elopement in this version, Lydia comes home with Wickham. She is so high toned and obnoxious about her marriage that no one seems to listen to her on the dinner table except Mrs. Bennet. Lydia shows her ring repeatedly by simply not putting her hand down. Her attitude towards her sisters is changed and she belittles them. As she is quite talkative, she also spills the beans about Mr. Darcy being at their wedding and paying everything to Elizabeth. While they are leaving Loungbourn, we see Lydia standing up and waving a hand to her family. In that scene, however, one disturbing thing happens, and Wickham holds Lydia’s arm quite strongly and sits her down in the carriage. It foreshadows the possible relationship that they will have and the true feelings of Wickham once they are away from Loungbourn.

In these three adaptations, Lydia Bennet is true to her character in the novel. She is unthoughtful, without manners and decorum. She is also selfish enough to

not to think about the damage she has caused to her family. There is not any character development for Lydia in these adaptations because the 1980, 1995 and 2005 adaptations were faithful to the original text.

3.3. Lydia in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

The Lizzie Bennet Diaries is different from the adaptations that are chosen for this thesis. First, it is not a channel production like BBC. It was aired through YouTube. In addition, because the show was in a vlog format the knowing audience was aware of the future events that Lizzie was going to go through. It did not change anything, and it still had views. The extra part even Austen did not have was Lydia Bennet. This Lydia Bennet in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* was a Lydia we had never seen in any of the adaptations.

The first appearance of Lydia is in the first episode. Lydia comes to Lizzie's room when she is recording with Charlotte, and the first thing she talks about is Bing Lee. It might be said that Lizzie does not approve Lydia's way of living. She talks about as if Lydia is always sleeping with different people and is displaying herself to be an easy woman. In episode three when Lizzie and Charlotte are doing yet another costume theatre, Charlotte, in the role of Mr. Bennet, calls Lydia a "slut." Lydia immediately drops into the room and Lizzie has to correct herself by saying that "My sister Lydia is not a slut." ("My Parents: Opposingly Supportive - Ep: 3") As can be understood from Lizzie's approach to Lydia, Lizzie is not kind or fair to each other.

In the novel, Mrs. Bennet creates a plan to send Jane to Netherfield on a rainy day where she has to stay as she catches a cold. In the adaptation, as it is a modernized adaptation, there are not any horses for Jane to ride on a rainy day; Mrs.

Bennet comes with a plan to renovate their house. Because of the renovation, the sisters have to stay somewhere else. Lydia tells Lizzie that they will stay at Mary's house, who is their cousin, not their sister. Lizzie is not happy about that as Mary's house is small and far from the city. Lydia is rather excited that everyone will be there. After that, Jane shows up on the camera and tells Lizzie that she will not be staying at Mary's. Bing knows about the Bennet's house renovation so when he invites Jane to stay with them Jane accepts. After Jane explains this to Lizzie, she understands her mom's scheme. Being invited by Jane, Lizzie will be also staying at Netherfield, as she does not enjoy her cousins's company.

Lydia starts her own separate Youtube channel after she is left alone at Mary Bennet's house. Mary is a cousin who likes to read and has no facial expressions. ("Lydia Bennet Ep: 1") Lydia as being herself talks about boys on camera where we hear about Denny. This is the first time Denny is introduced in the vlogs. In the novel, Lieutenant Denny is one of Lydia's favorites. In episode 2, Lydia mentions Denny being super-hot and she thinks he is into her. ("About A Boy: Ep-2" 0:19-0:20) Yet in Mary's opinion, Denny is gay. So, in the adaptation, Lydia does not have a lot of boys around or we basically do not know who she is hanging out with. There are no mentions about boys after Denny until Wickham.

In her own Youtube channel, we see Lydia's true feelings and how she feels around Lizzie and Jane. In the novel, there are five sisters and Lydia is not alone because she has Kitty. However, in this version, Lydia is the youngest sister and does not have anyone around her. In "Babysitting-Ep: 5", she gets a job as a babysitter to earn extra money as a babysitter to the kids, yet she is fired. That is because she is unattentive to the older kids in the household since she emphasizes with the youngest one more. This is how she projects her feelings. Jane and Elizabeth are always together to support each other but they do not care about Lydia

as much as they care about themselves or they are not very good at showing how much they care about her.

No matter how lonely she feels, Lydia is always supportive of her family and puts her family first. Her sisters come before everything and she loves them so much. In episode “Girl Talk” – Ep: 11, Mary and Lydia start to talk about boys. Wickham’s topic comes up and Lydia remarks about Wickham’s physical attributes. When Lydia starts to praise Wickham, Mary says, “Do not get any ideas.” Lydia then states she would never date someone one of her sisters dated and says, “Boys come and go but sisters are forever.”

The one extra thing that that novel does not have is friction between sisters. In episode “2+1” – Ep:73, Lizzie gives Lydia a birthday present after Darcy convinces Bing to leave because he thinks Lydia is “energetic” and he does not appreciate Lizzie’s mother as well. Darcy in his own way tries to protect Bing by jeopardizing his future with Jane. As a mirroring event to this, Lizzie buys an advice book to Lydia on how to be a grown up and more mature. Of course, it deeply hurts Lydia as she thinks that Lizzie thinks the same way as Darcy. Darcy’s scornful approach towards Lydia, gets supported by Lizzie. Lydia loves Lizzie so much however, Lizzie because of her pride and blindness to her sister’s affections does not comprehend that she is doing the same thing as Darcy did to Bing. Darcy is separating Bing because he meant well and looked after him in his own way, it is the same thing that Lizzie is doing for Lydia. Both of them were wrong and both of them affected people’s lives for the worst.

After Lizzie’s gift, Lydia projects her anger on self-destruction. She goes away for the New Year’s and everything starts to fall apart for Lydia with her departure. In an episode called “Answers From The Lydia Bennet”, she answers a

question saying “Do you feel like a secondary character in someone else’s story?” Lydia rejects this and states “you are only a secondary character if you let yourself be.” After her trip to Vegas, she actually evolves to a main character because her character growth starts with her choices to hurt Lizzie. In the novel, there is no intention of hurting her sisters. Lydia does what she does because she thinks running away is a joke to laugh at and finding a man is what she was growing with for this whole time. On the other hand, in the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Lydia goes rogue because of the lack of communication she has with her sisters.

Lydia does not do what she does because she is a reckless little girl. Lydia Bennet in *the Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is twenty-one years old. She intentionally gets involved with Wickham because she knows that would hurt Lizzie if she watches her videos. Unfortunately, Lizzie does not watch Lydia’s videos thus cannot see her when she is falling apart. Elizabeth and Lizzie’s ignorance towards her younger sister is apparent both in the novel and in the adaptation. Elizabeth only has deep and long conversations with Jane. Sometimes these conversations shift to Charlotte. She does not engage with her younger sisters. Lizzie has deep connections with Jane and Charlotte. Hence, Lydia is always the odd one out. She is not as close to anyone like Lizzie is close to both Jane and Charlotte.

The videos that involve Wickham is interesting because Lydia’s personality, her energy level even her choice of clothes and make-up changes dramatically. She becomes less energetic and starts to wear dark colors. She mostly has dark circles around her eyes. “Mistakes” – Ep: 23 is the first episode that we see Wickham with Lydia. After Darcy’s statement about Wickham, Lizzie changes her stance about him. When Wickham starts to explain what actually happened, he twists his story by partially telling the truth and partially lying. His manipulation of his side of the story causes Lydia to believe him. As mentioned above, Lydia tends to be on the loser’s side like the example with the youngest child where she babysitted. This

time, she hears Wickham and she chooses him over Darcy who does not appreciate Lydia as who she is.

In “Strangers-Ep: 24” she still chooses her family over Wickham. Lydia and Wickham start to talk about Lizzie and that she might be watching the videos, Wickham insists that there is no way that Lizzie cannot be watching her videos. In addition, after that Lydia kisses Wickham passionately and plays to the cameras. Wickham gets what he wants, and Lydia thinks she is winning against Lizzie.

In “Special Two: Ep-28” the basic abusive relationship starts to show itself. (psychcentral.com) Wickham starts to isolate Lydia from her sisters. He makes her feel like she does not care about him and trying to use that over Lydia’s commitment to her sisters. He uses the relationship Jane and Lizzie has and tries to separate Lydia from them. He pressures her by stating he has done everything so far for her. Because her sisters are not communicating with her enough, Wickham tries to convince Lydia that she is alone. After some heated arguments especially the ones that involve making Lydia worthless, he announces his love in front of the cameras. Lydia is stunned after Wickham’s confession, a confession that is done deliberately in front of the cameras so that he can use it against Lydia. It works perfectly as Lydia believes Wickham instantly. We do not read what happens between Lydia and Wickham in the novel. All we know is from Lydia’s letters after she runs away. The letters are written by Lydia so we cannot comment on Wickham’s intentions. Both in the novel and in the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, the intentions of Wickham are clear by day. He manipulates her to get what he wants. In addition, both of the time Elizabeth/Lizzie acts incompetent towards her younger sister. She does not reveal Wickham’s identity hence witnesses her sister going into a vortex she cannot escape. Fortunately, Lydia destiny changes with the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

“Good Enough-Ep: 29” is the last video from Lydia that she uploads. She mentions how family loves because they are supposed but not because they want to. The whole time she does not believe that she is worthy of her sister’s love. This makes her vulnerable to every kind of manipulation that gets in her way. She tries to act as she is in control of her life however; she is in so much bigger trouble than she could ever imagine she would get herself into. She says she loves George Wickham and Wickham is calculating enough to tempt her to stay away from her sisters. This episode is crucial because she says she would do anything for him, and it opens the way for Wickham to tape their sex and threaten to put it on the internet. This twist of the plot of course adaptation’s interpretation towards an updated Wickham and Lydia. The most scandalous thing for a young woman can be a sex video that is leaked. Wickham knows how to use this to his own advantage, and he does care neither about Lydia or anyone else.

In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, we see the growth of the two main characters. Normally Lizzie Bennet is the main character of this story, but Lydia Bennet evolves into a main character by putting her videos on YouTube and growing as a main character supposed to do. Lizzie and Lydia both go through events that change their whole lives. The selfishness and proudness of Lizzie disappears when she understands that she was not able to see her little sister when she needed her the most. Lydia Bennet in this version grows and becomes a new person. She acts as a party girl who cannot pull herself together to make wise decisions about her life. However, her experience with George Wickham puts everything to a new perspective. In the novel, Lydia does not learn from her experience because getting married to Wickham almost fixes everything that she has done. In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Wickham threatens to put their sex tape with Lydia on the internet. It is not a quick fix and like Lizzie says many times the internet is forever. In the novel, the scandalous act of Lydia is shown to the reader as the fault of Lydia. Lydia’s character seems like it created a way for Wickham to act on. A small marriage ceremony and an announcement on the paper hushes the gossip even though

everybody know that she eloped with Wickham. Lydia's case in the LBD, is not something that can go away with an announcement on a newspaper. Once a video of her is downloaded on the internet, there is no coming back from it. ("An Understanding" – Ep: 87)

In *the Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Lydia always feels like an outsider and to get the attention of her sisters, does things that they do not approve. After the incident with Wickham, however, everyone starts to talk about exactly how they feel about each other and talk about their vices and errors. This event changes both Lizzie and Lydia. It is not about romantic relationships but the sisterly bond that Lizzie and Lydia need to discover in order to grow.

3.4. Mary in the Novel

The pairing of Jane-Elizabeth and Kitty-Lydia leaves Mary alone in the family. Although Jane Austen does not approve Lydia, she is not kind to Mary either. "Mary had neither genius nor taste; and though vanity had given her application, it had given her likewise a pedantic air and conceited manner, which would have injured a higher degree of excellence than she had reached."(Austen 29)

Mary reads a lot, but unfortunately lacks insight. She is not problematic as Kitty and Lydia, but she is not intelligent enough to capture the attention of others. This causes her to try to prove herself to her family and to the other people all the time. That is why she wants to show her piano skills at the Netherfield ball. Nonetheless, she fails to do so, embarrassing herself and her family.

Even though she tries to better herself through extensive reading, she does not have an analytic chain of thought to come to an understandable conclusion. When talking about Lydia and her elopement she says, "Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson: that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable; that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex." (Austen 221) This is a harsh conclusion to come to when the female you are talking about is your sister. However, this is Mary's character and she is not like any other Bennet sister. She is generally lonely even though there are six people in the household besides her.

There is nothing about Mary in the novel that shows character development, neither through event nor impression. Kitty and Mary are more of side characters to help enhance the characters of Elizabeth and Jane. They are not deeply thought of and that is the reason why Mary just stays where she is buried, in her books trying to get her family's attention.

3.5. Mary in the 1980, 95, 05 Adaptations

In the 1980 version, Weldon does something other adaptations lack. She gives Mary and Ms. Hill a voice. Mary is highlighted in this version more than following versions. In *the Lizzie Bennet Diaries* Mary Bennet solely exists as a cousin that they interact with through 20 episodes or so. In other adaptations, she is just silenced. On the other hand, in the 1980 version almost all the scenes we see Mary's perspective as well as others. The 1980 version gives Mary the most screen time and line by presenting her participation in most social events. In the 1995 version, Mary is just away from everyone and her existence is not the most important thing for her family. In the 2005 version, she is there only to embarrass the family and not there because she changes as a character.

3.6. Mary in *The Lizzie Bennet Dairies*

Mary, as stated, is not a sister in this version but a cousin. In Lydia's videos, we see Mary and her character is not the same as in the novel. Mary loves reading, as we understand from Lydia's videos. (Boredom Ep: 1) Like in the novel, she is also bad at playing the piano. (About a Boy Ep: 2) However, in the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* version, Mary is more approachable, quite smart and intuitive.

Mary helps Lydia when she is kicked out from the babysitting job. She also helps with Lydia's lessons and makes her study. They start to get closer with each video. However, because Lydia needs constant attention from someone, she starts to overwhelm Mary and their relationship almost ends. Eventually, they apologize from each other and things go back to normal.

Even though Mary is not a character without intelligence and gifts, she is still neglected. When Mrs. Bennet is renovating their house for the sake of making Jane stay at Netherfield with Bing, Lizzie finds out that they will be staying at Mary's. After that Lizzie says that she always forgets about Mary. (Mom's Convoluting Plan Ep: 26) Like in the novel, there is not much attention towards Mary, and she is portrayed as a character on her own. The biggest difference that Mary has in the adaptation is the relationship that grows between her and Lydia. In the novel, Mary cannot have a decent relationship with anyone. In the adaptation, we see that Lydia and Mary do have a good relationship considering both have singular characters.

It is good to witness that *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is making a change and gives both Lydia and Mary depth to her characters. Although these characters are secondary characters in the novel, Lydia definitely becomes a main character as much as Lizzie does. For Mary, the same thing may not be true but at least she has cleverness and empathy.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, the adaptations changed the feminist reading of *Pride and Prejudice*. Every scriptwriter male or female contributed to the original text to either enhance the inequality or enhance the characteristics of certain main characters. Since the field of adaptation, theory is still in the process of creating its own canonical works, Linda Hutcheon and Ariane Hudelet were this paper's primary sources in understanding what adaptation theory is and how this theory can be applied to adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* in search of feminist literary theory.

The cinematic Jane Austen could be viewed as a cultural phenomenon at the turn of the 21st century. Austenmania, which began in 1995 and has continued to the present, has turned into a cultural notion. Austen adaptations on film and on TV have led her texts to be read differently; today, Jane Austen is considered cinematic because the way we know her has changed. (Hudelet 148)

In the 1980 BBC rendition of *Pride and Prejudice*, Fay Weldon focused on the feminine, and in the 1995 BBC/A&E version, Andrew Davies focused on the hyper-masculine. The 2005 version by Joe Wright serves as a romantic translation. All three of these versions provide the audience a transposition and commentary of the novel and they include all the key plot points and characters. It seems that the adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* will not end any time soon. Indeed, the book keeps taking new directions. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, a rewriting of Austen's novel with the inclusion of an apocalyptic zombie twist, was released in 2013.

In the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* Elizabeth Bennet to Lizzie, with a sharper focus on the character's Bildung, in order to create space to show the dangers of showing every aspect of her life on the Internet. This adaptation also demonstrates a critical reflection on *Pride and Prejudice* in the way it used its media. The vlogs allowed the adaptation to present characters in depth. Ultimately, in the depiction of the elopement of Lydia Bennet that shows how this 'mixing media' really sent a message about *Pride and Prejudice*: it results in a very well rounded Lydia character who deserves a second chance.

While *the Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a wonderful example of the transition from novel to adaptation of Austen's feminist themes, it raises the question of how audiences perceive adaptations—specifically, the "modernization" aspect of adaptation. Clearly, the feminist themes discussed so far in terms of *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* are not the creation of Bernie Su and Hank Green, the web series creators, but Jane Austen herself.

Specifics, however, alter from novel to adaptation, such as character names, events and such, due to the shift from the eighteenth to the 21st century period; indeed, Linda Troost would probably agree with this statement, as her concept of "imitation" adaptation suits well with this assessment of "updated" *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* rather than "modernized" would be better fitted to describe the changes to Austen's story that is shown in the vlogs. The chapter titled "The nineteenth-century novel on film: Jane Austen" in Linda Troost's in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, categorizes cinematic adaptations of Austen's works into four main divisions. The first is the "Hollywood-style adaptation," which revises essential aspects of the original text, including the plot, settings and characters, to make the adaptation more attractive to the public.

Troost offers MGM's 1940 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* as an example. Troost's second category of cinematic adaptation is the "heritage-style adaptation," It usually takes the form of a serial. This type of adaptation is usually utterly faithful to the original novel with respect to historical accuracy and authenticity--for example, the BBC's 1979 serial adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. The "fusion adaptation" is Troost's third division; this incorporates aspects of the "Hollywood" and "heritage" styles to create an adaptation that can "connect with a broad range of viewers, tell a good story and show compelling images" (82). Both the 1995 BBC miniseries and the 2005 film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* belongs to this category. Troost only shortly touches on the fourth possibility, which is the "imitation." She argues that this form of adaptation "uses a novel's plot and character but updates the setting to focus on a modern-day highly structured society" (76). Examples of the "imitation," according Troost, include 2004's *Bride and Prejudice* and 2003's *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter-Day Comedy*. Although it is a web series rather than a film, *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, too, would fall into the imitation category.

However, updating the text by adapting mitigates the problems that would present a return to a previous society, effectively glossing over the controversial subjects and focusing on those that viewers of the 21st century want. Vast changes from novel to adaptation, like the change from informal advancement of women to the presence of women in higher education, allow *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* to appeal to today's audience more effectively. As academics, our primary goal in dealing with classic texts such as *Pride and Prejudice* should be to reinforce the critical conversation about past elements that merit re-examination. If updating old books and adapting them to better attract readers of the 21st century helps in this process, it is not only important to discover new and exciting ways to adapt works such as the novels of Austen – such as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*' interactive web

series medium – but also necessary to help keep these ideas prominent and part of the pertinent conversation.

Hence, it can be deduced that Jane Austen, provides us with a realistic image of society through her novels such as *Pride and Prejudice*. Though belonging to an age when feminist movement with the women's suffrage movement had just begun how she and her view of how a woman can shed these constraints and arise as an independent woman such as Elizabeth in the time when being a woman just meant suppressed and confined. Therefore, Austen could be included in the gynocritics category: Women writing about women expressing their sense of good judgment and reason rather portraying them as gullible emotional beings.

This study does not claim to provide substantive evidence of Austen's personal views on feminism, but rather notes her consciousness of the cause and its inclusion in her writing. It should be acknowledged that the feminist themes presented in *Pride and Prejudice* in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* are by no means limited to those previously discussed; in fact, I hope that this study can provide a gateway to a new subdivision of Austen feminist studies primarily concerned with the recent web series adaptations of Austen's novels.

Going back to the main research question, the adaptations seem to help the reading of Austen enhancing it in multiple ways. However, building secondary characters or adding narrative depth to the adaptations do not reflect the feminist reading that this study is searching. Every time a new adaptation is created with different motives, the novel loses the focus on the problems of the women and these lost shifts to a more commercialized product of Jane Austen. In the 19th century, gaining economical independence can be a huge step at the beginning, however; the concern of equal rights in the 21st century is not limited to that anymore. The

novel ends with Elizabeth and Darcy's union, the adaptations also end in a union marriage or not. For the further feminist reading and to comprehend the family dynamics of Darcy and Elizabeth, if there were to be an adaptation following "what would happen after the happily ever after", it would add into the feminist reading furthermore.



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