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In Pursuit of Jane Austen
—Jane Austen's Characters and Their Adaptability From Literature To Film Fiction

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W pogoni za Jane Austen
—postaci prozy angielskiej pisarki
i ich potencjał adaptacyjny w filmie fikcji

Rozprawa doktorska napisana pod kierunkiem

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Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a well-known novel in possession of qualities conducive to cinematic adaptation, must be filmed[1]. In her prose, Jane Austen presents the world of the rich, with impressive and affluent residences, which—when filmed—is attractive for the eye of a viewer. The film adaptations of the British writer's novels introduce her "Austenian" world to the audience and allow them to fantasise about "a simpler time as it was lived by a comfortingly wealthy and leisurely class" (Troost and Greenfield, *Watching* 4). Without doubt the visual attributes of the Austenian world of Regency England—Georgian architecture, picturesque landscapes and high-waisted dresses—add profoundly to its appeal (4).

Yet, in his *Novels into Film,* George Bluestone enumerates also such attributes of Jane Austen's style as "a lack of particularity, an absence of metaphorical language, an omniscient point of view, a dependency on dialogue to reveal character, an insistence on absolute clarity" and declares them to be the actual traits that are, in fact, indicative of Austen's novels' adaptability (118). According to the scholar, Jane Austen's novels are particularly well suited for film adaptation, as they depict love stories which always end with a happily ever after, following the universal formula of a "boy meets girl; boy loses girl; boy gets girl" (118). Similarly to Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield (*Watching* 3-4), Bluestone points out that the plots of Austen's novels revolve around issues which the subsequent filmmakers find attractive (144). Clearly, such themes as social status, money, romance, courtship, love, misalliance, and matrimony sell well. The producer of the cinematic adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* (dir. Ang Lee, 1995), Lindsay Doran, seems to share the opinions of Bluestone, Troost and Greenfield and states that such qualities of Austen's prose as "wonderful characters, a strong love story … relevant themes, and a heart-stopping ending" easily "translate into a good film" (11).

Thus, as Doran notices, apart from captivating plots, interesting themes, and aesthetic potential, what makes film adaptations of Jane Austen's novels alluring to the late 20th and early 21st audience is the nature of "Austenian" characters. According to Troost and Greenfield, the writer strikes "a perfect balance between recognisable types and idiosyncratic personalities" (*Watching* 3). On the one hand, the viewers may identify with some of the characters (usually the main protagonists). On the other hand, they are entertained by ridiculously odd and flawed personalities (like Mr Collins,

[1] A paraphrased introductory line from *Pride and Prejudice,* which originally reads: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen, *Pride* 5).

Mrs Bennet or Mrs Elton). The construction of the British author's characters is particularly important in the context of her stories' narratives. In her novels the writer builds a satirical image of patriarchal society and provides a subtle criticism of the rules that determine social hierarchy and classism mainly through the construction of her literary protagonists. With her depictions of the novels' characters, Austen moralises her readers, reveals the absurdity of the social order in Regency England and provides comic relief to the serious narrative of her stories. In the process of doing so, the novelist uses a whole spectrum of strategies which allow for revealing the characters' personalities and highlighting the different perspectives of these literary protagonists. Dialogue, action, thought processes, the author's direct comments and the strategy of contrasting the protagonists are all used as tools for constructing literary characters.

Although created in the 18th century[2], Austen's protagonists are continuously reinvented both by subsequent novelists and by filmmakers in their own works (including Helen Fielding and Sharon Maguire and their *Bridget Jones' Diary*, or Karen Joy Fowler and Robin Swicord and their *Jane Austen Book Club*), either by direct references to original literary texts or by parodies of selected themes and characters. This doctoral dissertation examines how Jane Austen's nineteenth-century literary characters were transferred from the pages of literary texts to the medium of film. Despite the extensive literature on Jane Austen's novels and their adaptations, including scholarly articles and monographs on film versions of her stories, literary types have not been identified and defined with respect to the loose adaptations of the writer's prose. The authors of critical articles and monographs (such as Susan Parrill, George Bluestone, Sayre Greenfield and Linda Troost) compare her literary protagonists to their film versions in close adaptations, focusing primarily on how accurately Austen's characters are presented (in terms of appearance, physicality, personality, behaviour) in the film and ask the question to what extent the filmmakers remained close to the author and the spirit of the epoch. In addition, the studies of film adaptations of the British novelist's works published so far[3] have focused mainly on close adaptations, and not those modernised or including a change of the genre dominant or a change in the cultural context. The purpose of this dissertation is to identify Austen's character types in relation to their cinematic versions. The innovative aspect of the research manifests itself precisely in the identification of types of Austenian protagonists in film as well as in the ways

[2] Jane Austen wrote most of her novels in the 18th century, but she could not find a publisher of her works until the beginning of the 19th. Of course, the texts underwent modifications, and the characters probably changed as well. Nevertheless, their concept appeared in the 18th century.

[3] For instance *Jane Austen and William Shakespeare: A Love Affair in Literature, Film and Performance*, by Marina Cano and Rosa Maria Peragio, *The Cinematic Jane Austen—Essays on the Filmic Sensibility of the Novels*, by D. Monaghan, A. Hudelet and J. Wiltshire, *Jane Austen on Screen*, by G. and A. MacDonald, *Jane Austen on Film and Television: a Critical Study of the Adaptations*, by S. Parrill or *Janespotting and Beyond: British Heritage Retrovisions since Mid-1990s*, by E. Voigts-Virchow, to name but a few.

of rediscovering Austen's heroes and anti-heroes in the loose adaptations of the writer's works. The dissertation discusses adaptative operations used by filmmakers while adapting the novels for films and seeks to provide the answers to such questions as:

1. How do film adaptations reflect the images of Austen's protagonists and present their distinctive personality traits?
2. What changes are introduced in the original themes in order to adjust to the tastes and expectations of a late twentieth century/ early twenty-first century recipient? What is the effect of such modifications on the image of Austen's characters?

The types of literary characters created by the British author are compared to their film counterparts, with respect to film style and these adaptation strategies that serve to portray selected features of a literary prototype in film. The comparative method, understood here as the analysis of two or more relation systems (in this case, literature and film), confronts literary characters with their film counterparts in order to find similarities and differences conditioning the identification of Austen's character types. As Edward Kasperski points out, the comparative method allows for investigating the interrelations of literary and non-literary phenomena and brings out the contrasts and parallels between them (332). The choice of a subject matter to compare is to some extent subjective and arbitrary, as it largely depends on the researcher's decision. Nevertheless, making this choice and using the comparative method require formulating a criterion of comparison and determining the common ground (the so called *tertium comparationis*) on which the literary and non-literary phenomena are compared (335). In respect of this particular dissertation, the research needs to be grounded in Austen's novels, especially with the focus on their protagonists.

A thorough comparison of these protagonists requires a neoformal analysis of film adaptations discussed in this dissertation. According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, who discuss this approach in their *Film Art: Introduction*, "a good starting point is to think about how the film is put together as a whole" (306). The neoformal analysis examines the film's style and form. Bordwell and Thompson define film style as a combination of characteristic patterns of technique that can be found in a movie (306). The film form, in turn, is referred to as "a system of relationships between the film's elements" (517). Since every movie expresses itself through form, it becomes the movie's most relevant element. Observing the interactions between film's elements, as well as between the observed film and the viewer, is a necessary condition for the observers to understand how the film style actually works, and how it works on the audience (Ostaszewski 104-107). The viewer begins to notice how the movie manipulates causality, time, and space (either by rearranging scenes in time or by manipulating degrees of subjectivity) and is able to interpret the film characters' aims, motives, thoughts, and emotions, "all of which need to be conveyed to the viewer through form and style"

(Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art* 306). As film style is "intimately tied to the emotions that the movie expresses and that it can engender in the viewer"; it may both strengthen emotional aspects of the story in the film and shape meaning (307). It is a tool that works perceptually and, therefore, it may "clarify, intensify, or complicate our understanding of the action" (307).

Since "the overall effect" of every movie is influenced by distinctive patterns of the filmmakers' techniques, or, as Bordwell and Thompson call them, "the salient techniques" (*Film Art* 306), the neoformal analysis requires identifying them. Once the salient techniques are identified, the viewer is able to notice how they are organised throughout the whole film or a single segment. The decision about which techniques are salient is, however, subjective as it is influenced both by what the viewer wants to learn more about and by the viewer's interpretation of what the film may emphasise. The audience's attention may focus on stylistic patterns in two ways, as Bordwell and Thompson point out—either by reflecting on responses to posed questions or by searching for stylistic patterns that "reinforce the unfolding narrative" (307). According to them, "the film's narration will manipulate what we know" and the knowledge of these manipulations as well as how and when they are discovered may "guide us toward specific responses" (306). In respect of this dissertation, these are the responses to research questions.

In order to categorise the film adaptations of Jane Austen's novels, the scholars[4] usually refer to Geoffrey Wagner's taxonomy, which he proposes in *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975)[5]. This dissertation does not follow this particular classification, however, as the typology proposed by John M. Desmond and Peter Hawkes is considerably more accurate and can be used more effectively in this study. Similarly to Wagner's tripartite division, in their *Adaptation: Studying Film and Literature* (2005), Desmond and Hawkes classify movie adaptations also into three groups in relation to the fidelity category—*close, loose* and *intermediate* adaptations (3). The scholars argue that "a film is a close adaptation when most of the narrative elements in the literary text are kept in the film, few elements are dropped, and not many elements are added" (44). In this dissertation, the notion *close*

[4] Susan Parrill in her *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (10), Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield in their *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (10), Louise Flavin in *Jane Austen in Classroom* (12), Brian McFarlane in his *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* (10-11)

[5] The author divides adaptations into three types: transpositions, commentaries, and analogies (222). According to Wagner, *transpositions* adapt the novel as accurately as possible and allow only minor alterations which do not affect the original plot too much—these are the costume heritage films and TV series based on Austen's prose. *Commentaries* follow the plot events, but they modify the literary original and introduce such changes as shifting the emphasis to another thread or expanding one of the side plots. *Analogies*, in turn, use the original text as a departure point to create a different story and introduce such radical changes within the characters and the setting that it is hard to see the original plot of the adapted work (222-231). The examples of this type are *Clueless*, *Bridget Jones' Diary* or *Lost in Austen*. Although Wagner's typology is popular among the scholars of film adaptations of Austen's prose, this doctoral dissertation does not follow his taxonomy, as it does not allow to answer the research questions.

adaptation refers to these films which try to recreate the novel, remaining as close as possible to the original text, including most of the novel's plot structure, its main events and most of the important characters. These are costume films, whose action is set in the 19th century England. Most of them represent heritage cinema and belong to the melodrama genre. According to Desmond and Hawkes' taxonomy, *loose adaptation* "uses the literary text as a point of departure" and, therefore, "most of the story elements in the literary text are dropped from the film and most elements in the film are substituted or added" (44). Somewhere between close and loose adaptation the critics locate *intermediate adaptation* which "neither conforms exactly nor departs entirely" the original text, as it keeps some elements of the story in the film, drops others, and adds some more elements (44).

This dissertation uses only two of the proposed notions—*close adaptation* and *loose adaptation*. The latter combines Desmond and Hawkes' types of loose and intermediate adaptations into one category. In this regard, the notion *loose adaptation* refers to all the films which loosely recreate the plot of a literary original. The authors of these adaptations borrow an idea, a situation or a character from a literary source, and then modify it in their own original way[6]. *Loose adaptations* provide new reinterpretations of the original stories, which may include bold changes in the plot or in the setting—through the *reduction* or *addition* of a particular thread or character, *substitution* or *amplification* of an element included in the original narrative, *transaccentuation* of the main thread of the adapted story, *inversion* of the events that originally take place or *condensation* of the adapted narrative[7]. In this dissertation, the term *loose adaptations* refers to all the adaptations whose action is moved from Regency England into different times or countries (and the characters of which are of different nationalities). These are also movies which follow different genre conventions than that of a melodrama.

The dissertation elaborates on the types of Jane Austen's protagonists and the processes that took place while they were being adapted for film. It consists of four chapters which include the film analysis of only the most representative cinematic adaptations. These are feature-length mainstream cinema movies made in or after 1995, the date which is considered to be the exact moment when *Austenmania* actually started. During this year five film adaptations of Austen's prose aired—the successful BBC serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice* (which additionally triggered *Darcymania,* owing to Colin Firth's performance), the popular TV series for children—*Wishbone*, Ang Lee's Oscar-winning *Sense and Sensibility*, Roger Michell's *Persuasion* and the cinematic loose adaptation

[6] Louis Giannetti explains *loose adaptation* in similar words in his *Understanding Movies* (442).
[7] These are adaptative operations, whose definitions are coined by Marek Hendrykowski in *Współczesna adaptacja filmowa.* They are further discussed in the following chapters of this dissertation.

of *Emma*, Amy Heckerling's *Clueless*. Never before or after that year did so many film adaptations of Austen's prose hit the screen within just one year.

Taking into consideration the scope of this dissertation, it would be rather impossible to analyse all movie adaptations of Jane Austen's novels. After all, the works of the British writer have been adapted for film and television since 1938, and they continuously attract the attention of subsequent filmmakers owing to a rich catalogue of characters, sublime humour and colourful, personalised dialogues (also functioning as a tool for constructing characters). All these factors contribute to building a vibrant picture of the English upper-class community and, at the same time, determine the film potential of the original stories. According to IMDb, over eighty film adaptations of the British author's prose were made until 2024 which shows that they fit in the trend of multi-adaptation[8]. Obviously, the number of movies, chosen for film analysis in this dissertation needed to have been limited. Hence, the study does not discuss movies made for television, short films, animations or film series. Moreover, the analysis undertaken here, which focuses on films made since 1995, centres on loose adaptations[9] of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, as these three novels are of the greatest interest to filmmakers. No feature-length loose adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* (the last one in 1993, *Ruby in Paradise*) or *Mansfield Park* (the last one in 1990, *Metropolitan*) appeared after 1995[10]. Therefore, the characters from these two novels are not included in the research at all.

The chapter structure of this dissertation reflects the categories based on the traits whose alteration affects the film syuzhet, i.e., time frame, genre convention and cultural context. Originally, Jane Austen's novels are set in England at the beginning of the 19th century. Most of their close film adaptations preserve both the setting and timeline and follow the convention of a melodrama. Meanwhile, loose adaptations depart from the novels in three major directions: they alter the temporal setting (i.e., modernisation), they change the genre dominant, and/or they modify the cultural context. Each of these alteration types is discussed in a different chapter.

However, in order to discern and analyse the deviations from the literary original, it is necessary to begin with examining close adaptations of the novels. Hence, the dissertation starts with the chapter on close adaptations of Austen's novels, which provides an introduction to the study and a necessary background for the subsequent discussion of the categorised loose adaptations. These

[8] A term introduced by Marek Hendrykowski in *Współczesna adaptacja filmowa* (148).
[9] Close adaptations are also mentioned and referred to, but they are not analysed thoroughly since there are already many analytical articles and monographs about most of them.
[10] Only a TV series for children, *Wishbone*, (each episode of which was a loose adaptation of a different English novel) and two vlog adaptations on YouTube, *From Mansfield with Love*, which aired in 2014, and *The Cate Morland Chronicles* which aired in 2016.

close adaptations include: the BBC's TV series *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Simon Langton, 1995), Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), both McGarth's and Lawrence's feature-length costume adaptations of *Emma,* which aired in 1996, Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park,* Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* from 2005, John Alexander's serialisation of *Sense and Sensibility* (2008), Jim O'Hanlon's serialisation of *Emma* (2009), Autumn de Wilde's cinematic *Emma* (2020), Carrie Cracknell's *Persuasion* (2022), distributed by Netflix.

The second chapter analyses the films whose plot has been modernised: *Clueless* (dir. Amy Heckerling, 1995), *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1998), *Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001). In these films, the action in the diegetic world was transferred from the 19th century to contemporary England or the United States and, thus, the social etiquette and women's limitations have altered as well. These adaptations emphasise the important aspects of literary originals for the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century readers and enter into dialogue with Austen's prose. The British author's novels become a starting point for a story about contemporary women struggling with the surrounding reality and searching for a love relationship. The main characters' stories are focused on the changes resulting from the mixing of two worlds—the modern one and the one created by Austen. These changes become the reality of the main characters. The chapter elaborates on the updated images of Austen's character types and on the modifications that were introduced into Austen's narratives while updating them into films whose action is set in the late 20th/ early 21st century England or the USA.

A slightly larger modification of the original involves the change of genre: the third chapter discusses films that employ this alteration. While most close adaptations of Austen's prose are melodramas or dramas, loose adaptations follow genre conventions of romantic comedies, teen/coming-of-age movies or even horror films. These conventions may mix and intertwine as proven in this chapter. By introducing different genre conventions and transforming Austen's stories for miscellaneous genre films, adaptations may appeal to larger audiences, not just the devotees of dramas and melodramas. Most of the movies discussed in this chapter involve a change of time frames as well. Therefore, the discussion involves adaptations which include double modifications. It is divided into three sections. The first one functions as an introduction to this chapter and elaborates on the notion of film genre. The following sub-chapter discusses what becomes of Austen's narrative if adapted into romantic comedies. The analysis here covers such cinematic adaptations as *Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001), *Clueless* (dir. Amy Heckerling, 1995), *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1998), *Bride and Prejudice* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2004) and *Aisha* (dir. Rajshree Ojha, 2010). The last section elaborates on Austen's prose adapted into horror films and their parodic

versions, and studies such adaptations as *Pride & Prejudice and Zombies* (dir. Burr Steers, 2016) and *Twilight* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2008).

An even greater modification is achieved by setting the plot in a different cultural reality, the more so if this alteration is additionally accompanied by the two previously mentioned—the modernisation and/or the change of the genre dominant. The fourth chapter elaborates on films in which the cultural dominant changes—or rather appears to change. The makers of these films try to set the action in a different cultural tradition and show how Austen's characters would function in different culture. However, since all the films discussed in this chapter are global, mainstream products, the actual change of cultural dominant appears only on surface-level. The filmmakers use the visual appeal of Indian and Chinese cinema to attract the viewer's eye with colourful costumes and breathtaking fight scenes. The chapter is divided into three sections. As in the case of previous chapters, the first section functions as an introduction—it elaborates on possible outcomes of the change of cultural context. The second subchapter analyses Indian adaptations of Austen's prose—Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) and Rajshree Ojha's *Aisha* (2010)—which share a post-colonial theme. The last subchapter provides an analysis of a Chinese adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*—Ang Lee's wuxia movie, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon.* Since *From Prada to Nada*, the Latina version of *Sense and Sensibility*, had only a limited reach, Afro-American *Pride and Prejudice: Atlanta* is a TV film, and Asian *Fire Island* is a Netflix movie, none of these adaptations is analysed in this dissertation, as its scope was set to focus solely on mainstream, cinematic loose adaptations with a wide reach.

The ordering of chapters reflects a kind of gradation related to the modifications performed in the adaptation process. The dissertation begins with a chapter about close adaptations which appear to alter the original narrative the least, and every following chapter focuses on a category introducing more substantial alterations. The layout of the dissertation suggests that the process of adapting Jane Austen's novels is evolving, and the popularisation of her prose is facilitated by applying a set of different adaptative operations[11]. This does not mean, however, that each new tendency ends the previous one. On the contrary, the tendencies intertwine and affect each other, giving a start to the new ones.

The study conducted in this dissertation proves that cinema treats Austen's prose instrumentally—the filmmakers of subsequent movie adaptations choose to adapt only these elements of the original narrative which they find most effective (or profitable), and at the same time they

[11] the seven adaptative operations described by Marek Hendrykowski in *Współczesna adaptacja filmowa:* transaccentuation, substitution, addition, reduction, inversion, condensation, amplification.

ignore or diminish these elements which they consider irrelevant for their films' narrative. The introduced modifications within the adapted work serve mainly to widen the movies' reach, attract as many viewers as possible and provide everyone with a film interesting to watch (although for different reasons). However, as it turns out, monetisation of Austen's stories through the medium of film leads to an almost complete change of Austen's character types at the cost of the film's visual layer, which becomes a true feast for the viewer's eye.

Chapter 1
The Beginnings

1.1. Gaining in Popularity

During the 19th century, Jane Austen's reputation grew slowly. The initial popularity of her prose spread mainly by word of mouth among the upper-class circles (Halsey 5-6). Her novels were mainly read by aristocratic and gentry-class coteries, as well as her literary contemporaries, but they lacked a wide range of readers (4). In comparison to such authors as George Byron, Walter Scott, Ann Radcliffe or Frances Burney, Austen's works gained only modest success and recognition in her lifetime. The most profitable of her novels was *Mansfield Park*; the writer earned over £310 for it—a profit considerably lower than Burney's £2000 for *Camilla* or Radcliffe's £800 for *Italian* (Halsey 4).

Although Austen's prose was not widely recognised, it did receive some very positive reviews. In February 1812, *The Critical Review* published the first written commentary on *Sense and Sensibility* and praised the novel for its characters, narration, and events which were captivating and realistic (Grosvenor Myer 184). The next positive review came three months later in the May issue of *The British Critic*, and six years later a conservative magazine related to the High Church, commented on *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska 137). That same year, in 1818, *Edinburgh Magazine* published a flattering review of the last two novels of Austen as well. Its anonymous author praised the English writer for her observation skills, sense of humour and sensitivity. The review also expressed astonishment over the underestimated reading recognition for her novels and made a prophetic remark that one day Jane Austen would be declared one of the most widely read English novelists (Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska 190).

The first critical articles about Austen's novels came out after the publication of the writer's first biography in 1870. *The Memoir of Jane Austen*, written by her nephew, reawakened the interest in her novels and triggered a wave of critical works about them. Since 1870, Austen's reputation grew rapidly, with the help of a group of esteemed writers (including George Saintsbury, William Dean Howells and Edward Morgan Forster), who became known as "Janeites." The British author's works aroused considerable interest also among researchers. Criticism of Austen's novels is commonly believed to begin with a published version of A.C. Bradley's lecture, which was first read in 1911. The researcher outlined the main themes of the writer's works and elaborated on the humour and

morality in her novels (Bradley 199-217). Bradley's words on Austen's "ironical amusement" are sometimes quoted by subsequent researchers, including Laura and Robert Lambdin (2000). Since Bradley's lecture many monographs and collections of essays were published both on Austen's work and on her life and the times in which she lived and wrote. The first significant edition of the British writer's texts was published by R.W. Chapman in 1923—at last all of her works were fully available to the public. The thorough edition of the author's texts included not only her six completed novels, but also all the extant letters, biographical documents, all the juvenilia, occasional writings and uncompleted works, such as *The Westons* or *Sandition.* As E. Rubinstein claims, the significant criticism of the writer's works started to occur in quantity "only after Chapman had shown how much labor Jane Austen was worth" (17). The first full study of the novelist's texts, entitled *Jane Austen and Her Art*, came out in 1939. Its author, Mary Lascelles, elaborates on Austen's writing technique, which she considered a tool responsible for making a connection between the author and her readers. In 1948, F.R. Leavis secured the novelist a place in the English literary canon, listing her as one of England's greatest writers in his *The Great Tradition* (13).

Since Leavis' acknowledgment text studies, biographies and various forms of formal and aesthetic analysis were also published, as well as collections of critical commentaries and essays on the writer's style of writing. In 1963 Ian Watt published a collection of critical essays on Austen's novels, written by such profound writers as C. S. Lewis, Virginia Woolf, or D. W. Harding[12]. Two years later, A. Walton Litz edited and published another critical compendium[13]. In 1969, E. Rubinstein published a collection of critical essays on *Pride and Prejudice*. The co-authors focused on such aspects of Austen's popular novel as the use of irony, narrative perspective, and character structure. As Rubinstein informs the readers in the "Introduction" to *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Pride and Prejudice*. *A Collection of Critical Essays,* the monograph includes critical articles of the preceding thirty years (17).

By 1975, Jane Austen had already become an important figure in the canon of English literature. The 200th anniversary of her birth was a time of great critical activity. The meeting of Joan Austen-Leigh (the writer's great-great-grand-niece) and J. David Grey, the devotees of Jane Austen's writings, took place in 1975 and resulted in co-founding four years later the greatest and most popular literary society in the world devoted to Jane Austen—*JASNA* (Jane Austen Society of North America). The society gathers thousands of members, including both the scholars and non-academic readers. JASNA's first publication, entitled *Persuasion* came out in 1979, on Jane Austen's birthday.

[12] See, Ian Watt, ed. *Jane Austen: A Collection of Critical Essays*. 4 vols. Prentice Hall, 1963.
[13] See, A. Walton Litz, *Jane Austen: A Study of Her Artistic Development*. Oxford University Press, 1965.

It actually became a tradition to release the following issues of the journal on the writer's birthday in subsequent years. After the publication of its first issue, the journal was officially named *Persuasions*. In 1997 JASNA created its website, jasna.org and since that year the following issues of the journal have been released and available online[14].

According to Laurence W. Mazzeno, "between 1970 and 1990 more than three hundred doctoral candidates wrote dissertations either focused exclusively on Austen or containing large sections devoted to analysis of her work" (131). Additionally, miscellaneous articles, special editions of magazines, and several books offered re-readings of individual papers or critical commentaries on her novels. In 1997 Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster published *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*—the compendium includes chapters on Austen's novels, her short fiction and letters. In addition, the scholars provide essays on religion, politics, class-consciousness, publishing practises, domestic economy, Austen's writing style, and the significance of the writer's juvenilia[15]. Three years later Laura Cooner Lambdin and Robert Thomas Lambdin presented essays written both by established scholars and early-career researchers in *A Companion to Jane Austen Studies*. As stated in *Jane Austen: Two Centuries of Criticism*, most critical works produced after the mid-1970s mirror the influence of feminists, but many practitioners of such critical fields as psychology, narratology, sociological studies, Marxism or new historicism found Austen's prose a fertile ground for their analyses as well (Mazzeno 131).

In the twenty-first century, the interest in the novelists and her works is still visible. In 2006 Janet Todd published *The Cambridge Introduction to Jane Austen*, with chapters on the writer's life, novels, and times. In 2007 Tony Tanner created a critical introduction to her literary texts. Apart from critical perspectives on the writer's prose, the scholars and devotees of the British author turned their attention to film adaptations of Austen's novels. The writer's literary formula, combining social realism, satire and romance, proved successful enough for her prose to be adapted for television, radio, theatre and movie and to generate many sequels, prequels and other spin-offs. These adaptations have been subjected to critical analysis as well. The publications on film adaptations of Austen's novels began appearing in 2001, when a collection of fourteen critical essays was presented in *Jane Austen in Hollywood.* The authors of these texts analyse the phenomenon of the British novelist and provide critical perspectives on the close film adaptations of her prose. They attempt to resolve whether the adaptations from the 1990s enhance or weaken the subtle feminism Austen

[14] See, *JASNA Turns 40* on jasna.org
[15] E. Copeland and J. McMaster, "Preface" [in:] *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen.* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

promoted in her stories. A year later, Sue Parrill released *Jane Austen on Film and Television: A Critical Study of the Adaptations.* It provides critical insight on close adaptations of Austen's works, starting with the 1940's *Pride and Prejudice* with Lawrence Olivier and ending with Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* from 1999. The study traces the history of film and television adaptations, comparing adaptations with manuscripts and the way different adaptations treat novels. Another collection of critical essays appeared just a year later in *Jane Austen and Co: Remaking the Past in Contemporary Culture.* Its editors, Suzanne R. Pucci and James Thompson, included these essays which analyse adaptations from the 1990s with regard to how the past is represented in heritage cinema films. In *Jane Austen on Screen* Gina and Andrew MacDonald compare film adaptations to their source texts and the novels' previous adaptations. These are only some of the critical monographs about film adaptations of Austen's prose, most of which focus on close adaptations from the 1990s.

1.2. Changing Tendencies in Film Adaptations of Austen's Novels

Although the first film adaptation of Austen's prose, *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Michael Barry), was released in 1938, the real fashion for filming the writer's novels came in the 1990s. As IMDb and Filmweb inform, after the premiere of Barry's movie adaptation in 1938, only two more followed in the 1940s, another five were released in the 1950s and 1960s, but only three adaptations came out in the 1970s and in the 1980s. The most fertile period for close film adaptations of Austen's prose came in the 1990s. According to IMDb and Filmweb, during that decade, six close adaptations of the writer's novels were released—these included five feature-length movies[16] and a TV-series[17].

Thus, the filmmakers' interest in close adaptations of the author's novels is considerably more visible in the 1990s than in the previous decades. The 1990s became an undoubtedly significant period for movies based on Austen's prose not only because of the greatest number of close adaptations, but mainly because these films which appeared in that decade were so critically and commercially successful that they triggered an immense interest in Jane Austen's works. In fact, they started a phenomenon often referred to as *Austenmania* or *Jane Mania* and influenced subsequent adaptations of the writer's novels as well as new tendencies in adapting Austen's works for film. After all, the first loose adaptations of *Emma*, *Mansfield Park* and *Northanger Abbey* appeared in the

[16] *Sense and Sensibility* (dir. Ang Lee, 1995), *Persuasion* (dir. Roger Michell, 1995), *Emma* (dir. Douglas McGrath, 1996), *Emma* (dir. Diarmuid Lawrence, 1996), *Mansfield Park* (dir. Patricia Rozema, 1999)
[17] *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Simon Langton, 1995)

1990s as well. These included both feature-length movies[18] and TV series[19]. Even though the very first loose adaptation of Austen's prose had its premiere in 1940[20], the craze for loose adaptations of the writer's novels did not start until the 1990s—another argument why this decade is so important for movies based on the British novelist's works.

A turning point for movie adaptations of Austen's texts turned out to be the year 1995, when five films based on the writer's works aired—three of them were close adaptations. A&E released an absolute blockbuster TV series *Pride and Prejudice*[21], which many filmmakers and writers refer to in their films and novels[22]. That same year, Roger Mitchell filmed *Persuasion,* and Emma Thompson wrote and played in Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility*—the first Oscar-winning film adaptation of Austen's novel. These two feature-length movies were declared the best films of 1995 by *Time* magazine[23]. According to Andrew Higson, "the gritty realism" of Mitchell's *Persuasion* influenced such subsequent movies based on the British writer's prose as *Mansfield Park* (1999) or *Becoming Jane* (2007) (143). Apart from these three close adaptations, which turned out to be indisputable hits, the filmmakers released two loose adaptations that same year: PBS created *Wishbone,* a TV show for children, whose one of the episodes, entitled "Furst Impressions", was based on *Pride and Prejudice,* whereas Amy Heckerling directed *Clueless*, a feature-length adaptation of *Emma. Clueless* is probably the most significant loose adaptation of Austen's prose even if it was not the first one to be made. The movie was so successful both commercially[24] and critically[25] that it was soon followed by

[18] *Metropolitan* (dir. Whit Stillman, 1990) is the first loose adaptation of *Mansfield Park.*
Ruby in Paradise (dir. Victor Nunez, 1993) is the first loose adaptation of *Northanger Abbey*,
Clueless (dir. Amy Hackerling, 1995) is the first loose adaptation of *Emma.*

[19] The first TV series whose episodes are loosely based on Austen's prose was entitled *Wishbone* and appeared in 1995.

[20] It was Robert Z. Leonard's *Pride and Prejudice* with Lawrence Olivier and Geer Garson.

[21] The series was awarded with Emmy for "Outstanding Individual Achievement in Costume Design for a Miniseries or a Special", and was Emmy-nominated for its achievements, as well as for choreography and writing. Apart from that, the series got BAFTA nominations for the "Best Drama Serial", "Best Costume Design", and "Best Make Up/Hair" in 1996. It also received a Peabody Award, a Television Critics Association Award, and a Golden Satellite Award nomination for outstanding achievements as a serial. Jennifer Ehle, who played the leading role of Elizabeth Bennet, was awarded with a BAFTA for the "Best Actress", while Colin Firth, who portrayed Mr Darcy in the series, and Benjamin Whitrow, who played Mr Bennet, received nominations for the "Best Actor". Firth won a Broadcasting Press Guild Award both for the "Best Actor" and the "Best Drama Series".

[22] A reference to "The Lake Scene" appears at least in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones' Diary* and in *Lost in Austen* (dir. Dan Zeff, 2008), a TV series loosely based on *Pride and Prejudice.* Colin Firth, who played Mr Darcy in the BBC series from 1995, played Mr Darcy again in Sharon Maguire's film adaptation of *Bridget Jones' Diary.*

[23] See, *The Best of 1995: Cinema*, Web 25 Dec. 1995, available on
https://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,983896,00.html

[24]The film turned out to be a sleeper hit of 1995. It grossed $10, 612, 443 on its opening weekend and the final domestic gross of $56, 631, 572 placed the film at the 28th position in the ranking of the top grossing movies in 1995 (IMDb). The film has basically launched the career of Alicia Silverstone who played Cher Horowitz, the main protagonist and the film counterpart of Austen's Emma Woodhouse.

[25] The movie was well received by the critics. Its director, Amy Heckerling, won the National Society of Film Critics Award for the best screenplay in 1995 (Parrill 4). The film received positive reviews from *The New York Times* and *Chicago Sun-Times.* American review-aggregation websites responded to the movie positively as well; *Rotten Tomatoes* granted it the score of 81% based on 116 critic reviews, with an average rating of 6.8/10 whereas *Metacritic* gave it the score of 6.8/10 rating, based on 18 critic reviews.

a TV series of the same title, which brought together characters from the film, played by a different cast. The direct references to the movie are noticeable in other films (which are not its spin-offs) as well, especially in Rajshree Ojha's *Aisha*[26] from 2010.

The majority of the movies made in and before the 1990s, based on the British writer's prose, are close adaptations, released in a relatively short period of time. Sometimes two or even three costume films hit the screen within just one year—as it was in 1995 or in 1996, when two close adaptations of *Emma* had their premieres. Thus, within only one year apart, five close adaptations appeared. However, after Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* (1999), the interest in close adaptations of Austen's novels slightly declined, as the interval between premieres of subsequent films increased. After the release of *Mansfield Park* in 1999, the viewers had to wait six years for the next close adaptation of Austen's prose—The Oscar and Golden Globe-nominated Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*. Two years later, three adaptations, released by ITV as part of the British series *The Jane Austen Season*, had their TV premieres: *Mansfield Park, Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. In the meantime, BBC created a new version of *Sense and Sensibility* in 2008, and another adaptation of *Emma* aired in 2009. Then, another *Pride and Prejudice* hit the screen in 2014 and six years had to pass before the next adaptation was released on the screens—*Emma*, directed by Autumn de Wilde. Then after two years Netflix released *Persuasion.*

Most of these costume adaptations show the image of England in Regency era and focus on class differences—the issues often discussed in *heritage cinema*. Film adaptations of Austen's prose, including the 1985, 1995 and 1996 BBC series, as well as cinematic adaptations of *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Emma* (1996) and *Mansfield Park* (1999) represent this trend and follow the convention of costume melodramas. Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), along with the ITV and BBC series (2007-2009) are heritage costume adaptations as well even though they were not made in the 1980s or 1990s, the time in which these types of movies proliferated.

As indicated before, apart from costume heritage film adaptations, the 1990s saw another trend among movie adaptations of Austen's novels—loose adaptations, movies which do not follow the trajectory of events as closely as costume films. This trend developed in the 1990s and inspired the subsequent filmmakers to release more adaptations of the author's novels in the next decade. As IMDb and Filmweb inform, at least 12 film adaptations of Austen's prose were released between

[26] The film relates to Heckerling's blockbuster through the scene of fight for the remote control, the main character's lack of driving abilities and her costumes as well as through the character of Pinky Bose, whose extravagant style of clothing and snappy remarks remind the audience of Dionne from *Clueless.*

2000 and 2010. These were both close (two TV series, four feature-length adaptations[27]) and loose adaptations[28] (it is difficult to establish the exact number, as some loose adaptations depart from Austen's narrative so radically that websites do not provide the actual reference to the writer's works). The period between 2010 and 2020 is entirely dominated by loose adaptations. According to IMDb and Filmweb, at least seventeen adaptations were released during that decade. Only three of them are close adaptations of Austen's prose—*Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Rebecca McGibney, 2014), *Love & Friendship* (dir. Whit Stillman, 2016), *Emma* (dir. Autumn de Wilde, 2020).

The comparison of subsequent decades with regard to the quantity of films based on Austen's prose and their premieres reveals a shift in the approach to the adaptations of the writer's works. While the filmmakers' interest in costume adaptations appears to decline at least for now, the fashion for loose adaptations continues to grow. A wide spectrum of movies loosely based on Austen's novels features new tendencies emerging within the trend of loose adaptations. The first such adaptations, which aired in the 1990s, involved changing the time frame. *Metropolitan*, *Ruby in Paradise*, *Clueless* and *You've Got Mail* (a loose adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* which had its premiere in 1998) transfer Austen's narrative into the twentieth-century America. Soon after, they were followed by *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2001), *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter-Day Comedy* (2003), *The Jane Austen Book Club* (2007), *Lost in Austen* (2008), *Scents and Sensibility* (2008)—which move the original stories to the reality of the twenty-first-century England or the USA. These films present Austen's prose in a contemporary setting, because they aim at a modern audience (late twentieth and early twenty-first century viewers). Their protagonists and selected plotlines (usually these which concern the main characters) provide deliberate and direct references to the original narrative. Most of these films follow the conventions of romantic comedies. However, the filmmakers are eager to combine Austen's narratives with different genres as well. Some of the makers use elements and conventions of horror movies. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* or *Twilight* add horror tropes into the love story of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,* in turn, introduces *Sense and Sensibility* to martial arts film and the wuxia genre.

At the beginning of the 21st century the viewers experienced the second wave of *Austenmania*—apart from the already known tendencies in adapting Austen's prose for film (such as

[27] TV series: *Sense and Sensibility* (dir. Andrew Davies, 2008), *Emma* (dir. O'Hanlon, 2009) and full-length adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Joe Wright, 2005), *Persuasion* (dir. Adrian Shergold, 2007), *Mansfield Park* (dir. Iain MacDonald, 2007), *Northanger Abbey* (dir. Jon Jones, 2007).

[28] Filmweb and IMDb mention Hindi loose adaptations—*Kandukondain, Kandukondain* (dir. Rajiv Menon, 2000), *Bride and Prejudice* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2004), *Aisha* (dir. Rajshree Ojha, 2010), American *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. Andrew Black, 2003), *Ellie & Marianne* (dir. Heath Benfield, Robin Bisel and Benjamin Dewhurst, 2006), and British TV series *Lost in Austen* (dir. Dan Zeff, 2008). However, there were more. *Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001), for example, is also considered a loose adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, even though it is not listed on Filmweb or IMDb.

costume melodramas or adaptations involving a change of temporal setting) another two trends developed. The first new tendency among loose adaptations of Austen's novels required both a change of time frames and a relocation of the narrative into a different cultural context[29]. *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (2000), *Bride and Prejudice* (2004) and *Aisha* (2010) move the action of *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* to modern India. *From Prada to Nada* (2011) presents Latina version of *Sense and Sensibility*, and a TV movie, *Pride and Prejudice: Atlanta* offers an Afro-American adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The second tendency within loose adaptations of Austen's novels emerges within and presenting the novels as a result of her personal experiences. These are, for example, *The Real Jane Austen* (2002), *Becoming Jane* (2007), *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008), *The Jane Austen Trilogy* (2010), *The Many Lovers of Miss Jane Austen* (2011). The above-enumerated movies purport to be the British writer's biographies, but they include—apart from elements inspired by the novelist's life—narrative elements taken directly from her fiction[30].

Since little is known about Jane Austen's love life, the filmmakers eagerly turn their attention to the author's novels for guidance. In this way, they create filmic narratives of a hybrid status: including elements both of Austen's biography and of her novels. In the case of some of these movies, the impact of the writer's original narratives is especially noticeable. A good example is *Becoming Jane*, which basically follows the trajectory of events from *Pride and Prejudice*, presenting Tom LeFroy as the real-life inspiration for creating Mr Darcy and indicating that the character of Elizabeth Bennet is an alter ego of the British author. Even though the title of the movie suggests that the story focuses on the process of Jane Austen's becoming a writer, this process is reduced to a background for a tragic love story that probably never really happened. Obviously, the story depicted in the movie cannot be a faithful writer's biography since Cassandra burnt most of her talented sister's correspondence and, thus, no confirmed information about Jane Austen's attachment to Tom LeFroy exists: it was not confirmed by any of the writer's relatives or by the author herself. Meanwhile, the film indicates that the novelist's literary taste and style were shaped by Tom Lefroy's penchants and

[29] The idea of a cultural relocation came up for the first time in 1966. Alberto Gonzalez Vergel directed Spanish version of *Pride and Prejudice*, untitled *Orgullo y Prejucio.* As Mari Carmen Romero Sánchez notices, the sets resembled more Spanish than British houses and the costumes referred to the 1840s—as the filmmakers re-used costumes from other series of *Novela*. Some of the protagonists' names were changed into these more popular in Spain: Jane was altered into Jenny, Lydia into Lina, and Caroline into Carol (Romero Sánchez). The TV series did not have, however, a major influence on the development of this tendency—the audience had to wait for a long time to watch another adaptation of Austen's novel, whose action was relocated into non-Anglo-Saxon region.

[30] To some extent Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* fits in this group as well, because the filmmakers adopt some of the details from Jane Austen's life and introduce them into the movie. They change the main heroine into a writer. The audience can see the similarity between Fanny Price and Jane Austen at the very beginning of the movie: the teenage Fanny writes down the history of England, just like Jane Austen did when she was a child herself. Furthermore, the adult Fanny copies the note Jane Austen added to her *History of England* and adds it to her first finished work.

provokes the viewers to ponder whether the story behind *Pride and Prejudice* actually took place in real life—but with no real happily-ever-after. Once again, Austen's prose is reduced to the role of a money-making machine, as film producers commercialise *Pride and Prejudice* and draw the viewers' attention to the author's works by suggesting that her grand love stories are not just literary fiction. With all the adopted threads, plotlines and even character types, *Becoming Jane* is closer to another adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* than to a biopic based on Jane Austen's life.

All in all, numerous changes emerged in the approach to adapting Austen's original stories for film. The filmmakers whose movies represent the trends mentioned in this section treat the source-texts in an instrumental manner, borrowing selected narrative elements and re-inventing them in such a way so that the adaptations bring financial profit and attract more viewers. It is impossible not to notice that the creators of the subsequent adaptations use some of the strategies that made the adaptations from the 1990s successful. Such adaptative strategies as the development of the romantic thread, casting physically attractive actors and putting emphasis on their sex appeal—the strategies so eagerly used by the makers of loose adaptations of the British author's prose—are noticeable in their heritage predecessors. Since loose adaptations of Austen's works clearly refer to these movies and use the above-mentioned strategies, it is necessary to discuss how heritage cinema treats their literary source texts and change their original narratives before analysing the outcome of adapting Jane Austen's prose for loose adaptations.

1.3. The Genesis of Heritage Cinema

Heritage cinema, a term coined by Charles Barr, initially referred to historical costume British melodramas, often set in the Victorian and Edwardian eras and in the years leading up to World War II (Cartmell and Whelehan 128). *Heritage films* gained in popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1980s, during the reigns of Margaret Thatcher, they aimed at relieving social tension by referring to tradition and evoking in the audience the feeling of nostalgia for the glory days of the British Empire (128-129). The movies offered an escape from everyday problems during the difficult years of Thatcherism (Woźniak 100).

Margaret Thatcher's assumption of power made her the first female Prime Minister. Thatcher won the elections on behalf of the Conservative Party in 1979, at a time of economic crisis, powerlessness of the British government and diminishing prestige. The Iron Lady based her election campaign on economic issues, calling for the reduction of unemployment and the limitation of the government's role in the economy, as well as for free trade in the country and abroad, and for

individual enterprise (McDowall 179). Her politics centred on the development of the service sector at the expense of industry, which resulted in an increase in unemployment among factory, mine and shipyard workers in the 1980s.

After the closures of steel mills and coal mines in 1984, the situation worsened even more. As a consequence, the miners went on strike, which lasted a year and resulted in an open conflict with the police (McDowall 178). At that time, Great Britain was overwhelmed by a wave of strikes and protests—not only of miners. Transport and railroad workers, nurses and female employees in general were all fighting for better working and living conditions. Women protested against sexism and domestic violence and demanded more severe punishments for sexual abuse. Feminists fought for equal salary and working conditions as men (McDowall 176-178). The economic situation of the country was dreadful—the combination of rising prices and unemployment caused economic downfall. By 1985, over three millions of Britons were out of work—the highest unemployment rate was noted in the industrial north of England and southeast Wales (178). Along with the fuel crisis and rising oil prices, high unemployment only deteriorated the already poor economic situation in the country. Consequently, the government had to limit wage increases in order to reduce inflation and budget deficit.

Apart from financial problems, the Britons' frustration resulted from the decline in Great Britain's prestige, which was mainly related to the loss of the country's colonies. In order to strengthen the relationships with the former British colonies and to assure the society that these relations still exist, Thatcher visited India and Pakistan in the first years of her leadership. Her politics focused in part on rebuilding the country's influences within the international area. The UK's participation in the Falklands conflict had a positive influence on this "postcolonial melancholy" of the British citizens and definitely increased the Iron Lady's ratings as the British prime minister.

Nevertheless, the country's poor economic situation and bad public mood triggered the emergence of two different trends in British cinema: social realism and heritage cinema. The first one entailed the films which referred to the prevailing unemployment, strikes and difficult living conditions in the country during Thatcher's leadership, such as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (dir. Stephen Frears, 1985). In 1984 Ken Loach directed a provocative documentary, *Which Side Are You On*, about the miners' strike that took place that same year. Later films, such as Herman's *Brassed Off* (1996) or Cattaneo's *The Full Monty* (1997), also depict British working class fighting to adjust to the transition from an industrial to a service economy in times of Margaret Thatcher's government. While the films of social realism appeared to give vent for frustration and dissatisfaction from all the hardships the Britons had to face in Thatcher's era, heritage cinema, as Andrew Higson notes, aimed

at rebuilding the national identity and soothing social tensions in the face of the post-imperial crisis as well as at allaying the fears related to the Americanisation of British culture (*Waving the Flag* 19).

The emergence of heritage cinema was strictly related to the passage of The National Heritage Acts in 1980 and 1983, which introduced the necessity of special protection of material heritage for the state money. Material heritage included landscapes (also English lawns, which are so often shown in heritage films) and estates, even those privately owned (Włodek 78). In cinema, the issue of protecting historical heritage, along with the feeling of national pride, manifests itself in the films which show the glory of the British Empire, where the sun always shines, and the landscapes look mesmerising. Heritage cinema was also a response to the growing popularity of American films on the British market. The filmmakers wished to distinguish British cinema from American by referring to cultural tradition. Numerous awards[31] (especially Oscar, Emmy and Golden Globe nominations) and the budget of some of their movies[32] prove that the filmmakers of heritage films also made attempts to compete with Hollywood (Higson, *Waving the Flag* 1). While Hollywood uses *American Star System* and casts well-known actors or actresses (Hollywood stars) in one of the leading roles to promote the film and improve the box-office appeal (Giannetti 582), the filmmakers of heritage cinema cast in their movies the most recognisable British stars, such as Anthony Hopkins, Hugh Grant, Helena Bonham-Carter, Emma Thompson, to name but a few.

The enormous popularity of heritage films and their commercial potential translated not only into their export to other countries, but also into the promotion of British monuments and the development of cultural tourism (Woźniak 101). With time, the definition of heritage films has broadened: initially, the term referred only to British cinematography, but after a while, it also began to be used with regard to non-British films glorifying the past of their own country.

1.4. Heritage Cinema & Austen's Prose

The most representative heritage films are the adaptations of literary classics, which present the splendour of life of the British elites, especially in the Edwardian or Victorian era, boast detailed props and costumes, and offer excellent performances of world-wide known actors and actresses,

[31] The film adaptations of Austen's novels which represent heritage cinema won a considerable number of awards as well. The TV series *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. S. Langton, 1995) received one BAFTA (five nominations) and one Emmy (but two nominations), *Pride and Prejudice* (dir. J. Wright, 2005) won one BAFTA (five nominations) and got four Oscar nominations, and two Golden Globe nominations, Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* was awarded with an Oscar, Jim O'Hanlon's *Emma* got an Emmy Award (IMDb).

[32] For instance, the budget of Douglas McGrath's *Emma* was 7 mln dollars, the budget of Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* was 16 mln dollars, and the budget of Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* was 28 mln dollars (IMDb).

unhurried plots as well as picturesque shots made in authentic interiors[33], often against the background of historic residences (Belen 8). Apart from Jane Austen, the leading authors whose works have also been eagerly and repeatedly adapted for films, are William Shakespeare (*Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*), Edward Morgan Forster (*A Passage to India*, *A Room with a View*, *Howards End* and *Maurice*), Henry James (*The Wings of the Dove*), to name but a few. Many film adaptations of these writers' literary texts were produced by Merchant Ivory Productions in the 1980s. During the 1990s, in turn, the directors of heritage films were fascinated mainly with the nineteenth century literature—from the Regency through the entire Victorian Era. They lavished their attention mainly on the prose of Jane Austen[34], William Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and the Brontë sisters. As Eckart Voigts-Virchow claims, the film adaptations of these authors' novels refer to British history and tradition through conservative ideology and characteristic visuals, such as carefully recreated costumes and props, a multitude of portrayals of the British countryside, picturesque landscapes and rural manor estates (130). The sight of these was supposed to evoke a feeling of nostalgia and national pride in the viewers, whereas conventional camerawork, as well as a characteristic visual layer, created an impression of theatricality of the unfolding story (Voigts-Virchow 130).

"The conventional camerawork" and "characteristic visual layer", which Voigts-Virchow mentions, together with the editing create a slow and graceful rhythm in a heritage movie. Long shots and the lack of abrupt, dramatic cutting, along with fluid and slow camera movement maintain this impression of tranquillity. These techniques complement the unhurried narrative, devoid of violent scenes and illustrated with soothing soundtracks, often of classical music. Since heritage films tend to focus rather on character development, their plots unfold slowly and without significant dramatisation. The movies deal mainly with private problems and everyday life of the upper classes, whereas historical and political issues are either marginalised or shown only from a private perspective. Love threads and related adversities of inheriting land estates, which usually end with a happily-ever-after, are in the centre of attention. The action takes place in authentic places in England and the social milieu of heritage films includes members of middle and upper social classes. The unhurried narrative of the films allows the viewer to plunge into the beauty of British estates surrounded by picturesque, often rural landscapes, whose charms, along with the realistic and carefully prepared costumes, props and scenography attract the viewer's eye and (as mentioned

[33] Basildon Park in Berkshire was pictured as Netherfield Park whereas Chatsworth Palace in Derbyshire and the interior of Wilton House in Wiltshire served as Pemberley estate in Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (Pilawska 423-424).

[34] The second wave of heritage films' popularity coincided with the period of intensified interest in Jane Austen's novels, often referred to as *Austenmania* or *Jane Mania* (See, Niemczyńska's *Kino kobiet*).

before) recreate the nostalgic atmosphere of old times (Włodek 57). Of course, this nostalgia considers the world that never really existed, the world, which was created to appeal to the viewer. Consequently, the past, shown in these films, has become an idealised picture of a bygone epoch, and an admirable spectacle to watch. The adaptations of Jane Austen's novels fit perfectly into the pattern of this movie trend, as they have all of the abovementioned traits.

Since Jane Austen is considered one of the greatest English writers, it is understandable that the filmmakers of heritage movies eagerly adapt her prose. After all, Austen's works are part of British national legacy. To some extent, filming her novels might be perceived as a way of immortalising, and thus, protecting the cultural inheritance which the famous novelist left behind. However, heritage cinema makes use of Austen's fiction for its own purposes: the filmmakers beautify and romanticise the writer's stories and treat them as a means of commercialising Englishness and, therefore, they do not necessarily try to keep the stories intact and unchanged. Contrary to the British author, the filmmakers do not intend to thoroughly portray the dreadfulness of women's economic situation in Regency England. Instead, they idealise the times in which Austen's heroines live by presenting the audience with a collage of carefully selected shots of beautiful English landscapes. As Voigts-Virchow points out, the past, presented in heritage films is posed and, therefore, artificial. Nevertheless, the aesthetics of the diegetic world in these films adds profoundly to their appeal. Watching the adaptations of literary classics, such as Jane Austen, allows the viewers to travel to the past and enter the world of the rich living in elegant, dreamlike surroundings. Thus, although the movies tend to beautify the old times, the viewers react positively to the versions of the past, which these films propose (130). The film adaptations of the British writer's novels introduce this modified "Austenian" world and allow the viewers to witness her romantic stories and fantasise about beautiful, old times of romantic love. Therefore, adapting her prose for heritage films affects the authenticity of original stories and turns Austen's shrewd observations concerning a difficult situation of women into lovely, romantic fairytales with happily-ever-afters.

This romanticisation is possible owing to the whole set of adaptative operations: transaccentuation, addition, reduction, substitution, amplification, inversion and condensation—these are the seven operations defined by Marek Hendrykowski in his *Współczesna adaptacja filmowa*. The operation which determines all the other operations is transaccentuation. As Hendrykowski notices, *transaccentuation* requires that the filmmakers prioritise different elements of the adapted story than the original work—they distribute the elements of importance in the film adaptation differently than the author of the literary text (81). In this way, film adaptations depart from their literary prototypes, losing their original meanings, as transaccentuation affects the meaning of the whole movie (81). As

previously mentioned, the motives of heritage cinema creators were closely related to their intention of capitalising on Britishness, hence such a strong emphasis on shots of British lawns, mansions and landscapes in these films. Therefore, it can be concluded that transaccentuation occurs already at the level of the visual layer in heritage adaptations of Austen's prose. These movies are meant to seduce the viewers' sight. In fact, with respect to these types of movie adaptations of the writer's prose, the original narrative becomes simplified, as the issues discussed in the literary source texts are only cursorily presented in their screen adaptations' syuzhets. According to Aleksandra Niemczyńska, the social and moral aspects discussed by Austen become overshadowed on account of the filmmakers' focus on romantic themes—which, in turn, become considerably more sentimental than in the novels (162). Thus, transaccentuation which occurs within the plot of the story requires displacing the emphasis from the economic situation of women in Regency England onto the romantic theme.

This tendency of shifting the importance emphasis to the love story was particularly promoted by the BBC's TV serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995—the most popular heritage adaptation of Jane Austen's prose. Since the very beginning the movie indicates that the development of a romantic relationship between the main protagonists is the core of the presented story. The filmmakers decide against beginning their adaptation with the famous introductory line of *Pride and Prejudice*, which captures pithily the novelist's irony and introduces the readers to the social setting of the story. Instead, the film starts with an invented scene featuring Darcy and Bingley looking at Netherfield Park and discussing the latter's intention to settle there. The men head towards the mansion on horses, unaware of Elizabeth Bennet watching them from afar while picking up flowers and taking a walk on a sunny day.

1.4.1. The establishing shot of Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy heading towards Netherfield Park

1.4.2. A close-up shot of Elizabeth Bennet watching Darcy and Bingley from afar

With such a modified beginning, the film adaptation releases both the original opening of the story and the main heroine's first encounter with Mr Darcy from the context of social machinations, dictated by the rules of matrimonial market and from Austen's satirical perspective on Regency England's gentry. The close-up shot of Elizabeth Bennet watching Darcy and Bingle from afar suggests that the heroine is going to experience a romantic encounter with one of these men. The colour palette of the sky against which the woman's face is presented—consisting of purples and pinks—indicates the upcoming romance. Thus, instead of adapting Austen' shrewd observations of social and economic regulations, the TV series offers a sentimental tale of love: the opening scene introduces Elizabeth Bennet as very "girly", sensitive and innocent—which is clearly indicated by her white gown (such an outfit brings connotations of purity and innocence) and her plucking up flowers (which presents the protagonist's sensitivity for nature and beauty) while merrily bouncing up and down like a little girl. Mr Darcy, in turn, is depicted as a handsome and wealthy newcomer on a horse, a scenario which evokes connotations to fairytales about a rich prince who falls for a peasant girl and asks her to live with him in his castle.

1.4.3. A full shot of Elizabeth Bennet plucking flowers

In comparison to the novel, the film Mr Darcy appears far more often in the TV series due to supplementary scenes in which the audience may observe his actions, even though he is away from Elizabeth. This is an example of Hendrykowski's "addition," defined as an inclusion into the adapted story of an element or elements which do not appear in the source text (180). Some of the scenes featuring the BBC's Mr Darcy are not present in the literary original—for instance, Austen does not describe the moments in which the hero practises his fencing skills or dives in the lake. Since the narrative in the novel limits the audience's point of view to the main heroine's observation, Mr Darcy appears usually in the scenes with Elizabeth Bennet, except for the one scene in Netherfield Park, in which the hero and the Bingleys exchange opinions after the ball in Meryton. These actions, which the heroine cannot witness herself, are reported to her by other characters. Thus, Darcy's most charismatic deeds, such as his search for Wickham or interference in Lydia's runaway scandal, are recounted to Elizabeth but not witnessed by the woman herself. Meanwhile, the film story is told through the perspective of both Elizabeth and Mr Darcy. The filmmakers of the BBC TV series have decided to add scenes which feature Darcy meeting the Gardiners and offering his help to solve the problem with Wickham, talking to Caroline Bingley about Elizabeth Bennet (more than once), listening to his younger sister, Georgina, play the piano while thinking about Elizabeth or just contemplating. The addition of these scenes aims at romanticising Mr Darcy and presenting him as a man deeply in love and truly motivated in his actions by his deep feelings for Elizabeth Bennet.

Ang Lee, the director of *Sense and Sensibility* (an adaptation which can also be classified as heritage film), uses the same methods to romanticise Colonel Brandon, a protagonist who is originally equally as secretive about his romantic feelings as Mr Darcy. The filmmakers add scenes featuring Brandon showing his care for Marianne during situations that originally never take place—handing her a ball while playing a game, handing her a knife while working in a field together. Obviously, the addition of these scenes serves to present the man as reliable and trustworthy when needed. Such an impression is strengthened even more when the hero appears in one of the scenes accompanied by a dog, an animal commonly perceived as a symbol of loyalty (interestingly, the BBC's Darcy also has a dog). Just like the BBC' *Pride and Prejudice*, the story depicted by Lee and Thompson in the cinematic *Sense and Sensibility* alters the original's focalisation: it is not told solely from the perspective of the Dashwood women. The film sometimes switches to Colonel Brandon's perspective—it includes a scene during which the man is having a private conversation with Sir John about his unrequited feelings for Marianne Dashwood or contemplating in solitude. In order to romanticise Colonel Brandon even more, the makers add scenes of Brandon looking at the younger Dashwood sister with mild expression of sad devotion or taking solitary walks while thinking of her—

indicated by the use of cross-cutting technique. Just like the addition of the scenes featuring Mr Darcy tormented by his unrequited love for Elizabeth, the inclusion of these particular scenes aims at evoking empathy in the audience and makes the viewers root for both suffering men.

The multiplication of the scenes during which Austen's male protagonists can display their feelings and crave for the women they love inevitably leads to amplification of Darcy's affection for Lizzy and Brandon's affection for Marianne. Marek Hendrykowski explains the term "amplification" as strengthening, emphasising, accentuating certain characteristic features or desired attributes of the literary original while adapting the source text for film (181). In respect of heritage adaptations of Austen's prose, the "desired attributes" of the literary original are surely both the tranquillity that emanates from the unhurried narratives of the novels and a romantic theme of a rich gentleman's affection for a worse off woman. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the increased number of shots of magnificent estates and neatly cut British lawns on almost always sunny days, shown with conventional camerawork certainly amplifies the effect of tranquillity. Obviously, amplification may combine the elements of other operations as well, including addition, reduction or substitution, and may also lead to transaccentuation (Hendrykowski 181). Thus, the multiplication of shots of picturesque landscapes contributes to amplification of the sentimental nature imagery, which, in turn, becomes a suitable background for a romantic relationship between two attractive protagonists—thus the beauty of the main characters and the charm of the scenery add to transaccentuation of the adaptation's visual layer.

The amplification of the main heroes' and their rivals' interest in the heroines, in turn, shifts the importance directly on the core of the adapted story—the romantic plotline. Hence, the BBC's Wickham seems to be even more interested in Elizabeth than his literary counterpart and appears far more often in the TV series than in the novel. The audience may witness the growing attachment of these two characters throughout the first five episodes (out of six) until they hear about Wickham's rather sudden change of heart. Interestingly, in order to dramatise Elizabeth's love life even more, the filmmakers make Mr Darcy fall in love with the Bennet woman already in the first episode of the TV series. Originally, the heroine wins the man's affection after she walks three miles on foot to Netherfield to visit her ill sister. Afterwards, the hero's attitude towards Lizzy changes, which may be concluded from his words, complementing Elizabeth's eyes in his conversation with Caroline Bingley. The BBC's Darcy shares his thoughts with Caroline much earlier, even before the heroine goes to Netherfield to see Jane. This inversion[35] indicates that Lizzy did not have to do anything to impress Mr Darcy. Such a version feels more sentimental, because it shows that the heritage film

[35] Hendrykowski explains the term *inversion* as changing the order of the events presented on the screen, compared to the literary original (181).

Darcy falls for Elizabeth almost at first sight. This is proved by Darcy's own words: "Almost from the earliest moments of our acquaintance I have come to feel for you a passionate admiration and regard" (Langton, episode 4, 00.55.45). The intensification of romantic relationships between Elizabeth Bennet and the two men, Mr Darcy and George Wickham, leads to the accentuation of a love triangle between these characters, a trope indicated but barely visible in the literary original.

Other filmmakers of heritage adaptations of Austen's prose use a similar approach. While Frank Churchill appears originally in a few scenes in the source text, both cinematic adaptations of *Emma* from 1996 either extend these scenes or add some more. *Sense and Sensibility* from 1995, in turn, features more scenes with Colonel Brandon than the literary original and make the man fall in love with Marianne at first sight. Originally, Marianne meets Brandon at Barton Park, where she entertains the company by playing the piano. Colonel is one of her listeners. In the film, the hero enters Barton Park in the middle of Marianne's song. He slowly approaches the living room and pauses at the door, completely mesmerised by the singing heroine. The whole scene reminds one of a siren luring a sailor with a song. The viewers witness Brandon falling for the heroine the moment he sees her, and thus by the time Marianne meets Willoughby, the audience know she already has a suitor.

In order to make the choice of a life partner easier for Austen's female protagonists the makers of heritage adaptations of her prose depict both admirers of every main heroine of the story physically attractive—whereas originally, Austen depicts the rivals of the heroine's future husbands as more dashing. Hence, rejecting them might at first seem difficult. Even though all her novels have a happy ending, Austen does not allow her heroines to have everything they want. A rich, intelligent, decent man does not necessarily mean handsome. Meanwhile, in the movies the heroines do not have to give up on attractive suitors on account of less appealing but decent ones. They get both sex appeal and decency. In order to present their future husbands' physical fitness and make the viewers appreciate it, the films feature the protagonists naked in bathtubs, wearing unbuttoned shirts, wet after swimming in a pond or sweaty after a fencing duel.


1.4.4-5. A close-up shot of Mr Darcy having a bath (on the left) and a mid-shot of Darcy incompletely dressed and wearing a wet shirt after taking a bath in a lake (*Pride and Prejudice*, dir. Simon Langton, 1995).


1.4.6.-7. Single shots of Mr Darcy, wearing an unbuttoned shirt (in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice,* 2005) and Colonel Brandon, also incompletely dressed (in Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility,* 1995).


1.4.8.-9. On the left a single shot of Mr Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*, dir. Simon Langton, 1995) and on the right a single shot of Edward Ferrars (*Sense and Sensibility,* dir. John Alexander, 2008).


1.4.10.-11. On the left a full shot of Edward Ferrars and Margaret Dashwood fencing and on the right a full shot of Colonel Brandon and John Willoughby's duel

Interestingly, most of the above-attached shots come from the scenes, which never happen in the literary original. These scenes were added in the process of adapting the novels mainly for aesthetic reasons. Obviously, the purpose of these particular scenes is to emphasise Austen's heroes' fitness and their sex appeal as well as to attract the attention of both the movies' audiences and the film heroines. Since the heroes are either positioned in the central points of the frames or presented in a deep focus (or both), they are more exposed to the viewers' attention than any other element of the shots. Thus, the men's silhouettes clearly dominate the frame. Additionally, the elements of the heroes' outfits make them the lightest points of the frames. Clearly, the physical attractiveness of Austen's male protagonists is deliberately accentuated.

This "beautifying process" becomes even more noticeable because of the reduction of the heroes' most repelling traits. Hendrykowski defines *reduction* as the omission or limitation from film adaptation of an element that originally appears in the source text (179). Even though the vices of Austen's male protagonists are not completely eliminated, the heritage adaptations radically soften them. Hence, the audience quickly forgive Edward Ferrars his irresponsible behaviour towards Elinor Dashwood, since the filmmakers add a scene in which he tries to tell the heroine the truth about his former engagement (such a scene originally never takes place). Colonel Brandon does not appear "past romance" anymore (Austen, *Sense* 78) when given so many scenes in Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* featuring the man too lovesick over Marianne to keep himself at a distance. The BBC's Darcy's haughtiness is less unlovable than Austen's literary protagonist's, especially when confronted with the gentle side of his nature—shown in the scenes featuring the man looking at Elizabeth with a completely besotted facial expression. In Joe Wright's adaptation, Darcy seems far less arrogant than in the novel or in the BBC TV series. Actually, his greatest vice appears to be social awkwardness, mistaken for pride. Wright's Darcy is depicted as a young man who struggles with the

responsibilities of adulthood and is still maturing emotionally (Stewart-Beer). Mr Knightley's patronising attitude towards Emma Woodhouse, in turn, is softened in all of the adaptations of *Emma*. Originally, the heroine's faulty judgement results from her young age, lack of experience and sheltered life. Austen depicts George Knightley as wiser and more sensitive towards other characters of the story, as a result of being older and thus being more aware of the hardships those less privileged than him or Emma have to face. Meanwhile, both films from 1996 as well as the TV series from 2008 and the last cinematic adaptation from 2020 depict Emma and George as two old friends, who keep bickering and bantering with each other, rather than as an experienced adult scolding a naïve, privileged girl. Such an image is especially well visible in McGrath's film: in the scene in which the two characters are together while shooting with bows. Emma, played by Gwyneth Paltrow, resembles a vicious Cupid with a bow—she almost shoots one of Knightley's dogs—in one of the scenes that never take place in the literary source text. The hero remains stoically calm, smiles and asks Emma to try not to kill his pet. O'Hanlon, in turn, indicates in the first episode of his TV series that the two characters basically grew up together, which means that neither of them is more life-experienced than the other. Obviously, in both cases the protagonists' familiarity runs deeper than in the novel.

As befits sentimental love stories, heritage adaptations of Austen's prose often end with wedding scenes. Of course, the literary originals end with the main heroines getting married as well, but the writer does not focus on describing the wedding scenes. In fact, she barely describes her heroines' weddings at all. For example, she summarises the weddings of the two Bennet girls with just one sentence, and a half of the sentence is used to provide information about Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars' wedding. Instead, Austen focuses far more on the epilogues of her stories—much more attention is paid to the inevitable changes that come after her heroines accept marriage proposals. Yet, none of these consequences are mentioned in the movies. The heritage adaptations adapt only parts of the original endings, providing the audience only with its positive aspects—Austen's heroines' marital happiness which results from marrying for love. The fact that Mr Darcy takes the responsibility to provide financially for Lydia and Wickham or that Mr Bennet remains miserable at Longbourn after his beloved daughter, Lizzy, moves out, are completely left out from BBC's version of *Pride and Prejudice.* The unwillingness of Mrs Ferrars first to give her blessing and accept her son, Edward, marrying Elinor Dashwood and then to treat his wife with as much of affection and care as she eventually starts to treat Lucy Steele is never indicated in the movies—in Ang Lee's film Mrs Ferrars does not appear at all. The reduction of these threads was probably motivated by the fact that including these revelations would surely cast a shadow on happy endings of "fairy-tale" love stories.

A thorough analysis of heritage adaptations of Austen's prose shows that the love stories between the main heroines and their husbands-to-be have been clearly accentuated through the use of such adaptative operations as the amplification of the main male characters' and their rivals' interest in the main heroines, inversion of the events that take place within the narrative and which influence the development of the characters' romantic feelings, addition of scenes that originally never happened in the novel, reduction of these plotlines which draw the viewers' attention out of the romantic thread, and transaccentuation of the visual layer of the movie, including nature imagery or the main male character's physicality.

In order to complete this sentimental vision of romance these heritage costume adaptations build an idyllic tone through the multiplication of shots of picturesque British landscapes on sunny days. In fact, as Serena Eggers points out[36], heritage adaptations of Austen's prose tend to amplify the beauty of nature and practically "develop nature imagery into a symbolic sub-narrative that accompanies and translates the progression of [the protagonists'] relationship and that even comes to motivate that progression". The nature imagery becomes not only a background for a love story but is used to highlight certain hallmarks of the characters' personalities and distinguish them both visually and symbolically from other protagonists of the heritage adaptation (Eggers). Thus, the clothing of Elizabeth Bennet emphasises the heroine's deep affinity for nature through floral patterns or warm earth tones, like greens or browns in the BBC's TV series, and simple dresses in dark browns in Joe Wright's cinematic adaptations.

In the TV serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*, such colour scheme is most noticeable in scenes featuring Elizabeth accompanied by her younger sisters and other members of her family. Upon their arrival at the Netherfield ball Lizzy appears in a green coat with flowers in her hair, whereas her older sister Jane and Mrs Bennet are clad in pink dresses. Even greater discrepancy in clothes' colouring is visible when the youngest Bennet girls accompany Elizabeth on her trip to Meryton, right before their first encounter with George Wickham. Kitty and Lydia are wearing crimson red coats and white bonnets—outfits which closely resemble those worn by handmaids in the serialisation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. The provocative colour of the girls' costumes clearly suggests the girls' need to be in the centre of attention and their tendency to flirtation (since red is often associated with love or romance).

[36] See, Serena Eggers' article "The BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*: Falling in Love Through Nature", available online in *Exposé Magazine.*

1.4.12. The shot of the Bennet girls visiting Meryton right before they meet Wickham

Such colouring builds even greater contrast with their older sister's clothing—once again Elizabeth is clad in earth tones. Reds and pinks are a complete visual opposite of greens and browns, and, thus, they make Elizabeth's affinity for earth tones more noticeable. Symbolically, these colours highlight the emotional distance between Lizzy and the rest of the Bennet women, all of whom choose to wear colours far more divorced from natural tones.

In Joe Wright's cinematic adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, the main heroine's affinity for nature is equally accentuated by Elizabeth's characterisation. The director often shows the main character wearing loose dresses, dark coats or with less neatly arranged hair. In this way, he pictures Elizabeth as much more carefree, less focused on her appearance, with natural rather than studied looks, and, therefore, distinguishing from all other young women, who are persistently trying to find a potential candidate for a husband. The dominant colour in Elizabeth's outfit is obviously brown. Lizzy's dark outfits, dresses and coats in a shade of dark brown, along with her dark brown hair and hazel eyes, build a contrast between the main heroine and other characters, including her sisters, but at the same time fit her into the rural landscapes presented in the diegetic world and stress the connection between her and nature—especially since the colour palette that dominates throughout the film corresponds with the colour scheme of Elizabeth's looks; it consists mainly of greens, browns and beiges, the colours of earth and nature. Elizabeth's natural image seems to correspond with her "wild" temper. The heroine's untamed behaviour and unwillingness to succumb to social pressure make her more challenging, but also more attractive to Darcy. Just like in the original, the man takes more interest in the woman the moment he sees her in a muddy dress and with dishevelled hair.

In his cinematic adaptation, Joe Wright manipulates colours in order to suggest who is going to be paired with whom. It is impossible not to notice that Bingley usually appears in light clothes that correspond with his fair complexion and red hair. Visually, he is a perfect match for Jane Bennet—the blonde also only appears in bright outfits.

1.4.13. A medium shot of Charles Bingley and Jane Bennet in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*

Darcy, on the other hand, is mostly dressed in dark costumes (a dark coat or waistcoat), which, combined with dark-brown hair and brown eyes, only emphasises the mysterious aura around him. As a result, Darcy appears as a slightly dark and inaccessible character, but, at the same time, visually matching Joe Wright's Lizzy Bennet.

1.4.14. A shot of Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*

Meanwhile, the makers of the BBC's TV series start their sub-narrative hidden in nature imagery with disassociating Mr Darcy from Elizabeth Bennet and depict the man as the woman's complete opposite. While Lizzy appears in light-coloured dresses (never in dark) throughout most of the series, Darcy keeps wearing costumes dark in tone throughout its first part. Dark colouring positions the protagonist in direct visual opposition to the main heroine. The disparity between the

two of them is clearly noticeable in the scene of Darcy's first proposal, in which Elizabeth is clad in a white gown whereas Mr Darcy is dressed in a dark suit.


1.4.15.-1.4.16. Single shots of Elizabeth Bennet rejecting Mr Darcy's first marriage proposal

Black and white colouring provides the most typical and obvious visual contrast of two opposites, like yin and yang. This very scene of the unfortunate first proposal emphasises the disparity between the two characters both through the visual opposition and the frame composition, also highlighting the importance of Darcy's black and Elizabeth's white colour scheme in the context of the film's nature imagery. While the shots of Elizabeth place her in front of the window (which lets the light into the room and allows the audience to see the green trees and lawn outside the Collins' cottage), Mr Darcy is positioned in front of the shaded wall of the drawing room. As the man prowls around, the camera captures all the fripperies of a cultivated house that are accommodated there. He stands in the shadow with all the opulent china plates and framed pictures, whereas Elizabeth sits in the most lighted place in the room. Such a frame composition in the context of Darcy's speech only proves that the hero is trapped in his social circle and the adopted social conventions. Elizabeth does not feel fully committed to them, however, and tries to act "naturally", in accordance with her conscience and beliefs. Thus, even though black and white refer symbolically to the wedding couple and even though Darcy proclaims his love for Elizabeth, the characters cannot unite at this moment, because the man himself states how much the two of them differ from each other and refuses to consider Elizabeth as his equal. Therefore, the scene provides a double-layered symbolism, mixing the romantic with the combative—an accurate description of the initial phase of the lovers' relationship—and the domestic with the wild.

At the time of his first declaration, Darcy is still a prisoner of social conventions. In film adaptations he confirms it not only with his words, with which he basically insults and humiliates Elizabeth and her family, but also with his clothes. Elizabeth's constructive criticism of his behaviour and her final rejection of his proposal make him realise how far from perfect he is. The scene of his

first proposal is crucial to his transformation and the development of his character. In the series, the colour scheme of the man's clothes changes into lighter in tone after the hero is rejected. In Wright's cinematic adaptation, in turn, the protagonist's impeccable, elegant outfits become less formal (also after Lizzy rejects him). For the first half of the movie the man's shirt and outerwear fit perfectly and are buttoned up, making Darcy look as if he was literally taken out of a portrait. In the following scenes, the viewers see Darcy under-dressed: with an unbuttoned coat or tailcoat. In both adaptations, the change of appearance is accompanied by a change in the man's behaviour, as both the BBC's Darcy and the cinematic Darcy slowly open up to others, become more talkative, less proud, and stop avoiding conversations with the newly-met acquaintances. During Elizabeth's visit in Pemberley, Darcy acts differently than before. He tries very hard to make a good impression on both Elizabeth and the Gardiners. The man is nice and talkative, he smiles, jokes and invites the visitors to spend time together. The culmination of the hero's transformation is pictured in the scene of his second proposal, in which he appears in an even more unbuttoned shirt and an overcoat; he walks towards Elizabeth at sunrise, and this time he only talks about the most delightful features of hers. In this scene, the unbuttoned shirt emphasises the protagonist's vulnerability and his openness to Elizabeth. Darcy ceases to fit into the dignified Netherfield Park and, together with Elizabeth, becomes a part of natural landscape. He frees himself from family ties and social conventions and begins to live in harmony with himself and with (his) nature, just like Elizabeth.

The sub-narrative incorporated into the nature imagery becomes more noticeable owing to the theme of journey, which appears quite frequently in heritage cinema, as it helps the filmmakers to build the atmosphere of melancholy and nostalgia both in the audience and the diegetic world. The theme of journey is used to indicate the heroines' emotional development and their embracing the emotional turmoil they experience. From the film characters' perspective, their journey is individual and very private—the protagonists indulge in their thoughts and memories. Therefore, they travel both physically and spiritually. The protagonists embark on a journey to their own past, which adds profoundly to the melancholic tone of the journey scenes. As a result of such excursions, the characters experience a kind of self-awareness. This type of journey is featured in nearly every Austen's novel and its adaptation. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne Dashwood travels to London to meet her beloved and learns the truth about the nature of their relationship. The journey is a harbinger of changes that are soon going to happen. In *Emma*, the local picnic trip, which ends with an unpleasant incident, makes the eponymous protagonist see the truth about her own faulty character and not so impeccable manners, which initiates the heroine's self-development. In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny travels to her parents' house to escape from the sight of Edmund Bertram and Maria Crawford together. Soon she realises that her engagement to Henry Crawford is a major mistake, as neither she

nor he is likely to lead a happy life in a marriage without affection. In *Persuasion,* Anne Eliot becomes more decisive and less prone to persuasion only after she moves to Bath, goes to Lyme, visits her sister and meets Captain Wentworth (basically the heroine is on a journey throughout the whole story). In *Pride and Prejudice*, as Alistair Duckworth points out, Elizabeth gets to know the true nature of Mr Darcy while traveling with her aunt and uncle and visiting Pemberley ("Social", 42-51).

A melancholic journey and self-indulgence in the characters' thoughts, even though these are two separate motifs, combine in heritage films and function as a means of discovering the truth about the protagonists' nature, their hidden fantasies and longings, or their blocked feelings. It is thoroughly illustrated in Joe Wright's cinematic adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, when Elizabeth and the Gardiners visit Darcy's estate. The delicate soundtrack accompanying this scene additionally strengthens the impression of melancholy felt by both the protagonist and the viewer. The scene takes on a deeper meaning as Elizabeth examines Darcy's bust. The sight of the man's image and the beautiful surroundings makes her realise what she could have if she had accepted his marriage proposal. It is this awareness that is the source of the heroine's melancholy. Darcy literally becomes the object of her sighs. While standing in front of his image, she scrutinises it with slightly parted lips, which adds some eroticism and intimacy to it. The scene clearly indicates Elizabeth's maturing sexuality—throughout the movie it is the third time the woman is looking at Darcy (here, at the image of him) with slightly parted lips in an intimate situation; she does it when Darcy helps her get into the carriage, holding her hand for a moment, and she does it again when she argues with him before she rejects his proposal.

1.4.17. A single shot of Elizabeth admiring Darcy's bust.

The increased number of scenes featuring male characters, observed by the main heroines, initiates a tendency to fetishise Austen's heroes. The films depict these men as the objects of female gaze. Through the addition of such scenes the movies refer to Laura Mulvey's famous theory about

the man as the "ruler of the gaze" and the woman as an erotic object[37], it is noticeable how often the relations of gaze are reversed in heritage films[38], as it is the man who becomes the object of viewing and contemplation (Monk 34). The main protagonists of all Austen's works are women, the plots of these novels focus on the situation of women in 19th century and the audience of the film adaptations of these literary originals are mainly women as well. Since female viewers constitute the target audience, their needs are met first. Therefore, in *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, it is Elizabeth who is watching Darcy, not only in the scene mentioned above, but also when she sees him for the first time in Meryton or when she is secretly looking at him and Georgina behind a door ajar. In Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility,* Marianne is trying to draw Willoughby's portrait and Elinor is watching Edward Ferrars playing with her youngest sister, Margaret. In Lawrence's *Emma,* the eponymous heroine is staring at Frank Churchill's portrait, daydreaming about their first encounter. This reversal of the technique theorised by Mulvey is especially apparent in the BBC's serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*. The very first episode of this TV series includes a scene which presents naked Darcy in a bathtub. Furthermore, the most iconic scene from the movie, which, as Sarah Cardwell claims, gave rise to Darcy Mania features Mr Darcy diving into a pond (243) mainly to over-aesthetise the diegetic world and openly sexualises the main male protagonist. Wet, underdressed Darcy becomes not only a sexual object, an object of sighs of the main character and the female viewers, but also a part of the depicted nature and picturesque landscape, so typical of heritage cinema.

The sentimental idea of unity between a human and nature has become an element of the convention characteristic of heritage cinema, especially of costume adaptations of Austen's novels. The filmmakers adopted it from Austen's prose in order to strengthen the feeling of nostalgia for the old, more peaceful times. In the writer's very first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (and its costume film adaptations), Marianne Dashwood's heartbreak and despair over Willoughby's rejection is illustrated with a rainstorm, which leaves the heroine dripping wet and in poor health condition. The unity between man and nature's manifestations functions as a means of presenting the depth of the feelings tormenting the protagonists. However, its use may also illustrate the characters' personalities, as it is in the case of Marianne Dashwood, Colonel Brandon and John Willoughby. The conversation between Marianne and Brandon about their attitude towards nature reveals different

[37] It is a theory proposed by Laura Mulvey in her *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975), according to which women have no control over shaping the meaning of a scene, as they are "the bearer of meaning and not the maker of meaning" (834). Their role is to attract attention, as they appear in the scene solely to be looked at. According to Mulvey's theory, cinema objectifies women, as it generally implies that male viewers constitute the target audience, and, therefore, their needs are met first. The feminist critic presumes that this problem stems from the expectations of an old-fashioned, male-driven community (834).

[38] Not only in the case of film adaptations of Austen's prose, but in others as well. In *A Room with a View*, for instance, Lucy is watching not only the kissing Italian couple, but also naked men bathing in a forest pool.

personalities of these two. The heroine feels a deep connection with nature and its unpredictability, which shows Marianne's romantic character. The fact that Colonel Brandon prefers nature to be tamed by the will of a man builds a distance between these two, at least in the eyes of Marianne. The characters seem to be incompatible at first (even more when taking into account their age difference), and the reader expects the heroine to marry Willoughby, rather than Colonel Brandon. Austen indicates that the actual antagonist of the story is the main heroine's soulmate and prime love interest. Like Marianne, Willoughby feels connected to nature. Hence, he appreciates poetry and understands the girl better than most. Unfortunately, he is as unpredictable and untamed as nature can be and, therefore, may destroy everything that surrounds him with equal force. The picture which Austen delivers might be confusing, as it is in the case of Colonel Brandon. The writer deceitfully pictures him as indifferent to untamed beauty of nature in order to hide his romantic character and purposely mislead the reader.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the author of the novel uses the idea of unity between nature and a human being once again and clearly establishes Elizabeth's ability to connect with nature as a distinguishing feature of her personality. As Mr Darcy notices, Lizzy has a "love of solitary walks" (Austen, *Pride* 178), which actually becomes the protagonist's typical modus operandi in times of great distress. Whenever the heroine tries to avoid or escape from an uncomfortable, unpleasant situation, she seeks comfort in her strolls, which is indicated in such scenes as the one that takes place at Rosings—in order to avoid meeting Lady Catherine, Elizabeth goes for a walk. And after the woman finds out the truth about Darcy's part in separating Bingley from Jane, the Bennet woman "indulges herself in the pleasures of negative recollections" while walking around (Austen, *Pride* 138). The makers of heritage adaptations of Austen's prose clearly accentuate the heroine's fondness of strolls. Both the BBC series and Joe Wright's film actually start with a scene featuring Lizzy taking a walk: in the series the woman is walking around the grounds and plucking up flowers. It is in that moment when she spots Darcy and Bingley for the first time. The opening scene of Wright's movie, in turn, introduces Elizabeth reading a book while taking a walk outside.

In both adaptations, the scenes in which the protagonist indulges in contemplation usually take place outdoors. In BBC's TV series such moments happen when Lizzy finds out that Darcy took part in separating Bingley from Jane and when she reads and thinks about Darcy's letter. In Wright's cinematic adaptation such moments are presented, for example, in a scene on a cliff or in a scene with a swing, in which Elizabeth digests Charlotte's information about her engagement to Mr Collins. In this feature-length adaptation the most emotional scenes showing anger, despair, discomfort, sadness or worry of the protagonist happen outside as well. During these scenes Elizabeth runs outside and away from people as if she was suffocating among others. When Mr Collins proposes to her, the

heroine rushes out of the house almost immediately. She runs so fast that her mother finds it difficult to catch up with her, and stops only at the pond, surrounded not by her sisters, but geese (also brown, like her attire). A similar reaction comes when Lizzy hears the news of Darcy's interference in the separation of her sister and Charles Bingley. She learns about it in the church and runs out of it, regardless of the rain.

Darcy's first proposal in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* is probably the most emotionally charged scene in the movie. This emotional tension results from the fact that the director uses the concept of the unity of man with nature to present the feelings of the characters through the upcoming changes in it (Pilawska 422). The scene begins with a shot of Elizabeth running in the rain after she learns about Darcy's involvement in separating Mr Bingley from Jane and, thereby, ruining their chance for marriage. The streams of rain are the elements of the scenery associated with building a romantic tone, especially in melodramas, which often include a scene of lovers' reconciliation or their tearful farewell with a kiss in the rain. In this scene, the rain and the neoclassical amphitheatre situated among the greenery definitely highlight the romantic tone of the scenery. However, the viewer already senses the failure of Darcy's proposal, even before Elizabeth answers him. Just like in the case of Marianne Dashwood, the downpour personifies the inner despair of the main character, and the accompanying thunder help the viewer feel the heroine's outrage, which escalates so much that at the end of the scene Elizabeth almost yells at Darcy.

1.4.18. A close-up shot of enraged Elizabeth Bennet in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*

Her facial expressions—wide open eyes and bare, clenched teeth—reveal how furious the protagonist really is. Darcy's unfortunate confession triggers a lively, resentful exchange of views and opinions about one another.

Despite the heroes' reciprocal fury and Elizabeth's declared contempt for Darcy, the language of the characters' bodies clearly suggests the passion and desire they have for each other. The scene ends with Darcy's and Elizabeth's faces getting closer, which reveals the probability of an upcoming

kiss. The camerawork suggests that the heroes are looking at each other's lips. Soon the characters assume a position ready for a kiss, which adds eroticism to the scene—Darcy leans in and Elizabeth lifts her head, tilting it slightly back; both of them have their lips slightly parted.

1. 4.19.-1.4.20. Close-up shots of Elizabeth's and Fitzwilliam's faces reveal sexual tension between the characters.

The scene of Darcy's first marriage proposal in *Pride and Prejudice* from 2005 is much more dramatic than in former adaptations. Of all the film Elizabeths, the one from Joe Wright's film is the most agitated character, as she is responsible for a nervous atmosphere and dynamism in this scene. The director exposed her angry reaction even more by capturing the approaching storm in the scenery. The downpour corresponds with her despair and becomes Elizabeth's companion in her suffering.

The amplification of scenes featuring Elizabeth's narrow escapes into the wild aims at emphasising her close connection with nature. In order to make Darcy a match for her, the makers of both BBC TV series and the cinematic adaptation depict the hero's emotional development as deeply incorporated in nature imagery as well. In this way, Darcy's own affinity for nature appears clear to the audience even if it is repressed at the beginning of the story. The man's emotional change is indicated by his contact with water, as is clearly indicated in the scene with the amphitheatre. The heavy rain, which develops into a rainstorm with thunder, becomes a metaphor also for Darcy's changing emotions, not just Elizabeth's. At first the man appears just helpless and miserably asks

Elizabeth to end "his agony" and to agree to marry him, but the moment Lizzy asks him about his past with Mr Wickham, his tone of voice changes and thunders can be heard—a clear indication of the man's anger building up. Of course, the motif of water symbolically represents rebirth. Hence, Elizabeth's conversation with Darcy in the rain becomes a turning point for his personal development. Only after he is dripping wet and soaked to the bone, does the hero start to change.

In the BBC's serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice* Darcy's "rebirth" takes place the very moment he takes a bath in a pond. Afterwards the change in the man's behaviour and looks become quite noticeable. Darcy starts to act differently towards Elizabeth and her family: he smiles, jokes, and invites them to Pemberley. The makers of the series try to indicate Darcy's connection with water since the very first episode, which features naked Darcy taking a bathtub in Netherfield Park. Interestingly, the shots of Darcy entwine with the shots of Elizabeth playing with Darcy's dog in the garden. Such a juxtaposition simultaneously visualises similarities and differences between the two protagonists. Elizabeth's association with earth, and Darcy's with water provide symbolic explanation for their falling in love. Of course, it is impossible for the two of them to unite at that moment. Darcy watches Lizzy through the window after he gets out of the bathtub—in this scene both the window and the bathtub symbolise obstacles between the future spouses, as they block Darcy's freedom and keep him inside away from Elizabeth in his unnatural environment—the mansion.

The idea of unity between a human and nature is one of Austen's most eagerly followed conventions—at least by heritage adaptations of her novels. These costume movies use this technique both as a tool for building characters and for building an idealised image of life in imperial England. The late heritage adaptations go a step further than their earlier versions, however. Of course, the shots featuring the characters against the background of English landscapes are still intended to seduce the viewer's eyes, whereas the symbolism of nature (tonal palette and plant patterns) still marks the characters' connection with nature and says a lot about their temperaments. Apart from that, the filmmakers of late heritage adaptations of Austen's prose have found inspiration in how the novelist relates to her protagonists' emotions through the descriptions of weather conditions (which is perfectly demonstrated by the scene of Darcy's first proposal in Joe Wright's film). Starting with the 1999's *Mansfield Park* and 2005's *Pride and Prejudice*, the close adaptations amplify the scenes which visualise the main characters' feelings through changing weather phenomena. This amplification, in turn, leads to transaccentuation—because although the visual layer of the film still plays a humongous role in the late heritage adaptations, what comes to the fore in these movies is the protagonists' emotionality.

1.5. Austen's Prose & Its Late Heritage Adaptations

The change in aesthetics of close adaptations of Austen's prose resulted from the fact that at some point heritage movies became predictable and lacked innovative solutions. As Patrycja Włodek claims, the insistent fetishisation of the past and making a spectacle out of it solely for consumptive reasons brought a repetitiveness of themes and adaptation strategies (78). Therefore, at the end of the 1990s some of the filmmakers began to undermine the adopted standards and started searching for newer and more innovative techniques. As Andrew Higson points out, typical heritage movies show "preference for long takes and deep focus", as well as "for long and medium shots" and static pictorialism (*Re-presenting* 117). Clearly, long takes and wide shots allowed the early heritage movies to present the highly detailed costuming and to emphasise production design. The use of these editing techniques set the calm tone in the film. Thus, while the early costume adaptations maintain light and carefree mood of tranquillity basically throughout the whole movie, the late heritage adaptations may start with it, but at some point, they begin to provide the audience with unsettling images of rugged landscapes and unkempt, incompletely dressed or covered in mud characters.

Perhaps the viewers got tired of watching neatly cut lawns and characters with equally impeccable looks. The meticulously stylised appearance of both the film protagonists and diegetic landscapes give the impression of artificiality–such a vision only deepens the impression of the characters' unnatural restraint and their clinging to the adopted etiquette, which does not allow for emotional outbursts. Meanwhile, the aesthetics of the late heritage movies romanticise the main protagonists and present them as too emotional and agitated to pay close attention to their outfits or feel comfortable in elegant houses. To calm their nerves the protagonists of late heritage adaptations seek shelter "in the wild", away from society and interiors of luxurious mansions. Instead, they are portrayed on the cliffs, at the beaches, in the caves, forests or old temples surrounded by greenery. Such shots suggest the characters' need for an escape from overwhelming social decorum and their internal conflict between natural instincts and social etiquette.

Similarly to their earlier versions, the late heritage adaptations continue to accentuate the romantic plotline. But while in the early heritage movies the transaccentuation of the main plotline is conducted by the amplification of main male characters' and their rivals' interest in the main heroines and the addition of scenes featuring the male characters taking care of the women they love, the late heritage adaptations focus more on the amplification of the heroines' emotional reactions. The protagonists of these movies are far less self-restrained than their predecessors—they cry hysterically in bathtubs, yell in downpours and laugh out loud instead of just giggling. The addition of such deadpan moments as the 2005 Elizabeth Bennet standing on a cliff, the 2008 Elinor Dashwood

confronting her emotions in solitude while in the cave or the 2022 Anne Eliot standing on the seashore and watching the waves put the importance emphasis on the female characters' emotional journey they need to embark on before they (re)unite with their husbands-to-be.

In order to capture the characters' emotionality, the filmmakers of late heritage adaptations need to modify the solutions which until this point were commonly used. Thus, long takes and wide shots are dominated by close-ups which deliberately direct the viewers' attention to the characters' facial expressions. And while in heritage films from the 1980s and 1990s "camera movement is dictated less by a desire to follow the movement of characters than by a desire to offer the spectator a more aesthetic angle on the period setting and the objects that fill it" (Higson, *Re-presenting* 117), the late adaptations of Austen's prose begin to diversify the camera movement. Thus, even though the highly detailed costuming and production design are still important after 1999, they just appear to be less accentuated because, contrary to the makers of early heritage costume adaptations, the 21st century adaptations do not "favour a static pictorialism rather than making the fullest use of the moving image" (Higson, "British Heritage-Film" 178).

This rejection of "static pictorialism" is clearly presented in the scene featuring Elizabeth visiting Pemberley in Wright's movie. The camera is particularly mobile in that scene. As the scene begins, the camera on a crane is shooting from directly overhead. The bird's-eye view shots show Elizabeth Bennet and the Gardiners entering Darcy's mansion. The subsequent shots of Lizzy wandering around the hall and studying the interiors of Pemberley mansion are made with the use of a steadicam or a dolly. A series of horizontal and vertical arch shots are made while Elizabeth is admiring statues—Darcy's portrait gallery alters into a gallery of statues. The use of arch shots in this scene centralises the audience's attention on Lizzy's reaction to what she sees. The camera starts to circumvent Elizabeth the moment she comes across the sculpture presenting Darcy's bust. Its rotating movement and deep focus on the woman's face accentuate the significance of the momentum—the horizontal arch shots of Elizabeth admiring Darcy's bust keep the focus on the heroine's emerging romantic feelings for the man—and, at the same time, distance the audience from Pemberley's ornately decorated interiors. The shooting of this scene clearly rejects the static pictorialism of heritage cinema. As mentioned at the beginning of this sub-chapter, the filmmakers of heritage movies opt for conventional camerawork—which does not include diversified camera movements. Jessica Durgan suggests that such inclinations may result from the assumption that the excessively mobile camerawork would distance the audience from period setting and draw too much of their attention to modern technology solutions.

Rotating camera movements and the break with static pictorialism are not the only innovative solutions used by the filmmakers after 1999. The 21st century adaptations of Austen's prose begin to

call attention to the camera technology in key dramatic scenes in order to prioritise the storyline over heritage spectacle: not only do they start to reject the static pictorialism, but they decide to introduce still frames, use red hue and high contrast ratio as well as break the fourth wall—all to engage the viewers in the diegetic world of Austen's heroines as much as they can.

These solutions are largely promoted by Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park.* The filmmaking of this particular movie brings something fresh into heritage cinema conventions. In fact, it is this film that introduced the use of still frames, high contrast ratio and breaking the fourth wall to the movie adaptations of Austen's prose. The subsequent filmmakers implement them very eagerly in their own works. With respect to the editing techniques, the influence of *Mansfield Park* is particularly seen in the last two adaptations of Austen's prose, Autumn de Wilde's *Emma* and Netflix *Persuasions*. The two films borrow the idea of calling the viewers' attention by breaking the fourth wall—the cinematic technique which aims at pulling the viewer into the story by directly addressing them.

1.5.1-1.5.2. Medium shots of Fanny Price breaking the fourth wall in Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park*

"The fourth wall" is considered an imaginary wall that separates the ongoing story from the audience. Thus, whenever the film characters acknowledge the viewers' presence (look directly at the camera

and talk to the audience), the fourth wall is broken. While this technique is used once or twice in Rozema's *Mansfield Park* and de Wilde's *Emma*, Netflix' *Persuasions* amplifies the use of this technique. In fact, the movie breaks the fourth wall all the time—it is the film's dominant convention. Anne Eliot continuously addresses the viewers or gives them knowing looks and because of that the audience have an impression they are the characters of the diegetic story as well. The use of breaking the fourth wall not only plays with the conventions of heritage films made before 1999, but it also diminishes the authenticity of the story in favour of the film characters' self-awareness.

1.5.3. A medium shot of Anne Eliot breaking the fourth wall in *Persuasions*

Some of the alterations proposed by the directors have made a great influence on the tone of the subsequent movies based on Austen's prose. While the film adaptations from the 1990s were called "E-Z Austen" or a harlequinization of Austen (Higson, *Waving the Flag* 36), those released after 1999, directed by Rozema, Wright, Alexander and O'Hanlon, undermine the former aesthetics and move towards a more realistic, gloomier in tone adaptations, making the conveyed stories less naïve.

Rozema's *Mansfield Park* is a notable film adaptation of Austen's prose, as it is the first to undermine the heritage cinema conventions. On the one hand, it shows picturesque scenery and the impressive Mansfield Park. On the other hand, it brings out the ugliness of those times, hidden somewhere between the lines of Austen's novel and, so far, only subtly resonating from it. The director contrasts the grandeur of Mansfield Park with poor living conditions of Fanny's parents, adding scenes featuring scratched walls, dirty dishes and bugs on their kitchen table. Of course, Mansfield Park, while magnificent in appearance, does not hide an equally beautiful interior. Although all Austen's novels address the issues of (im)morality and bygone mores as well as principles of decorum, *Mansfield Park* does not present them in an equally ironic or humorous manner. In fact, Rozema amplifies the serious tone which Jane Austen sets in her novel. The director

literally pulls the main character out of her comfort zone, forcing her to grow up and brutally introduces the heroine to the world she does not know and she is not even aware of.

While the literary original only echoes the postcolonial thread (the reader can guess how Mr Bertram got his fortune, which is apparently maintained by the slave labour of the colonised), Rozema amplifies the theme of colonialism and refers to it more vividly through the addition of a scene in which Fanny accidently finds Tom Bertram's dreadful drawings—they illustrate brutal scenes of mutilation and group rapes performed on the colonised. The frightened heroine is caught by Tom and Edmund's father, Mr Bertram. The hero explains the meaning of these drawings with a comment, "My son is mad" (Rozema 00.59.14.). Then he gets furious and tells Fanny to go to her room. Mr Bertram obviously suggests that the illustrations are just figments of Tom's sick imagination. Before Fanny finds his works, she takes care of Tom, washes his face and applies a cold compress to his forehead. It is evident how ill he is. Yet Mr Bertram's words cannot mislead the viewers, as the whole scene suggests that what Tom has learnt or witnessed makes him feel even more sick than he already is. Fanny returns to her room, but she cannot find peace. A groan breaks her out of reflecting on what she has just seen. Probably assuming that Tom requires help, she walks up the stairs to check what is going on and enters the room with Henry and Maria, catching the pair in the act. The discovery of Tom's drawings, illustrating sexual abuse, along with the sight of a naked couple having adulterous intercourse constitute Fanny's first encounter with sex. The fact that both incidents happen at night has a symbolic meaning, as it may indicate getting to know the darker, gloomier side of human life. Rozema shows the lack of normal interpersonal relationships in Fanny Price's life in a rather brutal manner. Both the protagonist and the viewer become aware of this revelation when the heroine discovers that her married cousin has an affair with Fanny's former fiancé and that her uncle's estate is maintained through the work of mutilated and raped inhabitants of the colonies. The scene featuring Fanny Price horrified by illustrations of abused and enslaved residents of colonised regions clearly departs from what the early heritage movies tended to say about imperial splendours.

The addition of a bold scene of adulterous sex between Henry Crawford and Maria Rushworth is another flagrant undermining of heritage films' conventions. The scene is quite perverse, as the lovers are caught in the act by Fanny Price, whose affections Henry had tried to win and who he had proposed to before. For a long moment, the heroine just stands and looks at the couple as if unable to move. By cutting from shots of the looking heroine to shots of the surprised couple, Rozema dramatises Fanny's thoughts. Henry remains in the same position while looking at Fanny, which makes the scene even more dreadful. The camera suggests that the hero is looking Fanny in the eye, even though it is not her who he is having sex with at the time. In no earlier (or later) version of *Mansfield Park* is the Fanny-Henry-Maria love triangle shown so emphatically.

Originally, Austen's novels do not include kissing scenes or sex—these themes are only signalled in the characters' conversations, when they report to each other the news of what happened. Accordingly, older adaptations from before 1999 do not abound with intimacy scenes—they only end with the lovers' kiss or their wedding (or both). Yet, the adaptations made after 1999 are not quite as puritan anymore. John Alexander's 2008 *Sense and Sensibility* starts very boldly—with a sex scene.

1.5.4. A shot from the opening scene of John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility*

The opening scene of 2008 serialisation of *Sense and Sensibility* featuring Willoughby seducing Eliza Williams drips with eroticism. Willoughby's hands move between shadow and light as the camera pulls in uncomfortably close. The red glow and penumbra make the scene sensuous, but also sinful and ominous, especially when the man tells Eliza to trust him after she asks if he really loves her (Alexander 00.25-00.30). In that moment Willoughby brings connotations of a devil that leads the innocent to temptation, persuades her to commit a sin, and in the end brings her downfall. The impression is deepened due to the red hue and the fire in the background which remind the audience of hell. With the red glow, lights off, the shots of a kissing couple, their bare shoulders and hands caressing flesh, fragments of their naked skin and the shots of the fire (probably in the fireplace), the scene suggests from the very beginning that this adaptation will break with the naive way of interpreting the novel. Instead, the filmmakers decide to present it in "the version for adults" and tackle the topic inappropriate for a fairy-tale-like story[39].

Although heritage films focus mainly on the development of the characters, in film adaptations of Austen's prose made until 1999 this development focuses mainly on the heroines' judgement or behaviour, and not necessarily on their sexual development. The older adaptations show

[39] It does not concern other heritage films, as the issue of awakening sexuality is noticeable in some of them, for example in *A Room With A View* (dir. James Ivory, 1986).

changes in the heroines' attitudes, but the heroines of these films seem to mature sexually just in time of the reconciliation with their future husbands. These usually end with a kiss. After 1999 the heroines' sexuality begins to awake much earlier—Rozema's Fanny has contact with sex even before she is ready for it, the 2005 Elizabeth starts maturing the moment Darcy touches her for the first time[40], and the 2008 Marianne Dashwood experiences her first kiss with Willoughby in the absence of his aunt before he breaks her heart.

Additionally, after 1999 romantic scenes are played often in a more sentimental convention. Some scenes do not try to reflect the customs of the time. For example, the scene of Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars's engagement in Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility* ends with a kiss—which never happened originally, as physical contact between the future spouses was out of question until the wedding. The previously discussed proposal scene in Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* takes place in an amphitheatre during a downpour, and not in the living room of Mr and Mrs Collins—as in the original and in earlier adaptations of that novel. It is a major change, as the scenery itself significantly reduces the distance between the future spouses and makes the scene more intimate. Furthermore, the characters' body language indicates a close proximity of a kiss—which implies that in this adaptation, Elizabeth had feelings for Darcy already at the point of his first proposal (Wróblewska 87). The second proposal departs from the customs of Regency England even more, as both Darcy and Elizabeth are incompletely dressed when the scene takes place.

Wright's interpretation differs both from these presented by the authors of the previous adaptations and from the novel itself. Originally, the reconciliation of Darcy and Elizabeth took place during their walk together on a clear, warm day, and this is also the scene presented by the creators of the BBC series. The adaptation from 1995 closely recreates the scene of Darcy's renewed proposal. As in the novel, in the BBC series, the protagonist goes for a walk with Elizabeth on a sunny day and talks to her openly about his feelings. It is noticeable how much they have both changed since that unfortunate proposal in the Collins' house. The atmosphere is no longer nervous, and the characters are accompanied by idyllic peace and harmony. Contrary to the BBC series, Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* relates more to the Gothic aesthetics (Pilawska 422). Elizabeth, wearing a nightgown and a coat, with her hair loosely braided, walks out into the meadow by the house before dawn. The dawn is foggy, so the colour palette is off. The final scene is reminiscent of the opening scene, which also portrays a hazy landscape—in this way Wright forms the brace for the film. The director continues to apply the idea of the unity between man and nature. Elizabeth feels anxious and lonely after

[40] *Pride and Prejudice* from 2005 brings the character of Elizabeth Bennet to the fore and focuses on the process of the heroine's mental and sexual maturation—which is greatly influenced by her encounter with Mr Darcy (Olszewska 52).

admitting to Lady Catherine de Bourgh that she is not engaged to Mr Darcy, so the surrounding seems sad as well.

1.5.5. A single shot of Elizabeth feeling restless at night after her conversation with Lady Catherine de Bourgh in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*

There is no colour, no warmth. Everything around is dimmed. It is cold. Finally, in the distance, Elizabeth notices Darcy's silhouette (also incompletely dressed). The moment he emerges from behind the hill, the dawn is breaking, and the rays of the rising sun appear, as if hope for a new, warmer day has come with Darcy. Thus, the director suggests that the heroine feels joy at the sight of her beloved. The meeting of two incompletely dressed protagonists, who are ordered by their passionate feelings to leave their homes in search of each other, proves that their love and relationship deviate from social norms of that time (Pilawska 422).

The scene is even more emotional because of the contrast between the characters' passionate feelings and the cold scenery. Elizabeth and Darcy do not talk on a warm, joyful day (as in the novel). But even though everything is shrouded in fog, the rays of the sun are getting more visible with Darcy's words. These show the change in the hero and confirm his romantic character— the filmmakers romanticise Darcy by depicting him as a man driven primarily by a passionate feeling, which motivates him to oppose the accepted rules of social order (Pilawska 423). The hero no longer talks about his reluctance to relate to Elizabeth and her family. Instead, he openly complements her by saying that "she charmed him with her beauty and character" (Wright 01.55.06) and then confesses that "he never wants to part with her again" (Wright 01.55.15). The scene does not end with a shot featuring the lovers' kiss, but with a shot suggesting its proximity in a slightly Hollywood style—the sunrays illuminate the characters' faces, evidently symbolising their full happiness, as if the filmmakers were trying to tell the audience "And they lived happily ever after."

1. 5.6. A close-up of Elizabeth and Darcy's reconciliation

John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility* ends the story of Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars in a similar manner. Yet, in this case the sun rays shine through the kitchen window and the protagonists are at home. Also, this time the scene of the characters' reconciliation ends with a kiss, and the final scene of the movie presents the pair in front of their house, Elinor standing and laughing at the sight of Edward trying to catch a hen.

Rozema's *Mansfield Park* was the first close film adaptation whose director put so much emphasis on picturing the diegetic world in a realistic, but, simultaneously, gloomy manner. The subsequent close film adaptations of Austen's prose do not show the immorality of characters and the ugliness of the surrounding world in an equally aggressive manner. However, the changes in making heritage films after 1999 are still noticeable. Similarly to Rozema's adaptation, Joe Wright also opts for realism in his *Pride and Prejudice* and presents the Austenian world as less idyllic. At first the filmmakers were even unwilling to cast Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet as they found her too attractive for the role (BBC America 2014: 00.25-00.37). They also decided against beautifying Longbourn. Although the film starts with a picturesque sunrise scene on the hill, it does not remind the audience of the scenes from any previous film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Beautiful as it may be, the view is covered in the mist which, in turn, gives the effect of gloom and coldness—as the colour palette is dimmed. The picture reminds the viewers more of a scene from an adaptation of a gothic story, rather than Austen's idyllic novel of manners. Furthermore, the director decides to present Longbourn as a dilapidated country estate. With dogs and even pigs walking through the hallways, and ducks squawking near the house, the Bennets' family home resembles a farmhouse. In the opening scene, Elizabeth has to cross the footbridge over the muddy water and pass by the hanging laundry at the back of the property to enter the house. Such an image differs from the distinguished interiors of large estates shown in earlier heritage films. According to Pilawska, the alterations in visual layer were to draw attention to class inequalities during imperial England (411). Yet, the departure from idealised representations of the past towards a more realistic convention met with

criticism. Some viewers praised the film for its faithfulness to the literary original, while others accused the filmmakers of distorting the image of the Bennet family created by Austen[41].

Additionally, Wright also decided to change the historical realities in which the action takes place. Instead of the end of the Georgian era (1811-1820), the action takes place in 1797. The director's preferences as to the costumes are the main reason for it. As Wright admits in an interview, he preferred simpler outfits than those characteristic of the Empire style at the beginning of the 19th century (DeGennaro). Simpler and definitely less stylish clothing of the Bennet family compared to the elegant clothes of Mr Darcy and the Bingley siblings, especially Caroline, were to emphasise the inequalities in financial status between the Netherfield tenants and the Longbourn inhabitants. It is noticeable both at the Meryton ball and in the scene where Elizabeth Bennet and Caroline Bingley have a walk around the room. The differences in costumes testify not only to different financial status, but also to different personalities. Bingley's sister, dressed in a classic Empire fashionable gown in a shade of deep red, resembles a real matron and is haughty in her statements, consciously emphasising her superiority over Elizabeth. It is ironic, then, that Caroline, although wearing a dress of a conspicuous colour, is unable to attract Darcy's attention. That is why she invites Elizabeth for a walk. Contrary to Caroline, Lizzy does not strive for attention with persistence. Her simple dress compliments her behaviour. Before Bingley's sister suggests a walk, Elizabeth is trying to read a book. She expresses her bold opinions with determination and playfulness, but only when she is asked for it. Similar contrasts are noticeable in *Sense and Sensibility* (2008), *Persuasion* (2007) and *Mansfield Park* (1999). In each of these cases those heroines who wear plainer and darker outfits—Elinor Dashwood, Fanny Price, Anne Eliot—behave in a quieter way, not trying to draw attention to themselves.

The departure from some of the conventions typical of heritage cinema is evident at the very beginning of Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*. In general, the connection between the literary original and the movie adaptation is usually marked at the very beginning of the heritage film. The opening credits of *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995 inform the audience that the movie was based on a novel by Jane Austen. The opening credits of *Pride and Prejudice* from 2005, in turn, mention only the names of the producers, whereas the information about the relationship between the film and the novel appears in the closing credits. In his *English Heritage, English Cinema*, Andrew Higson points out that Austen's authorship is only the background in the film, as the opening scene of the film presenting a sunlit glade and, a moment later, Elizabeth reading a book and walking around is

[41] Nevertheless, Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* got four Oscar nominations, and its director was awarded with a BAFTA. All in all, the film adaptation turned out to be a great artistic and commercial success. The box office results have shown that the movie grossed over 126 mln dollars with a budget of 28 mln dollars (IMDb).

a substitute for the information that the film is based on a novel (10)**.** The opening scene ends with the camera shot of a characteristic headgear in which the characters from the adaptation of Austen's prose usually walk. However, in Wright's film, none of the women wears it. At that moment it remains only an element of a scenography, which emphasises even more the symbolic break with the former way of adapting Austen's texts for heritage films (Urbanik-Kopeć 405). The previous aesthetics alters, and its posed beauty is left behind in a realistic mess, just like the abandoned bonnet of one of the Bennet sisters (405).

The appearance of the houses in the adaptations after 1999 is more realistic, but at the same time clearly communicates the financial problems that bother the heroines. The Price and the Bennet sisters share their beds in pairs. The house of the Price family barely seats all of its inhabitants whereas Longbourn, although large, is slowly falling apart. The house of Miss and Mrs Bates, once a beautiful mansion, changes into a shabby cubicle with crumbling stairs, where the women are constantly waiting for a letter from their niece. In John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility,* the Dashwood sisters' "new" house looks really poor, even if it is not compared to the majestic Norland estate.

1.5.7. The "new" house of the Dashwood women in *Sense and Sensibility* from 2008

The establishing shot presents a small, dilapidated white house on a hostile cliff. This extremely poor reinvention of Barton Cottage lacks the carpets, wallpaper and minor decorative elements. At first, even the furniture is missing. The wild landscape which surrounds it, along with dramatic, unwelcoming weather, form a visual layer appropriate for a film adaptation of one of the Brönte sisters' novels rather than that of Austen's prose—the sea is always rough there and the days are rainy and windy. The diegetic world is drowned in cold greys and blues, and the sun, which shines so brightly in the adaptations from the 1990s, rarely comes out in later ones. The former idyllic

landscapes with vivid colours become rugged. The colours are dimmed and therefore the image of the landscape gives an unwelcoming impression of coolness.

Just like the weather conditions and landscape change, the lie of the land alters as well (Urbanik-Kopeć 405). Altogether, these elements reflect the protagonists' emotional well-being, as well as highlight challenging living conditions and difficult choices they need to face. After the death of Mr Dashwood, Marianne, Elinor and Margaret are forced to leave Norland and move with their mother to a shabby cottage, situated (in Alexander's film) on the coast. The final scene of O'Hanlon's *Emma*, which shows the eponymous heroine and Mr Knightley standing on a cliff, implies that Emma is reaching emotional maturity (405). Although at first the heroine has no plans to ever get married or leave the idyllic (and flat) Highbury, the final scene of the adaptation presents her standing on a cliff, hand in hand with her newly-wed husband. Thus, Emma's maturity manifests itself in the heroine's readiness to commit herself to marriage. While the film adaptations from the 1990s[42] tend to present their heroines walking around picturesque lawns, and only sometimes stepping on mounds or hills (such as during the Box Hill picnic in *Emma*), the characters of the adaptations made after 1999 stand on a cliff or hill on a windy day at least once, which carries a symbolic meaning of a change of their heart or mark a turning point in action, or both, as it is in the case of Elizabeth Bennet in Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*. A majestic shot of Elizabeth Bennet standing on the edge of a cliff in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* is taken right after Lizzy leaves her family home on a journey with her aunt and uncle. Dario Marinelli's piece of music, entitled *Liz on Top of The World*, has been composed specially for this scene and adds to its aura. Wright uses a long shot to portray Elizabeth standing on a cliff—placing her as a part of this wild landscape, and then the long shot is followed by a close-up of the protagonist's face so that the viewer could see her emotional reaction. It is a scene in which the heroine re-evaluates her behaviour—Elizabeth realises her wrong attitude towards Darcy, and her feelings towards him begin to change.

1.5.8. A long shot of Elizabeth Bennet standing on the edge of a cliff in Joe Wright's adaptation

[42] For example these directed by Langton, Lee, Lawrence and McGrath.

The following scenes depicting Elizabeth sitting on bulky, moss-covered roots, watching a running deer, are calmer and suggest that the heroine regains her inner peace. The images resemble the most typical artistic representations of a romantic landscape (Pilawska 429). In combination with the cliff scene, the presence of the deer might suggest that Elizabeth has untethered herself from her negative feelings after experiencing a sort of private *katharsis* and finally feels free.

The subsequent filmmakers of costume adaptations follow Joe Wright and resign from the idyllic images of English countryside and neatly cut lawns in favour of mesmerising, although more rugged landscapes, but simultaneously retain the nostalgic character of heritage cinema. The use of scenic, untamed landscapes has become an element of aesthetic convention of later heritage adaptations of Austen's prose, which results in picturesque shots. The 21st century adaptations depict Austen's heroines entering caves, watching tidal waves of rough seas, or standing on the edges of cliffs. Such a change of aesthetics is meant to visualise the emotional turmoil of Austen's women. In his *Sense and Sensibility* John Alexander captures Elinor Dashwood's sorrow and need to hide herself and her emotions from the world in a scene featuring the woman entering a cave at the seaside and sitting there alone. The low-key lighting and high contrast ratio in this shot build the gloomy tone of the scene.

1.5.9. A single shot of Elinor Dashwood standing in a cave at the seaside in John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility* from 2008.

1.5.10. A full shot of Anne Eliot contemplating after her conversation with Captain Wentworth in *Persuasions* released by Netflix in 2022.

The introduced changes within the heritage movies' aesthetics set a different tone in these movies. They become a little bit gloomy, and their heroines mature sexually faster. The aura of these adaptations becomes heavy, not only due to alterations in the visual layer, such as dimmed colour palette, the shots of poor living conditions (featuring scratched interiors of the protagonists' houses, dirty clothes and dishes), but also because of the addition of such scenes, which dramatise the adapted narrative—for example, the scenes of John Alexander and Andrew Davies' *Sense and Sensibility*, or the events that both the viewers and readers could previously learn about from the characters' dialogues. Both the readers and the viewers of the older films based on Austen's prose are aware of such events as Mr Dashwood's death and the Dashwood women's losing Norland, Willoughby's seduction of a teenage Eliza Williams, the death of both Mrs Woodhouse and Frank Churchill's mother or Jane Fairfax leaving her aunts' house. However, only those late adaptations after 1999 illustrate them. The opening scene of *Sense and Sensibility* from 2008 presents Willoughby seducing and abandoning Eliza Williams only to move the viewer's attention to Mr Dashwood's deathbed and his despairing family. In turn, O'Hanlon's *Emma* from 2009 starts with a sequence of scenes presenting horrifying human tragedies which are omitted in former adaptations. These costume heritage films based on Austen's prose focus not only on love threads, but present real human tragedies and threats that lurk in the air. They convey the stories about making a life transaction, the failure of which can threaten with poverty, hunger or loss of home—that is why, these 21st century movies adapt Austen's prose more closely than earlier heritage adaptations. They still put the emphasis on the courtship plotlines but do not try to beautify Austen's narrative so extremely. The transaccentuation of the romantic thread is introduced by the dramatisation of romantic plotlines.

This dramatisation manifests itself both through the images of the stories' protagonists and the films' aesthetics. The characters of Ms and Mrs Bates and Mr Woodhouse, although still eccentric, appear no longer ridiculous, as the viewers begin to understand that the peculiar behaviour of these characters is the result of the experienced traumas and the feeling of anxiety for the future. Accordingly, the images of the main heroines alter after 1999 as well. The filmmakers begin to depict Austen's protagonists as more agitated and, at times, even contradictious—they modernise the images of the writer's heroines. Elizabeth becomes more impulsive, as she finds it impossible not to yell at Darcy when the man insults her family and antagonises her. Thus, the sentimental image of a girl dressed in white, skipping merrily and plucking flowers, disappears. After 1999 Elizabeth resembles more of a tomboy, keen on rambles into the wild and not much bothered by her looks. Even Fanny Price and Anne Eliot, the two most passive protagonists, find their voice in Rozema's and Cracknell's movies and are depicted as more energetic and outspoken than in the novels or in previous

adaptations. The filmmakers give these heroines the role of the narrator to play. Rozema changes Austen's shy and emotionally distressed Fanny into a creative, but modest, writer who boldly expresses her opinions about the issues of women's independence and individuality. Cracknell's Anne, in turn, alters into a witty and at times ironic girl, aware of her own assets. Throughout the movie the heroine either makes ironic remarks aimed at her family or casts meaningful looks towards the audience. She is far more expressive than Austen's composed Anne: she cries when she needs to, gets drunk and suffers from a hangover, cries Wentworth's name through the open window, or dramatically throws herself onto the bed in frustration. In both cases—Anne's and Fanny's—the feeling of servility so noticeable in the literary originals is much reduced.

The drama which the characters are forced to face, and the abovementioned scenes require using darker aesthetic solutions in order to emphasise the gravity of the protagonists' situation and add weight to their choices. Hence, as mentioned before, the diegetic worlds of late heritage adaptations directed by Rozema, Wright, O'Hanlon, and Alexander present dilapidated houses with dingy rooms under cloudy skies. The viewers begin to notice the threats that await Austen's heroines in the event of their defeat on the matrimonial market while looking at the dark interior of the Bates' and the Prices' ruined apartments and the hostile emptiness of the Dashwood sisters' new house. The multiplication of shots made with the use of low-key lighting or red hue in John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility*, dimmed colour palette and soft-focus foggy shots of British landscapes in Wright's *Pride and Prejudice*, or shots made in high contrast ratio in Rozema's *Mansfield Park* surely add to the gloomy, if not at times a bit sinister tone of these movies.

While at first it may appear that the late heritage adaptations of Austen's prose reduce the importance emphasis which their earlier versions put on the visual layer, these late costume adaptations are, in fact, equally over-aestheticized as those from the 1980s and 1990s, but they include aesthetic changes which go in the opposite direction. As a result, instead of love stories set on an idyllic landscape on a sunny day, these films move the action to wuthering heights[43], where the protagonists experience their change of heart as the wind blows their hair[44]. The bonnets of the heroines from the mid-90s' adaptations are replaced with dark dresses dipped in mud, the vivid colours of the landscapes fade out, and the British lawns are replaced with cliffs and hills. The landscapes are rugged, and the roads are muddy. The frames are still thoroughly artistic even though

[43] The pun is intended, as the aesthetics of these films and their almost gothic atmosphere fit more the film adaptations of the novels written by the Brontë sisters. The fashion for realistic representation of rural life through the use of dimmed colours and shots of rugged landscapes is noticeable not only in adaptations of Austen's prose, but also in other films made after 1999 and based on classic literature, such as *Wuthering Heights* (2011), *Jane Eyre* (2011), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (dir. Thomas Vinterberg, 2015) or *Poldark* (2015-2019).

[44] This happens in film adaptations of Austen's prose from 2005, 2008, 2009.

they do not show well-dressed members of the upper class with vividly green British lawns in the background. Instead, they present the main heroines standing on high cliffs with windblown, dishevelled hair[45] or casting a shadow while leaning against the wall of a cave[46]. Despite the apparent aesthetic alterations, the late adaptations of Austen's prose still represent heritage cinema. Although their aesthetics changes, the main purpose remains the same—which is to attract new viewers and (re-)evoke interest in heritage films based on Austen's prose. In their attempt to achieve these goals, the 21st century costume adaptations of the writer's works both reject and embrace heritage cinema conventions. By diversifying camerawork and rejecting the artificial tranquillity of heritage wide shots on account of equally picturesque shots of rugged landscapes, these late heritage adaptations of Austen's prose appeal to mainstream audiences without daunting the devotees of heritage cinema.

To label costume movies based on Austen's novels their faithful adaptations would be an overstatement. The introduction of numerous modifications within the original narrative— including the addition and/or reduction of certain plotlines, threads and characters or transaccentuation of the main threads—discredits these adaptations as faithful. That is why this dissertation is unwilling to use this term. Costume adaptations of the novels are purposely referred to as "close" because they maintain the connection with the original narrative by setting the stories in Regency England as in the source texts and by adapting more elements of the original plot than these adaptations which transfer the stories into other countries or time frames. Nevertheless, the modifications which these costume films introduce in the conveyed Austen's stories and the following commercial and critical success of these adaptations inspired the subsequent filmmakers to re-use some of these ideas in their own works. The following chapters present the subsequent phases of the creation of Jane Austen's film brand and show how the images of her heroines and heroes have changed in the process of creating loose adaptations of the writer's prose.

[45] as in Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), Andrew Davies' *Sense and Sensibility* (2008), O'Hanlon's *Emma* (2009)
[46] as in Andrew Davies' *Sense and Sensibility* (2008)

Chapter 2:
A Change in Time Setting—
Modernised Film Adaptations of Austen's Prose

2.1. Defining *Modernisation*

As Linda Hutcheon points out, adapting a literary text for film requires finding equivalences "for the various elements of the story: its themes, events, world, characters, motivations, points of view, consequences, contexts, symbols, imagery, and so on" (10). Adapting a literary work for a modernised movie means presenting these elements in such a manner that would allow the adapted work to appeal to contemporary audiences. Obviously, filmmakers need to decide how close their adaptations ought to be to their source texts. Some adaptations may basically follow the original plot but instead alter other elements, such as the setting or language. Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* (1995), for example, adapts the original trajectory of events that take place in Austen's *Emma*, but moves the action to the 1990s in Los Angeles and modernises the characters' language by introducing youth slang. Carrie Cracknell's costume adaptation of *Persuasions* (2022) preserves, in turn, both the setting of Regency England and the original plot, but clearly modernises Austen's last written novel by engaging the colour-blind casting, adding abbreviations and contemporary words into the characters' language[47] or by the use of soundtrack which involves modern music[48]. Other movies based on the British writer's prose do not follow the trajectory of events closely and instead "pick" and adapt selected elements. *You've Got Mail* (1998) and *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2001) preserve mainly the romantic plotline between the main protagonists, but they reduce side plots and limit the number of the characters. In these cases, the reduction of side plots and transaccentuation of the main plot contributes to the modernisation of the stories—the threads which are outdated and cannot function in a twentieth or twenty-first century world are reduced. Yet, the theme of love between a wealthy and well-educated man and a poor but intelligent woman appears to be universal.

According to Anne-Marie Scholz, contemporary filmmakers do not aim at changing the story completely, but rather update it and make it modern enough to fit the needs of contemporary viewers

[47] "Now we're worse than enemies, we're exes" (Cracknell 00.45.43.)
[48] *Quietly yours* by Birdy

and appeal to today's audience (116). In order to make the adapted story more relatable the makers substitute certain elements of the original narrative with their modernised equivalents. Marek Hendrykowski calls this conscious adaptative procedure a *substitution* and emphasises that introducing such a form of equivalence must be justified and motivated; it cannot be coincidental. It should be based on a semantically motivated substitution, as it should result from the semantic equivalence of both elements (78-79).

The range of possible modifications is wide, as many different elements can be substituted in order to modernise the story. Even though the term *modernisation* is often associated with a change of time frames, the modernisation of a literary text for film does not have to entail such an alteration at all. Some filmmakers decide not to substitute the Regency-era setting for a more contemporary one, and instead introduce less evident substitutions—which, nevertheless, may impact the adapted story's narrative and contribute to accentuation of a theme. Patricia Rozema, for example, alters Fanny Price's brother into a sister. Such an alteration may appear irrelevant at first, but with regard to the entire film it is a major change. Rozema's *Mansfield Park* (1999) clearly emphasises the feminist undertones of the original narrative. It depicts the main heroine as a strongly opinionated writer, far more expressive than the original Fanny, who openly speaks about freedom and female independence. By substituting her brother, William, with a younger sister, Susie, and by amplifying the scenes in which the two girls write letters to each other the makers put an emphasis on the relation between two women.

Of course, a choice of equivalence may be motivated by the change of a setting. In the case of films inspired by Austen's prose, modernisation quite often entails time frames transfer. As mentioned before, the filmmakers move the action of the literary source texts into a modern-day setting in order to "update" the adapted story and make it more relatable. It is supposedly easier for the viewers to identify with the film's protagonists if they live in times of their audiences. Hence, *Clueless* and *You've Got Mail* move the action of *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* respectively to the USA in the 1990s whereas *Bridget Jones' Diary* preserves the location of the original *Pride and Prejudice* to some extent (the action still takes place in England, yet in London, and not on a countryside), but moves it forward in time—to the 21st century.

Obviously, a modern-day setting requires a different set of props than the setting of period costume films. Heckerling's adaptation of *Emma* is recognisably modernised through the use of miscellaneous props; the filmmakers substitute corsets with miniskirts and exchange letters with talking on cell phones. *You've Got Mail*, in turn, amplifies the scenes in which Ephron's counterparts of Elizabeth and Mr Darcy exchange correspondence but features emails instead of the old-fashioned

letters. With the screeching dial-up sound, instant messaging and the image of New York City transforming from a 3D form into the shot of the real city, the movie presents the early days of the Internet. In fact, in order to accentuate the change of time frames, filmmakers of modernised adaptations tend to include numerous scenes featuring technological devices, such as cars, computers and mobile phones—the indicators of modern times. These inventions function as substitutions for carriages and letters—props used in costume movies. Thus, such an equivalence is justified in this case. Additionally, the use of technological props makes it easier for the viewers to identify with the film characters. Teenagers can empathise with the 20th century Emma Woodhouse more when they watch her learning to drive or talking on a mobile phone or waiting for a call from a boy she likes—these are real life situations to everyone in their teens. Similarly, working women in their thirties understand the rules of online dating and the mechanisms of chat rooms and Tinder, and thus, they may find it easier to identify with Kathleen Kelly, the heroine of *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1998), rather than with the original Elizabeth Bennet. The viewers do not have to imagine the world these protagonists live in, because it resembles their own.

As Hutcheon points out in *A Theory of Adaptation,* "adaptation can obviously be used to engage in a larger social or cultural critique" (94). Thus, some filmmakers modernise literary source texts to comment on current social issues. Gurinder Chadha and Rajshree Ojha use *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* as tools to address the question of Westernisation and patriarchal system in India[49], and Andrew Ahn comments on classism in the queer community in his LGBTQ version of *Pride and Prejudice—Fire Island* (2023). Amy Heckerling, in turn, adapts Austen's *Emma* to create a satire of American consumer culture, and above all, pop culture—references to which appear, as Susan Parrill notices, among others, in the names of famous artists, such as Cher or Dionne Warwick (117). Although the name Elton is taken directly from the novel, it takes on an additional meaning when juxtaposed with other artists' names—Mr Elton and Elton John (Margolis 33). Apart from the names of famous artists, the film is full of contemporary cultural references and relates directly to the iconosphere of popular culture in scenes such as Cher on the stairs à la Scarlett O'Hara but in a Calvin Klein dress, Christian's admiration for Tony Curtis in *Spartacus*, or the scene in which Cher mentions Mel Gibson's film adaptation of *Hamlet*. The moment the heroine admits Josh is handsome, she states the boy "is kind of a Baldwin" (Heckerling 01.18.55.).

The reasons for modernising literary classics are many. Certainly, working on a modernised adaptation gives the filmmakers more autonomy. While in closer movie adaptations even a minor character change or a dropped scene might evoke uproar among truly devoted fans of a novel (as it

[49] See, chapter 4.

was in the case of Carrie Cracknell's *Persuasions*[50]), modernised loose adaptations may be loosely based on the source texts, and thus they often modify the setting, plotlines, genre conventions, tone, cultural context, language and dialogues, as well as introduce modifications in characters' images, including their gender, identity and race. Austen's literary characters are played by actors and actresses of miscellaneous nationalities and different races, not necessarily by English white artists. In *Clueless*, the main heroine's best friend is African American. The colour-blind casting can be seen in *Persuasions* from 2022 as well—Lady Russell and Captain Bennick are played by African American actors. The cast of Rhonda Baraka's *Pride and Prejudice: Atlanta* consists solely of Afro-Americans. *Fire Island,* in turn, depicts Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy as homosexual Asians. *Wishbone* goes even further as the series turns Darcy into a dog—which is unsettling because Elizabeth Bennet remains a human being. Such a loose approach to adapting a novel guarantees more autonomy to make use of the original narrative and create separate stories out of it.

Modernisation of a literary text entails a whole set of difficult choices, as all the introduced modifications should be justified. While the change of time frames allows directors to modify a lot, at the same time it prevents them from fully conveying the drama of Austen's heroines. The idea of dramatic tension was different in times of Jane Austen than in the late 20th or early 21st century. Thus, some examples of scandalous misbehaviour which the writer describes as dreadful in consequences are not perceived as such nowadays. In modernised diegetic world of *Pride and Prejudice,* for example, Lydia Bennet's runaway with Wickham, although unethical and wrong, cannot end with social seclusion of the couple and ruined marital prospects of the older Bennet girls. Most of the novels' modernised adaptations cannot reflect that same sense of dramatic tension which radiates from Jane Austen's prose. Therefore, the filmmakers are forced to reinvent the most dramatic scenes: the makers of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* add a new dimension of drama to Lydia and Wickham's runaway by making the man a half-zombie, who locks Lydia in a cellar (which strangely resembles a dungeon) of a zombie invaded church. The makers of *The Lizzy Bennet Diaries*, in turn, alter the plot of the adapted story by making Lydia leave Wickham and come back home, then introduce dramatic tension by making Wickham release a sex tape—an idea used also in *Fire Island* (dir. Andrew Ahn, 2023). Today's average viewer will probably find these scenes far more disturbing than the original ones. The audience does realise Lydia's life is in danger when they find out that Steers' Wickham is a zombie in transition. The price the Bennet girl might pay for running off with

[50] The film received a series of negative reviews from *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *Variety*, *Vox*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Spectator* or *The New York Times.*

the man is indeed high. And while elopement and lovers' runaways are considered romantic nowadays[51], scandals around released sex tapes can actually ruin reputations.

In theory, as it has been explained above, filmic modernisation of a literary text enables the contemporary receivers to identify with the story's characters, understand the text better as well as relate to it more closely. In practice, however, the modernisation process may involve extreme changes which will completely distort not only the images of the literary protagonists but the original narrative in general. This is the case with modernised adaptations of Jane Austen's novels. As a result of the modernisation process, themes are transaccentuated (with regard to the assumed expectations of the target group to which the film is directed), which, in turn, forces further modifications in the protagonists (as themes are reinforced through the characters). The filmmakers take a particular interest in selected traits of the original protagonists and build the structure of their film counterparts with regard to these distinguishing features. As a result, these selected traits become dominant personality features of the film characters and change Austen's heroines into the women they are not: Elizabeth Bennet's outspokenness translates into snappishness, which changes the witty and cheerful heroine into a hothead rageaholic, Emma Woodhouse's matchmaking skills alter her into a manipulative ignorant, Fanny Price's strong sense of morality makes her more assertive and expressive than she is in in the original (as mentioned above) and Anne Elliot's introversion and tendency to dwell on the past make the filmmakers present her as a woman who cannot deal with her emotions to such an extent that she overdrinks and does not control her actions. Thus, transaccentuation appears not only with regard to themes but also with regard to the characters' portrayals. All of these radical modifications within the narrative are introduced in order to reinforce the main theme and attract large audiences with the view of increasing box office—after all, adaptations which are modernised and depart from the original narrative have the ability to reach a variety of different groups of viewers.

2.2. Modernisation of Austen's Themes and Characters

The choice of dominant themes is clearly influenced by the target audience of the film. *Wishbone*, the PBS TV series is addressed to children and, thus, the makers put an emphasis on the

[51] A theme of lovers' runaway continuously reappears in romantic comedies and melodramas—for example in *The Graduate* (dir. Mike Nichols, 1967) or *Made of Honor* (dir. Paul Weiland, 2008)—as well as in Bollywood movies, like *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (dir. Karan Johar, 2001), or even in animated films, like *Shrek* (dir. Andrew Adams and Vicky Jenson, 2001). Moreover, all these films feature no negative repercussions for the protagonists. The viewers actually root for the lovers to unite. Interestingly, the makers of *Becoming Jane* use this theme as well in relation to the character of Jane Austen herself, but in this case they make the writer abandon the idea and come back home.

issue of tolerance, power of friendship, difficulty in making new friendships, and social awkwardness—the story is intended to educate and moralise the audience. The very first modernised adaptation of Austen's *Emma*—Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* (1995)—appeals, in turn, mainly to teenagers and young adults, mostly in their twenties, as it focuses on teenagers and unfolds in a high school. Consequently, the film centres on issues that are relevant and often discussed in the teenage environment—sex and sexuality, alcohol and drug abuse, eating disorders, tolerance and charity, social stratification in school environment, and, obviously, maturing. *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter-Day Comedy* (dir. Andrew Black, 2003) is mostly addressed to viewers in their twenties, as its protagonists are still university students. Thus, the movie focuses on the themes of fraternity life on campus and most of the characters following their dream career and entering the adult world. Slightly older audiences are drawn by such movies as *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1998) or *Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001), which are addressed to working people in their thirties, mostly single. The plots of these movies revolve around the adventures of working women—their loneliness, lack of time for a private life, efforts and struggles to combine the professional sphere with love[52]. Heritage and costume films, in turn, draw attention of adult audiences in general—the theme of sentimental love in times devoid of technology and corporate rat race can attract both the older generations that actually grew up watching costume films as well as these viewers who dream of freeing themselves from the corporate ladder and other overwhelming and noisy working environments. Thus, the transaccentuation of the main theme is strongly motivated by the target audiences and their expectations.

The fact that the movie adaptations of the British writer's works attract such diversified target audiences popularises her texts and creates the impression of their universality. It should come as no surprise that Austen's stories are addressed not only to adults but also to youngsters—after all, the original plots of the author's novels revolve around maturing women. Obviously, this diversification with regard to the viewers' age is intended to increase the reach of the adapted stories. Yet, it is not the only factor which shapes the target audience's mixedness. As stated before in this dissertation, over the years Austen's prose was adapted for miscellaneous genre films—melodramas, comedies, horror or teen movies—which enforces the transaccentuation of themes with regard to generic

[52] The craze for films focusing on the life of a single, heterosexual woman had its peak in the 1990s. The makers of chick-flicks were very eager to build the narrative of their movies around this type of a heroine, and as a result, such hits as *Frankie and Johnny* (1991), *Sleepless in Seattle* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1993), *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1995) or *Picture Perfect* (1997) were released in that decade. The archetype of a working single woman became even more entrenched in cinematography owing to such long-running and award-winning series as *Ally McBeal* (dir. David Shore, 1997-2002) and *Sex and the City* (dir. David Shore, 1998-2004). In 2001 another modernised adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* started the second wave of fashion for romantic comedies and melodramas centred on the life of a single working woman and soon *The Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001) was followed by such Hollywood blockbusters as *Two Weeks Notice* (dir. Mark Lawrence, 2002), *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (dir. Donald Petrie, 2003), *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (dir. Beeban Kidron, 2004) or *Lake House* (dir. Alejandro Agresti, 2006)—the last two inspired by Austen's *Persuasion.* Thus, within one decade at least four movies about a working single woman in her thirties and inspired by Austen's prose were released.

conventions[53] and/ or with regard to the setting. Within the last decade, filmmakers have managed to modernise Austen's prose with regard to openness to non-heteronormative characters as well. Byrum Geisler's *Before the Fall* from 2016 and Andrew Ahn's *Fire Island* from 2023 change the relationship of Elisabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy into that of two homosexual men, whereas Kelsey O'Brien's *Love Magick* from 2023 presents Emma Woodhouse as a lesbian Wiccan—the movies' major themes are class discrimination in homosexual and queer communities and prejudices against LGBTQ communities. In order to appeal to mass tastes, the subsequent filmmakers take into account the viewers' nationalities, their preference for film genres and even their sexual orientation—all to reach as wide audience as possible and draw attention of both Western and Eastern viewers, fans of versatile genre movies, as well as heterosexual, homosexual and queer communities.

The disparity of themes presented in film adaptations of Austen's prose proves that the transaccentuation of the adapted work's themes is inevitably connected both with the times in which a movie is released and a change in time setting introduced within the narrative. Jane Austen lived and wrote in times when it was unusual for a woman to have a profession, earn money, have her own land or home or in fact any trace of independence and self-sufficiency at all. In fact, women could not own property as they were considered as property of either their father, brother or a husband (Richardson 5). Her novels present such a world as well. Originally, the narratives of Austen's stories are all framed by the injustice which her female protagonists are forced to endure (Bufacchi 4). A recurring theme in Austen's prose is how the main heroines face and overcome the social and economic unjust situation they live in (with regard to the differences in the heroines' temperament and abilities). In *Emma*, Mrs and Ms Bates fall into poverty and have to send away Jane Fairfax after Mr Bates' death. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the Dashwood women lose their home the moment Mr Dashwood dies, as Norland can only be inherited by a male relative. A similar situation is about to happen in *Pride and Prejudice*. Mr Bennet is still alive; nevertheless, he has no male heir, but as many as five daughters. After his death, Longbourn is going to fall not to his offspring but to the nearest male relative—the girls' cousin, Mr Collins. Thus, the future of Austen's heroines is determined by legal restrictions and social norms, according to which women are barred from inheriting their family houses and estates in which they grew up—estates were entailed upon a male child. Throughout Austen's narratives the readers learn that the fates of English women in the early 19th century were mostly dictated by men. Therefore, the chances of pursuing their individual conception of a good life were radically diminished—despite their privileged class status, women had no control over their future. Since they could not inherit, their houses did not actually belong to them

[53] This issue is discussed at length in chapter 3.

at all, but to their husbands, fathers and sons. Such legal restrictions become both a source of Austen's heroines' despair and their male relatives' (Mr Collins' or Mr John Dashwood's) greatest assets.

Over the years most of the issues Jane Austen wrote about became either obsolete or redefined. In movie adaptations of her prose the transaccentuation of themes often involves the reduction or substitution of some of them. They are either replaced by new ones or by those that only resound in the background on the pages of the novels but gain in importance in films. Thus, the issue of inheritance—so important in Austen's prose, as it makes the topic of marriage fundamental—takes on a completely different context or is simply omitted in modernised adaptations of her novels. In the case of *Clueless* and *Aisha*—the comedic adaptations of *Emma*—as well as *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *Bride and Prejudice*—the comedic adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and the novel's horror adaptation, *Twilight*—the filmmakers abandon this topic. In *You've Got Mail*, inspired by *Pride and Prejudice* as well, it is reduced to Kathleen Kelly inheriting her children's bookstore from her mother. Such modifications seem natural, because the issue of inheritance becomes outdated due to the time transfer. Nevertheless, the theme's reduction may result from the fact that the plotline of Mr Collins inheriting Longbourn and, thus, depriving the Bennet girls of a roof over their heads, and the plotline of the Bates women's impoverishment are only side plots, the background to the events which take place in the novels. Yet, by reducing the issue of inheritance and subplots involving Jane Fairfax and Misses Bates, and Mr Collins taking over Longbourn, the creators of modernised screen adaptations of Austen's prose limit the plots of their movies to not much more than love stories and make the original narratives far more sentimental than Austen intended them to be.

As in the case of inheritance, the theme of marriage—equally important in Jane Austen's prose—is either greatly reduced or presented in a completely different context. Originally, all the writer's novels end with the main heroines' wedding. Such an ending provides not just a happy finale to the story, but most of all grants the female protagonists economic and social security. Austen's novels provide a commentary about the social and economic implications of matrimony in Regency England (Gibson 43-53). In her works, married couples are assessed by how economically advantageous their unions are. Mrs Price's marriage with poor Mr Price in *Mansfield Park*, Anne Eliot's engagement with poor and unknown Frederick Wentworth in *Persuasions* and Lydia Bennet's elopement with penniless Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* meet with social disapproval. Since Mr Darcy is presented as both extremely rich and handsome, Elizabeth's choice to marry him is sanctioned straight away by everyone except for Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Caroline Bingley (who have their own agendas). Owing to Darcy's social standing and fortune, the man's rude demeanour is easily forgiven and forgotten by the countryside's inhabitants.

The idea that a woman needs to marry so as to secure her future becomes outdated, and even sexist, in the late 20th and 21st century. Bridget Jones and Kathleen Kelly have well-paid jobs as well as their own apartments, so they can take care of themselves. Modernised Austenian heroines do not *need* to marry and, therefore, marriage itself is no longer a point of major focus. In fact, except for Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice,* modernised adaptations of Austen's prose feature no weddings of the main protagonists'. The final scene of Andrew Black's *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter-Day Comedy* only indicates Elizabeth and Darcy's engagement but does not feature their wedding. In the case of *Clueless*, such a modification of an ending is understandable—after all, Cher Chorowitz is underage. Bridget Jones, Kathleen Kelly—who would definitely be considered old spinsters in Austen's times—and Aisha Kapoor remain, however, unmarried and not engaged even though they are in their twenties or thirties. The reduction of the scenes of these heroines getting married shows how much social mores have changed—marriage is not forced on women, at least not for economic reasons. The four modernised adaptations directed by Amy Heckerling, Nora Ephron, Rajshree Ojha and Sharon Maguire present completely different approaches towards the theme. *Clueless* substitutes it with the idea of dating and sexual intercourse. The movie emphasises the importance of romance and focuses more on the issues of sex and virginity—themes far more typical of coming-of-age movies. *You've Got Mail* reduces it to a sub-plot of Joe's father being a serial groom and divorcé, which provides a stark contrast to his son's perspective towards marriage—in this case marriage theme is treated instrumentally only to accentuate the disparity between Joe Fox' sentimental attitude towards the issue of matrimony and his father's practical perspective. *Aisha,* in turn, treats weddings as an element of the narrative, but not necessarily as the axis of the main plotline[54]. Out of all modernised adaptations the theme of marriage and its importance seems to be most accentuated in *Bridget Jones' Diary*—even if the film uses it in order to introduce the binary opposition between singles and couples, and to base the theme of social stratification on this juxtaposition. In the case of Maguire's movie, the issue of marital status is still pivotal, but for different reasons than in Austen's prose—apparently being single brings only social and not both economic and social repercussions.

In *Bridget Jones' Diary,* social stratification—a topic continuously discussed in Jane Austen's novels—is based on the dichotomy between singles and people in a relationship, and not on the lineage or wealth. Of course, Darcy's relatives have a financial advantage over the Jones family—the living room in their house is at least twice as large as Bridget's parents', and the main heroine's apartment is rather cramped and furnished far less extravagantly. Nevertheless, classism is indicated

[54] The theme of marriage with regard to Indian films is addressed in chapter 4.

primarily by marital status. Married people and couples are considerably more respected by society. The scene at Una's party shows differences in their treatment—only married people and couples are informed of the change of the dress code. Only singles appear in costumes and look ridiculous. Since Bridget's mother has left her husband, he does not know about the change of plans for the party, and he comes dressed up as a priest. His wife finds herself a partner and brings him to the party—they are informed about the change of plans as they are considered a couple. The fact that Bridget appears without Daniel and in the outfit of a bunny only shows that her relationship with Cleaver is not sanctioned by the community. Furthermore, Bridget can still hear people asking persistent questions about her love life during the party. The adventures of singles are shown in the film as entertainment for couples and spouses: the scene with Bridget dining at her married friends' is a downright example. Although no fewer than thirteen people are gathered at the table, the room is not filled with the guests' conversations. All the audience hears is the clatter of cutlery and the couples instructing Bridget that she should finally find herself a husband and start thinking about babies as time flies quickly. The moment one of the married women asks Bridget why so many females remain unmarried in their thirties, the POV shot reveals that all of the eyes and the attention of the guests are focused on Bridget.

2.1. A wide-angle shot encompassing the guests of Cosmo and Magda waiting for Bridget's answer

Due to the dark colour palette with red hue along with burning candles (the only diegetic source of light) in this scene, the shot brings connotations of hell. This impression is deepened the moment the close-up shot on Bridget's face reveals the heroine's uneasiness. The woman's embarrassment is emphasised by the candlelight in the background which corresponds with her blushing cheeks and red sweater. The POV shot from Bridget's perspective reveals couples everywhere—starting with the guests and ending with two candles placed at the fireplace and in the middle of the table. The fact that the shot is symmetrical strongly accentuates the importance of couplehood and indicates that the

main heroine's uneasiness partially results from the fact that she is the only one without a partner. Bridget breaks the symmetry of the previous shot by sitting alone opposite one of the married couples.

2.2. A close-up on Bridget's blushing face

The scene in which Bridget is sitting at the table with her unmarried friends brings contrast to the dinner scene and reveals the gap between the two groups—the singles and the spouses. The tone of the scene is completely different. It appears light and more intimate, which is confirmed by the characters' body language and their less formal clothing. Bridget's friends seem interested in the conversation—they lean towards each other. No one seems embarrassed by tactless questions.

2.3-4. The shots of Bridget and her friends spending time together in a pub and restaurant.

Additionally, marital status seems to manifest itself in the characters' language. People in committed relationships do not swear and seem to have greater verbal culture in comparison to singles who do not hesitate to use the word "fuck" in a variety of circumstances. Out of all Bridget's friends, only Jude, who has a boyfriend, does not swear. Shazzer, as Bridget admits herself, "likes to swear" (Maguire 00.15.56.) and overuses swear words all the time. Tom, on the other hand, is less expressive

than the journalist but he also swears in everyday language. As for the heroine, the verbal culture seems to change along with Bridget's relationship status: the woman tends to swear only when she does not date anyone, but immediately stops when she starts seeing Daniel. Since her boss uses swear words even when they spend time together, it can be concluded that Cleaver does not treat his relationship with Bridget as official and does not think it has legislative potential. In his mind he is still single and has no obligation to the woman. Mark Darcy, in turn, does not swear throughout the greater part of the film. The hero is usually accompanied by his colleague, Natasha Glenville, who is clearly interested in him romantically. Darcy never openly admits his attachment to the woman, but his father suggests his son's imminent engagement with the heroine at a party in their house. Thus, the audience may conclude that Natasha and Darcy's relationship is not just professional. Throughout the movie Mark uses a swear word only once—at the end of the film right before he and Bridget finally start their relationship. The scene takes place after the hero resigns from his job position in New York and, apparently, from his intention to marry Natasha Glenville. He leaves his life in America and comes back to Bridget as a free man with no obligation towards others. For this brief moment the man is truly single. Then, a moment later he will fall in Bridget's arms and engage himself into another relationship.

While Sharon Maguire's film does not adapt *Pride and Prejudice* most accurately, it succeeds both critically[55] and commercially[56] because of the manner in which it dimensionalises the original themes of Austen's novel, such as matrimony, the unfortunate situation of unmarried women and social stratification. The movie borrows some of the most characteristic parts of its source text and adapts them into a new story for contemporary viewers about a single woman in her thirties determined to get herself a boyfriend as a result of both her loneliness and social pressure she faces (mostly from her mother, whose matchmaking activities echo Mrs Bennet's efforts in finding her five daughters eligible husbands). Bridget's frustration grows as her relatives keep asking her how her love life is. To make matters worse, later in the film, her lover describes her and himself as "people of a certain age… looking for the moment to commit" (Maguire 00.43.03.). Thus, Bridget is continuously defined, by others and herself, by her age and relationship status.

Social stratification is actually one of those Austenian themes which are continuously featured and thoroughly discussed in modernised adaptations of the writer's novels. The movies explore the theme of classism through characters—their clothes and/or language—as well as the setting. Thus, Mark Darcy's and his parents' reserved manners and vocabulary clearly differ from Bridget's and her

[55] The film was nominated for numerous awards, including BAFTA and the Golden Globe, and won the European Film Award.
[56] The film's budget was $25 million, but the movie managed to gross $282 million.

family's outspokenness. The house of Darcy's parents brings a stark contrast to that of the Jones family. Even though the heroine's family house is large and surrounded by carefully trimmed hedges as well as fancy hedge sculptures, the aesthetics of the building does not indicate the Jones' high material standing. From the outside it closely resembles Barton Cottage from Ang Lee's heritage adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*—a house the Dashwood women are forced to move into after losing the Norland estate.

2.5. The establishing shot of Barton Cottage from *Sense and Sensibility* (dir. Ang Lee, 1995).

2.6. The establishing shot of Bridget Jones' family house.

The house interior—warm in tone owing to the dominance of beiges, browns and accents of reds—is designed in an old-fashioned style. The walls are covered with patterned wallpapers—stripes dominate in the entrance and corridor whereas the living room is decorated with floral wallpaper. The windows are framed by heavy velvet curtains with fringes, which along with fabric lampshades and shag carpets give the effect of the fashion from the 1970s. Altogether with elegant sculptures and hand-made china (which does not match the entrance hall at all), the interior design does not look sophisticated or chic, but rather old-fashioned and a little bit cluttered. Bridget's cramped apartment

gives a similar impression, as in both cases the audience see worn-out and out-of-fashion pieces of furniture and elements of home design.

2.7-8. Wide shots of the entrance hall (on the left) and the reception hall (on the right) of Bridget's family house.

Darcy's apartment is not featured in the film—at least not in the first part of the trilogy. Nevertheless, the viewers may assume the hero's living conditions are far more comfortable and luxurious than the main heroine's—they are informed Mark is a successful lawyer, which means that he earns a lot. Additionally, the palatial looks of his parents' house proves that the man comes from a rich family. The golden framed paintings, sculptures, crystal chandeliers, decorative carvings on doorframes and intricate tapestries remind the audience of Baroque and clearly indicate the house inhabitants' wealth—with the opulent interior design and a spacious reception hall which actually looks like a banquet hall.

2.9-10. Wide shots of the reception hall's interior design in Mark Darcy's family house.

The hero's family house, furnished in a highly ornate, extravagant style, is more of a mansion or a manor. With its characteristic columns, it closely resembles the Pemberley estate from the popular BBC serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice.*


2.11-12. Long shots of both Mark Darcy's family house (on the left) and Fitzwilliam Darcy's Pemberley estate (on the right).

The juxtaposition of Mark Darcy's and Bridget Jones' family houses serves to present the difference in economic situation of both families and maintain, at least to some extent, the conceptual integrity with the source text. Mrs Jones, the counterpart of Mrs Bennet, wants her daughter to marry into a wealthier family than hers. Additionally, the reinforcement of the theme of classism through the juxtaposition and differentiation of the two houses allows the filmmakers to accentuate the main romantic plotline between Elizabeth and Darcy—a love story of a rich man and a poorly situated woman.

For similar reasons Nora Ephron juxtaposes Kathleen Kelly's and Joe Fox' apartments and bookstores in *You've Got Mail*. Joe's spacious apartment in the penthouse, his yacht as well as Fox Books megastore tower over Kathleen's modest children's bookstore and her cosy, yet a little bit cramped, flat; they manifest the businessman's wealth. In Ephron's adaptation, The Shop Around the Corner becomes the film's substitution for Longbourn—the dreadful prospect of losing Longbourn translates into the threat of closing The Shop Around the Corner. FoxBooks, in turn, represents both Netherfield Park and Pemberley. The news about the imminent opening of Fox megastore in the neighbourhood relates to the news that the Bennets receive about Netherfield Park being rented. In the movie, the affluent proprietors of FoxBooks move right next to Kelly's shop—just like the Bingleys penetrate the neighbourhood of Longbourn in the first chapter of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The longevity of FoxBooks chainstore as a family-owned enterprise functions in Ephron's movie as an indication of being well-bred. In the scene in which Joe Fox addresses for the first time

the issue of The Shop Around the Corner in a conversation with his father and grandfather, the viewers are informed about three generations of FoxBooks' economic success. Thus, FoxBooks superstore functions as a symbol of social and economic superiority, just like Pemberly or Netherfield Park does.

The parallel between the megastore and Pemberley estate becomes quite clear the moment Kathleen enters the enormous bookstore complex after she decides to close her own shop. The scene closely recalls the scene in which Elizabeth Bennet pays her first visit to Pemberley. Just like Austen's original heroine is astonished by the beauty and grandeur of Darcy's estate, Kathleen Kelly is overwhelmed with the store's size and its interior. However, instead of admiring the picturesque location of this Pemberley with its architecture, she focuses mainly on the vast selection of book volumes.

2.13. An establishing shot of Kathleen's bookstore

2.14. An establishing shot of FoxBooks megastore

The scene starts with a long shot, which shows the megastore's interior in details—all the elements are presented in deep focus. And since the shots are made from Kathleen's point of view, the use of deep focus indicates the heroine is scrutinising everything that the building accommodates—every volume, shelf, the decorative Statue of Liberty, etc. As she climbs the stairs and enters the floor with children's literature she discovers it is twice as large as her own shop even though it is just one floor. In comparison to the heroine's modest shop, which offers solely books for children, Joe's FoxBooks presents itself as the bookstore leviathan—with more than 1500 titles, spread over three floors and a "mochachino land" tempting the potential customers with coffee. With such a bookstore in the neighbourhood, The Shop Around the Corner appears as a relic of a bygone era.

Contrary to Ephron and Maguire, the filmmakers of *Clueless,* the very first full-length modernised adaptation of *Emma,* do not try to present the living conditions and financial standing of both Cher and Josh and settle just for the main heroine's. Such a choice may partially result from the fact that the story is told from the point of view of a girl who wants to control everything, including the camera. The makers choose to focus primarily on introducing the audience to the conditions in

which the main heroine grows up as well as on presenting the world that surrounds her, because it explains a lot about the main heroine's personality.

Cher's overconfidence and sense of impunity result clearly from the girl's awareness of her high social standing, which she acquires owing to her father's job position and her family's living conditions. The idyllic lifestyle of the main heroine is established through camerawork and cross-cutting editing technique in the opening scene of the film. The shots of a crystal chandelier and palatial stairs are obvious indications of the Horowitz' upper social status within the society—actually long and massive stairs seem to be a common indicator of wealth in movies. Along with other shots of the house interior, the above-mentioned elements of house decor show that the inhabitants of the mansion are not a typical American family. Altogether, the shots of Cher's house, a pool party she throws out, her fancy car or her carrying a set of shopping bags present the extravagant lifestyle of the protagonist in a rather stereotypical view of white American rich girls—Cher is in her teens and she already has a credit card, throws lavish parties and drives an expensive car her "daddy" (as she continuously refers to him) bought her even though she does not have a driving licence. Thus, Cher's privileging becomes apparent at the very beginning of the film.


2.15-16. The establishing shots of Cher's house's interior


2.17. A bird's view eye shot of Cher driving a car. 2.18. A dirty two shot of Cher having fun at the pool party

In *Clueless*, wealth and connections determine class and social status. Therefore, the heroine's best friend, Dionne is, obviously, as rich as Cher. The teenager openly admits this is exactly why they are friends in the first place: "She's my friend because we both know that others are jealous of us" (Heckerling 00.06.07). Dionne's wealth is hinted at as soon as the girl appears. Just like Cher, she lives in a palatial villa and wears expensive clothes, including rather extravagant hats.

The filmmakers depict the main heroine's world as some kind of a bubble, in which apparently all her friends are rich and live in expensive houses. Not a single modestly furnished apartment or house appears throughout the entire film. The opening sequence of *Clueless* introduces the viewers to the diegetic world of materialism and fast-paced American youth culture. The close-ups of giggling teenage girls, parties at the swimming pools, shopping bags and designer clothes, as well as the bird's eye angle shots of teenagers driving fancy cars tell the audience a lot about the main heroine's and her friends' lifestyle. The non-diegetic music track, *Kids in America*, is playing while the flashes of Cher's carefree daily life are depicted, which links to the storyline. The audiovisual layer of the film—the song's lyrics along with the shots of teenagers having fun—indicate a world in which the youngsters rule. *Clueless* presents a utopian vision of undergraduates with driving licences and credit cards, free from responsibilities and allowed to have fun and do whatever they wish to do.

As Sivya Vasudevan points out, since the movie exhibits thoroughly the cultural preferences and behaviours of the rich, "it remains surprisingly true to Austen's novels themselves, which focus largely on England's high-bourgeois society" (62). *Clueless* discusses the social mores of its time and elaborates on the issues originally explored by Jane Austen in her novels, but "in a very contemporary and American manner" (DiPaolo 128): the first full-length modernised adaptation of *Emma* invites the audience to a quintessential 1990s teen milieu and orients the viewers at posh high school in Beverly Hills, where the representatives of school elite have even their own personal trainers and plastic surgeons.

In this film the adaptative operation of substitution occurs both at the narrative and linguistic level—the first part of Emma's hometown's name—Highbury—remains intact, but its second part alters into school. The filmmakers' choice of Beverly Hills does not seem accidental either—both parts of this town's name start with the same consonant as both parts of the word Highbury, but they are arranged in a reverse order. It is as if Heckerling wanted to imply that *Clueless* is actually *Emma* but presented in a distorting mirror. The connection between the words high and hill deepens this impression—the word "high" reminds us of the pronunciation "height", which might be treated as a synonym of hill. According to Susan Parrill, the reason why the filmmakers may have decided to substitute Highbury with high school in Beverly Hills may be, on the one hand, the assumption that

only a person who is still of school age can be as clueless as Emma and Cher (Parrill 117). On the other hand, the creators probably also took into account the fact that social stratification, so clearly addressed in *Emma*, might be easier to present within the school environment, which naturally separates and divides the students into groups (117). In *Clueless*, druggies, who obviously represent low social status, sit on the grass and skateboard instead of attending classes—they are notoriously late and get rather poor grades. Popular girls dress in flamboyant clothes to school and have a tendency to overdress themselves. Popular boys prink as well, because they come from rich families, and they can afford elegant and expensive designer clothes. Their stylish looks differ significantly from the skateboarders', who dress in oversize hoodies or graphic T-shirts, faded, baggy jeans and trainers.

While in other film adaptations, class differences were amplified through the shots of interior design (at least at the mise-en-scene level), in *Clueless*, the theme of classism is accentuated mainly through the shots of the characters' costumes. Clothes function, therefore, as indicators of social status in Heckerling's movie—which becomes clear at the beginning of the film, when the main heroine is introduced to the audience. The opening sequence of *Clueless* features Cher Horowitz getting ready for school and carefully preparing her outfit. The scene indicates that the protagonist's daily routine involves opening a giant closet, filled with Calvin Kleins and Alaias (and probably other designer clothes) and using a computer programme which matches the elements of her clothing in fashionable stylizations. The fact that Cher's best friend, with whom the girl goes shopping, is equally fascinated by fashion accentuates the importance of clothes in the movie even more. Knowing the social norms of Beverly Hills High School, Cher convinces Tai to let her and Dionne do her styling. In this way the new schoolmate finally becomes acknowledged. Tai's visual metamorphosis carries, however, a deeper meaning, as it symbolises Tai leaving the sphere of low status, and thus, her leaving Travis Birkenstock's[57] sphere. The amplification of symbols—such as giant mirrors and wardrobes, multiplicity of shopping bags, malls or the names of famous designers—or motifs connected with fashion, such as matching the elements of wardrobe or the idea of a make-over, reinforces the importance of money and good looks—the indicators of social status in the movie[58].

Since the makeover indicates the heroine's social advancement, it is performed by the most popular and the richest (these traits often go hand in hand in teen movies) girl at school. In this way,

[57] the film counterpart of Mr Robert Martin, Harriet Smith's wooer

[58] At the same time, it contributes to establishing the film genre as a teen movie. Clothes and fashion are typically used as indicators of social status in coming-of-age/teen films. The idea of a makeover which symbolises the character's social upliftment is also a common motif—it appears both in full-length teen movies like *Grease* (dir. Randal Kleiser, 1978) or *Mean Girls* (dir. Mark Waters, 2004), and such popular TV series as *Gossip Girl* (2007-2012) or *Glee* (2009-2015).

the makeover resembles a ritual of empowerment—especially when taking into consideration that the heroine who has just undergone this metamorphosis often overshadows her popular and influential friend as the story develops. In *Clueless*, Cher Horowitz has the power to conduct such "a ritual", as she represents the school elite and is depicted as a typical "Queen Bee" who rules the school. The protagonist's high social position is continuously accentuated by the addition of scenes which clearly show how popular among her peers the main heroine is, as well as by the addition of the shots of her fancy car, luxurious living conditions and extravagant clothes.

Apart from the visual tools, however, the filmmakers clearly emphasise the girl's sense of class affiliation by making her use expressions that distinguish her from other students and give an impression of the heroine's sophistication. Similarly to *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the characters' language becomes an indicator of the class affiliation in *Clueless*. Through her specific choice of words, Cher Horowitz tries to present herself as much more familiar with culture and more "mainstream" than the average teenager. At times, the heroine appears to actually speak her own unique language which needs to be translated for those who represent lower social spheres, like Tai Fraisier. A "full on Monet" refers to a person who looks fine from distance but "from up close, it's a mess" (Heckerling 00.55.21). A "Baldwin" is a physically attractive boy, an expression used in reference to the famously handsome Baldwin brothers. Cher appears wise and eloquent to her schoolmates, especially to Tai, who listens to her comments with fascination. Sometimes, however, the heroine's ignorance comes to light. At some points the girl clearly does not know what she is talking about, and the audience has no idea what she means either. When Cher describes the cartoon series *The Ren and Stimpy Show* as "way existential," Josh asks if she even knows what she is talking about. Cher admits she does not and asks if she gives the impression she does. Clearly, the teenager is aware of how she uses language and does not really care if she does it correctly as long as others think she does. The girl's reply makes the viewers wonder how much of what the main protagonist says has been used purely for effect.

At first glance Cher Horowitz seems to be an adequate representation of Austen's Emma Woodhouse: "handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition" (Austen, *Emma* 5). Accordingly, the teenager takes over Emma's "power of having rather too much her own way"—as her father has taught her that the girl can always get whatever she wants if she argues well enough—"and a disposition to think a little too well of herself" (5). The similarities between the two heroines are apparent since the very beginning of Heckerling's movie. Just like Emma is considered a member of the elite community of Highbury, Cher is one of the most popular girls at her school. She is perfectly aware of her popularity and considers herself to be above her schoolmates—which is why she refuses to date her schoolmates (until she meets Christian). Clearly, the teenager also believes

she is entitled to have everything she wants, including good grades even though she does not study hard, or a driving licence although she cannot drive well.

Throughout the film the girl tries to talk her way out of some sort of an unfortunate situation (getting poor marks, avoiding doing exercises in PE classes, failing a driving test, etc.) just because she feels she is empowered to. The art of arguing is in the heroine's mind an attribute of wealthy and influential people—a conclusion she must have drawn from the fact that her father has made a fortune on arguing. Most of the time the teenager manages to get away with whatever she is trying to avoid—which is why the girl's sense of impunity, and her self-confidence are so strong. In order to enhance her chances to get what she wants Cher emphasises her comments with a whole spectrum of adverbs and adjectives. The teenager's language is clearly marked by hyperbole, as it is filled with expressions which accentuate whatever the girl says at the moment: thus, the heroine is "brutally rebuffed" by a teacher, whom she later tries to make "sublimely happy" by interfering in his love life, her matchmaking and manipulative skills make her fellow students "utterly grateful". The heroine tends to exaggerate both in times of distress (she calls her life "a royal mess") and on a regular basis, as she tries to make an impression not just on her fellow students but on her audience as well—at the beginning of the movie Cher's voice over informs the viewers her father works on "a gazillion depositions."

The filmmakers of modernised movie adaptations of Austen's novels treat the theme of social stratification as one of the foundations on which they build their narratives. Foundation means in this respect background or a context. The introduction of this particular theme allows the creators to reinforce, at least to some extent, the original plotlines and characters' structure. Nevertheless, classism is not the main theme of those adaptations. The message of *Clueless* is actually one of tolerance—quite adequate for a teen movie, yet never really a central theme in Austen's *Emma*. The major theme of *You've Got Mail* is, in turn, complacency, whereas *Bridget Jones' Diary* focuses most of all on the theme of loneliness.

In *Clueless,* the issue of tolerance is discussed throughout the movie. It is directly addressed by Cher and Mr Hall during classes—first in the debate during which the main heroine argues for the Haitians in America and then by the teacher, who states that "tolerance is always a good lesson" (Heckerling 00.06.07). The setting of the movie—school environment—allows the filmmakers to explore the theme on different layers—in terms of race and nationality, sexual orientation, as well as physical appearance and behavioural propriety. All of these layers are explored through the character of Cher Horowitz, who reinforces the theme of (in)tolerance through her attitude towards Dionne, Tai, Lucy and Travis. At first sight the teenager appears open-minded and tolerant towards other races

and nationalities—she is best friends with African American Dionne and emphasises in her debate the need to preserve American society as tolerant, culturally diverse and inclusive. Yet, at the same time, she disrespects her own maid, Lucy, who comes from El Salvador. The original slight to Miss Bates in Austen's literary original changes into a confusion as to the housekeeper's country of origin. When Josh corrects the girl, she flippantly dismisses the information. Even greater offence towards Lucy is Cher's gift for her: the girl gives the housekeeper clothes which she does not intend to wear anymore. The heroine considers her gift an act of goodwill and calls it "charity", but it is downright offensive, as the age gap between the two females and a noticeable difference between their sizes shows how inappropriate it is to give a middle-aged woman a bunch of clothes, which are too small and too gaudery for her.

As mentioned before, the theme of tolerance is explored not only by racial diversity, but also by different sexual orientations of the characters and different attitudes towards sexuality as well—Cher wants to keep sexual abstinence until she meets the right person, Dionne claims to be "technically a virgin", Tai is sexually active, and while these three girls are heterosexual, Christian is homosexual, and it is also indicated that the PE teacher, Miss Stoeger, is a lesbian. The school community appears understanding and open-minded towards non-heterosexually oriented students—Christian is welcome without prejudice or homophobic abuse. Once again, Cher appears as a tolerant person as she accepts the news about the boy's sexual orientation without judgement. Nevertheless, the film treats homosexuals stereotypically, as it depicts Christian as keen on fashion and art, an admirer of films featuring naked male chests, whereas Miss Stoeger is presented as not particularly feminine—a rather cliché image of a butch lesbian: the PE teacher is always dressed in oversize tracksuit, wears no make-up and pulls her hair back in a careless ponytail. Additionally, the woman openly shows her dislike for men.

Yet, *Clueless* also presents the issue of lack of tolerance: it is seen in social stratification. While clothes and sense of fashion function as indicators of social status, at the same time, they also become a requirement to join Cher and Dionne's inner circle. The girls allow Tai to join their company only because they treat the teenager like a "project" and want to change her image. The physical make-over of Tai is, therefore, a key requirement for the girl to spend time with Cher and Dionne. Usually, a different sense of fashion and less sophisticated language evoke a dismissive attitude in the two divas. Thus, Cher chooses Christian to be her boyfriend because he dresses better than she does (as she states herself) and ignores all the other boys at school because they do not dress good enough and look "like they just fell out of bed and put on some baggy pants and take their greasy hair and cover it up with backwards cap" (Heckerling 00.47.29). Throughout the movie Cher tries to

manipulate whatever she does not tolerate. The heroine does not like Tai's look, so she modifies it—as easily as she changes stylizations in her computer program. The girl does not approve of Tai's verbal skills, so she convinces her new friend to work on her vocabulary as well. One of the self-improvement tasks which she assigns Tai is to acquire a new word every day ("sporadically" is the first one). Cher hopes that Tai's metamorphosis—which requires both changing her style of clothing and the manner in which the girl talks—will make the girl a more appropriate companion for her. And since the main heroine tries to change everything about her "friend"—her looks, way of expression and preferences—it is rather obvious the teenager never really accepts the new girl.

However, while Cher can alter Tai's way of speaking, her hairstyle and clothing, or even persuade her to fancy Elton, the girl—just like Harriet Smith—is essentially unchangeable. All the introduced modifications are apparent, as the protagonist remains sexually active and uses drugs, which sets contrast between her and Cher (who is a virgin and disapproves of drugs) and at the same time accentuates similarities between Tai and her admirer, Travis Birkenstock. In fact, "in *Clueless* behavioural propriety rather than class distinction is foremost" (Phillips and Heal). Thus, unlike the working-class farmer Robert Martin, Travis Birkenstock is distinguished not so much by his lower status in a school community as by his demeanour and life choices. Cher cannot tolerate Tai's admirer not because of his lower social rank, but because he is loud, wears clothes which the heroine finds odd and, most importantly, because he uses drugs (Flavin 148). The girl eventually accepts Tai's relationship with Travis, but only after the boy joins a drug rehab program and after she has an epiphany that "all [her] friends [are] really good in different ways" (Heckerling 01.21.50).

The epiphany comes unfortunately after Cher realises that her manipulations turn Tai into an unfeeling person who starts to look down on Travis and insults her friends if she does not like what they have to say. Thus, the moral of the story seems to be simultaneously a warning that not everything can and should be manipulated. Such a moral supports the major theme and reinforces Cher's image as a manipulator. The girl's unwillingness to accept opinions, preferences and behaviours she does not agree with pushes the teenager to find a solution to "the problem" and nurture her manipulative skills. Thus, the girl knows exactly how to manipulate her teachers into giving her higher grades for the semester—she lies to Miss Stoeger that a boy broke her heart to evoke the teacher's sympathy and because she knows the woman does not like boys—then, she lies to Mr Hall to make him think Miss Geist likes him and finally she sends love letters to Miss Geist on behalf of Mr Hall. Cher's manipulations are aimed both at teachers and her fellow students. The heroine persuades Tai into letting her change the girl's image because she cannot stand the new schoolmate's style and convinces the teenager that Elton likes her just because she questions Tai's interest in Travis. The way Cher tries to get Christian's attention—by sending herself chocolates with notes (to make

him think she already has many admirers), deliberately dropping her pen on the floor, and dressing provocatively—is equally sneaky.

Through the amplification of scenes featuring the main heroine using her persuasive abilities the filmmakers clearly accentuate Emma Woodhouse's need to control the lives of others. However, while Cher's manipulations are lined with lies and ruses, Austen's Emma never stoops so low as to lie. Harriet Smith believes Mr Elton fancies her because Emma genuinely thinks he does. The heroine is so sure of her own matchmaking skills that she is certain Mr Elton will eventually propose to Harriet just because she decides they should get married. Thus, while Austen's Emma Woodhouse is mostly depicted as a naïve girl who thinks she knows and sees more than those around her, Cher Horowitz is portrayed as a manipulative storyteller, proud of her deceptive skills.

The ending of the film presents Cher finally becoming the tolerant person she thought she always was. To show her approval and acknowledgment of Travis' efforts she agrees to come to a skateboarding competition in which the boy participates and applauds his performance. Then she makes peace with Tai and finally accepts the girl's preferences without judging her. The film's final scene features Dionne, Tai and Cher sitting at a wedding table as equal friends, without racial or class barriers to their relationships. Such a denouement of the story appears naive in comparison to the original ending. While in the novel Emma Woodhouse and Harriet Smith remain on good terms and Emma's clueless interference in Harriet's life is forgiven, the wedding of Harriet and Robert Martin essentially puts an end to the women' close friendship—which according to Austen is a natural course of events. Once again, the original ending of Austen's novel is in the film beautified to appeal to the masses and to make it fit the simplified fairytale narrative, in which everything turns out just fine.

In modernised adaptations of Austen's novels, the theme of social stratification provides a fertile ground for the inclusion of the major theme. In *Clueless* the issue of intolerance manifests itself primarily through the snobbery of the diegetic community—the main protagonist's disregard towards Travis, Tai and Lucy, Dionne's prejudice towards Tai and Elton's unwillingness to even consider Tai a potential girlfriend (which echoes Mr Elton dismissing the idea of him marrying Harriet Smith). In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the redefinition of the theme of social stratification, based on relationship status, supports and reinforces the main theme of the film, which is loneliness. The constant pressure of the community—the intrusive questions about the main heroine's love life as well as constant reminders of time passing by and the biological clock ticking—lead the eponymous protagonist to subordinate everything to finding a life partner. The theme of loneliness is continuously reinforced throughout the film by the main character herself as well as by the use of the setting and the music (both diegetic and non-diegetic).

The main theme of the movie is established at the very beginning: first the heroine expresses her deep dissatisfaction with her love life and then she promises herself she will find a decent boyfriend—this becomes one of her New Year' resolutions. The analysis of the opening scene presents how the characters, setting and music work together to reinforce the major theme of the movie. The scene starts with Bridget visiting her parents' home on a cold, winter day. The snowy weather outside along with the shots of a graveyard (which the woman passes by) and dimmed colour palette reflect the protagonist's mood of despair and set a dejected tone.

2.19. A single mid-shot of Bridget coming home in the opening scene

The impression of the heroine's poor mood is deepened as the viewers listen to her voiceover, which informs them that "it all began on the New Year's day in [her] thirty-second year of being single" (Maguire 00.01.02.). The woman brings her entire 32-year life to the status of being single, literally labelling her existence with singlehood. The establishing shot presents the protagonist surrounded only by snow drifts and empty cars—not a single human being stands in the frame. Such a frame composition purposely accentuates the woman's loneliness. The tone of the shot is quite heavy because of the dimmed colour palette and low-key lighting. Interestingly, the film continuously depicts Bridget as a single woman on cold, windy days. When she starts dating Daniel Cleaver, the weather is sunny and warm. Yet, as they split up the sunny days are over—once again it is windy and snowy. Thus, the motif of the unity between nature and a human, used so often by the filmmakers of heritage cinema, reappears in modernised adaptations as well.

The opening scene ends with Darcy insulting Bridget in front of his parents. As she walks out of the living room, the woman's bitter voiceover comments on the situation once again, and the camera takes the still frame of Bridget blushing in embarrassment and faking a smile. The close-up shot captures the woman's face in deep focus—which allows the audience to notice how Darcy's words hurt her. Mark Darcy and his mother remain in shallow focus, the camera does not capture their faces in full, which means that their emotions are not particularly important in the scene. This is

actually one of the many situations during which the heroine has to grin and bear unpleasant moments—she does it whenever someone asks her about her love life (which happens at least four times throughout the movie).

2.20. A dirty single shot of Bridget faking a smile after hearing Darcy's insult

After the still frame dissolves into a shot depicting the block of flats where the woman lives, the camera cuts to a shot of a party hat in front of Bridget's apartment, and the audience hear her voiceover once again. At the sight of the hat the viewers may expect to see Bridget out in the city or coming back home from a party or a pub crawl. Yet, the next establishing shot shows a completely opposite situation, as the camera orients the audience at the eponymous heroine's apartment, with its owner lying on a sofa in her pyjamas.

2.21. A full shot of Bridget lying on a sofa in her apartment

A full shot of a spacious room shows Bridget not in the centre of the frame, but on its right side—which only emphasises the size of the room and the empty space in it. Once again, Bridget is alone in the room, and watches *Frasier* out of boredom. At first, it is hard to notice her at all, as the lighting is low-key and the heroine's silhouette blends in the photo: the shade of the wall corresponds with the woman's fair hair whereas the colour of the sofa harmonises with her dark red pyjamas. The colour palette of the shot consists of browns and beiges—which makes the apartment look cosy and, at the same time, suggests its owner's warm personality, and yet, Bridget lives alone in this flat. The motifs, symbols and music used in this scene reinforce the theme of loneliness. The abandoned party

hat symbolises Bridget herself—a fun girl, being left out completely on her own. The hat along with such symbols as the heroine's diary, on the first page of which she later writes down "The Diary of Bridget Jones, old spinster and lunatic" or the board games in her apartment—Twister and Monopoly—become constant reminders of the woman's need for a company. Drinking wine in solitude, lying on the sofa or in the bed in pyjamas with a remote control in one hand and a cigarette or a glass of wine in the other (or both as in this case), and watching TV at home instead of going out are common signifiers of singleness in films[59]. Similarly, the song *All By Myself* is often used in romantic comedies to accompany the scenes featuring the heroine feeling dejected and at a low point in her life—it appears, for example, in *Clueless* in the scene in which Cher is at her most vulnerable. Interestingly, in *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the song appears to be non-diegetic at first, but as the heroine starts singing to it, it changes into diegetic. The use of this technique makes the audience more involved in the scene—they can hear what the main protagonist hears. The choice of the song and Bridget's expressive singing builds both a bitter and a funny mood. At first, the viewers empathise with the woman and feel sorry for her, as they see how affected she is by her loneliness. Yet, as the singing becomes more and more passionate, the viewers' empathy gradually alters into amusement. Bridget's performance is meant to be tragicomic, as the film does have a happy ending.

The accentuation of the theme of loneliness forces a change within the ending of the story. Of course, the original *Pride and Prejudice* does end with Elizabeth and Darcy's happy ever-after, but it is not Elizabeth who takes the initiative and asks for a second chance. Since Maguire's modernised adaptation of Austen's novel presents a story of a lonely woman determined to find herself a life partner, the denouement of the narrative requires the ultimate initiative in establishing the relationship made by the heroine. Bridget's desperate pursuits after Mark Darcy at the end of the movie, accompanied by the song *Ain't No Mountain High Enough*—whose lyrics relate to the woman's chasing after the man of her dreams—only accentuate the protagonist's determination to get a boyfriend.

Even though *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *You've Got Mail* are both modernised retellings of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, they do not centre on the same theme. Admittedly, Ephron's movie does feature the theme of loneliness, but it is one of the minor themes and, thus, the film's narrative does not revolve around it. The story within *You've Got Mail* is regulated by the theme of complacency, and the moral of the story sends a message that leaving one's comfort zone behind is necessary to grow and find true happiness. While Jane Austen tackles the theme of complacency in

[59] They appear in Cracknell's costume *Persuasions* (2022), *Legally Blonde* (dir. Robert Luketic, 2001) or *The Holiday* (dir. Nancy Meyers, 2006).

her literary original as well, she explores it from a different perspective: the author uses it as a tool to criticise the acknowledged standards of a patriarchal society and certain behaviours which further undermine female independence and worsen the already poor situation of women.

In truth, Jane Austen was neither a revolutionist nor a committed proponent of changes in a patriarchal society. However, she does elaborate negatively on these protagonists of her prose who willingly accept the role of a victim in a system dominated by men, and who try to impose such victimisation on others as well. Thus, the author presents Lady Cathrine de Bourgh as haughty and insensitive even towards Mr Darcy and her own daughter: she does not care whether they have feelings for each other, and she demands they get married, nevertheless. The heroine cannot imagine Mr Darcy marrying Elizabeth Bennet or anybody else, because she has been planning the man's wedding for years and finds it unnecessary to ruin these plans for such a trivial (according to her) reason as affection. Mrs Bennet's compliance with prevailing standards, in turn, makes her almost force one of her daughters to an unwanted marriage with a man who has no affection and respect for the girl in the first place. The woman does not hesitate even for a second to trade her own child's fate in exchange for the possibility to stay in Longbourn after Mr Bennet's death. Thus, female complacency in Austen's prose is often interrelated with the need to secure oneself or the family's finances. Male complacency, in turn, may result from the need to maintain high social status and reputation. Mr Darcy seems complacent at the beginning of Austen's story and then experiences an internal conflict when he falls in love. The depiction of the hero alters into positive, as the author rewards her protagonist for resisting family pressure and avoiding entering unhappy and unwanted marriage.

Similarly, in the film, Nora Ephron rewards Joe Fox for leaving his own comfort zone—ending his relationship with Patricia Eden and pursuing his former rival in business. The theme of complacency is explored through both main protagonists, as the film features both of them leading the lives they believe they ought to have, but not the ones they actually dream of. Thus, even though Kathleen and Joe feel mutual attraction the moment they meet for the first time, they do not act on it. The characters' complacent attitudes are noticeable in the choice of both their life partners and their occupation. Joe's girlfriend, a cynical and insensitive book editor, incorporates the image of how the hero sees himself at the beginning of the story—which may be concluded from Patricia's words, as she sees him the exact same way: "I love how you've totally forgotten that you've had any role in her [Kathleen] current situation. It's so obtuse. So insensitive. Reminds me of someone. Me!" (Ephron 01.26.46). Kathleen, in turn, lives with a sententious, self righteous writer who supports her efforts in keeping The Shop Around the Corner open. Nevertheless, neither the main heroine nor Joe Fox love their partners or appear to be particularly satisfied with their relationship. On the one hand,

entering a chat room might be interpreted as looking for some change. On the other hand, the protagonists agree on not sharing "the specifics" about their lives—the less they know about each other, the less probable they will not commit themselves emotionally in this relation. Obviously, the characters are more committed in this virtual relationship than in their real-life ones. Nevertheless, they keep dating Patricia and Frank out of habit.

Similarly, instead of choosing their own career paths in life, the protagonists choose to live their relatives' lives. Kathleen is so emotionally invested in her bookstore—her mother's legacy—that the woman sees The Shop Around the Corner as an extension of her parent's life and clings to it, refusing to say goodbye to the past. In fact, much of her wrath at Joe Fox is actually sorrow and regret that her mother's bookstore is not equipped to survive such a strong competition as FoxBooks megastore and stay on the market. As Kathleen admits herself, losing The Shop Around the Corner makes her grieve over the loss of her parent once again. Kathleen's fierce fight to keep the children's bookstore open prevents her from facing the reality of her mother's death and from beginning a new chapter in life. Instead, the woman hides behind her parent's shop, refusing to follow her own plans and dreams. Likewise, Joe stubbornly runs the family business even though he clearly does not like the person he becomes because of it. The characters' honest online confessions and radical difference between how they act in real life and on the Internet shows exactly how incompatible their behaviours are to their feelings. Only when Kathleen closes her mother's bookstore and the protagonists' business relation comes to an end, do the lovers get another chance to start again and realise how well they mesh.

Such a depiction of the theme of complacency forces changes in Austen's characters' structure. While the literary Mr Darcy is portrayed as highly moral and honest, Ephron's treatment of the film's major theme changes his film counterpart into more secretive and manipulative. The hero never actually lies to Kathleen, but he does not reveal the truth about his identity either. Joe's decision not to tell the woman that he is NY152 while cultivating their friendship is morally questionable. The man basically manipulates the heroine into falling in love with him in reality. Of course, his actions are to some extent justified—if Joe told Kathleen the truth straight away, this would definitely put an end to their relation. After all, Kathleen regards Joe as her enemy throughout the greater part of the story. The hero's duplicity is central to the pair's love story, as it is Joe who actually makes it possible for the couple to start their real-life relationship. He pushes the heroine beyond her prejudice and shows her how much fun they have together. By the end of the movie, the man even asks Kathleen to choose flesh-and-blood him over NY152. And while the woman is tempted, her complacent nature rears its head once again—she feels more comfortable to choose her long-time friend, a person she trusts (even though she does not know what he looks like).

A far greater distortion is introduced within the character structure of Elizabeth Bennet's film counterpart. While Austen's Lizzy strikes as strong, outspoken, witty and vibrant, Kathleen Kelly gives the overall impression of being fragile, a bit insecure and melancholic. In one of her emails, she admits she never knows what to say to those who are rude to her. Thus, the woman presents herself as powerless and inarticulate, although during her date with Joe at the café for "the first time in [her] life, when confronted with a horrible and insensitive person, [she] knew exactly what [she] wanted to say and [she] said it" (Ephron 01.01.17 – 01.01.23). Perhaps the filmmakers wanted to make a reference to Elizabeth's fallibility and her confession that she "never knew [her]self" until she found out the truth about Darcy's motivations—a conclusion Elizabeth makes after she realises how wrong she has been about the man. Unfortunately, by thanking Joe for her "breakthrough" in attacking "horrible" people verbally, Kathleen seems a bit ridiculous and self-deceitful, as if unaware of her own personality. Except for the last fifteen minutes of the film, the heroine acts aggressively and provocatively towards Joe Fox from the moment she finds out about his identity. Thus, Elizabeth's witty outspokenness changes into poignancy, which along with Kathleen's determination to see Joe Fox as a threat to her, makes the heroine appear quite touchy and neurotic—the two features that are generally not observable in Elizabeth Bennet. Of course, these introduced changes result largely from transaccentuation of the main theme: The perspective of a sudden and imminent change in Kathleen's life turns out to be too much for her to embrace as she got used to her daily routine—comfortable job position and a boyfriend she gets along with (even if their relationship is devoid of passion).

Neither *You've Got Mail*, however, nor any other modernised adaptation puts as much emphasis on the theme of the hardships of women in patriarchal society as the author of the literary source texts. Of course, the issue is not reduced completely but it does not play an equally important role in the narratives of the novels' modernised adaptations. In most cases the theme serves as a background for the main heroine's unfolding story—it reveals what the main protagonist is forced to fight against. Thus, the heroines' adapted stories are framed by unpleasant situations that happen to them and are caused by men. According to Claire Johnston, one of the progenitors of feminist film theory, the female within the patriarchal system is perceived as "the other" (34)—which explains why women in Austen's times were deprived of the rights to inherit and own households. In modernised adaptations of the novelist's works, the realities of patriarchy translate into male dominated workplaces where the film counterparts of Austen's heroines have to fight for their job positions[60]. The "othering" of the female protagonists manifests itself in these movies through the men

[60] In the case of *Clueless*, the patriarchal undertones are more noticeable in the heroine's home environment, as Cher Horowitz still attends school and does not have a job yet. The heroine's freedom is limited by her authoritative father, who controls her grades, style of clothing or the time when she comes back home and evokes fear in his and Cher's maid, his workers and co-workers.

objectifying and treating women as less competent workers. Thus, Kathleen Kelly owns a tiny bookstore and tries to protect it from the FoxBooks megastore, run by three ruthless businessmen who openly patronise her family business, but at the same time, sincerely compliment Kathleen's and her mother's beauty. The co-workers of Cher Horowitz' father do not want her around and dismiss the girl after she sorts some of the case documents, telling her to go to a mall, yet they appreciate it when she brings them some snacks. Apparently, in their minds all a young girl can do is shopping. Bridget Jones, in turn, tries to literally make a name for herself—one of her bosses continuously misspells her name—and earn respect in the Pemberley Publishing House as both her male bosses do not appreciate her working skills. In fact, both of them objectify Bridget and even harass the woman sexually—Mr Fitzherbert constantly ogles her breasts and Daniel Cleaver seduces the infatuated heroine but refuses to commit to her and form a stable relationship with her. Additionally, Bridget undergoes a series of interviews, always conducted by men and she basically is at their mercy—which clearly indicates that in Bridget's world men are in power over women. When the heroine finally manages to change her job, she is employed by another powerful man who diminishes her competences but hires her anyway because he wants to have sex with her. In the above-mentioned cases of Bridget and Kathleen men become the source of the heroines' misery. Joe Fox along with his father and grandfather bring downfall to Kathleen Kelly's beloved bookstore, whereas Daniel Cleaver, Mr Fitzherbert, Bridget's new boss—Richard, as well as "uncle" Joe (who constantly puts his hand on Bridget's bottom) collectively destroy the woman's self-confidence and strengthen her insecurities. Nevertheless, both women, Kathleen and Bridget, get themselves together and form a better future for themselves—which exemplifies female power. The heroines even manage to make the men who are responsible for their worries try to make amends and pursue them.

Out of all modernised adaptations of Austen's novels, the "othering" of women is probably most noticeable in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice.* The diegetic world of this movie presents the patriarchal society of contemporary India, which subordinates women to men. Mr Kholi's attitude towards women exemplifies this expected subordination, whereas Mrs Bakshi's and Chandra Lamba's acceptance of the adopted social norms shows how deeply rooted patriarchy is in Indian society. Meanwhile, female empowerment manifests itself mainly through Lalita Bakshi's outspokenness and conduct. The woman clearly marks that she refuses to be subordinated to a man as she is looking for a partnership. Lalita's unwillingness to be subordinated to a man is indicated in the opening scene of the movie, which features the heroine working alongside her father and supervising men as they work in the field. Lalita is the only woman on the plantation. The heroine is driving a tractor and monitoring the work of other men—which positions the woman in the role of a leader (usually ascribed to male characters). Her outfit—a comfortable set of clothes mixing a shirt,

trousers and massive boots—does not highlight the protagonist's femininity but strengthens the impression of ascribed male features and highlights the image of an emancipated woman, not limited by stereotypical female outfits which diminish the feeling of comfort.

In film adaptations of Austen's novels female empowerment often manifests itself in the depictions of the film heroines as underestimated equals to the male characters—which is largely motivated by the fact that Jane Austen herself matches her heroines and heroes intellectually. Costume adaptations, however, have set a pattern of presenting Austen's women as remarkably fit and athletic. They become well-skilled opponents in sport. The 1995 Marianne Dashwood plays cricket very well. Emma Woodhouse and Elizabeth Bennet both excel at archery in Douglas McGrath's *Emma* and Robert Z. Leonard's *Pride and Prejudice*. And while the cinematic 1996 Emma's skills clearly match Mr Knightley's, the 1940 Elizabeth is even more athletic than Mr Darcy, who turns out to be a rather poor archer. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, in turn, present the Bennet sisters as outstanding warriors and swordsmen. The scene featuring a duel between Elizabeth and Darcy reveals the two of them are equally well-trained. Charles Bingley's fencing skills, however, cannot match Jane Bennet's at all. The above-mentioned adaptations use one of Austen's conventions to amplify the adapted heroine's fitness in order to make the women look less vulnerable. Instead, they appear stronger and more empowered.

Modernised adaptations, which change time frames, give up on the idea of using the heroines' fitness as an indicator of their empowerment. Cher Horowitz and Bella Swan continuously try to avoid participating in PE lessons. Bridget Jones falls from the treadmill during her training. Most of the contemporised adaptations do not even include a scene which indicates that the heroine does anything at all to keep her silhouette fit. Clearly, the filmmakers have decided against accentuating female bodies. Instead, these loose adaptations move the emphasis onto the heroines' articulacy. The feminist undertones echoing through the pages of Austen's novels, mainly thanks to Elizabeth Bennet's assertiveness, Emma Woodhouse's sense of independence or Marianne Dashwood's stubborn determination to marry on her own terms regardless of social norms, may appear strengthened in modernised film adaptations through additional scenes featuring the heroines' fighting for what or whom they want and by amplifying the scenes in which the women openly express their opinions and scold their future partners. Thus, while Elizabeth Bennet behaves rudely towards Mr Darcy only once in the novel—and it happens right after he insults her first—her film counterparts take every chance to show their dislike for Darcy's film counterparts. Bridget Jones, Kathleen Kelly, Lalita Bakshi and Elizabeth Bennet from Andrew Black's *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter Day-Comedy* cling to every word of Darcy's film counterparts and twist them to their

disadvantage, almost looking for an excuse to quarrel[61]. Cher and Josh as well as Aisha and Arjun banter with each other throughout the movies. Such a transaccentuation allows modernised adaptations to build an image of strong-willed and energetic heroines who are looking for love and life partners, but on their own terms. The filmmakers may assume the viewers would prefer to see Austen's heroines freed from patriarchal society and given more autonomy and this is why they make women more decisive, outspoken and emotionally expressive in their movies.

They also take more initiative in building romantic relationships and become far more provocative: Bridget Jones starts wearing mini-skirts and translucent blouses to draw Daniel Cleaver's attention (successfully); Cher Horowitz tries to seduce the film counterpart of Frank Churchill; Kate Forster, the film counterpart of Anne Eliot in *Lake House*, engages in a drunken kiss with Alex Wyler (the film counterpart of Captain Wentworth) during a housewarming party; the modernised Jane Fairfax in Ojha's adaptation of *Emma*, Aarti Menon, engages in drunken kisses with her own Frank Churchill—Dhruv Singh. Even Kathleen Kelly, who seems the least provocative out of all of them, presents herself as rather daring, when she enters the "after 30 chat room" and engages herself in a virtual relationship with her pen pal even though she already lives with a boyfriend. Austen and her contemporary readers would be appalled by such actions, as some of them would be considered unfit for a well-mannered lady even nowadays. This change of attitude to social etiquette means that modernised adaptations of Austen's novels are not so strongly focused on the theme of morality, and, thus, they do not represent one of the generic characteristics of Austen's novels of manners.

While the film counterparts of Austen's heroines are depicted as far more liberated, men become more neutralised in their actions but simultaneously more verbose. Grand gestures of men in love are not captured by the filmmakers even though Austen depicts her main male protagonists as "knights in shining armour", ready for any sacrifice in the name of true love: the original Mr Darcy saves the Bennets from social infamy by searching out Wickham on his own and persuading him to marry Lydia Bennet whilst offering his financial support; then he convinces Bingley to pursue Jane Bennet, all because he wants to earn Elizabeth Bennet's love and respect; Mr Knightley decides to move out from his house and moves in with Emma and her father, acknowledging her power and ignoring the social conventions according to which the wife was required to move in her husband's home and not the other way round; Colonel Brandon sets out in a storm to look for Marianne, and when she falls ill he rushes through the night immediately to bring the woman's mother so that she

[61] A similar depiction of this protagonist is visible in *Fire Island* even though in this case Elizabeth Bennet is a homosexual man.

could bring comfort to her daughter; Captain Wentworth, in turn, goes out into the world to make a fortune so he can marry Anne Eliot.

While the British writer depicts her male characters as chivalric, she also describes them as secretive about their emotions and composed. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Darcy does not intend anyone to know about his interference in the Lydia/Wickham crisis, as he does not want Elizabeth or her family to feel they owe him anything. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward Ferrars does not reveal his feelings for Elinor Dashwood, and he does not mention the commitment he made to Lucy Steele years before he met the older Dashwood sister. Colonel Brandon keeps the truth about Willoughby from Marianne and does not mention his affection for her so that the heroine can make her own choices. Therefore, Austen's heroes do not win the ladies of their hearts by confessing their feelings to them, but by proving themselves highly moral and composed. In Austen's prose sense always triumphs over sensibility, as the heroines appear to choose whom they fall in love with on the basis of their admirers' actions and axiology. Elizabeth experiences a change of heart about Darcy after she hears about his grand gestures towards her family; determined to become more sensible, Marianne leaves her sensibilities along with Willoughby in the past and eventually falls for Colonel Brandon, Emma changes her perspective about matrimony and marries the only person who makes her behave better.

As Troost and Greenfield state, in the case of the film adaptations, "Austen's men are modernised out of their repressions into displays of feeling" (7). The audience does not have to wait until the end of the film to hear the heroes elaborating on their emotions, as they do it much earlier: After the Shop Around the Corner closes up, Joe Fox visits Kathleen Kelly in her sickness, brings her flowers and offers to make peace with her. Mark Darcy, in turn, apologises to Bridget for his rude behaviour during their first encounter and admits he likes her very much "just as she is" she is (Maguire 00.55.12) in the middle of the movie. Chadha's Will Darcy tells Lalita he is jealous of her when they fly together to attend Chandra and Mr Kholi's wedding. It can be argued that by making male characters emotionally expressive the filmmakers try to make them more attractive to a modern audience—as they provide an image of a man who is not afraid to talk about his feelings.

However, at the same time, the creators have made it unnecessary for the heroes to prove themselves worthy of the heroines and win their affections through their actions—a motif used so often by Austen. Consequently, Joe Fox does not rescue Kathleen Kelly from danger—on the contrary, he brings downfall to her business, and although Mark Darcy does help Bridget to perform well in her new job and Will Darcy helps Lalita find her younger sister, their gestures of goodwill are far less impressive than the literary Darcy's heroic actions. Besides, Mark Darcy does not need or try to rescue Bridget from Daniel Cleaver (a film counterpart of George Wickham) or the outcomes of

his wicked intentions, as the heroine refuses to reunite with the man out of her own decision—which exemplifies her empowerment. Josh and Arjun, in turn, do not have to sacrifice anything to be with Cher and Aisha. This clearly results from the fact that the modern audience wants to make Austen's females more independent. The film counterparts of Austen's heroines do not need to be rescued—they appear to be empowered enough to rescue themselves. The filmmakers refuse to picture their reinvented protagonists as damsels in distress and decide to give them a choice whom they are going to make a relationship with and an initiative to make this choice.

In order to accentuate the female protagonists' decisiveness, the filmmakers subvert the Austenian trope of an ultimate grand gesture by making women instead of men perform them in modernised film adaptations of Austen's novels. Consequently, more and more movies end in a very similar manner—the main heroine takes fate into her own hands and literally chases after the man she loves. Therefore, Bridget Jones runs after Mark Darcy (twice), Kate Forster hurries to the lake house to talk to Alex Wyler in time and save his life, the Bollywood Emma (Aisha Kapoor) follows her Mr Knightley to the wedding as fast as she can and bravely confesses her love to him over the microphone in front of all the guests and Cracknell's Anne Eliot chases Captain Wentworth on the street. The film heroines seem to be bolder in expressing their feelings than their literary predecessors. The heroines' impulsiveness and the heroes' passivity almost result with a reversal of the characters' roles. Men become more effeminate by making women hunt them. And since women take over the roles of seducers in the film, the subtle intimacy between the characters which Austen gradually builds in her texts is missing in modernised adaptations.

Originally, Austen's heroines do not search for love and romantic raptures. Yet, their film counterparts want to be in relationships, and take the initiative to start them. In her *Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema*, Johnston criticises the minor roles women are given in mainstream cinema: "It is probably true to say that despite the enormous emphasis placed on women as spectacle in the cinema, woman as a woman is largely absent" (214). Of course, since the narratives of cinematic adaptations of Austen's prose[62] revolve around women, it cannot be stated that female protagonists are "largely absent" in these movies. Their "absence" can be noticed, however, in the fact that these adaptations which move the original narrative into the 20th or 21st century present Austen's female characters in such a manner which suggests that they make their happiness dependent on being in a relationship with a man.

To some extent modernised adaptations subvert the patriarchal perspective and challenge its ideology, but at the end of the story they reinstate it by positioning men and the need for a romantic relationship in the centre of the heroines' worlds. Love and "catching" a man become the ulterior

[62] apart from *Before the Fall* and *Fire Island*

prizes for the female protagonists—the films end after the women unite with their beloved men. In order to make the life partner stay with them the heroines are willing to change a lot about themselves or cast a blind eye to their mistakes and vices. Bridget Jones starts dressing provocatively, wears slimming underwear (which in this context becomes a symbol of female oppression due to the discomfort it causes), reads guides which give tips on how to make a man happy (*What Men Want, How Men Think, How to Make Men Want What They Don't Think They Want*), and tries to work on her silhouette because she is certain all of this would help her find a boyfriend. Most of these efforts are made to catch the attention of Daniel Cleaver, who is not a relationship type of a man—the heroine knows his nature, but she pursues him, nevertheless. Kathleen Kelly forgives NY152 that he did not show up on their blind date and tries to convince him to meet her anyway. She also forgives Joe Fox that she lost her bookshop because of him and admits she hoped that he and NY152 are the same person. Aisha Kapoor applies for an internship even though she is not interested in it—she does it because she thinks Arjun will think better of her. Similarly, Cher Horowitz engages herself in charity because she thinks a social activist is the type of Josh would be interested in. Bella Swan's need for securing her relationship with Edward Cullen pushes her to the extreme: the teenage girl asks the vampire boy to turn her into the undead as well. Jill Nelmes notices that mainstream cinema often portrays women as extensions of male visions (230). Yet, the above-mentioned examples show that the heroines of the contemporized adaptations of Austen's prose accept such a role on their own account. They put a lot of effort into becoming a version of themselves they are convinced their beloved men want and look for.

As proven in this chapter, the modifications in the characters' structure of Austen's protagonists' film counterparts primarily result from the accentuation of a particular theme, which the structure of these characters supports. According to Elizabeth Steenkamp, modernised screen adaptations of Austen's prose remain remarkably popular as they enable the audience to access Austen's world through a distinctly modern route (9). The movies dimentionalise and twist the British writer's depiction of such issues as inheritance, matrimony, or social stratification so as to allow a larger focus on the more mainstream themes of wealth, romance and sexuality, loneliness or tolerance. What modernised adaptations primarily aim at is to reinvent and present the stories written in the Regency era to the 20th and 21st century viewers. Along with the increasing number of film adaptations of Austen's prose, the diversification of themes rises. Even though the cores of the adapted narratives—the courtship plotline—remain the same, the subsequent filmmakers accentuate diverse elements of the originals in order to send different messages to a larger group of viewers. Transaccentuation, reduction and substitution of adapted themes distort the original story so dramatically that modernised adaptations of Austen's novels tell in fact different stories than their

literary source texts, and since such elements of the story as the setting or character development support the theme, the characters' structure and time frames change accordingly. The plotlines as well as the heroines, heroes and the presentation of sexual attraction between them are modified and presented in the films' syuzhets in such a manner that they satisfy the contemporary viewers' needs. In times of online dating and mass-produced have-it-all fantasies, the audience expects the modernised Austen's heroes to be both physically appealing and emotionally available. Meanwhile, their contemporary Elizabeth Bennets and Emma Woodhouses are required to become even more outspoken and unintimidated women. Thus, the filmmakers reinforce the strength and independence of original heroines to live up to the requirements of the 20th and 21st century audiences. The narratives in contemporised adaptations emphasise the fact that a man admires in a woman the qualities that have stereotypically been considered masculine, such as enthusiasm, assertiveness, and decisiveness. As a result of their transformation, triggered by romantic feelings towards these heroines, the heroes acquire more sensitivity and emotional expressiveness—features which have been traditionally considered as feminine (Voiret 238). All in all, the contemporized cinematic adaptation of Austen's novels work—as it may be concluded from their box office—but ironically, they work partially by putting emphasis on the very tropes Austen tries to destabilise in her prose.

Chapter 3
A Change in Film Genre

3.1. Defining *Genre*

Film studies do not provide a clear definition of a *film genre.* It is quite problematic to explain what genre actually is, since the term is commonly used not only in film studies[63], but also in science as well as in reference to literature[64] and music[65]. The word *genre* comes from French and means "a type" or "a kind" (Jaworski 9-10). In cinema, "genre" refers to a category of film types, classified on the basis of similarities between them—in terms of narrative elements, aesthetics or emotional effect. These similarities are often referred to as "genre conventions." The expression "film genres" indicates, therefore, types of movies, such as comedies, melodramas, musicals, horror films, teen movies, etc., which follow and share certain characteristic generic conventions: familiar plotlines, conventional themes and subject matters, conventional characters, along with iconography, tone, mood and emotional effect of the movie.

Owing to these recurring conventions, genre fiction films become commercial feature movies which, "through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations" (Neale 7). For example, horror movies feature characters fighting for their lives, often against supernatural creatures (vampires, monsters, zombies) and forces (ghosts, demons, devils, evil powers) or a psychopathic killer—not all horror films, however, have to involve the figure of a monster. Melodrama, in turn, as Grażyna Stachówna notes, has a tendency towards such narrative solutions as the use of stock characters, stereotypes and such ready-made patterns as an accidental meeting and love at first sight, a heartbreak, an unexpected turn of events, a miraculous rescue (themes used also by Austen, especially in *Sense and Sensibility* and in the film adaptations of this novel) (31-42). Similarly, romantic comedies, often referred to as "rom-coms", tend to start with the introduction of the two leading characters, whose meet-cute (first encounter) is awkward and accidental (Ebert). They fall in love afterwards, then an obstacle breaks the couple apart, but in the end, they are reunited, often with a grand gesture, and live happily ever after.

The close adaptations of Jane Austen's novels follow the generic conventions of a melodrama. Melodramas often feature a random encounter of the main characters, after which the action of the

[63] Steve Neale describes popular film genres in his *Genre and Hollywood.*
[64] Marek Bernacki and Marta Pawlus, for example, focus on literary genres in their *Słownik gatunków literackich.*
[65] Stuart Borthwick and Ron Moy elaborate on musical genres in their monograph, *Popular Music Genres.*

movie speeds up: the fates of the protagonists intertwine, and they have to overcome many difficulties in order to be able to lead a life together (Katafiasz 392). These genre films may have either a happy or an unhappy ending. They end unhappily when the characters separate on account of an interference of a villain or other characters, or vicissitudes of fate: moral or social norms that must be respected, tragic historical events or, finally, the death of one of the lovers (392). In other words—an unhappy ending occurs whenever fate hangs over the characters' bliss. The interference of fate becomes the basic principle that organises the diegetic world and the narrative (Stachówna 42). The protagonists of Austen's novels, and consequently their film adaptations, manage to overcome the hardships that fate brings, as the British novelist chooses a positive ending for her heroines. Hence, all of the main protagonists of Austen's stories are happily married by the end of the novels—even if the social or financial status of the lovers is not equal.

According to Olga Katafiasz, melodrama follows the construction principles derived from the literature of Romanticism: it eagerly uses a strong contrast between the main characters both in terms of their views and conditions they live in; includes sudden twists within the narrative structure; and emphasises the power of a feeling (393). In fact, the feelings shown in melodramas are usually exaggerated and the characters' activity comes down to fulfilment in the sphere of emotions, as if bypassing other spheres of life (Helman and Pitrus 177). Such a depiction would explain the amplification of scenes featuring lovesick protagonists in costume adaptations of Austen's prose.

The role of a film genre mainly comes down to the reproduction of a formula that works well on the screen. The success of a film evokes in a viewer the need for watching another one—of the same genre but different (Helman and Pitrus 170). Hence, many genre films adopt conventional narrative structure and depict typical scenes, which are slightly modified. An individual commercial success of a particular genre film often initiates a fashion for similar movies, and soon the blockbuster is followed by a whole *cycle* of movies alike. Steve Neale defines a *cycle* as a period of immense popularity during which particular genre movies appear (7). The term refers to these groups of films that are made within a specific and limited time span (7). For example, a cycle of romantic comedies centring on single working women emerged in the mid-1990s and ended at the beginning of the 21st century. In 2008, in turn, *Twilight* and *True Blood* TV series triggered a cycle of romantic vampire films, as the two movies were soon followed by *The Vampire Diaries, The Originals* and *Legacies* TV series.

Interestingly, close adaptations of Jane Austen's have created their own cycle. The indisputable success of BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* and Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility* inspired a cycle encompassing costume melodramas based on the British author's prose. The cycle started in 1995 and within the next four years four more movies were released. However, after Patricia

Rozema's *Mansfield Park,* filmmakers lost interest in such movies, until Joe Wright's another costume retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* hit the screen in 2005. The film triggered another spate of costume adaptations of Jane Austen's novels, encompassing both mini-series and full-length movies produced in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The cycle ended with Jim O'Hanlon's *Emma.* Wright's movie triggered the second "wave" of the same cycle of costume melodramas, but in updated versions—the first wave of the cycle included the adaptations whose aesthetics was typical of the first heritage films, whereas the second rejected the picturesque aesthetics, letting in realism. The appearance of another updated costume adaptation of *Emma* in 2020*,* directed by Autumn de Wilde, suggests the cycle's return (along with the picturesque aesthetics' comeback). The more so, as the film adaptation of Austen's novel was quickly followed by another one—*Persuasion,* produced by Netflix and released in 2022.

The popularity of cycle movies is not constant, as it may grow or decline. No genre actually dies, however. Cycles may come out of fashion temporarily, only to return in an updated version, as it was in the case of the second and third wave of the cycles encompassing the costume adaptations of Austen's novels.

Obviously, the appearance of recurring types of characters, threads and narrative plotlines in genre fiction films, which the cycles consist of, shows replicability and predictability of these movies' plots. Although the audience expects to see familiar elements, simultaneously they wish to experience some novelty. The audience might get bored if the movie uses only clichés and typical tropes. That is why the filmmakers need to come up with an idea to create a film which employs new elements and patterns. Thus, some directors may decide not to closely follow the conventions associated with a specific film genre and, instead, they allow themselves to adjust and modify them. As Bordwell and Thompson point out, "the interplay of convention and innovation, familiarity and novelty, is central to the genre film" (Bordwell and Thompson 363). Since the system of genre conventions is not fully consistent, the categories may overlap—the conventions may mingle with each other, and consequently mix genres. By "blending or varying or even rejecting genre conventions, filmmakers force viewers to reset their expectations and engage with the film in fresh ways" (363). In fact, film genres may be perceived as constantly developing conventions of communication between the audience and the film creators (Helman and Pitrus 170)—as the filmmakers continuously challenge (for example by using spoofs[66] or by making the film switch to a different genre in the middle of the

[66] A spoof functions in a similar manner as parody. It is a work of humorous fiction as well, but centres on specific genre conventions and exaggerates them for comic effect.

story[67]) and subvert[68] generic conventions. Over time, film genres may alter and develop, since the cultural context changes and filmmakers adapt new twists to old formulas. As a result, new genres appear, and the existing genre labels become broader.

A great spectrum of distinct and long-lasting types within a genre provides a division of sub-genres, whose interplay leads to the emergence of hybrid genres. These particular film types are becoming more and more popular among cinematic adaptations of Austen's prose as filmmakers explore and experiment with what is possible between different movie genres. Hybrid genre films do not switch to a different genre in the middle of the story—they mix and follow genre conventions from two or more film genres throughout the entire movie. Some of the adaptations discussed later in this chapter fall into more than one genre category and, therefore, may be considered hybrid genre films. For instance, *Clueless* (1995) is both a romantic comedy and a teen movie, as it revolves around teenagers and their love affairs. *Twilight* (2008) encompasses the conventions of a vampire horror as well as a melodrama and a coming-of-age film, as it centres on the romance between a teenage girl and a vampire, who literally come from two different worlds and whose love is, therefore, threatened. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2016), in turn, follows simultaneously the generic conventions of a melodrama, zombie horror and a war film. Therefore, while close, costume adaptations of Jane Austen's novels represent melodrama film genre, their loose, modernised adaptations are genre hybrids.

To some extent, adapting Austen's prose for hybrid movies might be justified due to the fact that the author's literary originals follow conventions of several different genres as well. The researchers reached no consensus regarding the genre classification of Jane Austen's prose and, thus, many genre categories are used to refer to her novels.

Since the British writer's novels centre on depicting the social world of Regency England and comment on its customs, mores and values, they are frequently referred to as novels of manners. These became popular at the end of the 18th century and focused on aspects of social etiquette: (mis)conduct, manners, habits and language typical of a particular class of people in a specific historical context. According to Gordon Milne, the genre's development has been heavily influenced by Jane Austen's works (11), which, just like the novels of manners, study the protagonists' social whereabouts, their interpersonal relationships and class affiliations along with their influence on the characters' living conditions and their demeanour. These particular types of novels explore the role of money, property, and its influence on people's actions as well as manners. The plot of a novel of

[67] Some films undergo a complete genre switch at certain points in the story. By switching a filmmaker can avoid clichés and tropes that the audience may expect from a given genre.
[68] A subversion means using the opposite of genre conventions, it can be introduced through the character, tone, music, etc.

manners is often built around a conflict between individual aspirations and the approved social codes of behaviour (12)—an issue addressed in every novel of Austen's. The authors of novels of manners do not put much of their attention to describe the characters' physical appearance and instead they bring the protagonists' personalities and actions more in focus (Spacks 160). Likewise, Austen focuses primarily on developing her characters' personalities. The author barely describes her protagonists' physical appearance at all—such descriptions appear solely for a humourising effect or to present a background for the upcoming story[69].

Since the narratives of all of Jane Austen's novels follow the psychological development of the main heroines, they obviously employ the main convention of a *Bildungsroman,* and in terms of such they may be comprehended. Moreover, Austen's novels make use of the motif of journey, which is so important in *Bildungsroman*, because it symbolises the character's maturing process and, thus, reinforces the theme of self-development (Maier 318).

Austen's novels have also been labelled as satires since the writer derides "follies and vices of the middle and upper classes of all ages and professions" (Flavin 60). Through the portrayal of such self-absorbed and convinced of their superiority protagonists as Mr Elliot (the baronet) or Lady Catherine de Bourgh the author mocks the haughtiness of high classes (Wróblewska 180-181). In lower social spheres a satirical depiction is exemplified by the character of Mrs Bennet, who is obsessed with finding her daughters eligible husbands, and by Mr Collins and his servility towards those who have higher social positions than his (181). The vices of these characters are purposely exaggerated to provide comic relief within the story.

Because of their use of wit and humoristic tone, as well as happy endings and incorporated elements of narrative, such as intrigues, Austen's works are frequently called *comedies of manners* as well. According to Jan Fergus, the British writer's texts represent this genre because they depict "relations and intrigues of gentlemen and ladies living in a polished and sophisticated society" and because, in Austen's novels, the comedy often results from "violations of social conventions and decorum and relies for its effect in great part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue" (98).

Some scholars claim, however, that by focusing her stories on the landed gentry's everyday lives as well as by guaranteeing all her heroines requited love and happily-ever-after endings Austen sets her prose between a novel/comedy of manners and a sentimental romance. In fact, M.H. Abrahms and Geoffrey Galt Harpham state that the British writer's literary texts may be read as romance

[69] For example, Anne Eliot's foregone beauty was supposed to reflect the impact of a breakup with Captain Wentworth. Elisabeth Bennet, in turn, was not pictured as physically attractive as her older sister, Jane, and yet owing to her personality traits she gets to marry the richest man in society and, therefore, the best match. Austen portrays Lizzy as the most intelligent of all the Bennet women, and tries to convince the reader that her heroine deserves a wealthy and intelligent husband.

novels, because they are love stories, in which, after diverse obstacles have been overcome, the plots end happily with the betrothal or marriage of the lovers (351). Pamela Regis supports Abrahms and Harpham's opinion by pointing out that Austen's novels[70] show the most typical traits of the romance genre—they centre on female characters and the issue of marriage (30-38). She further notes that the narrative of Austen's prose involves themes characteristic of romance—the rise of a heroine, her quest (journey to self-awareness), her way of dealing with obstacles, and a happy ending (30-38). Additionally, the British writer's protagonists act on emotional impulses and some of the side characters, including Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Mr Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* or Fanny Dashwood and Mrs Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, function as 'obstacles' to the lovers' union (Regis 101).

According to Pamela Regis, Austen's novels of manners present the theme of love in a manner typical of romance genre (30). Regis formulates her conclusion concerning the structure of a romance novel and enumerates eight plot elements which shape the treatment of relationships in the romance novel. When related to *Pride and Prejudice*, they consist of the scenes featuring: the initial state of the society (the bleak economic prospects of the Bennet sisters unless they marry well), the meeting of the hero and the heroine (Darcy's rude behaviour towards Elizabeth on their first encounter and her taking offence), the attraction between them (Darcy's growing enchantment with Elizabeth), the declaration of love (Darcy's marriage proposal and Elizabeth's refusal), the barrier(s) to their union (the Bennets' financial inequality and Lydia's scandalous elopement), the point of ritual death when the union seems impossible (Elizabeth's belief that Lydia's disgrace will affect her and the other Bennet sisters' marital prospects), the recognition of the means to overcome the barrier (Elizabeth's unwillingness to promise she will never marry Darcy encourages him), and the betrothal (second successful proposal) (Regis 30-38). The above-mentioned generic scenes might appear in any order and, apart from that, they may be multiplied, repeated, merged and/or condensed (Regis 38). These may also be reinvented, as in the case of all these movies which are analysed in this chapter.

The filmmakers of costume adaptations of Austen's novels choose to classify the writer's prose as romance as well and emphasise the romantic plotline, completely ignoring the fact that the author's writings are devoid of emotionality typical of romanticism. As previously stated, the first film adaptations of Austen's prose represent mostly the melodrama genre, and their narratives often revolve around the love that connects the characters but is threatened by the obstacles which prevent the protagonists' union (Katafiasz 392)—which is also the core of the narrative structure in basically every novel written by Austen. A frequent motif shared by melodramas and the British writer's works is the heroine's or the hero's internal metamorphosis, owing to which the protagonists mature and

[70] *Pride and Prejudice* in particular.

can become better people. Another common ground is the emphasis on dialogue, rather than action both in melodramas and Austen's prose—the writer uses dialogue as a character-building tool.

According to Helman and Pitrus, a melodrama is sometimes perceived as a kind of genre matrix on which other formulas are based (176). The distinctiveness of this genre lies in the lack of clearly defined distinguishing features—melodramas are not associated with strictly typical elements of iconography, their plots can be set at different times, and they can also use costumes characteristic of other genres, even as specific as horror movies (Helman and Pitrus 176). This is the case with the adaptations of Austen's novels. Since their first film adaptations were classified as melodramas, this genre became a sort of a departing point for the subsequent filmmakers of movie adaptations of the author's prose and films inspired by her novels. Loose adaptations of Austen's works do not give up on the melodramatic plotline either. Yet, at the level of iconography or the used stylistic means, they include the conventions of other genres, such as romantic comedies, teen movies or horror films. These films seem to hybridise Austen's novels in two ways. The first one requires modifying certain narrative elements and locating the author's stories in these genre conventions which echo in her novels. These did not dominate Austen's narrative style, however, and functioned more as frames in which more important issues were inscribed. Yet, in terms of loose adaptations, these generic conventions are amplified and, thus, soften these themes which were crucial in the literary source texts. The following sub-chapter focuses on these film adaptations which present this kind of hybridisation—the romantic comedies. The last sub-chapter, in turn, centres on the cinematic adaptations which, at first glance, appear to involve a radical change of genre because they annex the conventions of horror movies. But since the horror conventions do not dominate over melodrama determinants, the genre change is apparent. Horror tropes and its characteristic narrative elements are used mainly to dramatise the popular love stories and attract new viewers. By reinventing Austenian protagonists with the use of generic conventions, typical of miscellaneous film genres, the filmmakers retell familiar love stories and reconstruct familiar characters, invented by the British author.

3.2. Jane Austen's Protagonists in Romantic Comedies

The melodrama adaptations of Jane Austen's prose have initiated a rather instrumental manner of adapting the writer's prose for film. As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation, these costume movies centre on the theme of love and romanticise the characters as well as some elements of the plot and the setting of the stories. Although the British writer's novels are far more complex, the subsequent filmmakers focus primarily on the thread of love and romance in Austen's prose and refer to her works as if they could provide not much more than a recipe for a love story: they use

a widely recognisable romance formula and limit the original narrative to the romantic plotline between the main protagonists (Margolis 37). Consequently, many adaptations of the author's novels are reduced to the form of popular romantic comedies and melodramas.

Adapting Austen's prose for popular romantic comedies requires adopting a typical rom-com formula along with its characteristic tropes. Consequently, some original elements of Austen's narrative are reshaped so that the adapted narrative fits better in the conventions of a romantic comedy. Thus, the theme of love is presented as far more sentimental than in the literary originals and the stories' endings become considerably more emotional. For instance, a brief flirtation between Emma Woodhouse and Frank Churchill, or between Elizabeth Bennet and John Wickham, serves to introduce a love triangle within a story—a narrative trope commonly used in rom-coms. Additionally, the rom-com adaptations of Austen's prose continue to use the same adaptative strategies the costume melodramas do in order to romanticise the film protagonists—they amplify the number of scenes featuring lovesick characters and cast physically attractive actors and actresses in leading roles. These adaptative decisions aim at making the romantic plotline more captivating to the viewers.

Deborah Kaplan calls such an instrumental treatment of Austen's prose *harlequinization*. According to the scholar, the plots of cinematic adaptations which are subjected to the process of harlequinization revolve around "a hero and a heroine's courtship at the expense of other characters and other experiences, which are sketchily represented" (171)—this explains condensation and reduction of certain characters and side plots. Consequently, the original narrative of the story along with the world presented in Austen's novels are simplified. Since the filmmakers decide to turn Austen's original stories into light and simple chick-flicks, the writer's sophisticated, serious works about social norms in Regency England become light-hearted in tone: the protagonists become less complex—they are driven primarily by love or the need for love—and the most problematic and unfortunate issues originally discussed by the British author are either treated in a humoristic manner or are not depicted at all—thus, the genre change forces reduction of these elements which disturb the narrative structure of a romantic comedy[71].

The harlequinisation of courtship and a clear emphasis on love thread in romantic comedies leads to transaccentuation. As was already established in the previous chapter, love is never the major theme in Austen's prose. The courtship plot remains, of course, the core of the novels' narrative structures, but the British author treats it as a tool to introduce her readers into the world of Regency England and its rules. Issues of morality, manners, money and inheritance, along with the financial transaction

[71] Themes and plotlines, which have been reduced, are discussed in chapter 2.

that marriage was in Austen's times and the social and economic situation of English women are discussed through the lens of the courtship plot, which is used instrumentally.

This subchapter provides the analysis of these adaptations of Austen's prose which follow the conventions of the rom-com genre and therefore the section elaborates on the above-mentioned modifications in relation to the original. In chronological order these are *Clueless* (dir. Amy Heckerling, 1995), *You've Got Mail* (dir. Nora Ephron, 1998), *Bridget Jones' Diary* (dir. Sharon Maguire, 2001), *Bride and Prejudice* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2004) and *Aisha* (dir. Rajshree Ojha, 2010).

Tamar Jeffer McDonald defines romantic comedies as films whose narratives revolve around the theme of quest for love (9) and adds that the genre's basic convention is "the primary importance of the couple" (13). Of course, the plot of the above-mentioned romantic comedies, and most of films which represent the rom-com genre, could be depicted with the earnestness of a melodrama since both genres build their narratives on the theme of love and often elicit tears owing to emotional endings. Yet, as Gordon Milne notices, the humorous tone of a romantic comedy transforms the experience the viewers have when watching the same story presented in the form of a rom-com (2). According to the scholar, the genre films "assume a self-deprecating stance which signals the audience to relax and have fun, for nothing serious will disturb their pleasure" (2). Thus, a rom-com is a movie which features the quest for love in a light-hearted manner; these types of films usually have happy endings and may elicit laughter throughout the unfolding stories (McDonald 9-10). All of the above-enumerated adaptations end well, which is no surprise since their literary source-texts include happy endings as well. Yet, in order to strengthen a light-hearted tone and provide comic relief in their movies, the filmmakers introduce elements of slapstick comedies. Originally comic relief is provided mainly by witty dialogues, satire, as well as elements of parody and irony, not by the characters' clumsiness. Meanwhile, in rom-com adaptations of Austen's novels, Bridget Jones' unfortunate performance in television with the use of a sliding pole, Daniel Cleaver's fall into a pond, Tai Fraiser's spectacular fall from the stairs at a party or Joe Fox' and Bridget Jones' falls from treadmill machines evoke amusement in the audiences and set a playful tone. Adapting Austen's prose for romantic comedies requires, therefore, reducing their serious tone on account of more uncomplicated entertainment and accentuating the courtship plot which provides the core of the narrative structure in a romantic comedy—a drive toward matrimony or a long-term relationship is a fundamental convention of this film genre (Grindon 2).

The filmmakers of rom-com seem to be particularly interested in filming Jane Austen's novels because the courtship plot is the core of her texts' narrative. However, some critics are not convinced Austen lavished as much attention to the issue of romance and courting in her novels as the filmmakers of rom-coms in the movie adaptations of her prose. In *No Connections Subsequent: Jane Austen's World of Sisterhood* Susan Sniader Lanser indicates that the writer was not fully committed to the courtship plot that shapes the narrative structure of her works (53-67). Her thesis is supported by Ruth Perry in her "Interrupted Friendships in Jane Austen's *Emma*" (185-202). Other critics, including Wayne Booth, argue that the British author treats the conventions of the courtship plot with irony (29-40). Kaplan, in turn, claims that the writer's attitude to this theme is more ambiguous, as Austen both endorses and challenges the focus on heterosexual romance and courtship plot (175). The scholar points out that, in Austen's prose, friendships and relations between female protagonists are at least as important as the romantic relationships between the main heroines and their husbands-to-be (175).

Conversely, the filmmakers of rom-coms seem to ignore the importance of the relationship between the main heroines and their best friends and change the functionality of these less important protagonists. In Austen's novels the side characters' structures stand in opposition to the main protagonists' and often highlight their faulty personalities. Jane Bennet, who is described as shy, obedient and a little bit naïve, makes Elizabeth look daring, impulsive and stubborn. Miss Taylor and Harriet Smith, always full of understanding and humility, are stark contrast to arrogant and self-confident Emma Woodhouse. Elinor Dashwood's calmness and rationality are juxtaposed by Marianne's passionate outbursts and energetic behaviour. By the end of the stories the main heroines mature, and their demeanour becomes calmer and more similar to their best friends'. Conversely, in rom-com adaptations of Austen's novels, the side-kicks often provide comic relief, like in the case of Dionne in *Clueless*, who always complains about her boyfriend and is over-jealous of him, or Joe Fox's friend, who keeps advising him in love matters even though he has problems with commitments himself, or Kathleen Kelly's friend George, who refuses to hire people without a Phd in literature in a bookstore, or finally Bridget Jones' eccentric group of friends—a homosexual former singer, who thinks his fame will last forever thanks to one single album he recorded years ago, constantly swearing Shazzer, who is incapable of formulating one sentence without vulgarisms, and always weeping Jude, who cannot handle her own problems in love life. Such portrayals of the side characters are motivated by the filmmakers' intention to make the main protagonists seem the only obvious and reasonable choice for their suitors.

In these romanticised retellings of Austen's stories, the side characters cannot overshadow the main protagonists. Therefore, best friends are usually played by less recognisable cast, whereas the main heroine of a romantic comedy is often played by an attractive actress whose *emploi* indicates another part in a rom-com. The Golden Age of these genre movies was in the 1990s and in the early 2000s. This period offered sophisticated, well-executed takes on the form, as during this era a cadre of stars like Meg Ryan, Julia Roberts, Sandra Bullock, Renee Zellweger and Kate Hudson became expected fixtures of the genre, and such genre masterminds as Richard Curtis (the screenwriter of *Bridget Jones' Diary*), Nancy Meyers and Nora Ephron (the director of *You've Got Mail*) became household names. In addition, the main heroines of the story in romantic comedies tend to work at magazines, in the fashion or book industry[72]—Kathleen Kelly runs a children's bookstore, whereas Bridget Jones works in a publishing house named The Pemberly Entreprise (a clear reference to *Pride and Prejudice*). Perhaps, the filmmakers try to indicate that the leading protagonists are well-read and, thus, more intelligent and eloquent than those who surround them. Nevertheless, since Jane Austen always portrays her heroines as keen on reading as well, the choice to depict their modernised film counterparts as working in book departments seems justified.

The heroines' interest in literature completes the character's portrayal as emotional and misunderstood (as if the film counterparts of Austen's protagonists could only find a proper adviser in the matter of the heart in their books). Even though a cast of side characters of a rom-com usually includes an eccentric best friend or a group of friends always available to talk to and discuss problems in the main protagonist's private lives, the women choose not to share their most intimate thoughts with them—they prefer to pour their worries and reflections into a diary or write about them to an online pen pal, instead—or their voiceover shares these thoughts directly with the audience like in *Clueless* and *Aisha*. With regard to the importance of female friendships in Austen's prose, the relations between the main protagonists and their friends are clearly flattened—none of the cinematic adaptations of the writer's novels analysed in this sub-chapter suggests that female friendships are enough to provide an alternative emotional life for the female protagonists. Thus, Emma Woodhouse's deep affection for her former governess, Miss Taylor, who practically raised her, is not given any attention in *Clueless*—the filmmakers replace this side character with Miss Geist, an old spinster who is one of Cher's teachers. The main heroine only starts to pay closer attention to the woman as she decides she needs to manipulate the teacher and, thus, improve her grades. Miss Geist provides comic relief for the film. The character is instrumentally treated by both the main heroine and the filmmakers. Further on, the film does not show Emma Woodhouse's intense focus on and

[72] In Andrew Black's *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter Day Comedy* Elizabeth Bennet is working on her own novel, as she wants to become a writer.

feelings for Harriet Smith either. Of course, Cher socialises with Tai Fraiser and pays a lot of attention to her, but she treats her more like a project, an entertainment for her and Dionne, and does not consider the girl her friend. After the unfortunate situation in a mall, Cher does not seem to be moved by what happened. In her thoughts she calls Tai a stupid attention-seeker. Even the heroine's relationship with Dionne, who may to some extent function as a counterpart for Miss Taylor—Cher calls her a friend—is reduced to a shallow acquaintance. In the opening scene, right after admitting Dionne is her friend, the heroine explains the reason why the two girls hang out—money and arrogance.

The filmmakers of *Aisha*, another modernised adaptation of Emma, treat the issue of female friendship rather sketchily as well. Even though the film counterpart of Miss Taylor does appear in the form of the protagonist's aunt, she is not given much attention. Throughout the movie the woman appears twice and utters only one sentence. Also, Pinky Bose, Aisha's best friend, seems to be included in the film mainly to provide comic relief with her snappy remarks and extravagant style of clothing. Shefali, a film counterpart of Harriet Smith, is treated in an equally instrumental manner as Tai Fraiser in *Clueless.* Aisha has no deeper feelings for the girl, and she does not try to rekindle when Shefali isolates herself. Similarly, neither Kathleen Kelly nor Bridget Jones has managed to build an equally strong relationship as that between Emma Woodhouse and Miss Taylor or Elizabeth and Jane Bennet. In fact, in the case of modernised adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, the filmmakers tend to fully reduce the relationship between Elizabeth and Jane—except for Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* and Andrew Black's *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter Day Comedy*, modernised cinematic adaptations do not adapt the Jane Bennet/Charles Bingley and Jane Bennet/Elizabeth Bennet plotlines. Neither in *Bridget Jones' Diary* nor in *You've Got Mail* the film counterpart of Jane appears.

This modification forces the filmmakers to find equivalence for the Jane Bennet/ Charles Bingley storyline. In *Bridget Jones' Diary* the romantic plotline of the original second couple is, therefore, substituted with the matrimonial turbulence of Bridget's parents, Mrs and Mr Jones. In *You've Got Mail*, in turn, the main heroine's male friend, George, and then her boyfriend, Frank, meet someone new in their lives and start to date them. Such equivalence allows Nora Ephron to easily get rid of one of the obstacles preventing Kathleen and Joe's union. In the case of Sharon Maguire's film, the above-mentioned substitution choice provides comic relief within the adapted narrative: the fact that Mrs Jones, a woman in her sixties, is far more sexually active than her thirty-year-old daughter is ridiculous. Such modifications in the narrative of the adapted stories are introduced to avoid overshadowing the main courtship plotline which involves the leading characters. Even though the

side characters often start or already are in a relationship as well— like in Austen's prose—their romantic storyline provides only a background for the main couple's romance. Originally, the supporting characters' developing relationships are given considerably more attention. Nevertheless, the introduction of the second couple' plotline strengthens the importance of the courtship plot anyway.

As Kaplan marks, harlequinisation of the adapted story does not call for the film's plot closely following the original trajectory of events. Yet, it does require an unwavering attention to the protagonists' desires for each other, and a technique to show those desires in an unsurprising, even clichéd manner (171)—hence the characteristic iconography, stock characters and a recognisable narrative structure. The filmmakers use the whole set of symbols and motifs which are constant reminders of the films' genre and which emphasise the courtship plot even more. The shots of couples dancing among the fountains, kissing in the rain or snow, cuddling while watching the sunset, as well as such recurring symbolic props as flowers, heart-shaped cushions, pictures of swans or finally such iconographic settings as low-key lit restaurants, beaches, parks filled with flowers certainly build the romantic tone of the movies and keep reminding the audience of the narrative structure and of the film genre.

According to Kaplan, "familiarity breeds content"[73], as the pleasure of watching a mass-market love story results not only from "the unfolding of desire and the achievement of gratification but also in the comfortable knowledge of what is to come and how it is to occur" (173). Thus, adapting Jane Austen's narrative for a romantic comedy entails adopting a typical rom-com formula: the story is often set in New York if it is an American romantic comedy,[74] such as *You've Got Mail*, or in London if it is a British romantic comedy, such as *Bridget Jones' Diary*; the film usually starts with introducing the leading characters to the viewers; then at some point the characters meet by chance and their relation starts usually at odds—the future lovers may compete with or dislike each other at first, or they may just come from two different worlds (and even have a life partner at that moment)—yet as the story unfolds the differences and obstacles between the hero and the heroine start to gradually disappear as the film frames the friction between the main characters as kindling for spark (Stachówna 376). Eventually, true love wins, and the film ends with a happily ever-after. Typical plot tropes in a narrative of a romantic comedy include a serendipitous meet-cute—apparently, a motif of

[73] Wendy Moffat agrees that genres in general provide their readers with the satisfaction of being able to predict a work's outcome. See "Identifying with *Emma*: Some Problems for the Feminist Reader," *College English*, vol. 53, no. 1, 1991, pp. 48. A similar conclusion is shared by David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson with regard to genre films.
[74] *Clueless* is set in Beverly Hills because the filmmakers want to indicate the film's focus on wealth and popcultural undertones owing to the proximity of Hollywood.

destiny is typical of romantic comedies (Stachówna 377), a big misunderstanding—as in *Bridget Jones' Diary, Bride and Prejudice, Clueless,* and *Aisha*—or an indisputable deception as the protagonists hide their true identity—like Joe Fox in *You've Got Mail,* a love triangle and a scene of the lovers uniting which features the protagonists kissing in the rain (which is replaced by snow in the case of *Bridget Jones' Diary*) or chasing after one another.

Romantic comedies often begin with a mismatched love interest (Stachówna 376). In order to make the narrative of the story more captivating, the filmmakers of rom-coms eagerly use the love triangle trope. Thus, the brief flirtation between Emma Woodhouse and Frank Churchill, and between Elizabeth Bennet and George Wickham are strengthened and altered into more intensive relationships. Originally, neither Emma nor Elizabeth falls in love with Frank Churchill and George Wickham, respectively. They seem intrigued and enjoy the men's company, but nothing more happens. Conversely, in *Clueless* Cher tells Dionne she is completely smitten with Christian and plans to lose virginity with him; in *Aisha* the eponymous heroine starts dating Dhruv; Bridget Jones falls blindly in love with Daniel Cleaver and imagines their wedding; and in *Bride and Prejudice* Lalita Bakshi dreams of marrying Johnny Wickham. In *You've Got Mail* the love triangle turns into a love square, since Kathleen lives with her boyfriend, is romantically engaged with her pen pal—NY152—and simultaneously feels attracted to Joe Fox, whose double identity she gets to know at the end of the story. In her novels Austen tends to juxtapose both her female and male characters. Yet, interestingly, in *You've Got Mail* the main male protagonist plays both the role of Darcy and Wickham at the same time. In Austen's original, Wickham functions as a foil character to Darcy. Thus, by blending the two male protagonists, the filmmakers force the heroine to form a relationship with a character who represents both Darcy and Wickham. Such a modification appears to send a message to the audience that it is required to accept all about a potential life-partner[75].

The character of the heroine's first partner functions as a red herring in the story. In fiction "a red herring" refers to a narrative element which is purposely used and aims at misleading the readers and diverting their attention (Turco 143). In cinema, red herring characters often appear in thrillers and crime films, so the viewers usually suspect the wrong person of committing the crime. In a romantic comedy, the main protagonist initially dates, or wants to date, or is courted by a red herring character, who may seem appealing at first but eventually turns out to be a poor choice. The viewers can often predict, however, whom the main heroine is going to end up with. Thus, the

[75] A similar message is sent by *Bridget Jones' Diary* but this time it is openly said by Mark Darcy himself the moment he admits he likes Bridget "just as [she] is" (Maguire 00.59.13).

introduction of the red herring love interest may not necessarily serve to mislead the audience. Instead, it functions as one of the obstacles preventing the union of the main couple and strengthens the theme of the main heroine's psychological development. The first boyfriend/admirer is often a symbolic reflection of the immature heroine's desires at the beginning of the movie. As the story unfolds and the protagonist starts to spend more time with a man she is not trying to impress, she finally becomes herself and realises what she really needs and what is good for her.

As mentioned in chapter 2 of this dissertation, Austen depicts her protagonists' red herring love interest as dashing and deceptively charming, as opposed to those men who are actually worth attention, as if she wanted to stress that people should not marry because of physical attraction. Thus, it is rather easy to discover who is going to turn out to be the wrong choice for the heroine of her novel. But since rom-coms tend to beautify not only the villains, but the main male heroes as well, the filmmakers of romantic comedies based on Austen's prose accentuate the charm of the "wrong men" with camerawork and the discrepancies in the characters' styles of clothing. In *Bridget Jones' Diary,* the audience knows who is going to be the initial love interest and a poor choice, as the heroine first enlists all the vices she needs to avoid while searching for a life partner and then admits she feels attracted to a man who is the epitome of all these features.

The filmmakers try to prepare their audience for their first encounter with the man of Bridget's desire, as a J-cut along with a wipe transition to a close-up shot of Daniel Cleaver's face follow immediately the heroine's description of the man. A J-cut is when the audio from the following scene precedes the image and thus it successfully builds the audience's anticipation: as the viewers watch Bridget writing in her diary and listen to her voiceover, they can hear non-diegetic music gradually getting louder and the sound of the lift reaching the floor. Then the scene fades into black, and the viewers are introduced to a single close-up shot of the man's face with a wipe editing transition. The lilac colour of his shirt indicates the audience should expect a love affair between the man and the heroine. In his expensive, well-tailored dark suit Bridget's boss appears to have more sex appeal than Mark Darcy, whom she sees for the first time wearing a knitted sweater with a picture of a snowman—of course this particular image may also relate to the man's aloof personality.



3.2.1-2. Close-up shots of Daniel Cleaver's face

As Daniel gets off the lift in slow motion, it is rather clear how enchanted Bridget feels about him—slow motion emphasises whatever action or emotion the filmmakers present it with. It can make a horror more terrifying, an action more spectacular, or a comedy more hilarious. In rom-coms slow motion is often used in the meet-cute scenes to accentuate the character's sex appeal and/or beauty and bring a dream-like aura into the scene as well as emphasise the sexual attraction one protagonist feels for another.

The filmmakers of *Clueless* and *Bride and Prejudice* use this high frame rate manoeuvre as well. As Cher is thinking about her own love life and comes to a conclusion that she should find herself a boyfriend, she looks left, and a whip pan moves the audience's attention to Christian entering the classroom in slow motion. A whip pan, also known as a swish pan, is a quick horizontal camera rotation which blurs the image and is highly advantageous when the filmmakers want to maintain the momentum of the previous scene. In this case the use of whip pan transition leads the viewers from Cher's thoughts, revealed with her voiceover, to their corporeal form—Christian. Thus, the scene indicates that the boy is the answer to the girl's need for a boyfriend. As Christian stops in the entrance and knocks on the wall, the camera slowly zooms in to emphasise the moment and shows the handsome teenager more clearly. The boy nonchalantly flicks his jacket over the shoulder and strikes a pose worthy of a model.

3.2.3. A mid-shot of Christian entering the classroom

His skin-tight black T-shirt along with a well-tailored suit reveal the teenager's athletic silhouette. Since fashion is really important to Cher—she feels powerful and influential owing to her expensive, fancy costumes—the girl notices Christian's sense of fashion immediately. Unlike other boys from her school and even her future boyfriend, Josh, the teenager looks as if he was taken out of a fashion magazine. Probably this is one of the reasons Cher decides that the boy is a fine match for her. Later the heroine even admits Christian dresses himself better than she does.

3.2.4-5. A shot-reverse-shot of Cher and Christian exchanging looks

A shot-reverse-shot of Cher and Christian exchanging looks reveals that Cher is closely watching the boy throughout the scene. The girl is clearly mesmerised and sexually aroused: she keeps staring at the muscular teenager and a quiet "damn" escapes her slightly parted lips; then she takes a deep breath and her chest heaves. Since *Clueless* is a teen flick, the filmmakers present the main heroine's emotions and reaction as intense and exaggerated. Cher is completely smitten with Christian since

their first encounter at school and this impression becomes even clearer when she is waiting for Christian's phone call.

3.2.6. A static close-up shot of Cher's phone made from low angle

In this scene the camera takes a static shot of Cher's phone. The device is featured in a deep focus whereas everything else is blurred. The deep focus on the phone and the fact that it is framed right in the middle of the shot emphasises how important this item is for Cher at that exact moment. Additionally, the low-angle framing of the close-up reveals how much power Christian's call has on the teenage girl. To enhance the dramatic effect of the momentum even more the scene is accompanied by *Thus speaks Zarathustra*, a characteristic piece of soundtrack from Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey.*

In Chadha's retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* the red herring love interest of the main heroine is even more sexualised — throughout the movie Johnny Wickham is depicted almost always shirtless or in an unbuttoned shirt. The first scene in which the man appears features him slowly getting out of the ocean in the night, wearing only shorts and presenting his athletic torso. At that moment the man resembles a male counterpart of Aphrodite—a goddess born from white foam Cronus threw into the sea. It is a very sentimental way to introduce the object of love interest. Interestingly, the man does not put his shirt on even after he dries and starts a conversation with Lalita and remains shirtless till the end of the scene. On the one hand, it is rather obvious the film accentuates the man's physicality. On the other hand, maybe the filmmakers also want to indicate the man's liberated attitude towards sex (he is after all a film counterpart of Austen's libertine, George Wickham). Conversely, Darcy appears almost always clad in a shirt, although in few cases he does not wear it either.

3.2.7. A mid-shot of Johnny Wickham getting out of the water.

Lalita feels attracted to Johnny almost instantly and invites him to come and visit her in Amritsar. Soon after their first encounter she starts dreaming of marrying Wickham. Thus, the antihero becomes literally the man of Lalita's dreams. As Lalita falls for Johnny the movie starts to feature him in soft focus—the edges of his silhouette are slightly blurred. This manoeuvre aims at adding a dream-like aura to the scene and gives the impression of dizziness, caused by a high level of oxytocin—a hormone produced in the moment of infatuation.

3.2.8. A close-up of Lalita and Johnny having a conversation

As Kaplan notices, harlequinisation of Austen's prose "is typified by attention to physical appearances" of the protagonists (177). Cinematic adaptations of Austen's prose strengthen the role of men through their focus on romance plotline and casting such handsome actors as Colin Firth, Hugh Grant or Tom Hanks—as opposed to Austen's texts, in which male protagonists were poorly represented because the author focused more on women (176). Of course, attractiveness can be relative, yet the actors' previous roles and *emploi* show that they were primarily supposed to present

a romantic, idealised image of the character they play. And since the image is idealised, the flaws and weaknesses of Austen's male protagonists, such as the severity of Mr Knightley and his patronising treatment of Emma or Darcy's aloofness have been either diminished or ignored altogether in modernised adaptations. Adapting Austen's novels into romantic comedies, which are intensely commercial forms of romance, requires changes in characters' looks. As mentioned before in chapter 2, Austen does not depict her main male protagonists as physically attractive. She puts more emphasis on their virtues. Yet, the rules of mass-marketed romance necessitate that the hero and heroine should be good-looking and radiate with sex appeal in order to attract more viewers. As Kaplan concludes, "visions of new men seem to be created on the basis of fantasy and romance, which is one of the manifestations of male idealisation" (179).

Additionally, it seems easier for the filmmakers to visualise the main characters' awakening desires for one another if they are attractive—the viewers used to the Harlequin convention can empathise with that. Thus, even though the original Mr Darcy does not find Elizabeth pretty enough to be tempted to dance with her at the Meryton ball, Joe Fox admits that Kathleen Kelly is beautiful and is attracted to her the moment he first casts his eyes on her. What is more, the genre conventions of romantic comedies allow for the trope of the love at first sight (Stachówna 163)—in rom-coms, a virtuous personality is often enhanced by the character's physicality. Gurinder Chadha's retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* features the main protagonists' meet-cute in a manner that departs from Austen's narrative but instead fits in rom-com's genre convention even more, as Will Darcy is literally mesmerised by Indian Elizabeth right from the start and keeps staring at her with wide eyes and an almost gaping mouth.

The men in the heroine's life can be interpreted as symbolic stand-ins for the versions of herself she could become. Seeing beyond the red herring love interest symbolises the protagonist's maturing process—the character abandons her childish and often superficial misconceptions about her life expectations. The true goal of the story seems, therefore, the main protagonist's personal development. Luckily for the filmmakers of rom-coms, based on Austen's prose, self-development is a crucial element of the writer's original narratives as well. The novelist portrays her protagonists as young women in transition between the freedom of childhood and the demands of adulthood, with the role of a good wife in the foreground. As mentioned before, the British writer's novels follow some of the conventions of a Bildungsroman, as their narratives revolve around the heroines who mature and develop emotionally. Therefore, presenting the modernised Emma Woodhouse as an adolescent teenager seems far closer to the original than depicting Elizabeth Bennet as a woman in her thirties. Throughout the movie, Cher Horowitz experiences the need for change and self-

development just as Emma Woodhouse does. Yet, the motives of the heroines in this transformation are quite different. Emma feels uncomfortable due to her rude remark towards Miss Bates, and Mr Knightley's rebuke makes that feeling even worse. However, Mr Knightley's opinion about her impolite conduct and the desire to impress him are not the direct causes of the heroine's transformation. Emma Woodhouse is a person highly regarded in Highbury and her manners are considered impeccable until the Box Hill incident. The heroine is aware of accepted social norms and etiquette, so her desire to fix the tense situation results more from her self-disgust and the awareness of her own impertinence. Meanwhile, Cher's need for self-development is a direct result of her newly awakened love for Josh. The heroine is looking for a way to impress a student and all of a sudden engages herself in charity work, because, as she says: "if it was someone else, she would start sending herself flowers" (Heckerling 01.01.03.). By changing the motives of the heroine, Heckerling moves away from Austen's narrative in order to follow the convention of a teen flick. The social context and the importance of social etiquette disappear, and the narrative is flattened once again into a simple love story. Cher/Emma's makeover is turned into a grand romantic gesture the heroine needs to perform to draw attention of the boy she cares about. Thus, even if Cher really wants to change, the heroine does it solely for a man (or rather a boy) she loves, so the girl's development is not a natural outcome of maturing process and coming-of-age. The teenager evolves in the name of the need to succumb to the patriarchal order—to make a man interested in her.

The filmmakers of *Aisha,* another adaptation of *Emma,* approach the issue in a similar manner—the heroine's transformation also results from her newly-awakened affection towards the film counterpart of Mr Knightley. The protagonist decides to apply for a job only after she realises that she is in love with Arjun. Both in the case of *Clueless* and *Aisha* the heroines try to prove to the men they love and to themselves that they are not just air-heads with credit cards. However, Aisha's decision to look for a job partially results from her need to escape from a heartbreak. Thus, the women undergo their makeover only apparently. The viewers have no idea whether the heroines will act differently and actually change their lives, as they never get to see what their lives look like after they reunite with their lovers. By making the heroines' self-development manipulated by men and the affection they have for men, the filmmakers diminish the authenticity and the role of women in that aspect. This is even more visible in *You've Got Mail*, as Joe Fox literally manipulates Kathleen into changing her attitude by making her fall in love with him. Thus, the motif of self-realisation and the main heroine's development—the issues so often discussed by Austen—serve only to emphasise the romantic plotline in the case of these modernised film adaptations of the writer's prose which represent the rom-com genre. As banal as it may sound, the romantic comedies based on *Pride and*

Prejudice and *Emma* indicate that personal development is possible only through the power of love or the need for love.

The latter becomes a driving force in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Throughout the movie Bridget is insecure and lacks self-confidence until Daniel Cleaver breaks her heart. This becomes the reason for her self-development and sudden surge of self-confidence.

3.2.9. An over-the-shoulder mid-shot of Daniel asking Bridget not to resign from her job

In the scene in which Bridget quits her job and, thus, leaves her life with Daniel behind, the power dynamics rapidly changes. Since the man is the heroine's boss, he obviously dominates the situation. In the attached shot from this scene Daniel is positioned higher than Bridget. The camera angle is slightly tilted, which emphasises the impression that the hero is looking down at Bridget, both metaphorically and literally. The characters' positioning changes right after she brutally expresses her utmost disgust at the thought of working next to her former lover who cheated on her.

3.2.10. A close-up shot of Bridget feeling satisfaction after standing up for herself

The next shot features Bridget's smiling face in deep focus, with her co-workers in soft focus in the background. The camera captures only a part of Daniel standing in front of his office. His face is not depicted in the shot, which emphasises the change of power dynamics even more—his emotions are completely unimportant, as his face is not even shown in the frame.

Just like a comedy of manners, romantic comedies guarantee a happy ending and almost always end with finding love. The scene in which the lovers declare their affection and commit to each other is of course saved for the end. Since the movie usually stops after that scene, the viewers do not actually see what a happily-ever-after looks like. In Austen's prose, the heroines get their own happy endings, but the stories do not stop right after the declarations of love. The scenes of lovers' (re)union are followed by an epilogue or an additional chapter and then an epilogue, which provides the information of what happens next: how the heroines' family, friends and enemies react to the news of their engagement and how the protagonists' lives change after they get married. Thus, while Austen accentuates the importance of the upcoming changes in her heroines' lives, the romantic comedies indicate that what really matters is the journey the characters need to embark on to find love: the protagonists' ups and downs, their private doubts and struggles, their ridiculous escapades with friends. Even falling in love and building romantic relationships are framed as part of the maturing process. That is why the chemistry between the heroine and her well-matched lover-to-be usually builds throughout the entire movie until the heroine is finally ready to enter the romantic relationship with her star-crossed lover. The audience easily recognises when the heroine is ready to start dating the man who is actually destined to be with her. The rom-com movies usually accentuate the moment of the protagonists' acknowledging their romantic feelings—emotions that have been crystal-clear to the audience from the start. In such moments of epiphany the characters' sudden self-realisation is depicted with their exaggerated reactions—the protagonists stop abruptly and abandon whatever they are doing at that moment, they stand still with gaping mouths and their eyes wide-open in shock—such a facial expression comes out of the sudden discovery.

3.2.11. A close-up shot of Bridget experiencing the epiphany of realising Daniel lied to her about his past with Mark Darcy

In *Clueless* the filmmakers accentuate the momentum by positioning the heroine in the middle of the frame and capturing the pink hue highlighting the fountain behind the heroine. Everything in the shot

directs the viewers' attention to the silhouette of the main heroine: the girl stands in the brightest spot in the frame, her white attire distinguishes her even more from the dark background, and the water coming from the fountain gives the impression that the light comes out of Cher—which indicates the power of the girl's sudden realisation. The fact that the hue which surrounds the heroine, and the fountain is pink highlights, in turn, the discovery's romantic character.

3.2.12. A single mid-shot of Cher experiencing the epiphany of realising her feeling for Josh

Surely, part of what makes the filmmakers adapt Austen's prose for romantic comedies so willingly is the fact that this commercial film genre might be inherently contradictory as well. Like Austen's novels, the genre follows the conventions that are both empowering and limiting to women—the demographic it is most marketed to and beloved by. Its plot tends to focus on an energetic female individualist, but it also suggests that finding love is her number one priority. The heroines can find happiness only by living with a man, finding an alternative to their emotional fulfilment is impossible. Thus, while Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse express a complete lack of interest in the question of marriage (at least in relation to themselves) and make absolutely no matrimonial plans, their film counterparts—Lalita Bakshi, Aisha Kapoor, Cher Horowitz, Bridget Jones and Kathleen Kelly—not only dream of love, but they actually look for life partners. In fact, Bridget Jones is utterly obsessed with finding herself a boyfriend. This becomes even clearer when she embarks on an affair with Daniel Cleaver, who is the epitome of all the qualities she intends to avoid:

> Resolution number one: Obviously, will lose twenty pounds. Number two: […] Equally important, will find a sensible boyfriend to go out with and not continue to form romantic attachments to any of the following: alcoholics, workaholics, commitment phobics, peeping toms, megalomaniacs, emotional fuckwits or perverts. And especially will not fantasise about a particular person who embodies all these things... Unfortunately, he just happens to be my boss, editor in chief Daniel Cleaver, and for various slightly unfair reasons relating to this year's Christmas party I suspect he does not fantasise about me (Macguire 00.07.35)

The heroine is aware that the man is a sexual predator, who exudes all the vices she has just enlisted and, ironically, she still attempts to catch his attention and fantasises of marrying him. The viewers realise at the very beginning of the film that the main heroine, even though in her thirties, is emotionally immature both due to her fascination with Cleaver and the opening sequence of the movie—the credits roll in brightly-coloured and playful font, which is characteristic of high school movies, shallow chick-flicks or women's films about maturing girls[76]. Thus, in her determination to find herself a boyfriend and in her scandalous behaviour Bridget resembles more Lydia Bennet, Elizabeth's teenage sister rather than the main heroine herself. While Austen's Elizabeth demands respect from men and refuses to be objectified, Bridget condones sexual harassment and does not react when Daniel Cleaver or "uncle" Geoffrey lays a hand on her bottom, a co-worker ogles her breasts and confuses her name, and the next boss only hires her because he finds out that she slept with the previous one and suggests that he would not fire her for that reason. The very fact that Bridget sleeps with her boss and allows Daniel to hide their romantic relationship from other employees puts her in the position of a woman dominated by a man. Unlike Elizabeth, who finds Darcy's first proposal offensive, Bridget replays in her mind only the fragment of Mark Darcy admitting he likes her "just the way she is" (Maguire 00.53.29.). She does not feel much insulted by what he says just before this confession even though he enlists her vices. Of course, this attitude stems directly from the main themes of the film—the pain of loneliness and the difficult life of a single woman—which require radical changes in the main heroine's image. Nevertheless, there is not much of Elizabeth Bennet's assertiveness left in Bridget's attitude.

As shown in this sub-chapter, rom-coms are all about romance, by definition—starting with the character' structures and ending with sentimentalised mise-en-scéne. The genre films build their narrative around romantic plotline and allow for such characters' behaviour which would be considered absurd in real life: seducing a person with a different sexual orientation than the seducer's (*Clueless*), chasing after someone with no trousers on in the middle of the night on the street, or flying across the whole country to kiss a person goodbye (*Bridget Jones' Diary* in both cases), and finally hiding one's true identity from their love interest to manipulate them (*You've Got Mail*). A common critique is that romantic comedies are unrealistic, as they feed their audience with a potentially deceitful myth of a star-crossed soulmate who is the solution to all their problems. Mandy Kaling perceives romantic comedies as a subgenre of sci-fi, as she finds that the diegetic world of these genre

[76] Such opening credits appear for example in *Legally Blonde,* dir. Robert Luketic 2001, or *To All the Boys I've Loved Before,* dir. Susan Johnson 2018.

films has different rules than the regular world of an average person (147). For example, it tends to depict people making grand gestures of love and acting abnormally, always in full make up and perfect hairstyle even right after they wake up. Thus, by adapting Austen's novels of manners into romantic comedies, the filmmakers reduce the sense of authenticity of her stories. The original narrative of Austen's prose presents daily-life and a routine of landed gentry—their struggles, fears and joys. What the audience is witnessing while watching a romantic comedy may hardly be considered a routine sometimes.

In truth, Austen's novels have some common ground with romance, but it is difficult to agree that the writer's style, the way she builds a fictional world or her psychological and social analysis of the fate of women follow the patterns of popular romances. While mass-marketed romances celebrate sentimental love, are often related to sex, and to some extent accept the patriarchal order, love in Austen's novels is not sentimental or physical, but rather realistic and platonic, and social patriarchy, although not openly criticised, functions as an element enslaving women and determining their fate (Margolis 24). In Austen's world, romantic themes are presented in a social context, and falling in love becomes an attempt to find happiness and make a life in a community bearable. Yet, love is not the main reason why people marry. The author shows the world in the context of interconnections, usually regulated by economic factors. Therefore, the writer's novels are rather anti-romances which, based on the plot about love, present a rational image of it.

Thus, while nothing romantic or sentimental may be noticed in Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy's first encounter in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* the filmmakers of the novels' rom-com adaptations clearly try to romanticise that key moment. As mentioned before, Nora Ephron's adaptation includes an additional scene which features Kathleen Kelly and Joe Fox getting attracted to each other before they get to know each other's identities. Gurinder Chadha's movie, in turn, captures Lalita Bakshi and Will Darcy staring at each other with mesmerised expressions on their faces. Even the film directed by Sharon Maguire, which depicts the meet-cute most closely out of the three adaptations, sends a clear message to the audience that the love affair between the two protagonists is going to develop.

Bridget Jones and Mark Darcy's first encounter echoes the situation at Meryton ball, during which Mr Darcy belittles Elizabeth Bennet by refusing to ask her to dance and commenting on her looks to be tolerable, but not enough to encourage him. The novel's hero's impolite behaviour is mirrored, if not amplified, by Mark Darcy's words: "Mother, I do not need a blind date. Particularly not with some verbally incontinent spinster who drinks like a fish, smokes like a chimney, and dresses

like her own mother" (Maguire 00.04.32). Mark Darcy's comment appears far crueller than that of Austen's protagonist. However, in light of his conversation with Bridget, during which the woman presents herself as coarse, his words seem more justified: "I'm afraid I'm a bit hungover, wish I could be lying with my head in the toilet like all normal people" (Maguire 00.03.56.). A poorly considered outfit was not the main reason why the man lost interest in Bridget. Most of all it was her manners and bad habits—while talking to Darcy, Bridget smokes cigarettes, although he does not, and on top of that, the heroine herself suggests that she has drinking issues.

3.2.13. A middle two shot of Bridget and Mark's first encounter

The shot of the couple suggests, however, that even though Bridget and Mark are so different they still belong together. The photo seems almost symmetrical. Because the whole story is told from Bridget's perspective, she is in the centre of the frame, right next to a lit lamp, which draws the viewer's attention to her person even more. The facial expressions of both protagonists show how embarrassed of the situation they actually are. They both wear eccentric clothes their parents bought them—Bridget's dress, as she admits, resembles a carpet, whereas Mark is wearing a reindeer sweater, which looks even more bizarre with the creased pants. The photo suggests that despite the apparent differences between Bridget and Darcy, the characters complement each other and share similarities. As soon as the heroine starts talking, the photo becomes less symmetrical and shows Darcy against the balcony door as if he was looking for a way out.

3.2.14. A middle shot of Bridget and Mark having their first conversation

Since the colour palette focuses on reds, the scene obviously builds an aura for a romance between the two protagonists. The only element that does not blend with other elements of the scene's composition is Mark himself, as he is wearing a green sweater. Apparently, the filmmakers want to indicate that the hero is not ready for a relationship yet. Bridget, in turn, smiles and leans slightly towards the man, in vain trying to entertain him with conversation. Standing upright with a serious face, Mark contrasts with the smiling, relaxed Bridget, who holds a lit cigarette in her hand. The language of the film clearly suggests that the protagonist wants to get away from Bridget and this conversation as quickly as possible. The veil that separates the future lovers begins to resemble a wall separating the two characters—while Bridget keeps talking about her New Year's resolutions, Darcy remains completely quiet, embarrassed by what he hears.

The relationship between Bridget Jones and Mark Darcy parallels the relation of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy—at first, they seem to resent each other, but after a while their antipathy gradually changes into affection. Similarly, *You've Got Mail* loosely follows the trajectory of the original events from Austen's literary original but readapts the key moments that influence the development of the main couple's relationship: the encounter at the Meryton Assembly, Darcy's dreadful first proposal, Darcy's explaining himself through the means of a letter, Elizabeth's visit in Pemberley, the second proposal and the lovers' reunion. The hate-love relationship, which defines Austen's famous literary pairing of Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy, is reflected in Kathleen Kelly and Joe Fox's relation. Yet, while the original couple shares the social class affiliation, Ephron's protagonists share the business branch. The film pairs Kathleen Kelly, the proprietor of a lovely children's bookstore—The Shop Around the Corner—with Joe Fox, the CEO of the competing FoxBooks megastore and the film counterpart of the literary Fitzwilliam Darcy.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen's main characters are at first and throughout most of the story kept apart since Darcy does not want to mingle with Elizabeth and the Bennets. Even though Lizzy comes from landed gentry as well as Darcy, he finds the woman a poor match and disrespects her due to the heroine's poor social connections along with worse financial standing. After Joe Fox finds out about Kathleen's surname he starts avoiding the woman as well and begins to treat her with almost as much indulgence as Darcy showed Elizabeth. The scene of the book dinner party readapts the Meryton Assembly, during which Darcy snubs and belittles Elizabeth. Joe tries to avoid Kathleen just as much as Darcy tries to ignore Lizzy—he barely acknowledges her presence and wants to cut the conversation with her before it even starts.

3.2.15. A mid-shot of Kathleen Kelly meeting Joe Fox on the book party

The characters' unexpected encounter at a book party is the very moment they start disliking each other. The tone of the dirty two shot is not dramatic, as no contrast ratio can be discerned. The colour palette of the scene centres on beiges, dark yellows and browns, which is actually a tonal range of most of the movie. Thus, the mood of this scene remains light-hearted and adequate for a romantic comedy. Yet, the composition of the shot reveals that the story revolves around two characters with different perspectives on their business. The protagonists are framed between focal points, the audience can see a lit lamp between them—which means both of them are the main characters of the story and both of their perspectives are equally emphasised. Yet, since the viewers can see book volumes behind Joe's back, they may assume he finds his business in bookselling the most important. The amount of the volumes may also indicate his wealth. Behind Kathleen, in turn, the audience can see a crowd of people. On the one hand it may suggest she is more sociable than him. On the other hand, when juxtaposed with the volumes of books behind Joe's back, such a view can indicate Kathleen is not a materialist and cares more about people and not items or money one can gather from selling.

Throughout the movie Kathleen and Joe lead their separate lives and talk to each other about them on the Internet. The content of their e-mails is presented to the viewers with the use of a voice-over technique, which becomes a key factor for this film. It is used both to keep the protagonists' stories separate and to individualise the viewers' perceptions of Kathleen and Joe. Although this technique is usually introduced to present the character's inner monologue (like in *Aisha* and *Bridget Jones' Diary*), in the context of Ephron's movie, voice-over is mostly used when the audience sees Joe and Kathleen exchanging messages. Thus, the viewers hear their emails to one another, and thanks to the cross-cutting technique they are also allowed to see the protagonists react to what has been written to them. In this way the audience may remain neutral as they are aware of both characters' perspectives and have access to their thoughts. Thus, even though Joe Fox gives an impression of a ruthless businessman, upon hearing his email in which he tries to support Kathleen in her fight for The Shop Around the Corner, the audience realises he is not the villain.

Cross-cutting is an editing technique which allows the filmmakers to cut between two or more scenes happening in two different locations, usually at the same time. The camera cuts from one scene/action to another to establish a relationship between two scenes or to suggest the actions are occurring at the same time. In *You've Got Mail* the use of cross-cutting technique presents the background of the protagonists and sets a good base for exchanging emails. The implementation of this technique makes the audience equally invested in the lives of both protagonists and allows the film to keep the stories of Joe and Kathleen connected even if they are apart. In scenes which do not feature the characters writing to each other, the cross-cutting builds an impression the two protagonists are destined to be together.

In fact, the film indicates the two characters have been made for each other since the very beginning of the story. As the movie starts, the audience sees Kathleen and Joe start their day in a very similar manner. First they check their emails in hope of getting a message from one another—a voice-over plays as the characters read the emails and respond to them, thus, they begin their days with contacting each other and continue to think about one another while getting ready for work and beginning their daily routines. Then the star-crossed lovers take the same route to work, pass by the same neighbourhood, stop at the same coffee shop for their morning cups of coffee, only at different time. Later on, the cross-cutting technique reveals the protagonists break up with their life partners almost at the same moment. The cross-cutting can, therefore, create an impression that a film universe is actively pulling the characters towards each other.

This impression that the two characters belong to each other deepens through the symmetry in the shots' composition. The movie uses quite often symmetrical shots of the lovers to suggest they mesh well and complete each other.

3.2.16. The wide-angle shot of Kathleen and Joe going to work

In this shot the protagonists are situated on both sides of the frame. Dressed in outer clothes, both Kathleen and Joe are carrying a cup of coffee and a bag, which gives the impression of a mirror reflection. Since the photo was taken at the beginning of the film, it can be interpreted as an establishing shot: it informs the audience that the film features two different stories (Kathleen's and Joe's) at the same time. The stories intermingle until they finally connect, just like the characters depicted in this shot.

The cross-cutting technique used in the scenes of their online conversations only proves the above-explained interpretation to be right, as it allows the viewers to notice the different rearrangement of the characters in the frame: Kathleen is situated on its left side and the blank space on the right side of the frame suggests that someone is missing.

3.2.17-18. The single shots of Kathleen and Joe having one of their online conversations.

By juxtaposing this shot with the shot of Joe lying in his bed in front of his computer screen on the right side of the frame an obvious conclusion comes to the viewer's mind that it is Joe who is missing

from Kathleen's shot, and vice versa. Additionally, it is impossible not to notice the symmetry in the shot of Joe: Two lamps stand on both sides of his bed, two paintings are hanging above the bed, two pillows are lying on the bed. The symmetry and aesthetics of the shot is broken by Joe—he is the only element of the frame that lacks a pair. Just like Kathleen, the hero stands out in the frame and catches the viewer's attention straight away—the colour palette centres once again on beiges whereas Joe is dressed in dark clothes, his computer is dark as well. The fact that everything else is doubled only reveals the man's longing for a relationship.

All in all, the modernised adaptations of Austen's prose, especially those that are romantic comedies, do not oppose the sentimentalism that the novelist herself opposed. On the contrary, they sanction and exploit elements of romance throughout the movies. Yet, the most sentimental parts are the endings of the stories—which is another modification motivated by the change of genre dominant. In *Aisha*, for example, Arjun declares his love for the heroine in a very Romeo and Juliet like manner. The scene starts with the establishing shot of Aisha's lit house, which in this respect becomes an obstacle between the lovers. Since Aisha refuses to come down the stairs, Arjun has to climb up. The woman is standing on a balcony and listens to her lover responding to her former declaration of love while climbing the ladder. The high contrast ratio presents Aisha as the lightest point of the frame, whereas Arjun, clad in his dark suit, is the darkest point. The scene indicates that the two characters are opposites of each other, but at the same time they connote the colours of the bride and groom's wedding outfits.

3.2.19-20. Mid-shots of Aisha and Arjun reuniting in a Romeo-and-Juliet type of a scene.

As Arjun manages to climb up, he kisses Aisha's face, and the woman hugs him. Their happily-ever-after is indicated as the shot of the couple dissolves into a matching shot of the lovers—which transfers the audience into one year forward.

3.2.21-22. A close-up shot of Arjun and Aisha dissolving into another shot of the couple still in love after one year of being together.

Since Austen's novels end with weddings, such an ending may be perceived as a manifestation of romance and a consequence of women's consent to the conditions imposed by patriarchal order. Maybe that is why the ending of *You've Got Mail* features Kathleen Kelly getting to terms with losing her business at Joe Fox's expense and her getting involved with him anyway.

Such an ending of a love story based on Austen's prose may appear surprising, as it suggests that in exchange for affection the heroines are able to forgive even losing their autonomy, and that nothing other than love actually matters. It is a very sentimental ending to the story. Although Jane Austen herself uses elements of popular romances in the plots of her works and deliberately introduces sentimental clichés, commonly perceived as romantic, the author approaches sentimental inclinations quite ironically. In truth, her literary heroines try to bond with men out of love, crossing social, personal and economic barriers. As Nora Nachumi notices, they also fight for the balance between their desires and social position and financial security (132). However, like Austen herself, the heroines of her novels often reject sentimental conventions. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne learns that she can become attached to someone other than Willoughby, and in P*ride and Prejudice* Elizabeth practically decides to fall in love with Darcy after she learns how noble and decent he actually is. Thus, the happy ending depends on the heroines, who must rely on the knowledge of their feelings and correctly interpret the surrounding world (Nachumi 132).

Perhaps the writer's ironic approach to sentimental conventions justifies the addition of a scene in *Bridget Jones' Diary* in which the heroine runs out of her apartment to apologise to Mark Darcy and reunite with him, would be considered sentimental: the shot depicts the couple in the middle of the frame, cuddling; the low-key lighting and the soundtrack which accompanies the scene—*Someone like you*—builds a romantic mood of the scene; the camera slowly recedes back, showing the lovers from a high angle, indicating their vulnerability and suggesting they managed to find each other in this big world. Yet, since Bridget has no trousers on, the scene is a little bit hilarious,

and the comedic effect is strengthened by the fact that the heroine's buttocks become the most illuminated point of the frame.

3.2.23. A full shot of Bridget and Mark reuniting at the end of the story

In *Clueless,* as Cher is trying to digest the latest revelation that Tai is into Josh and feels upset after their fight, the emotional scene alters into comic, as the main heroine stops her internal monologue because she spotted a nice dress: "What was my problem? Tai is my pal. I don't begrudge her a boyfriend. I really—oh!—I wonder if they have that in my size" (Heckerling 01.18.08.). The comedic effect strengthens even more through the use of the elements of mise-en-scéne at that very moment. As the refrain of the song appears and Cher has an epiphany that she loves Josh, the fountain in the background lights up in pink and purple colours—it resembles a little bit a bulb that lights up over the head of cartoon characters in the moments of their sudden realisations.

Contrary to Austen, who mainly uses wry comments, ironic tone and satirical character in order to present and, to some extent, ridicule the society of her time and the prevailing norms which limit women, the filmmakers give a humorous tone to their adaptations through the satirical presentation of the heroines themselves, as if the protagonists were as pitiable as the whole image of the diegetic world. Obviously, the heroines of rom-coms should have some relatable flaws so that the viewers can identify themselves with these characters, but in the case of Bridget Jones, Lalita Bakshi, Aisha Kapoor and Cher Horowitz these traits are exaggerated and, therefore, the film protagonists become more of a parody of Austen's heroines than their modernised counterparts. Conversely, Austen consciously makes her heroines stand out from the society in which they live—as if their intelligence and ability to adapt and survive in difficult conditions made them superior to the rest of society. For example, in the novel, Mr Darcy notes that out of the entire Bennet family, only Elizabeth and her sister Jane always behave in accordance with the accepted etiquette, their manners in society are actually exemplary, and their manner of speech is impeccable. Conversely, Bridget Jones' demeanour is a stark contrast. While Elizabeth Bennet evokes respect in the receiver, Bridget Jones'

behaviour generates mostly pity or amusement. The heroine initiates a series of cringe embarrassments such as exposing her undergarments—which would make any female inhabitant of Regency England blush. The woman constantly humiliates herself. The scenes in which Bridget slides down a fire pole with her butt into the camera, dresses up in an erotic but slightly vulgar outfit of a playboy bunny, sings (spoofing) into the microphone at a work party with a cigarette in her hand, chases after Mark Darcy with no trousers on while it snows, fails to switch on the microphone on stage, tells Mark about her hungover during their first encounter—altogether make the viewer perceive the heroine as inept and vulgar. Likewise, the fact that the woman curses, smokes, and drinks to such an extent that she falls out of a taxi-cab and makes New Year's resolutions to cut down on unhealthy habits only adds to the picture. At times the viewer has the impression that the heroine does not know what her job is about or that she is just intellectually incompetent—Bridget thinks that Kafir Aghani and Elenor Hini are one person (while they are a married couple whom she is supposed to interview), pretends to the editor-in-chief that she is talking to F.R. Leavis[77] on the phone (even though the literary critic died in 1978), and she does not know how to answer Salman Rushdie's question about Kafka's novel, which her company is promoting, so she asks the writer for directions to the restroom. These scenes show that Austen's irony in Maguire's movie turns largely into a situational comedy. In such moments as the heroine's clumsy slide down a fire pole or the scene where the contents of a food processor shoot her in the face, *Bridget Jones' Diary* resembles a slapstick comedy.

A tendency that appears more and more often in romantic comedies based on the works of Jane Austen is to bring the romantic thread to the fore and focus primarily on the courtship plot—which shallows the entire adapted narrative. This shallowing of Austen's prose—on account of transaccentuation of the theme of love and the courtship plotline, reduction and addition of certain elements (introduction of comedy and slapstick gags results in reducing the authenticity of Austen's prose and making the tone of Austen's stories more light-hearted). The emphasis on romance is clearly visible in the sentimental scenes, which make Austen's narrative more cinematic, but at the same time are a denial of the writer's literary values. A similar opposition to her conventions is the romanticisation of the main male characters, which partly results from commercialization and an attempt to make the love story more attractive. The change of the genre dominant precludes a close adaptation of certain Austen's themes. Since these films refer to the image of a modern—the 20th or 21st century—woman whose situation is significantly different from that of the 19th-century-women

[77] The critic was one of the Janeites, so his name appearing in the film relates to Austen's prose. Since the opening credits list neither Jane Austen's name nor her novel's title, the Janeite's name along with the paraphrase of the introductory line of *Pride and Prejudice* serve as a reference.

and because the films emphasise romantic themes, ignoring their social context, the aspect of emancipation, understood by Jane Austen, is diminished. In fact, the themes of women's emancipation and (in)equality either disappear or become marginalised, but the issues of morality and manners remain: comedies, as a rule, mock serious and difficult topics. Yet, they allow to implement the elements of satire and irony, especially in relation to human behaviour. However, the amplification of parodic elements in the above-analysed romantic comedies further diminishes the seriousness of the adapted stories' narrative. The issue of female community and friendship is also omitted or trivialised in adaptations, because the filmmakers focus on an audience that wants to experience love with an intensity rarely seen in everyday life and, thus, they refer to the poetics of mass-marketed romantic comedies. Consequently, most modernised adaptations which follow the romantic comedies' conventions reduce Jane Austen's prose to simple love stories.

3.3. Austen's Characters in "Horror" Films

According to Andrew Tudor, horror films are (mostly) variations of the "seek and destroy" narrative pattern, which entails "a monstrous threat into a stable situation; the monster rampages in the face of attempts to combat it; the monster is (perhaps) destroyed and order (perhaps) restored"[78] (80). Vampire and zombie films tend to follow the same pattern, as they are regarded as sub-genres of horror films. Analogically, vampire and zombie novels or short stories are considered sub-genres of horror literature (Vajdovich 202). As Tudor marks, horror narratives present "an ordered, *known* world under threat from an *unknown* of some kind" (82). The disparities between "the known" and "the unknown" are based on such oppositions as life and death, normality and abnormality, culture and nature, or sanity and insanity. The narratives of vampire and zombie movies are built on the antithesis of life and death. In their cases, "the known" is represented by humankind whereas "the unknown" by a monster—which refers to Altman's theory considering the importance of dualistic factors in presenting the diegetic world in a genre film (62). The effect which horror films impose on their audience is the key criterion for their classification to this film genre (Bordwell and Thompson 373). Horror fiction aims at frightening the receiver. Hence, the main nemesis in horror narrative is often portrayed as a monster, which is supposed to horrify and repel, as it violates basic laws of nature. Both vampires and zombies are examples of monsters that a horror narrative can be based on—both types of creatures transgress life and death, nature and culture, and analogically, the border of the

[78] This description especially refers to vampire and zombie films, although not all of them follow this pattern. Of course, not all horror films have to revolve around the figure of a supernatural monster. *Friday the 13th* (dir. Sean S. Cunningham, 1980) or *Nightmare on Elm Street* (dir. Wes Craven, 1984) centre on the character of a serial killer.

known and the unknown dimension, as well as the border of the human and inhuman. Their existence endangers the humankind—that is why they evoke fear in the viewers.

While a "monstrous threat" often take the form of a monster in horror movie, danger does not have to be impersonated. Sometimes there may not be an identifiable monster figure, but simply perilous circumstances which pose a threat to the characters. Nevertheless, loose adaptations of Jane Austen's novels happen to be made in the convention of those subgenres of horror that are based on the figure of a monster.

The introduction of Austen's characters into the stories involving monsters was an idea of Stephanie Meyer. In her *Twilight* series of novels, the author moves the action of *Pride and Prejudice* to the 21st century America, changing Elizabeth Bennet into a teenage girl and Mr Darcy into a 117-year-old vampire. The novel turned out to be a bestseller and in 2008 Catherine Hardwicke adapted it for film. The commercial success of Meyer's novel and Hardwicke's film adaptation inspired subsequent writers and filmmakers—a year after the premiere of the Hardwicke's film adaptation, Quirk Books published *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (written by Jane Austen[79] and Seth Grahame-Smith) and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (written by Jane Austen[80] and Ben H. Winters). The publishers refer to these adaptations as extensions and "audacious retelling[s]"[81] of two Austen's novels, because they blend the narratives of the original texts with some newly written scenes featuring horrific creatures and gruesome action[82]. Just as in the case of *Twilight*, Grahame-Smith's decision to introduce the motif of the living dead to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* was certainly motivated by the desire to achieve high financial profits and to attract new readers by refreshing the already known love story[83]. On the official website of the series the publishers inform that the Quirk Classics novels are "designed to be cleverly conceived, well-written, and entertainingly executed masterpieces that bring new fans to both classic works of literature and to original works of genre-based fiction"[84]. While most readers of Jane Austen's prose tend to be female, the readers of zombie literature are male (Federici 33). Therefore, the threat of a zombie apocalypse may be treated as a metaphor for the invasion of the Austen canon by a different kind of a reader (Federici 33).

[79] Since most of her narrative remains unchanged, Austen's name appears on the novel's cover next to Grahame-Smith's. The writer is listed as the co-author of the literary adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.
[80] The case is analogous to the previously mentioned novel.
[81] Quirk Books, https://www.quirkbooks.com/book/pride-and-prejudice-and-zombies
[82] https://www.quirkbooks.com/book/pride-and-prejudice-and-zombies/
[83] *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* appeared on the New York Times best-seller list. Originally, Quirk Books planned to print 10 000 copies. However, after the cover and the cover blurb went viral, the publishers changed their mind and around 850,000 copies were printed (Jacobsen)
[84] https://www.quirkbooks.com/quirk-classics/

Along with Winters's *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, Grahame-Smith's novel evoked a new tendency in literature—the mash-up novel[85], which usually combines threads from at least two sources in order to create a third work without losing the understanding of the original (Perzyńska 38). Its structure allows for adding some new elements, mainly from the borderline of thriller and horror—like zombies, werewolves or vampires—into the narrative of the literary original (Piechota 118).

Soon after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, the subsequent authors decided to readapt other classics of world literature in a similar manner and such novels as *Mansfield Park and the Mummies* or *Emma and the Werewolves* joined the new craze. Grahame-Smith's and Ben Winters' mash-up novels inaugurated the "Quirk Classics" series, which focused on readapting the works of world literature uncovered by copyright (Szyngiel 417). However, the subsequent literary works failed to evoke such interest: they have neither been translated into other languages[86] nor filmed so far. Conversely, Grahame-Smith's zombified *Pride and Prejudice* achieved a great commercial success with millions sold copies[87] and a cinematic adaptation, directed by Burr Steers and released in 2016. In Burr Steers' *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* Austen's ironically and critically portrayed Regency England changes into an alternative universe in which zombies invade the countryside, Mr Darcy becomes a zombie-slayer, and Elizabeth Bennet arms herself not only with witty responses but also with martial-arts fighting abilities—which clearly refers to martial arts movies.

Both Hardwicke's *Twilight* and Steers' *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* might be considered second-degree adaptations of Austen's novel, which involve what Marek Hendrykowski defines as addition: the adaptive operation which requires adding elements from outside the original text to its film adaptation (57). The addition used in these particular film adaptations consists in supplementing the story with the motif of a vampire invasion and a zombie pandemic.

By studying vampire and zombie characters (constructed by Meyer and Grahame-Smith and filmed by Hardwicke and Steers) as well as by analysing the types of narrative created by the appearance of these figures and the stylistic means used by the filmmakers, this section explores the functionality of Austen's characters in alternative universe of *Twilight* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. The sub-chapter proves that although the introduced alterations may at first seem radical,

[85] The concept of mashup is originally associated with the Internet and music. It may refer to a website that combines online applications from various sources. Music mashup, in turn, combines fragments of different songs. Literary mashup functions alike—it combines elements typical of different literary genres. The person who first used the term "mash-up" in reference to Steers' movie was probably Caroline Kellogg, a blogger who reviewed *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* for LA Times.

[86] *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* was translated into Polish a year after its premiere.

[87] The Polish publisher informs about over a million copies sold and plans to film it with the participation of Hollywood stars: http://www.gjksiazki.pl/ksiazki,1,4,61,duma-i-uprze-dzenie-i-zombi.html

they do not modify the narrative structure of Austen's literary prototype completely—they fail to classify *Pride and Prejudice* as a typical horror story. The filmmakers may use the aesthetics of horror movies to attract more viewers, but genre change is apparent in the case of these two second-degree adaptations—it occurs mainly at the visual layer. The melodrama conventions still dominate the films' narratives. The cinematic adaptations are analysed in separate sections of this subchapter, as they represent two different sub-genres of a horror movie and differ in the degree to which they remain close to the literary original.

Pride and Prejudice in a Vampire Film

According to Noel Carroll, what defines a film as a horror movie is the appearance of a monster (78). Yet, even though Forks, where the action of the story in *Twilight* takes place, is invaded by vampires and werewolves, the classification of Hardwicke's movie as a horror film poses some problems. Since Bella finds vampires attractive and takes a liking to them almost immediately[88], it might be difficult to perceive them as utterly horrifying. After all, the heroine's voiceover narrates the story and, thus, the audience shares her perspective. Bella is not afraid of the Cullens, and, therefore, the appearance of the vampire family cannot be perceived by the viewers as frightening. The effect of horror continuously diminishes as the Cullens never show their vampire teeth; they are clad in modern, casual clothes in light colours and can walk in the sunlight—which instead of burning them makes them sparkle. *Twilight* does not follow the traditional convention of horror and does not present the vampire figures as gloomy, nocturnal creatures, lurking in the darkness. Instead, it romanticises vampires by presenting them from the perspective of a maturing girl who feels uncomfortable in her own human body. Bella is willing to become a vampire herself, as she feels emotionally closer to the Cullens than to her human friends or even family. Such an attitude alters the vampire story into a melodrama instead of a typical horror story—with this adaptive strategy, the traditional manner of adapting Jane Austen's prose for film is maintained.

As Györgyi Vajdovich points out, the traditional vampire figure (in a variable form) always personifies "the morally unacceptable, the evil, and the damned" (205). Nevertheless, vampires may be portrayed in different manners. David Skal points out that canine teeth and vulnerability to sun rays appeared with the characters of Varney the Vampire and Count Dracula (99-104), whereas stage productions of *Dracula* from the 1920s added another vampiric attribute: a dark cloak with a high

[88] This is an approach sometimes used in modern vampire films, like *True Blood*. Its main heroine, Sookie Stackhouse, instantly comes to like Bill Compton.

collar (62). Over time, vampires have been portrayed as either young[89] or old[90], visually attractive[91] or repelling[92], dynamic or melancholic[93]. Yet, their appearance always poses a lethal threat to humans, as those characters who have contact with them, risk ending up either dead or damned. Eventually, humans become fully aware of this danger, and they try to eliminate it (202). The vampires tend to hide themselves from humans[94], as they realise that the humankind's awareness of their existence is, in fact, a threat to the vampiric realm.

To emphasise the sense of peril and to evoke the emotions of fear and horror in viewers, vampire movies employ the stylistic features typical of the horror film genre. However, the filmmakers of *Twilight* agree to soften the image of the main vampire characters, consequently rejecting many typical tropes of a vampire film. Hence, the audience does not watch blood-dripping mouths with big canines, long black coats, dark dungeons, bats or chains. If such elements appear at all, they are usually presented in a humorous way: the Cullens add garlic to food when they cook for Bella; a crucifix hangs on the wall of the living room (in older vampire movies it was used as a weapon against vampires, but here it is a family relic). The breakage with the clichéd elements of mise-en-scéne is directly referred to by Edward Cullen: during Bella's first visit, the hero asks the girl if she expected to see a castle with coffins. The Cullens' house does not resemble an old castle or a mansion at all—it is a secluded, but modernly furnished detached house with lots of windows, which let the sun rays in. Giving up the iconography of vampire horror makes the character of Edward more of a lover than a monster. In fact, the *Twilight* saga centres on the visual attractiveness of mise-en-scéne—an aspect which is crucial in heritage film adaptations of Austen's prose. However, the element of promoting British cultural heritage is abandoned.

The fact that *Twilight* series departs from the image of stereotypical vampire figures only strengthens the impression of abandoning the idea of portraying Edward Cullen as a murderous beast. The Cullens' physical appearance—pale skin, which sparkles in the sun, or changing eye-colour—does not particularly disturb other inhabitants of Forks, which allows the undead to live among humans, attend school and go to work. In Hardwicke's film, except for the Quileute tribe and Afro-American inhabitants of the town, most of the characters are pale—Forks is

[89] like Edward, Alice, Rosalie and Emmett Cullen in *Twilight* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2008)
[90] like count Dracula in Coppola's film adaptation (1992) of Bram Stoker's novel
[91] like the Salvatore brothers in Julie Plec and Robin Williamson's TV series, *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017), a film adaptation of L.J. Smith's series of novels. The actor who played Damon Salvatore, Ian Somerhalder, used to be a model.
[92] like the horrifying Count Orlok in Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922)
[93] like Lestat versus Louis in *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1994), a film adaptation of Anne Rice's novel, or Damon versus Stephan Salvatore in *The Vampire Diaries*.
[94] This is not a rule; in *True Blood* (dir. Alan Ball, 2008-2015) vampires officially revealed their existence and they openly co-exist with humans.

a rainy town, and the sun shines there rarely. Sparkling skin and changing eye-colour are barely noticeable as well. The only person who seems to notice the vampires' eyes change colour is Bella.

Even though the ability to mask themselves in order to mingle with humans is nothing new, the Cullens' high sense of morality certainly distinguishes them among traditional gothic vampire figures. Moral standards of the *Twilight* vampire family diminish the effect of horror and fear the creatures should evoke. Carlisle's moral standpoint manifests itself in the vampire's devotion to humankind—he works as a doctor in a hospital. Edward's piety prevents him not only from killing humans, but also from pre-marital sex. Since the Cullens are determined not to become monsters or killers, they feed on animals instead of humans. Maintaining such a diet requires a great deal of self-restraint and sacrifice from them, because, as Edward Cullen claims, animal blood is not as nutritious as human. Such a positive portrayal of the vampire family, whose members are determined to lead virtuous lives, is supposed to create a basis for a positive reception of Edward Cullen—the main male hero and the equivalent of Mr Darcy's character. The Cullens' determination in following the rules of vampire etiquette and not succumbing to being driven by bloodthirst and hunger can be read as an indicator of aristocracy within the vampiric environment. Of course, such an interpretation subverts Austen's treatment of social norms: in *Twilight,* following social conventions makes the vampiric protagonists more human, whereas in Austen's Regency England abiding etiquette turns the characters into emotionless and calculated people, who consider themselves civilised elite members.

The Cullens' sense of morality puts them in stark contrast with stereotypical gothic "evil" vampire figures, represented by James, Laurent and Victoria (or the Volturi, who function as the vampiric authority in subsequent parts of the series). The conflict between these nomadic vampires and the Cullens organises the order of the diegetic world in *Twilight.* While the civilised Cullens represent culture, wild and untamed James, Laurent and Victoria represent nature—always on the run, they hunt and feed on people, killing them afterwards. What truly makes them monstrous is their cruelty and unstoppable thirst for human blood. Such a contraposition of two groups of vampires suggests another binary opposition—moral versus immoral, or perhaps even human versus inhuman, since the moral standpoints of the Cullens' make them rather human than monstrous. Additionally, as Vajdovich suggests, this "sense of humanity" is emphasised by the Cullens' task of exterminating the evil and the morally unacceptable—by killing James, and subsequently also Laurent and Victoria (205).

The rejection of the stereotypical vampire image manifests itself in the scenes of vampires' deaths—which are but a few. Vampire films have used miscellaneous methods of vanquishing these creatures—from stabbing a vampire's heart with a wooden stake, or exposing vampire's flesh to sunlight, to even more gory, such as beheading and setting on fire. Since the extermination of a

vampire was the culminating point of the horror vampire narrative, as Vajdovich points out, a scene featuring the monster's death was usually spectacular and frightening (206). The filmmakers of *Twilight*, however, purposely diminish the importance of these scenes and merely suggest that such events take place. The deaths of James and Laurent are barely shown—in both cases the filmmakers have decided to spare the audience the gory details. The viewers cannot clearly see James' actual death scene, since it is shown from Bella's perspective. The girl only sees blurred silhouettes before a fire, as the excruciating pain that she feels after being bitten by the vampire affects her sight. Laurent's death, in turn, lasts only a moment and is rather suggested by the shot of Jacob throwing himself on the vampire while in his werewolf form. Victoria's death cannot be overlooked, however, because the scene ends the "seek and destroy" plotline (Vajdovich 206). Nevertheless, it departs from the horror tradition and from its literary original. While the novel describes the scene as frightening, the movie does not present it as such—Edward kills the female vampire with one quick bite to her neck, after which she literally falls apart. In that moment Victoria reminds one of a glass statue which crashes into pieces.

Since the filmmakers choose to soften the image of a vampire, they give up on the gory depiction of vampires' deaths. Additionally, they build a distance between the viewers and the scenes of the vampire attacks on humans, which are supposed to be the most frightening events of the story. Thus, the effect of horror diminishes even more. In the scene of the final confrontation with James, the viewer's attention is focused more on what is happening to Bella than the vampire—the sounds of vampires fighting are drowned out by the heroine's screams and sudden music. Both the acoustic and visual effects distance the viewers from the probably horrifying events that are happening in the background. Similarly, the scenes of James, Laurent and Victoria's attack on a security guard, and then on Waylon—Bella's father's friend, or the initial scene of the movie feature no gory details. In fact, these scenes do not picture the vampire attack clearly. During the opening scene the viewers see only the back of a vampire capturing a deer in the woods (but they do not witness the animal's death). In turn, the scene of vampire attack on a security guard is filmed through the opaque glass floor so the audience cannot see his death in focus. Likewise, the killing of Waylon is not shown either—the scene shows three vampires (James, Victoria, and Laurent) taunting their victim, and ends after Laurent's words "James, let's not play with our food" (Hardwicke 01.25.48). The viewers only see Victoria kicking the man before the scene ends.

Since the viewers cannot see the actual harm that is afflicting the characters, they cannot fully sympathise with the victims. Out of them all, the viewers empathise most with the deer, whose perspective they can actually share. The first scene of *Twilight* begins with an establishing shot of a forest. It is also a point-of-view shot—the audience takes over the perspective of someone who is

hunting for a deer. The centre of the frame is occupied by a deer (at first unaware of somebody else's presence). The background of the picture is blurred, as the shot is taken with a shallow focus. Such a manoeuvre helps to concentrate the viewers' attention directly on a deer, which is about to fall prey to a figure lurking behind the trees. The change in the animal's behaviour is crucial for the scene. At first the deer keeps calm; it is eating and walking around at a slow pace. The moment it notices the intruder, the animal breaks into a gallop. The camera literally chases after the running deer, which makes it seem more and more scared. The pursuit becomes even more dramatic because the scene is accompanied by unnerving music, and the point-of-view shot suddenly changes its perspective from the vampire's to the fleeing deer's. This change allows the audience to relate to the frightened animal. The scene ends with the stalker capturing the petrified deer. The inclusion of this scene (as well as other numerous scenes in the forest) allows *Twilight* to maintain the emphasis on nature and picturesque landscapes—so often presented in heritage close adaptations of Austen's novels.

Apart from that, the above-analysed introductory scene shows the audience what to expect. The scenes of the vampires' fatal attacks are rather suggested than featured in the movie, as the audience have to imagine what will happen instead of witnessing the actual events. In fact, the viewers never actually see the vampires killing anybody—they just assume that. Except for the final confrontation with James, during which the vampire bites Bella's hand, the vampire attacks are not depicted either. Nevertheless, the viewers are more afraid of what they may witness than of what they finally see. The effect is deepened by the fact that the scene is filmed in a highly stylised manner: the chiaroscuro lighting adds suspense, the composition of blue light and the white beams of light fragment the space and may suggest the confrontation of two realms—the world of the living (white beams) and the world of the dead (bluish light). The scene is scary, but it does not include visual hallmarks of a vampire film—James neither exposes his vampire teeth nor allures Bella with his hypnotic powers. He does not bend over her neck to suck her blood. The viewer sees only traces of James's bite on Bella's hand after his attack on her. The filmmakers clearly do not wish to make their movie brutal or horrifying, but they want to build the drama effect; thus, the scenes of vampire attack indicate the protagonists' sense of danger, but the actual gory finale is not depicted.

The aura of angst and mystery is introduced mainly by the colour palette, which is dimmed and combines shades of green, grey and blue. With this stylistic means, the filmmakers build a connection between the coldness and paleness of the vampire skin and the diegetic world of Forks—which becomes even clearer the moment Edward Cullen states the fact that Forks is the rainiest town in the USA. Thus, the viewers find out involuntarily why the vampire family chooses to live there. When the Cullens decide to leave Forks in *New Moon,* and Bella's attention is directed towards Jacob Black, the colour palette changes as well—it warms up. The blue hue finally recedes, and the visual

layer of the film is dominated by beiges and greens, consequently getting a significantly warmer look. Forks is not as misty as it is in *Twilight*, the sun rays appear considerably more often. The new colour palette stresses the connection between nature and Jacob's lycanthropy, and suggests Forks is no longer occupied by vampires. Thus, the unity between human and nature, which the heritage adaptations of Austen's prose aim to amplify so clearly, is still maintained in this horror loose adaptation. *Twilight* operates with the same tools as heritage costume melodramas with regard to the heroine's changing emotions: the heroines' changing emotions are depicted with the use of a tonal colour palette and the weather changes. Therefore, the colour tone and atmosphere alter along with Bella Swan's changing relationships with boys—they concentrate on the hero who receives the greatest deal of the heroine's attention at the time.

The vampire retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* may start as a horror movie-to-be (or be labelled as one), but it enters the film genre which the film adaptations of Austen's prose are mainly associated with—the melodrama. Thus, even though blood and gory scenes quite often appear in vampire films (Vajdovich 211), the audience can barely ever see blood in *Twilight*. The accent colour in vampire movies—red—which brings connotations to blood and wounds – is used mainly in the scenes featuring Bella and Edward together in order to add eroticism to the scene and indicate the building up romance between these two, not to build the tone of danger.

Twilight does not fully adopt the traditional horror narrative. Its plot is not centred on "the seek and destroy" pattern—the plotline of James hunting Bella does not appear until almost the end of the film. It is rather a side plot, as it functions as one of the obstacles Bella and Edward must overcome in order to be together. In fact, *Twilight*'s plot follows the formula of "a boy meeting a girl, slighting the girl, and finally getting the girl"—a narrative pattern proposed by Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, adopting it to a teen-oriented movie (a teen pic). The first part of the vampiric saga updates and transforms the story of love between Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy. Hardwicke has grounded her treatment of the theme of love in Austen's prose, adopting the courtship plotline of *Pride and Prejudice.* The introduction of the Cullens to Bella, who becomes the newest member of the school community, and to the viewer, resembles the appearance of the Bingleys and Darcy at the Meryton ball. In previous film adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, these from 1995 and 2005, Elizabeth finds out more about Darcy from her friend, Charlotte Lucas, at the Meryton ball. Throughout their conversation, the heroine examines Mr Darcy carefully, clearly intrigued by him. Likewise, the moment the Cullens enter the school canteen Bella asks her schoolmate, Jessica, about them. While listening to her, she is eyeing Edward and his siblings with curiosity. Jessica pictures Edward as "gorgeous", but aloof and proud, as according to her, "none of the girls [here] are good-looking enough for him" (Hardwicke 01.51.56-53). Additionally, the girl suggests that the Cullens

do not integrate with other students at all and one of the reasons for their high sense of superiority is their wealth. The Cullens' economic prominence becomes apparent the moment Edward arrives at school, driving his shiny Volvo, which stands in stark contrast with Bella's old truck her father bought for her. The discrepancy in the financial situation of the main characters is, of course, dictated by the fact that in Jane Austen's source text the main heroine has worse connections and her family is much less wealthy than her future husband. Of course, in the case of its vampire adaptation, such a difference deepens the image of the main hero as mighty and powerful, whereas the main heroine seems considerably more vulnerable than in Austen's prose, when shown alongside an immortal and wealthy vampire aristocrat.

The eight key elements which Pamela Regis enumerates with regard to the plot structure of *Pride and Prejudice* formulate the main narrative plotline and introduce the theme of love in *Twilight* as well. The background for the story of Bella and Edward features a conflict between the Cullens and the local Quileute tribe, which builds tension, as it is on the verge of breaking out and, thus, the conflict poses yet another obstacle between Bella and Edward. Initially, the film presents the society of the diegetic world as the community which needs changes. That involves the main protagonists as well—Edward's vampirism makes him believe that he is doomed and, therefore, cannot be loved, at least not by a human being like Bella, whereas Bella lacks emotional support from her parents.

The lack of parental guidance and emotional distance between Bella and her parents has been marked since the very beginning of the film. After the initial scene of hunting in the forest, the camera shifts towards Bella. The following close-ups on the girl feature the protagonist saying goodbye to her life in sunny Arizona—thus, the prospect of losing Longbourn to Mr Collins in *Pride and Prejudice* translates into losing a family home in Arizona. The heroine decides to move in with her father so as not to interrupt her mother's love life with her new husband. The scene begins with a shot of Bella holding a cactus in a pot and a shovel. With every step she makes, the girl enumerates what she is going to miss most when she leaves. The audience's attention focuses directly on the heroine, who takes the central position in the shot.

3.3.1. An establishing shot of Bella Swan in Arizona

With her dark hair, clad in a long-sleeved dark grey blouse and a brown unbuttoned shirt, the girl distinguishes herself, as she is the darkest part of the frame. The high key lighting along with the colour palette of the scene—beiges and greens—indicate warmth. Nevertheless, Bella is pale and wears a long-sleeved blouse. The shots suggest that the girl does not belong to Arizona, as she does not blend in the landscape. The heroine's appearance stands in high contrast to her mother's looks. Contrary to her daughter, the woman is wearing a sleeveless top and a cowboy hat, which makes her fit into the landscape perfectly.

3.3.2. A middle two-shot of Bella and her mother

The fact that Bella's sole companion is a tiny cactus in a pot, which she holds in her hand and does not part with throughout the whole journey to Forks, may suggest that she feels insecure about the new chapter in her life. That is why she takes a part of Phoenix (and her former life) with herself. A cactus, however, may also become an attribute of Bella. The plant is not very demanding and does not need much care. Therefore, its appearance may symbolise Bella's self-containment and her getting used to the insufficient attention of her parents. Such an interpretation becomes apparent the moment the teenage girl arrives home. As her father leaves her alone in her room, she admits that one of the best things about Charlie is that he "doesn't hover" (Hardwicke 00.03.59-00.04.03). The awkwardness between Bella and her father becomes clear the very moment the girl arrives to Forks. In their first shot together, which takes place in Charlie's car, the characters are sitting at the edge of the frame, which mirrors the distance between the daughter and the father. Additionally, the protagonists barely speak to each other. The sole question Charlie asks Bella is about her hairstyle.

Since Bella Swan functions in the film as a counterpart of Austen's Elizabeth Bennet, the girl's portrayal as an outcast can be justified. After all, Jane Austen depicts Lizzy as a sort of a misfit as well—clearly, the heroine does not belong to Netherfield Park but at the same time, she stands out from the rest of the Bennets and, thus, she does not belong to Longbourn either. The filmmakers of

heritage melodramas capture this discrepancy in their movies and feature Elizabeth (both in BBC's TV series and Joe Wright's adaptation) in direct opposition to the rest of the Bennet women in scenes which are analysed in the first chapter of this dissertation.

Twilight also draws upon *Pride and Prejudice* in constructing the main male character as unapproachable and mysterious. The first encounter of Bella and Edward adapts another scene of the Meriton ball, as their relation starts exactly like Darcy and Elizabeth's—with Edward acting impolitely, and Bella taking offence. This first direct meeting sets the tone for subsequent misunderstandings between the future lovers and, therefore, proves crucial in both cases. Just like Mr Darcy, Edward behaves during their first meeting as if Bella repelled him. However, their mutual attraction escalates quickly. Contrary to Elizabeth Bennet, Bella Swan does not reject Edward when he declares he loves her. Nevertheless, their relationship is threatened from the very beginning due to the fact that the protagonists are of different ontological status—one a human, the other a vampire. In this way, the adaptation replaces the issue of the Bennets' financial inequality. It becomes the main obstacle in their union. The "point of ritual death", which Regis mentions in her analysis of the courtship plot structure in *Pride and Prejudice*, appears for the first time with Bella's near-death experience when James decides to hunt for her (and is repeated in the following parts of the tetralogy when Edward breaks up with Bella, and when she nearly dies in childbirth) (Pyrhönen 6). In both cases, Edward's and Darcy's, the protagonists manage to overcome the barrier to their relationships by coming to terms with the differences between them and the women they love.

Originally, the story of Lizzy Bennet and Mr Darcy, although romantic, involves Elizabeth's fight against Darcy's proud demeanour and her own prejudices, as a result of which both the heroine and the hero mature. In *Twilight*, in turn, Bella does not mature to the relationship with Edward. The girl does not need to experience a change of heart to be with the vampire, as she is blindly devoted to him since the very beginning of the story. The heroine is willing to reject everything, including her friends and family, even her human nature, for the sake of a romantic relationship with Edward. Hence, in *Twilight* the heroine's rebellious attitude is given up for the sake of sentimentality. Bella's infatuated state of mind regarding Edward Cullen does not mirror Elizabeth's conflicted feelings and her experiencing self-awareness. Of course such a change in the character's structure might have been motivated by the fact that *Twilight* is a teen-oriented movie and as such it may present the protagonists as emotionally charged and doting.

Every heroine of Austen's novel faces a challenge as she has to choose the "right" husband-to-be among all their suitors. This dilemma has become the generic element of the barrier in the romance novel, as well as in melodramas (Pyrhönen 18). Of course, the choice should be rational, and the heroine's emotional response complicates it, if it is based on fascination. A decision made on

such a basis may (and usually does) turn out to be a fatal mistake and misjudgement of the suitor's character. While Elizabeth Bennet has to assess the value of Mr Darcy and Mr Wickham, and Marianne Dashwood must consider the merits of Brandon and Willoughby, Bella Swan chooses between the vampire—Edward, the werewolf—Jacob and Colin Newton, who is the only human suitor in this case. Contrary to Austen's heroines, who need to take into consideration their suitors' personalities as well as their social and financial status, Bella needs to pay attention to the ontological status of the potential boyfriend and its possible dangerous consequences. Since Bella's blood allures Edward and tempts him to bite her, the girl's fascination with him appears even more perilous.

Originally, Austen's heroines finally make their choices with regard to their future husbands closer to the end of the story—they declare their love and accept the proposals. This way the author suggests that her female protagonists need more time to properly assess their suitors and to experience "a change of heart", as their feelings need to grow. *Twilight*, however, departs from this tendency and Bella does not require the whole movie (or a novel) to realise how she really feels about Edward. Her fascination with the protagonist is apparent from the very beginning, even when she is upset with his rude behaviour towards her. Thus, once again[95] the films make Austen's story more sentimental and use the narrative trope typical more of a melodrama or a romantic comedy than a horror movie—love at first sight.

The filmmakers of *Twilight* reject the sensible and moderated approach to the theme of love—an attitude Jane Austen seems to praise in her novels. In fact, the British author treats love at first sight as threatening and deceitful and criticises those who recklessly act on their infatuation and desire. Following such emotions usually costs her protagonists too much—the loss of reputation along with social banishment, and sometimes their health as well. Such examples as Lydia's elopement in *Pride and Prejudice,* Maria Bertram's desire for Henry Crawford and Edmund Bertram's blind infatuation with Maria Crawford in *Mansfield Park*, Eliza Williams' and Marianne Dashwood's passionate love at first sight for John Willoughby in *Sense and Sensibility* warn against acting on one's desire and infatuation. In Austen's novels social banishment never compensates for such a life choice. The writer gives preference to emotions steered by reason and discernment as love should not mean irrationality. Hence, Elizabeth marries Darcy and not Wickham, although she is at first enchanted by the latter. In *Sense and Sensibility,* Marianne marries Colonel Brandon instead of John Willoughby, whom she falls in love with at first sight. Even though he is much older, Brandon is still a more reasonable choice than Willoughby, who is portrayed as emotionally unbalanced and, therefore, an unsuitable husband. Austen emphasises that choosing a partner should be well-thought

[95] The meet-cute scenes in *Bride and Prejudice* and *You've Got Mail* indicate that Will Darcy and Lalita Bakshi as well as Kathleen Kelly and Joe Fox are attracted to each other the moment they meet for the first time in their lives.

and not hasty. To prove that she tends to contrast well-matched unions with unhappy marriages: the union of Elizabeth and Darcy is juxtaposed with less fortunate matrimonies of Charlotte Lucas and Mr Collins, and even Elizabeth's parents—the couples that trusted inconsistent and deceitful feelings.

As Baumbach notices, fascination is a borderline experience, a combination of the opposing forces of deep attraction and intense repulsion, the latter of which results from its hidden, subversive and devious nature (3-4). The repulsive underside of Bella's fascination with Edward stems from his balancing between life and death (Pyrhönen 23). From the heroine's perspective, by becoming a vampire, Edward has, in a way, upgraded from a human to a superhuman—she describes him as "*impossibly* fast and strong" (Hardwicke 01.12.02). The fact that the real possibility of being killed by Edward draws the girl even more to him makes their relationship more perverse than it already is due to the discrepancy in the protagonists' ontological statuses. When the vampire confesses that he is a killer, the heroine replies: "I don't care", and tries to get closer to him (Hardwicke 01.08.12). Although Bella nearly dies when another vampire attacks her, the heroine's infatuation with her vampire boyfriend remains as intense as ever. The element of danger, which dating a vampire inevitably involves, only strengthens the girl's emotional engagement. It accounts for her blind devotion as it freezes rational thinking. A relationship with a vampire offers immortality by allowing her to enter into a realm of supernatural creatures. Even though becoming a vampire would entail some form of banishment for Bella, as she would have to leave her family and friends, the heroine considers this possibility a benefit rather than a risk or a curse and does not bother to think twice about the consequences of choosing this path. Hence, although the dangers of fascination are real, its outcomes are presented as beneficial, at least from Bella's perspective.

In her novels, Jane Austen also presents a connection between fascination, enchanted love, and death. However, it is not as direct as the possibility of becoming a vampire while dating one. In *Sense and Sensibility,* the heartache over Willoughby has driven Marianne Dashwood to a serious illness. The girl recovers from a lethal fever, yet she never experiences such passionate love again. By marrying Brandon, the heroine achieves contented love. A similar situation takes place in *Mansfield Park,* where Edmund Bertram decides against marrying Maria Crawford, who hopes Edmund's older brother will die—it would make her potential future husband an heir. Instead, Edmund proposes to Fanny Price, his cousin and oldest friend. Both unions are morally commendable and accepted by society so the spouses may enter the roles of wives and husbands easily. As such these marriages conform to the expectation that: "a good marriage consists in the capacity to play one's role successfully, namely, to feel and display the emotions attendant to the role" (Illouz 38). They stand, however, in stark contrast to the carnal relationship of Bella and Edward.

While in Austen following such emotional impulses brings more damage than benefits, in *Twilight* it is far more rewarding: Bella is smitten with Edward Cullen since the very beginning of the movie, but dating the vampire does not distort the girl's reputation. On the contrary—it adds to it and upgrades the teenager's status in the student environment, as the vampire is considered the most attractive boy at school and a member of the school elite. Thus, the filmmakers of *Twilight*, sanction love based solely on fascination and physical attraction.

One of the most intimate scenes featuring the two lovers takes place after the characters' conversation about Edward's vampirism. The scene features the characters lying on the grass and looking at each other.

3.3.3. A bird-view shot of Bella and Edward lying on the grass and looking at each other

The shots in this scene are taken from the bird's-eye angle, which sets the camera directly above Bella and Edward. The horizontal angle in which the shots of the couple are taken allows to capture the tranquillity of the scene and the romance between the protagonists. As Bella and Edward continue to look at each other, the camera moves around them, zooming in to take a closer shot of the protagonists' facial expressions. Since this scene happens right after Edward admits he is a vampire and confesses love to Bella, the camera roll suggests the characters' bonding and an intensification of their affection. The heroine is aware of Edward's true identity, which means the couple share the hero's greatest secret. The rotation of the camera around Bella and Edward, who keep looking into each other's eyes, indicates the lovers' great devotion—the couple do not notice anything apart from each other. Right at the end of the scene, the sun comes out and the sun rays illuminate the faces and silhouettes of the characters lying next to each other—it is to symbolise their bliss. The whole scene seems very romantic, even Edenic, with the lovers looking into each other's eyes, lying in a forest glade among purple flowers. In addition, the scene is accompanied by calm, non-diegetic music. The idyllic picture is soon completed by the rays of the sun which make Edward's skin shine like diamonds.

Throughout the rest of the film, the audience witnesses the escalation of Bella and Edward's romance. Soon after their conversation in the forest, the hero invites the heroine to his house and shows her the view from the top of one of the trees nearby. The filmmakers capture a moment of intimacy between the characters with pan and arc shots. First the camera moves from left to right, then from right to left, and finally it rotates around the teenagers. The characters position themselves in the centre of the frame.

3.3.4. A boom shot with tilt down of Bella and Edward on top of a tree

A boom shot with a tilt down helps to capture the world surrounding the couple. The scene indicates that together, Bella and Edward may literally have the world at their feet. The non-diegetic music which accompanies the scene soon alters into diegetic, when Edward plays the melody from the previous scene on the piano while Bella watches and listens.

3.3.5. A two-shot of Bella and Edward

The scene positions the characters in the centre of the audience's attention once again with the use of arc and pan shots. Again, the viewers have an impression that whenever Bella and Edward are together, the whole world fades. In this case it almost disappears, as the filmmakers decide to flood the room with chiaroscuro lighting. Stylistically, this manoeuvre strengthens the effect of intimacy between the lovers. The contrast between shadow and light, which this sort of lighting entails, aims at picturing the love story of a teenage girl and a vampire as a tale of forbidden love. In this respect,

Edward Cullen functions as a gender-swapped femme fatale figure as Bella's love for him puts her in perilous situations. Therefore, *Twilight* relates (to some extent) to film noir, as its narrative unfolds the story of a protagonist who falls in love with a dangerous character and, consequently, is dragged into a life-threatening course of events.

Hardwicke insists on fascination as a necessary and basic element of a love relationship by making Bella fall for a vampire at first sight and choosing him over other suitors no matter the consequences. The human dimension of intimate relationships is completely rejected in *Twilight.* Bella neither considers any other "option" for a love relationship nor has doubts about the one she chooses. The heroine is sure that only a vampire male and his family can give her the love she yearns for. Such a departure from Austen's treatment of love at first sight and desire is motivated yet again by generic conventions of a melodrama—which becomes even more obvious as the stability of the lovers' relationship is difficult to achieve due to the obstacles to their love, including inequalities in financial and social status as well as different ontological status. According to Bella, only her transformation into a vampire may guarantee equity. Unlike Elizabeth Bennet, who refuses to see herself inferior to Mr Darcy and admits herself that while Darcy is a gentleman, she is a gentleman's daughter and, thus, they are equal, Bella considers Edward superior and requires (re)assurance that he wants to be with her. Edward, in turn, needs to hear that Bella does not consider him an evil monster despite his vampire nature, as he strongly believes that vampirism means the loss of one's soul (Pyrhönen 23).

Twilight incorporates one of the oldest assumptions about the vampire myth—that humans are sexually attracted to vampires and their union is deemed the greatest pleasure and, simultaneously, the greatest threat to human life (Vajdovich 211). Since the narrative is mainly built on Edward and Bella's love story—the growing attraction between them and the impediments that hamper their union—romance and melodrama predominate horror conventions that Hardwicke's films follow as well. The narrative of a melodrama usually unfolds the story of a protagonist whose life is affected by some invincible forces—it might be a serious illness or, as in the case of *Twilight*, social conventions or a moral obligation that prevent the protagonists from uniting (Vajdovich 208). Edward's sense of moral obligation to protect Bella renders the character torn between the willingness to be with the heroine and the need to protect her from himself—he is worried he might condemn her to eternal damnation or just physically hurt her. The protagonist's conflicted state of mind evokes the feeling of sympathy in the receiver. This melodramatisation of Edward's character is often manifested in his gestures and facial expressions—his hands and teeth clench, his eyebrows frown, his lips form a grimace, as if he was about to cry. The hero often gives the impression that he is suffering from almost physical pain. Since his facial expressions are often exaggerated, the viewer can easily read

the protagonist's emotions. Conversely, Bella is considerably more difficult to read. Comparing to Edward, the heroine is not equally conflicted, and she does not show her emotions as theatrically. Throughout the film, her facial expressions remain almost unchanged—in almost every scene in which Bella appears the girl's lips are slightly parted. Such an expression adds to the eroticism of the scenes with Edward, as the shots may indicate sexual attraction the vampire evokes in the girl.

Edward's fear of damnation is not the sole factor that hampers the young couple's relationship. One of the narrative tropes of a melodrama is a situation when the love between a human being and a supernatural creature like a vampire is impossible to be fulfilled, as it is fatal for the human (Vajdovich 208). As Vajdovich points out, physical attraction for a vampire predator may end with death or damnation and, as such, it should be prevented by society (208). *Twilight* alters this notion of a vampire myth into a melodrama, by making the vampire responsible for trying to prevent the contact and the relationship to grow so as to avoid the (unavoidable) tragedy. Since it is one of the lovers, and not the society that tries to prevent the emotional bond from deepening, the impediment seems almost impossible to overcome. The only solution would be to turn Bella into a vampire. Edward's persistence in keeping the heroine alive and human prolongs the melodramatic tension till the girl's death and rebirth in the last part of the series. The subsequent parts continue following the melodramatic narrative plotlines: in *New Moon* the lovers are separated—Edward's fear for Bella's safety overwhelms his judgement and he abandons her, but they cannot live without each other; in *Eclipse* the heroine is in love with both Edward and Jacob (even though both of them threaten her existence, as Jacob is a werewolf); *Breaking Down,* in turn, raises the topic of motherhood, as Bella has to fight for her child's life and protect it first both from Volturi and, then, Edward himself (Bella cannot survive the birth of her child so the choice has to be made whose life is going to be saved—Edward tries to save Bella whereas Bella wants to save her unborn baby).

Apart from using generic conventions of horror and melodrama films, *Twilight* tetralogy borrows patterns from action films, especially those, which centre on the adventures of superheroes. The characteristics of superhero films are most noticeable in features ascribed to some characters: Edward can read minds and Alice can foresee the future. These traits make the protagonists unique, as they are personal, exceptional gifts that most vampires are devoid of. Through the visualisation of fight scenes between supernaturals, *Twilight* depicts unnatural strength and quickness of its vampire protagonists. As Vajdovich points out, combining vampire films with action movies is nothing new. Since the 1990s some filmmakers "sought to renew the vampire film" by adding special effects and well-choreographed fight scenes, often enriched by the use of the mixture of traditional and modern weapons (209). A few of such movies adopted a crossover narrative, which typically makes use of more than one monster, such as in *Van Helsing* (dir. Stephen Sommers, 2004).

Usually, the filmmakers of such movies build the plot on the conflict of diverse groups of monsters which erupts into fight scenes. Consequently, the movies follow simultaneously the conventions of both horror and action movies (Vajdovich 210). *Twilight* employs the crossover narrative featuring both vampires and werewolves. However, it transforms this paradigm, as the conflict between werewolves and vampires remains only a background for the main plotline—a love story between Bella and Edward—basically until the last part of tetralogy. Moreover, werewolves become allies of the vampire family, the Cullens. They fight hand in hand against those vampires that feed on human beings and therefore endanger the inhabitants of Forks. Even though they are choreographed quite precisely, *Twilight*'s fight scenes are mainly based on the extraordinary strength and quickness of the characters. The filmmakers reject modern weapons and spectacular effects that could be achieved by their use—no light capsules, silver bullets, or anti-clotting injections appear (Vajdovich 210).

Combining vampire films with the elements of other film genres was a popular trend in the 1990s and 2000s (Vajdovich 211). For instance, *Blade* series mixes conventions of vampire and action films, *From Dusk till Dawn* blends elements of vampire and western movies, *Interview with a Vampire* features characteristics of a vampire film and a melodrama (211). On the one hand, *Twilight* might be considered a continuation of that trend. On the other hand, Hardwicke's film and Meyer's novel do not really embrace the horror paradigm, as they reject the key convention of this genre—the movie does not aim at frightening their audience. As Vajdovich remarks, apparently, some genres cooperate well with horror fiction, but some do not. While action may function well with horror, romance and melodrama are far more problematic. The combination of horror and melodrama results in aiming at evoking contradictory emotions, such as fear and pity. Similarly, the mixture of horror and romance provokes fear and love. To be horrified and simultaneously sorry for (or in love with) the same protagonist is rather impossible (211). One of the genres has to dominate over the other—in *Twilight*, horror is dominated by romance and melodrama.

All in all, Hardwicke's adaptation follows far more closely the genre conventions of a melodrama than these of horror movies and seems to stay closer to the heritage adaptations of Austen's prose than to the conventions proposed by the original *Pride and Prejudice*, because the filmmakers make the story far more sentimental than it originally is. *Twilight* depicts Edward Cullen as an incorporation of virtues—morality, piety, responsibility. The filmmakers of *Twilight* multiply the hero's attributes and deprecate the dark sides of his nature to the point that his actions may even seem noble and considerably more responsible than Bella's. His only vice appears to be vampirism, but since he refuses to feed on humans, even that obstacle is minimised. All this is complemented by the hero's attractive looks and his wealth, which produces a picture of an immortal Prince Charming.

Edward's sentimental image harmonises with the image of the main heroine. Since the hero is portrayed as gallant and physically equipped, Bella gladly accepts the role of a helpless lady in oppression: Edward rescues Bella first from the upcoming car crash, then from a group of drunk boys and finally from a vampire attack[96]. The filmmakers amplify the moments of grand gestures and the hero's coming to the heroine's rescue—which in *Pride and Prejudice* appears only once.

Since *Twilight* presents Bella Swan as socially withdrawn, fragile, clumsy and frequently in need of being rescued, the heroine has little to do with Elizabeth Bennet. The teenage girl's clumsiness and physical limitations evoke pity in the viewers and escalate the protagonist's insecurity. Her diffidence and withdrawal are clearly noticeable in situations which require physical efforts and cooperation with other people, such as dancing or playing volleyball. The heroine keeps trying to avoid these activities and openly admits she cannot dance, and she should not be engaged in playing volleyball—which provides a stark contrast between the heroine and Elizabeth Bennet, who is keen on physical activities and does not actively try to avoid social events. Bella's portrayal as a typical damsel in distress sharply contrasts with the image of Elizabeth, whose witty responses and communicative skills highlight the heroine's self-confidence and prove she can speak her mind and protect herself from any unpleasant comments and embarrassments.

In their retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*, the filmmakers of *Twilight* embrace and simultaneously subvert the conventions implemented by Jane Austen. All the narrative elements of romance—the courtship plotline, a character of a damsel in distress, a tormented lover who saves the day—are included in the vampiric retelling of the British author's story. Even the scene of a ball appears in the movie. Yet, the filmmakers refuse to render the literary prototype's satire or social critique. *Twilight* is most of all a love story, a teen-oriented vampire melodrama. It cannot be considered a typical horror film even though the main male hero is a vampire. The theme of romance with a vampire is not a metaphor for anything other than a promise of eternal love that literally goes beyond death. The fact that the image of a vampire figure is considerably softened as opposed to the stereotypical gothic vampire results from the intention of portraying Edward Cullen as a lover who emanates sex appeal, and not as a horrifying beast. It is easier for the audience to accept the hero's vampirism if he is ashamed of it and determined to keep his "humanity". To some extent, adapting Austen's prose for a horror movie may seem justified, as it allows the filmmakers to capture the sense of threat hidden between the lines of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The horror of the Regency era women (that comes from patriarchal system which destabilises the women's position in the society) is transformed in *Twilight* into the horror of a world in which vampires and werewolves live—however, it is not them who threaten the main heroine, but the lack of social acceptance for the Other.

[96] In the novel Edward also takes care of Bella after the girl faints at the sight of blood.

All in all, the full genre change does not happen in the case of *Twilight*, as the melodrama conventions are still heavily incorporated in the film. Meanwhile, the generic conventions of a horror movie function here more as a visual entertainment which addresses large audiences, and an iconographic chassis which supports slightly modified melodramatic conventions, known from heritage adaptations of Austen's prose.

Pride and Prejudice in a Zombie Film

The introduction of zombies into the world of *Pride and Prejudice* in Burr Steers' movie reduces the issues which are important in Austen's novels and their heritage adaptations, such as the role of marriage in the lives of Regency-era women or the emancipation of women. Therefore, the transformation of the universe of *Pride and Prejudice* into the apocalyptic diegetic world of its second-degree adaptation involves introducing the living dead at the price of reducing the satirical view of society. In return, the viewer receives dynamic fight scenes, fast-paced action and an emphasis on the sexual dimension of the relationships between the characters. In fact, the disruption of the generic conventions of Jane Austen's narratives is so great that it is possible to talk about introducing Austen's characters into the realm of zombies. Nevertheless, combining the elements of these two worlds—Austen's and zombies'—requires some modifications in the protagonists: the new circumstances hamper the characters' internal development and, instead, force them to transform into warriors—of course, this actually fits within the horror convention, as the characters of horror movies are not particularly complex and their self-development is not really emphasised.

While the novel consists of both the original fragments of text written by Austen and some added passages written by Grahame-Smithe, its movie adaptation mixes stylistic means and elements of miscellaneous film genres. The combination of costume melodramas, horror films, action movies, romantic comedies and war movies forms a hybrid form which is closest to a horror pastiche. Sometimes, this mixture is consistent with Austen's narrative—but mainly in the film's quieter, calmer moments, such as the scene in which the Bennets gather in a drawing room to oil and clean their muskets, bickering with each other, or a moment when the heroines prepare themselves for a ball—they style their hair, dress in elegant gowns, and carefully slide daggers into their garters for protection. In truth, cleaning guns and getting armed radically departs from such random house chores and activities as sewing and knitting which was expected from ladies at that period[97]. Nevertheless, these deadpan moments do not depart from Austen's prose as much as the noisy scenes of zombie attacks. Jane Austen wrote about the daily life of English gentry, their manners and mores. The above-

[97] The Bennet girls are portrayed as warriors with combat skills already in their initial on-screen appearances.

mentioned scenes feature moments from everyday life of English gentry in a world roamed by zombies. In this case such substitutions are justified, as cleaning weapons and getting armed become mundane, daily routines of upper classes as well.

Additionally, those deadpan moments do not look as aesthetically incongruent as the scenes of zombie attacks. Steers' film adaptation presents the monsters with macabre accuracy. The undead are physically repulsive, even grotesque: they are dressed in torn clothes stained with blood, their bodies partly disintegrate, and their faces often lack lips, eyes or ears. The appearance of zombies breaks the aesthetics of the film's visual layer: although the part of the plot which is based on Austen's novel is maintained in the convention of a costume melodrama, the appearance and behaviour of repelling zombies not only do not conform to this convention, but also evoke a feeling of aesthetic shock in the viewer.

3.3.6. A zombie woman whom Jane meets on her way to Netherfield Park

3.3.7. The shot of zombies at St. Lazarus Church

The cinematic image of a zombie originates from George Romero's films. His vision has dominated the image of the undead for many years (Gemra 215). The director of *Night of the Living Dead* portrays a zombie as a reanimated corpse, rising from the grave and attacking people. Due to an impaired motor system, the creature moves slowly and clumsily, shuffling and stretching out its arms towards the potential victims. Additionally, Romero's zombies are characterised by a bizarre, repelling ugliness, as they are partially affected by putrefaction. The decaying process is particularly

noticeable on the faces of the living dead, so it is easy to distinguish zombies from the living. Although their bodily shells degenerate, zombies are physically still human. In the spiritual dimension, however, they do not resemble human beings—the creatures are devoid of any sense of morality, which means that they are unable to experience remorse, shame or any emotion at all. Incapable of thinking and reflecting, and lacking human cognitive abilities or even speech, zombies are guided only by their eternal hunger for human flesh.

Even though the main purpose of zombies invading the English countryside remains the same as usual—the desire to taste human brains[98]—the zombies of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* seem considerably more developed and skilful in comparison to most examples from film creatures with mental limitations, like, for instance, the monsters of *Dawn of the Dead*. Conversely, these zombies can communicate verbally, set traps and ambushes, and they are also able to coordinate and organise themselves as a group. In fact, the undead seem to form a kind of society—they have their own aristocracy and the church of Saint Lazarus, where they take communion in the form of pig's (or human's) brains during a mass. The cognitive skills of the zombies are addressed by Mr Collins, who admits that he was "unaware that zombies possessed the required acuity to set such traps. Before we know it, they'll be running for Parliament" (Steers 00.35). Mr Darcy, in turn, acknowledges the monsters' physical fitness with a comment: "Every savage can dance. Why, I imagine even zombies could do it to some degree of success" (Steers 00.14.18-19).

Throughout the film, the depiction of the living dead undergoes changes. During the first part of the movie the filmmakers intend for the audience to sympathise with the monsters. They continuously use the zombies' point-of-view shots so that the audience could at least to some extent identify with them. The first such a POV shot is taken during the initial scene in which Darcy kills a zombie in transition. Such a manoeuvre automatically forces the viewers to sympathise with the zombie whose perspective they share. The audience begins to have doubts about the murderous nature of the creatures when the zombified Mrs Featherstone tries to have a conversation with Elizabeth instead of attacking her. The Bennet girl describes Mrs Featherstone's behaviour as "tolerable" (referring to Darcy's comment on herself) and refuses to feel threatened by her. Unfortunately, the hero shoots the zombified woman in the head before she manages to finish the sentence. The incident only deepens the main heroine's disdain towards Darcy, whom she has just overheard as he belittled her in front of Bingley. Since the film starts with Elizabeth's voiceover, the viewers adopt her perspective. Thus, they share the heroine's mixed feelings about killing Mrs Featherstone, who was only trying to talk to the girl (at least at that point of time). After this scene, the narrative starts to revolve around the mystery of whether all undead are driven by uncontrollable murderous instincts.

[98] A theme derived from Dan O'Bannon's *Return of the Living Dead,* the parody of Romero's film.

Just like in the case of *Twilight*, the "seek and destroy" plotline is not the core narrative of the story in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. Both the introduction of vampire thread and the thread of zombies serves in fact to melodramatise the original courtship plot—while Edward Cullens' vampirism becomes the greatest obstacle to the lovers' union in *Twilight*, different attitudes towards zombies (Darcy's prejudice and Elizabeth's naïve openness) set the future spouses apart in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies.*

The viewers' and Elizabeth's doubts in the matter strengthen significantly after the scene set in the church of St. Lazarus, where Wickham tries to convince Elizabeth of the zombies' "human identity". The scene evokes the audience's empathy through Wickham's pleading with Elizabeth to acknowledge the undead as creatures that may coexist with humans. The idea starts to seem possible and not so ridiculous the moment the monsters notice Elizabeth sitting on a bench—the living dead are not aggressive and do not try to attack. After taking a glance at the girl, most of them choose to ignore her. The impression that the undead are "civilised" deepens when the viewers see a zombie priest speaking at the altar and preaching the gospel, while two giggling zombie girls, sitting in front of Elizabeth and Wickham, stick their tongues out at the heroine.

This normality in an abnormal situation—zombies attending mass, gossiping and giggling, dressed in lace bonnets and gowns—is shocking but not particularly terrifying. According to Majakowski, the inappropriateness of juxtaposing Austen's sophisticated and ironic narrative with macabre scenes of zombie attacks is actually the source of humour (345). By focusing on the aesthetic layer, typical of heritage adaptations of Austen's prose, and on the action of the film instead on gore, the filmmakers intentionally attract the viewers' attention but simultaneously the feeling of fear and horror which the audience should experience while watching a horror movie is reduced, because the juxtaposition of mutually incompatible elements of convention becomes the source of comicality. The area where the monsters roam—the picturesque world of English landowners—and the staffage of the costume melodrama determine how the monsters are perceived by the viewer. Of course, the reception of this film is partially dependent on the position of zombies (and the undead in general) in cinema—which has changed since George Romero's times. Three years before Burr Steers' *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* had its premiere, Jonathan Levine released another zombie movie, which radically contradicts the traditional image of a zombie. His *Warm Bodies* tells the story of a zombie boy who falls in love with a high school girl, develops emotionally and learns how to behave like a human being. In the 21st century cinema, the viewers of zombie and vampire movies are no longer so afraid of the image of the undead, because they got used to it and because they were presented

with its milder versions. In fact, these conventional characters began to be portrayed as non-monstrous, creatures with extensive psychology[99].

The actual aim of modifying Austen's world into a monster-invaded, apocalyptic universe was not only to cause fear in the receivers. The filmmakers of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* use even some comic relief elements to reduce tension. Some of these measures were originally introduced by Austen herself—characters like Mr Collins and Mrs Bennet, witty dialogues and some ironic comments of the main heroine or the narrator—are mixed with the newly added amusing scenes and remarks, such as Darcy's comment on dancing zombies or Elizabeth's catching and crashing the Carrion flies and handing them back to Darcy. However, some comic relief elements are exaggerated and, therefore, rather cringe than funny; for example, Elizabeth's retort to Darcy's question about what she is doing on a battlefield which roams with zombies: "If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad" (Steers 01.18.00-01). The comment is followed by an awkward silence, as if even Darcy had not expected such a ridiculous answer. Nevertheless, such lines still ease the tension in the scene and therefore they fulfil the function of comic relief elements.

The impression that the filmmakers do not intend to alter Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* into a typical horror movie is deepened by the fact that the story does not focus on the "seek and destroy" plotline and it is further exacerbated by focusing the narrative on the main heroine's doubts about the true nature of the living dead. Elizabeth's dilemma of whether all the monsters are driven solely by their untamed bloodlust, along with the conflict between zombie fighters and zombie sympathisers add an element of moral complexity to the story. The conflict between the zombie slayers and those who believe that coexistence with the living dead is possible drives the action of the movie and therefore becomes what Altman calls the dualistic factor of the genre film. In zombie stories the dualistic factor usually focuses on the conflict between humans and monsters. The confrontation with the living dead provides the most brutal scenes of zombie movies—as the destruction of the monster determines the protagonists' survival. However, in the case of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* the fight scenes between human characters involve a greater deal of violence and combat skills. Elizabeth Bennet's internal doubts over zombies' nature makes her balance on the borderline of the two conflicted camps, represented by two men, Darcy and Wickham, whose motives and characters are complete opposites.

[99] For example, the Cullens in *Twilight* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2008), Louis de Pointe du Lac in I*nterview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1994), Bill Compton in *True Blood* (dir. Alan Ball, 2008-2014), Stefan Salvatore in *Vampire Diaries* (dir. Kevin Williamson and Julie Plec, 2009-2017) or R in *Warm Bodies* (dir. Jonathan Levine, 2013).

The perception of Steers' zombies is strongly affected by the changes which are introduced into the stereotypical depiction of these monsters. In the first part of the movie the living dead are continually established as the other, a destabilising power to Austen's picturesque England and a threat to upper classes, as their number is continuously rising. The "othered" zombies are initially associated with mass underclass, as they are given the ability to speak and coordinate but simultaneously they are excised to peripheral spaces—they hide in St. Lazarus Church or in the woods, secretly attend masses and take communion. The similarity between the undead and the unacknowledged and impoverished representatives of gentry, who pose a threat to upper classes, is indicated even more by Mr Collins' comment about the creatures getting to the Parliament one day. The chaos that England falls to due to a zombie plague represents the danger which the lower classes and foreign revolution pose to the morality of Austen's envisioned England and its inhabitants. Thus, Darcy's original prejudice against those lower than him is replaced with the disdain against zombies. The hero directly addresses the zombies' cultural and social otherness through his comment on the undead and savagery, ". . . every savage can dance – why I imagine even zombies could do it to some degree of success" (Steers 00.14.18-19).

In the second part of the movie the undead become redefined, as the filmmakers introduce the typical zombie image at the climax of the film—they present the living dead as an obvious threat to the existence of humankind. Wickham's shocking confession that he has been a zombie "all along" disrupts the zombies' image as "civilised" creatures and solves the issue of conflicted feelings about them, presenting them as typical villains. Contrary to the film adaptation, Wickham does not play such a pivotal role in the denouement of Grahame-Smith's mash-up novel—the hero remains human, but suffers from an accident, after which he becomes a quadriplegic and marries Lydia Bennet. The living dead, at first constructed as the other—a threat to order and the power of aristocracy —turn out to be utterly evil, murderous monsters expected in a zombie film. In this part, the movie sets a clear dichotomy between humans and zombies, the representatives of good and evil. In fact, the filmmakers follow this dualistic approach so visibly in the second part of the movie that they decide to add a comic-book style post-credits sequence, featuring Wickham, one-armed astride a horse, leading an army of zombies into a battle.

Originally, the story conveyed in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* and analogously rearticulated in its heritage film adaptations, unfolds in a world which is in order. Britain does not appear to be visibly affected by the Napoleonic wars, which allows the characters to make some predictions about their future—they will probably settle locally and make a living out of a lifetime income. In fact, the topic of war appears only in the characters' conversations. As Elżbieta Szyngiel notices, the only noticeable sign of the unrest taking place in a distant world is a temporary absence of some of the male

protagonists, who are obliged to perform military service (420). Instead, the emphasis is put on the problems of everyday life. Jane Austen presents the rules of the world of *Pride and Prejudice* with the introductory line: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (5). The first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* indicates that the story is going to present a world which revolves around the issues of matrimony and money. As mentioned before in this dissertation, the readers of Austen's novel are to find out soon enough that this sentence is ironic, as it is women without fortune who are in want of husbands and not the other way round. The following line suggests that women are determined to take their assumption about rich and single men for granted even though they may show no interest in looking for wives:

> However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters (Austen 5).

In spite of all the introduced alterations, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* tries to preserve the logic of Austen's world and keeps a connection with the British writer since the beginning of the story. The film begins with the voiceover of Austen's paraphrased introductory lines:

> It is a truth universally acknowledged that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains. Never was this truth more plain than in the recent attacks at Netherfield Park, in which an entire household was slaughtered by a horde of the living dead during the whist party (Steers 00.00.50-59).

Obviously, the first lines of both Grahame-Smith's novel, and its adaptation set a new context for the readapted story of *Pride and Prejudice* and indicate that the narrative is going to unravel around the fight against zombies rather than the issue of matrimony. As a result, the depicted diegetic world is much more sinister. The second sentence brings its fuller picture—its first part suggests that the appearance of zombies is not a novelty and that the monsters' attacks have been happening for some time. The inversion used in the second sentence puts an emphasis on the message conveyed in the introductory line and attracts the viewers' and readers' attention to the recent zombie invasion at Netherfield Park. The opening lines suggest that it is this occurrence that should put the audience (and the readers) in astonishment and not the fact that zombies existed in the Regency era. Simultaneously, the voiceover prepares the viewers for the following scene of a zombie attack which they are about to witness.

Apart from the fact that the opening lines of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* clearly relate to the source texts, the narrator's words make the viewers and readers realise they should not expect any close adaptation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, the paraphrase indicates that some elements may undergo modifications, but there are also those that must remain in the condition

determined by Austen. The introductory lines are a sort of trailer to what the audience may expect from the story—a slightly comedic take that uses Austen's words and simply gives zombies a role in the lives of the characters. Along with the initial scene of the movie, featuring a zombie attack at Netherfield Park, the paraphrased lines present an adaptation strategy which involves combining the original Austen's story with a pop-cultural realm of zombies. Therefore, the analysis of the prologue scene, featuring a zombie attack on Netherfield Park is pivotal in terms of understanding Steers' second-degree adaptation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The prologue of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* features Mr Darcy, a fearless and well-trained military investigator and zombie slayer, on his way to Mrs Featherstone's mansion. The opening scene begins with an extreme-long shot of Colonel Darcy on his horse, hurrying through the Hingham bridge. Soon the audience finds out that this is actually the only bridge left intact after the zombie invasion. The following establishing shots present the areas that Darcy passes—picturesque landscapes of English countryside. While Colonel Darcy is on his way to Netherfield Park, the voiceover of the narrator (Elizabeth Bennet) recites the introductory lines of the source text, which makes it clear for the viewer that, just like in Austen's novel, the story is going to be told from Elizabeth Bennet's perspective.

When Darcy finally arrives at the gates of Netherfield Park, the camera fades into black, as the Colonel enters a dark underground tunnel—a safe passage to Mrs Featherstone's house in Hertfordshire. Due to the outbreak of zombies, the English have to take miscellaneous safety measures. That is why Darcy needs to be submitted to physical investigation in search of any bite marks before he may join Mrs Featherstone and her guests at the whist party. The examination is conducted by a priest. Darcy takes off his clothes and enters a wooden cabinet, where he stays till the examination is over. The priest checks the Colonel's body through a small hole for any signs of a zombie bite while Darcy is standing still and naked in the cabinet.

3.3.8. The examination of Darcy's body for zombie bite marks.

The characters are surrounded by darkness, the only light comes from candles that stand nearby. The low key-lighting, which introduces a high contrast ratio, contributes to the mysterious tone of the scene. The white light over Darcy's head brings the connotation of a divine power, as if the filmmakers suggested that the Colonel's arrival was a blessing for those who were already in the house. Owing to the high tonal contrast, the scene keeps the viewers' attention on Darcy—the white overhead light makes him the brightest point of a full shot[100]. Additionally, the protagonist stands in the exact centre of the frame, which makes it even more natural for the audience to lavish their attention on him. After the examination ends, Darcy tricks the priest by asking about a wound that he has never had. The priest lies and brags that he has a good eye for wounds. His retort proves the poor quality and inadequacy of the physical examination. With the figure of an incompetent and vain priest Steers ridicules the priesthood and evokes connotations with Austen's depiction of Mr Collins. Yet, the depiction of a character whose morality is questionable becomes more repelling. After Darcy gets off the wooden cabinet, the priest is still staring at the man's naked body. The moment Darcy's voice breaks the lingering stare, the audience hears the priest's gulp.

3.3.9. The priest looking at Darcy's naked body

The hip-level shot features the priest ogling Darcy's lower part of the body. The shallow depth of field keeps the priest's face in focus, which enables the viewers to pay close attention to his facial expressions. The man's purring and licking his lips while still looking at Darcy's exposed genitalia makes the scene even more revolting (especially because it involves a priest). The following reverse medium close-up shot of the Colonel, who calls the priest only to make him stop ogling his intimate parts reveals the protagonist's discomfort and suggests that the hero's personal space has just been violated. At this point, it becomes clear that the viewers are going to watch a film adaptation which

[100] his whole silhouette is in the photo

does not refrain from covering the subjects of sexuality and brutality—the issues which only subtly resonate in the previous costume adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and in Austen's prose.

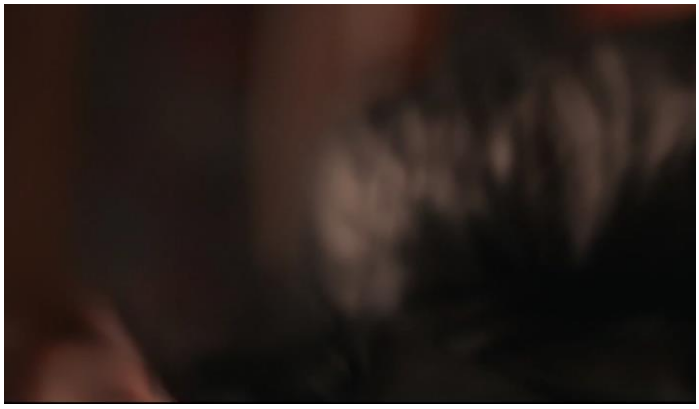
When Darcy finally enters the living room, where Mrs Featherstone and her guests are playing cards, the woman seems astonished at his arrival but allows him to join the game. Contrary to the viewers' expectations, the Colonel's open announcement of the purpose of his visit evokes no panic. Mrs Featherstone refuses to feel threatened as she relies completely on the precautions she has taken, even after Darcy explains that "a newly infected zombie is almost impossible to detect, until they've ingested their first human brains, at which point the transformation accelerates with every subsequent kill" (Steers 00.03.15-24). The anticipation starts building up the moment Colonel Darcy sits at one of the tables and takes out a small, glass vial containing a set of Carrion flies which, as the name says, can sense dead flesh and, therefore, are able to detect the living dead. The suspense reaches its peak the moment Darcy instructs his fellow players that they should not worry about the buzzing noises—on the contrary, it is the moment the buzzing stops that they ought to dread. The comment is instantly followed by sinister silence—the buzzing suddenly stops, and the anticipation arises. As the Carrion flies land on Mr Kingston's face, the man's eyes turn red, which typically signals a zombie infection. The Colonel presents his combat skills with stoical equanimity, as he breaks a glass and stabs the zombified Kingston on his head before decapitating him.

3.3.10. A close-up shot of zombified Mr Kingston

3.3.11. An oblique single shot of Darcy breaking a glass and standing up to fight with the zombie

Right before Darcy stabs the living dead with a broken glass, the camera angle changes. The shot of Darcy is taken from a low angle. With this manoeuvre the filmmakers accentuate Mr Darcy's physical strength and power. Additionally, in order to intensify tension and create the feeling of unease, the camera captures oblique shots of Darcy. Such shots, made from a Dutch angle, indicate that the order has been disturbed (by the appearance of a zombie), but the fearless and powerful Darcy is going to restore it. The moment the man attacks the monster, the camera angle changes once again, and the remaining Colonel's brutal actions are shown from the zombie's point of view.

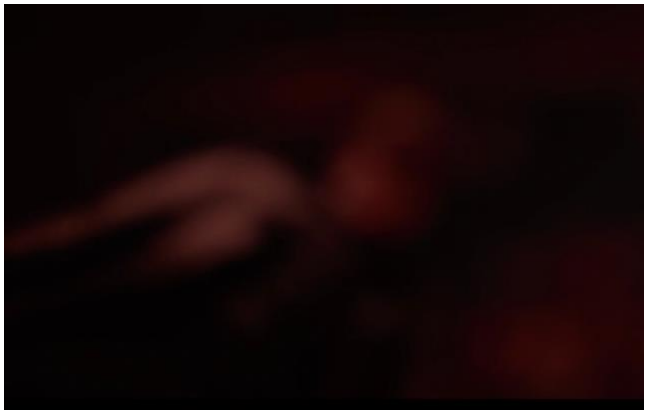
3.3.12. The POV shot with soft focus of Darcy attacking the zombie



3.3.13. The tilted POV shot of Darcy indicates the protagonist is decapitating the zombie.

To accentuate the perspective of a monster the filmmakers use the blurring effects of the modified tilt shift lens—the deakinizer lens, which blurs the edges of the POV shots, diffracts the colours and vignettes the image. The difference in zombie's and human's seeing perspectives emphasises the obvious fact that a zombie is no longer a human and therefore its perspective differs from human's. As the viewers share their perspective with the zombie, they may have an impression that Darcy is killing them as well. The camera roll at the point of decapitation visually reinforces the theme of confrontation with a zombie and indicates that the monster's head is rolling on the ground (after being chopped off with a broken glass). The audience have an impression the zombie's face is covered in

blood as the filmmakers use the red filter to make the viewers see the POV shots in red. The whole scene is complemented by the sound of a growling zombie. As Darcy finishes killing the zombified Mr Kingston with a kick on the monster's head, the camera fades into black.



3.3.14. The POV shot of Darcy with the use of a red filter on the tilt shift lens. The audience presume the monster is bleeding out.

The zombie point of view is usually marginalised in zombie horror movies. Yet, in Steers' adaptation the POV shots of zombie perspective appear every time the monsters are about to attack: when Jane is ambushed on her way to Netherfield, when Darcy is confronted by zombified Wickham, or right before a zombie attack during the ball[101]. Another example of such a manoeuvre may be noticed after Darcy's departure from Netherfield Park. As one of Mrs Featherstone's young companions goes upstairs to check on Annabelle, Mr Kingston's niece, it turns out that the girl has already transformed into a zombie with a half-decayed face. The moment the film features the eye-level close-up of the zombified girl the audience hear the sting—a high pitched sound deliberately used to cause an effect of the jump scare [OBJ] in a horror movie. The camera perspective changes once again to the zombified girl's point of view the moment Annabelle attacks her former friend. The scene fades into black when the prologue comes to an end, indicating that Cassandra has been eaten by the zombie as well. The subjective shots signal the monsters' presence and grant credibility to the scenes of attack. According to Ebert, the POV shots in horror movies provoke a sort of sadistic voyeurism on the part of the spectator, because they "displace the villain from his traditional place within the film and move him into the audience" (55-56). Thus, they allow the viewers to enter the zombies' mindsets and align with them.

In relation to Austen's prose, such adaptative techniques which allow the audience access to zombies' minds seem fully justified—after all, the story within *Pride and Prejudice* is told from the

[101] The viewers know about the attack in advance, because they see an establishing shot with blurred edges—another use of the deakinizer lens.

third-person omniscient narrator. Since the readers of Austen's novels have access to the literary protagonists' thoughts and emotions (these are described and commented by the omniscient narrator), it feels natural that the audience of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* have the possibility to share the perspective of human protagonists as well as zombies—these are also the story's characters.


3.3.15-16. On the left, a close-up shot of zombified Annabelle. On the right, the POV shot of Casandra (Annabelle's point of view)

As it was mentioned before, the prologue sequence serves as a trailer of the adaptation strategy used in this film, which entails mashups of different genres, styles and measures. It combines Austen's original narrative with those newly added lines and mixes the world of the Regency era with a pop-cultural realm of zombies. Additionally, the prologue sets the context for the story and depicts the diegetic world of the movie. Usually, a plague of zombies results either from an infectious virus or from some sort of a chemical substance. The theme of an infectious disease or virus, which spreads rapidly around the world and turns people into the living dead appears quite often in zombie movies[102]. The bite of a living corpse causes fever, death and the irrevocable transformation into another zombie, whose physicality is reduced to pure, grotesque corporeality. Since each bitten human irreversibly becomes a member of the undead community, the number of monsters grows at an alarming rate and humanity becomes endangered. Currently, the figures of the undead are often used as an integral element of post-apocalyptic cinematic visions. According to Elżbieta Szyngiel, the zombie epidemic presented in this way can be read as an expression of people's fears of uncontrollable pandemics, which is likely to happen in the era of globalisation (420). *Resident Evil* (dir. Paul W.S. Anderson, 2002) or *World War Z* (dir. Marc Forster, 2013) present such bleak future scenarios.

[102] It appears in *Dawn of the Dead* (dir. George R. Romero, 1978; dir. Zack Snyder, 2004), *Resident Evil* (dir. Paul W.S. Anderson, 2002), *28 Days Later* (dir. Juan Carlos Fresnadillo and Danny Boyle, 2002), *Zombieland* (dir. Ruben Fleischer, 2009), *World War Z* (dir. Marc Forster, 2013), to name but a few.

In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* the motif of a zombie epidemic is tied to religion, which becomes quite obvious with the appearance of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. The zombie plague is treated in the adaptation as a sort of a biblical punishment for the sins of imperialism and alters the peaceful world of the Bennet sisters into a dystopian one. The opening scene features an alternate history in which England's colonisation of the New World brought back an invasion of zombies. The quasi-historical exposition is presented in the form of a moving pop-up book with cardboard illustrations. The tunnel book, untitled "An Illustrated History of England: 1700-1800", is surrounded by candlelight, which contributes to the high contrast ratio in the scene.

3.3.17. The shots of cardboard illustrations from *An Illustrated History of England: 1700-1800* tunnel book

The use of low-key lighting and shadows add to the mood and tone of the scene. The ominous warnings of the voice-over narration intertwine with zombies' growling, howling, and grunting. On the one hand, the sounds like these emphasise the movie's post-apocalyptic setting. On the other hand, however, they build a comic effect. The scene's narrative is further dramatised by the sounds of closing gates, whispers, and laughter of people. Hence, along with the prologue, the cardboard illustrations build up the gloomy, yet comic tone. Mr Bennet's voiceover narration takes the form of a bedtime story, whose final words (a warning about an upcoming ultimate battle with the living dead) are accompanied by blowing out of candles. The audience is left in the dark and awaits the final confrontation with the zombies.

An animated sequence of the tunnel book explains the causes of the spread of the zombie pandemic in England. According to the narrator, Mr Bennet, at the beginning of the 19th century, the country enjoyed prosperity. It changed, however, after the merchants who travelled for trade to colonies brought a mysterious virus that turned the infected into the living dead. The scene clearly suggests that the plague of zombies is a punishment for the evil of colonialism and simultaneously a metaphor for what colonialism does to the English—it turns them into emotionless, murderous beasts. To illustrate the spread of pandemic and movement of these bloodthirsty beasts the scene

features a map with a trickle of blood which stands in for the standard red dotted line tracing the characters' journey. Since no cure for "zombism" has been found yet, the country is heading for imminent destruction and the end of the human race becomes a serious threat. The English are forced to fight with hordes of hungry zombies attacking the civilians at their own houses. Because of that, the representatives of the upper classes undergo specialised training during which they learn self-defence.

A closer look at the undead in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* reveals a strong correlation between the zombies and the role of the economy in Austen's prose. As mentioned above, Mr Bennet's narration explains to the audience that the zombie plague was spread due to colonial trade. The outbreak of a war against zombies strongly affected the country's economy. It forced the British to isolate themselves—they had to build a wall around London to keep the living dead out. Consequently, all trade in Britain was halted. The narrator reveals that many considered the French to be blamed for the ongoing situation. In this respect, the zombie thread of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* clearly refers to the occurrences that took place in Austen's time. In 1793 the French National Convention declared war on Great Britain, which led to a persistent warfare that did not halt until 1815 (O'Rourke 125). As Kevin O'Rourke points out, the long lasting period of unrest affected world trade—the importation of large classes of British goods was prohibited and all British manufactured goods were banned by the Convention as well (125). The wars heavily disrupted trade with Britain, leading to economic instability and growing anxiety about a potential revolution initiated by the poor in Britain. All of that happened while Austen was writing and editing *Pride and Prejudice* (O'Rourke 146). Thus, the zombie pandemic can be read as the "pandemic" brought by the French Revolution.

The zombies may also symbolise another economic issue the British had to face in Austen's time, namely, the issue of inheritance. At the end of Burr Steers' film, Wickham turns out to be a zombie and he blames Darcy for his infection, "If I had the living your father intended me I never would have been in the army. I never would have been infected" (Steers 01.34.). We see that Wickham got infected with zombism because he had to make his own income (by joining the army). In the novel, Austen portrays Wickham as a character whose motivations are driven solely by his unstoppable hunger for money. The hero's transformation into a zombie may therefore symbolise the downfall brought by financial greed.

The dystopian character of the diegetic world of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* does not stop its inhabitants from trying to lead a life as similar as possible to that before the outbreak of the plague. The presence of zombies does not change the customs, traditions or social etiquette. The class division is still noticeable. Balls at Meriton and Netherfield and other social events are still organised. What

is more, women often travel unaccompanied. On one of such journeys—on her way to the Bingleys' estate—Jane is attacked by zombies. Before leaving her house, the heroine warns her mother that something like that may happen. However, Mrs Bennet hopes her daughter can stay at the Bingleys' a little longer in case such an incident takes place. The situation echoes the original scene in which Jane Bennet is forced to ride to Netherfield Park without a carriage (in spite of poor weather conditions) because her mother has plotted to make the girl stay there longer. As a result of such an escapade, Jane catches a cold. The filmmakers of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* skillfully resort to a substitution by replacing a cold with a zombie attack. Such an equivalence presents zombism not only as a metaphor for a disease or a virus, but above all, (at least in the context of this scene) it serves to amplify the gruesomeness of travelling alone—which may be more broadly interpreted as the gruesomeness of being single and thus more vulnerable to danger.

In spite of infesting the world of *Pride and Prejudice* with zombies, Steers still manages to retain some of its core values, from a sense of decorum to the depiction of a headstrong main heroine, Elizabeth Bennet. Like in Austen's novel, the characters of the movie are constructed through their words and thoughts. Dialogue becomes a tool to explain the protagonist's attitude and influence the development of the plot just like in the source text (Federici 10). Yet, the Bennet women and the men surrounding them have different motivations in the film than in Jane Austen's literary prototype—which completely changes the meaning of some threads. Elizabeth Bennet attracts Mr Darcy's attention not only because of her originality, independence, courage and personal charm, but also because of her skills in hand-to-hand combat. The aristocrat starts paying attention to the heroine only when he witnesses how excellent she is at fighting with the zombies that attack people during the ball. In turn, John Wickham seems to be interested in the Bennet girls only to tease Darcy and lure him into a trap.

The change of the protagonists' motivations does not affect, however, the relationships between the characters—which develop in a similar direction as in Austen's novel. Lady Catherine still finds it inappropriate for Mr Darcy to marry one of the Bennet girls, although the main heroine manages to finally earn her respect with her fighting skills and participation in warfare. Elizabeth still becomes fond of Wickham quite soon, even though his affection for her is insincere (unlike in the original). The boundary for both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is the preservation of the emotional relations between the main characters. Mr Darcy again belittles Elizabeth and her family, which results in her disdain towards him. Nevertheless, his heroic actions—rescuing Lydia from zombies, unmasking Wickham's wrongdoings and helping Bingley and Jane reunite—help him regain her favours. Apparently, the relationships between the protagonists have not undergone a great metamorphosis, although at the end of the film Elizabeth admits she has been in love with Darcy ever

since he looked at her. In light of this revelation, Elizabeth's prejudiced attitude towards the man seems far-fetched and pretended. Moreover, her internal development is not as clearly depicted as the literary Elizabeth's. The heroine does not have to mature to fall in love with Darcy—she has been in love with him since the very beginning of the story. It has to be noted, though, that horror movies usually do not offer psychological depth of their characters and, thus, such a modification in Lizzy Bennet's personality fits the conventions of the genre.

Since the protection from zombie invasions becomes one of the major responsibilities of the upper classes, Austen's protagonists need to take over new roles. The representatives of landed gentry become the country's protectors: Lady Catherine de Bourgh becomes a well-skilled warrior (her wealth allows her to go to Japan and train herself), Mr Darcy becomes a Colonel and a zombie slayer, Elizabeth and her sisters are all well trained in fighting the undead as well. Conversely, the servants, who are frequently overlooked by Austen, have really poor chances of acquiring the fighting skills due to the lack of sufficient education and financial means. Consequently, these anonymous characters cannot protect themselves against zombies and frequently become the victims of the monsters' attacks. Since they are utterly unable to defeat the living dead, the servants stand in high contrast to aristocracy. As Ryszard Knapek notices, while the plague of the undead emphasises the importance of the upper classes, the servants are treated instrumentally. The only function of these anonymous characters is to contribute to building tension—they appear only to get infected and show how great danger the monsters pose (97).

The themes of class division and financial differences between the upper classes and those less privileged—the issues discussed in *Pride and Prejudice*—are also present in the zombie movie. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* clearly relates to the truth already known in Austen's times—only the representatives of the landed gentry, who are better suited financially, can afford safety. Of course, in Austen's novel "safety" entails decent living conditions and fine marital prospects. Safety in the world of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, in turn, requires acquiring fighting skills. Only those who can afford to learn martial arts can defend themselves against the threat posed by zombies. As a result, the nobility symbolically takes the responsibility to care for those who would not be able to defend themselves from the monsters on their own. The symbolic dimension results from the fact that the well-trained warriors do not pass their expertise and do not teach those who cannot afford to go to Japan and China to learn to fight. This echoes the military realities of the bygone eras: the lower classes did not take part in wars as often as the aristocracy, whose participation in wars was a consequence of the feudal system (the vassals had to fight at the king's call in return for the land they were given).

Since all the Bennet sisters were trained at Shaolin monastery, they excel at martial arts and, therefore, participate in protecting the surrounding area. According to Szyngiel, in this context, they do not have much in common with the women of Austen's novels, who are limited by social conventions (14). In Austen's prose, women live in a world limited to home, where they indulge in social entertainment and often dream of liberation—of abandoning the everyday monotony and of being allowed to act in accordance with the amorous impulses. Leaving this home space is usually associated with an escape that gives a "sense" of freedom. For this reason, so much importance is attached to travel in Austen's novels and their costume heritage film adaptations. This emphasis testifies to the heroines' desire for freedom. But in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* open space is not equated with independence or freedom. On the contrary, because it is dominated by monsters that fill it outside the walls of aristocratic estates, it becomes dangerous and, therefore, the characters try to avoid it. Their freedom is limited; in this case, travel is not a representation of freedom for young women but symbolises a state of danger and fight for survival.

The new circumstances trigger changes in the way the characters function. As part of the adjustment process, the protagonists need to change their looks as well. At first, it appears that the necessity to defend themselves against the living dead does not cause drastic changes in characters' clothing. Even though the Bennet sisters and Lady Catherine de Bourgh spend a lot of their time on training, physical exercises and hand-to-hand combat, they still wear high-waisted dresses that restrict their freedom of movement. However, the costume designers modernise the characters' style of clothing to some extent. In his leather black coat, armed with daggers, pistols and items which allow him to discern potential zombies—like the tiny vial with flies in it—Darcy resembles Van Helsing. Lady Catherine's black eye-patch makes her look, in turn, like a pirate. The movie evokes such associations on purpose as the filmmakers want to highlight Darcy's and de Bourgh's warrior skills and their roles as the country's protectors. The images of the Bennet sisters have changed as well. However, these alterations make the heroines look like the protagonists of adventure movies in order to emphasise their fitness. The costume designers combine the heroines' high-waisted dresses with such accessories as leather over-knee shoes. Such stylisations add zest to fight scenes and erotise the appearance of the already attractive female impersonators. Simultaneously, the filmmakers try to maintain the connection between *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and previous costume adaptations of Austen's novel—the costume designers make Jane (Bella Heathcote) wear the same dress as her counterpart in Joe Wright's film, whereas Elizabeth (Lily James) appears in the dress worn by Jennifer Ehle in BBC's adaptation.

Although the issue of teaching women to fight the undead is not considered inappropriate by most men, some of them are strongly against it. When proposing to Elizabeth, Mr Collins insinuates

that his future wife would have to stop fighting zombies. Conversely, Mr Darcy finds the knowledge of martial arts among women as crucial as the knowledge of foreign languages or drawing skills. While the issue of teaching women to fight is rather neutral, the way of acquiring this knowledge appears to be another determinant of social stratification. It is visible in the disrespectful attitude of Lady Catherine de Bourgh (who learnt to fight in Kyoto) towards Elizabeth, whose parents could not afford to send their daughters to Japan. At the beginning of the film the narrator explains that the rich are usually trained in Japan whereas "the wise" learn to fight in China (Steers 00.07.38). The conversation between Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lizzy Bennet echoes the original exchange of views which takes place at Rosings during the first meeting of the heroines in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice.* Darcy's aunt is equally haughty and appalled to hear the Bennet girls did not receive a proper education—their parents did not hire a governess.

In Steers' film, Lady Catherine finally admits she is impressed both with Elizabeth's combat skills and her female "resolve" after the girl defeats one of the warriors. In the novel, Darcy's aunt seems to share anti-feminist beliefs—she criticises the Bennets for letting all their daughters participate in social events and not abiding to the conventions, according to which the older daughters should first get married. In Austen's text, Lady Catherine never really acknowledges Elizabeth and her family. In Steers' film, however, Darcy's aunt teams up with the Bennets to fight zombies, their mutual enemies. Through Lady Catherine's change of attitude towards Elizabeth and her family the filmmakers alter the viewers' perception and understanding of Darcy's aunt and put an emphasis on the concept of female solidarity. This concept is further developed through the depiction of Lizzie's and Jane's relationship—the film features the sisters' weddings that take place at the same time. The heroines stand side by side as though they were about to marry each other. According to Heather Lambert[103], the filmmakers use this emphasis on female solidarity in the movie to bring Austen's feminist undertones into the zombified adaptation of her novel.

Since feminism is one of the themes in *Pride and Prejudice*[104], the filmmakers of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* use aspects of the zombie plotline to maintain the integrity of Austen's original feminist concepts. At first it may seem that introducing the living dead into the narrative would make its heroines emancipated as they get the statuses of female warriors and zombie slayers. Contrary to Austen's original, the heroines of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* are assessed not only through the prism of their social position, upbringing, financial situation, beauty and talents, but also

[103] See, Heather Lambert's article "*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*: Is Jane Austen Rolling in her Grave?"
[104] This view is supported by J. Donovan in *Women and the rise of the novel: A Feminist-Marxist theory*, by J.L. Newton's *"Pride and prejudice": Power, fantasy, and subversion in Jane Austen* published in Feminist Studies journal or by R. Hennessy and C. Ingraham, the editors and co-authors of *Materialist feminism: A reader in class, difference, and women's lives*.

in terms of their physical fitness. As Mulvey-Roberts points out, “women in the novel not only break the bounds of traditional femininity, but actually reverse gender roles by protecting men from attack” (28). At the end of the film Elizabeth saves Darcy’s life from Wickham. In the movie, Lizzy Bennet wields swords and daggers, fires muskets and vanquishes zombies. Yet, contrary to the mash-up novel, she never eats the still beating heart of Lady Catherine’s warrior after she strangles him with his own intestines. In the movie, Elizabeth behaves more ladylike. Apart from her active participation in protecting the country from zombies, she still expects men to show courtesy. That is why she is astonished by Mr Collins’ behaviour after she saves his life during one of the incidents with zombies. Instead of taking the set of muskets from the woman and carrying it for her, Mr Collins helps her to grip the guns tighter, making her carry them all the way back. Another situation occurs during a zombie attack at one of the balls. Elizabeth reacts instantly to the danger, whereas Mr Bingley wants to call Darcy and grabs a weapon rather unwillingly. Thus, in the dialogic relationship between Grahame-Smith’s source text and Steers’ film adaptation the filmmakers make some of the men break the bounds of traditional masculinity as a response to breaking the bounds of femininity. The moment when everything returns to the stereotypical perception of gender roles is the scene on Hingham Bridge—Darcy is presented as a brave male warrior, wounded in war, whereas Elizabeth is depicted as an emotional wife-to-be, waiting for her lover to come back to her from the war.

3.3.18. Elizabeth confesses her love for Darcy on half-blown Hingham Bridge.

3.3.19-20. The overhead shots of Elizabeth and Darcy after the explosion of Hingham Bridge

After the explosion, Darcy is injured and lies unconscious on the half-blown bridge. Elizabeth, in tears, confesses that she has fallen in love with him at first sight and then kisses him. The close-up on the couple allows the audience to focus on the romantic scene between the protagonists. After Elizabeth's confession, the camera angle changes into bird's view to present Elizabeth's and Darcy's vulnerability and slowly pulls out, abandoning the lovers. While pulling out, the camera begins to roll to accentuate the disconcerting, unsettling mood and present the lovers surrounded by the destroyed world that has plunged in chaos. The theme of a zombie war refers to the theme of the quest for matrimony in Austen's prose, which in this case may be read as a form of war as well. Darcy directly sums up the connection between love and war with a statement: "Of all weapons in the world, I now know love to be the most dangerous" (Steers 01.14.19). His words relate to the internal war that the original Darcy experiences, as he fights with his romantic feelings for Elizabeth Bennet.

As Szyngiel points out, although the Bennet sisters are physically fit and excellent with weapons, their independence is dubious, because they remain non-autonomous individuals (422). Their lives are still determined by the customary matrimonial duty. This kind of depiction of women seems to be a paradox in a story in which female characters are able to fight monsters better than many men (422). The aforementioned lack of autonomy is related to the sexualisation of the heroines. While the TV adaptation from 1995 is dominated by the female perspective (the lake scene with the wet Mr Darcy, the scene of Elizabeth admiring Darcy's sculpture at Pemberley or scenes featuring Elizabeth looking at Darcy over the window present female gaze as dominant), the zombie version returns to the traditional narrative model, abiding by stereotypes and emphasising physical attractiveness of women[105]. Once again, a female becomes a sexual object to watch[106]—the heroines of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* are not ashamed to explore their own bodies, because they treat them as tools used both in fights with zombies and in skirmishes with men (Szyngiel 422). The film indicates that the female gaze does not dominate in the case of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by making a reference to the lake scene from BBC's TV series. Steers' movie features a similar scene of Mr Darcy, clad once again in a white, unbuttoned shirt and jumping into the lake.

[105] which refers to Laura Mulvey's theory about men as the rulers of the gaze.

[106] According to Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, heterosexual male perspective constitutes Hollywood cinema. Mulvey finds men the active drivers of the narrative, whereas women are to be looked at—they bring visual pleasure to the audience (105).

3.3.21. The shot of Darcy jumping into the lake—a reference to BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995.

However, after Darcy dives into the water, the scene cuts abruptly, so the female audience does not have a chance to see another Mr Darcy in a wet shirt.

The change in the way of presenting women, in turn, is visible primarily in the scene of preparations for the ball, during which all the Bennet sisters reveal their bodies, show their thighs and deep cleavages, underwear, stockings and garters. Although they wear belts with daggers and bayonets under their elegant dresses, this does not prevent them from emphasising the seductive side of their silhouettes. The camera focuses on the physical attractiveness of the heroines, and they become the embodiment of male desires.

3.3.22. The shot of Jane (on the left) and Elizabeth (on the right) getting ready for a ball

The scene takes place almost at the beginning of the film. This deadpan moment does not influence the action in the movie, but it does say a lot about the Bennet sisters—above all, it shows what their everyday life looks like. Just before the scene begins, the viewers hear the girls' parents talking. Mrs Bennet worries about the girls' chances of getting married. Mr Bennet, in turn, worries about their

chances of survival and wonders if they live to see tomorrow. The "preparation scene" depicts how the Bennet daughters get ready for "tomorrow". Although the heroines are getting ready for the ball, they cannot forget about the realities of the world around them—which is full of zombies. That is why they adorn themselves not only with beautiful gowns and accessories. They must arm themselves appropriately as well. The whole "preparation scene" is shot in soft focus. With this stylised technique the filmmakers highlight the beauty of the Bennet girls[107]. However, the above-attached shot is made with the use of shallow focus, so the edges of the girls' faces are not as sharply highlighted (soft focus) as the edges of the abdominal parts of their bodies (deep focus). After this shot is taken, the camera tilts down to show the weapons hidden behind the garters or in a shoe. The use of symmetrical framing in this scene accentuates the similarities and differences between the heroines' opposed personalities and, naturally, their physical appearances. In Austen's novel, Jane Bennet, the eldest of the girls, is portrayed as the most polite and obedient of the Bennet women. In all of the costume adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice,* the heroine wears dresses in light colours, which complement her fair complexion and blonde hair. Such an image indicates the girl's innocence and purity[108]. Additionally, throughout the movie the heroine has her hair up in a bun, as opposed to Elizabeth, who often has her hair down and wears colourful outfits (mostly blue). The pinned-up hairstyle may symbolise the bonds of social conventions which entrap the older Bennet girl. Conversely, her sister Elizabeth, an individualist who is considered more outspoken and bolder, prefers to have her hair down—as it does not limit her freedom.

As it was mentioned before, the attractiveness of women, as well as men, depends not only on the financial and social position, but also on the ability to use weapons. This physical fitness and proficiency in the art of fighting zombies can be equated with sexual performance. As a result, Darcy becomes extremely interesting to Elizabeth, while Mr Collins is rejected and laughed at by the Bennet sisters. They are amused by both the man's snobbery and the fact that he is unable to use a gun and uses a knife only for meals. Since they are trained to fight hordes of hungry monsters, the women are skilful and fit, and therefore extremely attractive to the men around them.

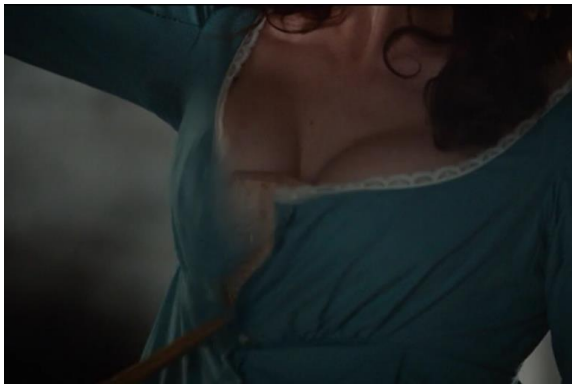
According to Szyngiel, the state of constant threat and readiness to fight for survival affects the physical dimension of the relationship between the characters (423). In comparison to previous costume adaptations, the relations between the characters from *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* are considerably more intensive and at times even brutal. The conflicts between the protagonists end not

[107] Other directors often used the technique in the same way. For example, Michael Curtiz used the soft focus depth of field in *Casablanca* (1942) to accentuate Ingrid Bergman's alluring physical appearance even more (she was already considered one of the most attractive women of her times).

[108] In English literature female purity is often indicated by white gowns. An example of such a depiction may be found in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* written by Thomas Hardy or in George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*, to name but a few.

only with heated exchanges of words, but in many cases also in a physical confrontation, which seems unacceptable in Austen's novels. Thus, the conflict between Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine de Bourgh is resolved in a fight. The Bennet sisters, even though they love and care for each other, also point guns at each other and fight hand-to-hand when their opinions differ. Apparently, fighting duels is a way for them to show affection and give vent to emotions (Szyngiel 424). A situation of this kind occurs when Mr Darcy proposes to Elizabeth. The romantic scene ends with a duel between him and the woman. Their fight involves a great deal of physical contact and indicates sexual fascination that arises between them (Szyngiel 423). It becomes clear that the girl feels attracted to Darcy even before they reconcile.


3.3.23-24. The shots of Elizabeth and Darcy's duel. The sexual tension between the characters is indicated by the positioning of their bodies.

3.3.25-26. The shots of Elizabeth and Darcy's duel. The frame on the left shows Elizabeth ripping off the button of Darcy's waistcoat. The frame on the right features Darcy ripping off the button of Elizabeth's dress.

The couple's duel resembles a brutal interplay, in which the sexual tension between the characters rises along with the intensity of their movements and attacks. While striking (Elizabeth) or defending themselves (Darcy), the characters unbutton each other's outfits—with one stroke of a knife Elizabeth rips off all the buttons on her opponent's waistcoat and Darcy gets rid of the first button of Elizabeth's dress, using a crowbar for protection. Obviously, the 19th century etiquette does not apply in this

scene. The fact that Elizabeth and Darcy engage into a fight and "find that they are equally matched" contradicts the historical patriarchal notion that women are not equal to men, which is reflected in Austen's novel, in which Elizabeth and Darcy are on par in terms of wit (Nelson 345).

Although the undead are a natural point of reference for other elements that constitute the world of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the outbreak of the zombies does not have an equally strong impact on all of the aspects of the story. However, it allows to introduce these concepts that could not openly appear in Austen's prose, such as brutality or sexuality. Hence, the modification of the world reveals what is implicit or marginalised in the author's novels. According to Przybysz, the addition of new determinants of social stratification allow for an amplification of the values already existing in the original (148). Steers' adaptation refers to some of the social disruptions of Austen's times, such as the Napoleonic Wars, the displacement of the working class, the fear of the other. It provides a new, contemporary take on Austen's novel by adding a zombie plot, but simultaneously including the key themes of the source text. The filmmakers use the zombie plotline to relate to the feminist undertones, the debate over love, matrimony and money, and the economic anxieties that resonate in Austen's prose. Apparently, a modern retelling of a classic story does not have to stay within the bounds of that text to keep the integrity of the novel. The introduction of the supernatural elements does not change *Pride and Prejudice* into a completely different story. It does not change the story into a typical horror movie, either. Even though the adaptation uses some of the horror tropes, such as the sting, dimmed palette of colours, high contrast ratio, low-key lighting, the film does not follow the most crucial convention of the genre: it does not evoke fear in the audience. Moreover, it does not present women as passive damsels in distress, consequently rejecting one of the characteristic horror tropes. Conversely, the film features a story of strong and decisive female warriors, entrapped in social conventions and commitments. Thus, despite the additions and substitutions, the film tries to revive the original narrative and remains relatively close to Austen's narrative—at least when compared to other modernised hybrid adaptations.

Chapter 4
The Change of Culture Dominant—
Austen's Protagonists in Non-Anglo-Saxon Cultural Context

4.1. Defining the Change of Culture Dominant

As Linda Hutcheon points out, "an adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context—a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum. Fashions, not to mention value system, are context-dependent" (142). Adapting a literary text from one cultural context into another is nothing new and often entails a shift in the political valence[109] as well as a change of language, place or time (145).

In fact, according to James Naremore, changes in "locale, time and language" are central to modifications of the adapted literary text (69). Most of the previously analysed movies mainly involve a change of time frames—the plots of these films (except for the adaptations discussed in the first chapter and Burr Steers' *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*) unfold either in the 20th or 21st century. A change in language manifests itself mainly in its modernisation—which results from transferring Austen's narratives into more contemporary times. Until this section, a change in "locale" appears far more seldom and primarily within English-speaking countries.

This chapter elaborates, however, on the cinematic adaptations which include all three modifications which James Naremore writes about at once, but with regard to locations outside the Anglo-Saxon culture area. Rajshree Ojha's retelling of *Emma*, entitled *Aisha*, moves the story's action to the 21st-century India and features continuity between locale and language, as the characters speak Hindi. Similarly, Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* moves the story of *Pride and Prejudice* to contemporary India as well. Since this particular film is a cultural hybrid, its plot unfolds both in India, Great Britain and the USA. Accordingly, the characters' speech mixes English and Hindi—the protagonists speak English, but they sometimes use Hindi as well (although mainly while singing). Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, in turn, transfers the movie counterparts of Marianne

[109] which the scholar refers to as "context conditions" (145)

and Elinor Dashwood to China in the times of the Qing dynasty. Accordingly, the protagonists communicate in Mandarin.

Relocating the action of a literary text into a different country may obviously involve changing the protagonists' names and cultural identities. As Hutcheon claims, along with modified time frames, and changes in the setting, such alterations may allow the filmmakers to avoid such legal repercussions as copyright infringement suits (146). In addition, transcultural adaptations frequently require modifications "in racial and gender politics" (Hutcheon 147)—which explains why Austen's protagonists are depicted as Indians in Gurinder Chadha's and Rajshree Ojha's movies; Asians in Ang Lee's and Andrew Ahn's retellings of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice,* Afro-Americans in Rhonda Baraka's *Pride and Prejudice: Atlanta*, or Latins in Angel Garcia's *Prada or Nada*, another adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility.*

Of course, Hutcheon's comment upon modifications in racial and gender politics indicates most of all the fact that moving the action to another country or continent or both automatically introduces changes within the entire network of cultural relations that establish the relationships between the characters. Hence, racial and gender politics in contemporary India constitute different relationships than in Regency England—as presented in Indian adaptations of Austen's novels. The postcolonial discourse, which often becomes an important element of the transcultural adaptations, changes as well. As Hutcheon notices, "adapters across cultures probably cannot avoid thinking about power" (152). Some of these movies address the politics of empire from a prominently postcolonial perspective, thereby altering the context of the source-text significantly (152). Thus, Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* emphasises the feminist undertones and add a postcolonial critique of slavery. Gurinder Chadha, in turn, uses the courtship plotline from *Pride and Prejudice* to depict a relationship between a coloniser and a colonised.

Relocating an adapted source text requires not only changes in racial and gender politics. When transferred from the adapted work to transcultural adaptation, "cultural and social meaning must be adjusted to a new environment, as the differences of national culture, religion and race create gaps that need filling" (Hutcheon 151). Thus, sometimes the filmmakers reduce the original elements which their cultures might find too controversial or replace them with equivalents that "de-repress" the politics of the adapted text (Stam 42-44). This would explain why Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* modifies the original Lydia Bennet and George Wickham plotline and does not allow for Lakhi's love affair or elopement with Johnny Wickham—the girl does run away with the protagonist, but the family ties turn out to be stronger than her affection for a man she barely knows and in the end the

teenager comes back home. Of course, such modifications not only depart from Austen's works but also reduce the original dramatic factor and diminish the seriousness of the source-texts' narratives.

As the stories travel—and they do when they are adapted across media, time, and place—they accumulate what Edward Said refers to as miscellaneous "processes of representation and institutionalization" (226). "The different processes of representation" may be achieved by changing the genre of the original stories. After all, some film genres are more culture specific than others. Thus, to some extent, adding the song and dance sequences featuring local Indians in traditional outfits and thus bollywoodising Austen's stories or adopting the generic conventions of wuxia genre and presenting the adapted stories as martial arts melodramas may be justified by the fact that the original source texts were relocated into non-Anglo-Saxon cultural areas.

However, since neither Bollywood films nor martial arts movies allow for a truthful representation of the society in which the film counterparts of Austen's characters live, a change of culture dominant occurs mainly at the visual level in the case of the "transcultural" adaptations of Austen's prose. The movies seem to retain the focus on exactly the same aspect as the heritage costume adaptations of the British writer's prose—the visual layer. Once again, picturesque landscapes become strongly accentuated. The importance of a shot composition is additionally emphasised through the thoroughly choreographed dance scenes in Indian adaptations and fight scenes in a Chinese retelling of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Even the theme of Westernization—which often appears in the Indian cinema—is treated rather stereotypically as the filmmakers basically reduce it to the matter of clothing or holiday festivities. All of these manoeuvres build the impression of stereotypical representation of India and China in the cinematic adaptations of Jane Austen's prose and establish the films based on the writer's stories as global products destined for export rather than adaptations with a thorough change of culture dominant.

4.2. Jane Austen's Protagonists in India

The new tendency to create adaptations of Jane Austen's prose in a different, non-Anglo-Saxon cultural circle marked another contribution to Austenmania that began in the 1990s. At the end of 20th century the filmmakers of Indian cinema began to acknowledge the cinematic potential of Jane Austen's novels and, as a result, three modernised film adaptations of the British writer's prose were released in India: Rejiv Menon's *Kandukondain Kandukondain* in 2000 (inspired by *Sense and*

Sensibility), Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* in 2004 (inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*) and Rajshree Ojha's *Aisha* in 2010 (inspired by *Emma*).

As Asha Kasbekar points out, "even though there is a tendency to refer to Indian cinema as if it were a cohesive whole, it is in fact fragmented into many regional film-producing centres, scattered all over the country" (366). In fact, India has 16 official languages, and movies are shot in all of them. About 200 Hindi movies are made annually in Bombay and are distributed throughout the country. As Kasbekar explains in *Introduction to Indian Cinema*, even though Madras (another filmmaking centre) releases more movies within a year, language barriers make it impossible to compete with Bombay's national and international distribution network—Madras makes films in the regional languages of Tamil and Telugu, which are not as widely understood as Hindi (366). After all, Hindi is the national language, and it is widely understood in the country—especially in the northern and central part of India (366).

This subchapter centres on the analysis of popular Hindi films that adapt Austen's novels to a globalised Indian tradition. At first, it may appear that these films introduce the viewers to Indian culture and heritage and aim at presenting them as distinctively local, but in fact they depict only these selected elements which might attract wider audiences—this actually explains why the two out of three Indian adaptations of Austen's prose follow the conventions of Bollywood. After all, Bollywood movies are global products which sell a beautified vision of India instead of presenting a truthful image of it. The film analysis in this section encompasses the movies directed by Gurinder Chadha and by Rajshree Ojha, as these two films are made in Hindi in Mumbai. Since *Kandukondain Kandukondain* is a Tamil film, it is not included in the analysis.

One of the distinguishing traits of Jane Austen's prose is the fact that the world in which her characters live is small and limited. Austen's Emma is a rural heroine and far from a cosmopolitan, world socialite. Still, she remains high on her society's social ladder. Meanwhile, the 21st-century Aisha is clearly urban—the film locates the heroine in Connaught Place and Defence Colony, the regions of the city associated with wealth and privilege (Kenney). Chadha's film, in turn, presents an even less limited community than Ojha's *Aisha*. In order to mirror the 21st-century Indian diaspora and depict a truly multicultural story, the filmmakers set their movie in three different countries: India, the United Kingdom, and the United States—which highlights the globalised character of the adaptation. The movie starts in Amritsar, which becomes an Indian substitution for Longbourn, and the action later moves to London and Los Angeles—the film equivalents of magnificent Netherfield and Pemberley (Sutherland 357). Just like the setting of Austen's deliberately contained *Pride and Prejudice* (Longbourn, Meryton, and Netherfield; London; Hunsford and Rosings; Brighton;

Derbyshire and Pemberley) reflects the British author's own geographically contained life, Chadha's Indo-Western canvas mirrors the director's own multicultural life—the Indo-Kenyan-British filmmaker is married to the Japanese American co-writer of the movie's script, Paul Mayeda Berges. The international setting of *Bride and Prejudice* may seem to some extent justified, as it allows the filmmakers to focus the story on an international and interracial relationship of the main couple—the Indian, Lalita and the white American, Will Darcy.

The Indian adaptations of Austen's prose transform the literary originals not only by changing the characters' nationalities and relocating them to India but also by adopting such major Bollywood conventions as the amplified scenes of weddings, addition of scenes featuring festivals and religious ceremonies as well as song and/or dance sequences, the absence of kissing, and references to commercially successful Bollywood movies. However, some Bollywood conventions, such as the appearance of wedding or dance scenes as well as the lack of physical intimacy, are simultaneously Jane Austen's conventions. Thus, following them feels quite natural in Indian adaptations of Austen's prose. In fact, these Austen's conventions might be the reason why the filmmakers of Bollywood adaptations decided to relocate Jane Austen's narratives into India.

Clearly, the theme of love which despite obstacles ends happily with the couple's wedding found a breeding ground in the cinematography of Bollywood as well—most of the popular Bombay movies are based on this scheme (Kasbekar 367). That is one of the reasons why the same pattern was also used by the filmmakers of the modernised film adaptations of Austen's novels set in India. Another recurring theme which Hindi movies share with the British writer's narratives is the importance of family ties. As seen in *Bride and Prejudice*, the tying of a family's reputation and demeanour of individual family members features heavily in the Indian culture. According to Chadha, Regency England and contemporary small-town India do not differ as much, especially when it comes to mothers who are too willing to make good marital arrangements for their daughters (Jha). Thus, the embarrassing deportment of Mrs Bakshi when out in public, or even at home, is supposed to remind the audience of Mrs Bennet's ill manners—the actions of both women put their daughters' marital prospects in danger. The underlying conflicts between social and individual identity, between relationships based on material gain and romantic love, remain, therefore, largely the same even though the action of Austen's original narratives moves from Regency England to contemporary India: *Aisha* shows Indian community living in Delhi and revolves around a privileged young woman's extravagant lifestyle, whereas *Bride and Prejudice* centres around the Bakshi family—the

reimagined Bennet family[110]—who lives in Amritsar—which stands in for the Hertfordshire countryside.

In the case of film adaptations of Austen's prose that set the original narrative in a different cultural context Austen becomes a tool to criticise the limitations and stereotypization of both cultures as well as to affirm their positive values. As it turns out, however, the affirmed cultural values are not necessarily the novels' values. The allure and global appeal of Jane Austen's stories partly derive from their localism and their emphasis upon family structure—as mentioned before, the plots of her novels centre on small-town families and their routines. However, the filmmakers seem to find the writer's portrayals of these families quite problematic to approach. Austen continuously presents parents as either silly or self-absorbed—sometimes both. Only few are presented positively, but most of them become the target of the author's satirical attacks. Marriage, in turn, becomes a tool used by the novelist to save her protagonists from claustrophobic family networks[111] (Troost and Greenfield, *Appropriating Austen*). The adapters of Austen's novels value her focus on community and family, as it can be easily translated into a defence of a local culture and the concept of family, especially in these film adaptations which include the change of the cultural dominant. Yet, Austen's mockery of parents and family in general is either deliberately toned down or shunned by the filmmakers.

Thus, in Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice*, the Bakshis receive a considerably more positive depiction from the filmmakers than Austen's Bennets. As opposed to Mr Bennet, Mr Bakshi is not indifferent towards his youngest daughters. He loves all of them and wants to keep all of them close (not just Elizabeth/Lalita). He is also less self-absorbed and cynical than his literary counterpart. Even though his wife is as ill-mannered as Austen's Mrs Bennet, Mrs Bakshi is far more worried about her daughters' safety. She reprimands Lakhi for running away from home (Mrs Bennet never rebuked Lydia for her misbehaviour): "No boy is coming more than ten miles near to you, until you get married" (Chadha 01.34.35.). Thus, Mrs Bakshi takes over Austen's Mr Bennet's reaction to his daughter's misbehaviour. Originally, it was Mr Bennet who was so angry with Lydia that he tells Kitty she is not allowed to go out for the next ten years without her sisters, and that no officer will be allowed within ten miles of Longborn. Even the film counterparts of the daughters are toned down: Lakhi remains a great flirt and runs off with Wickham, but she does feel ashamed for what she has done—unlike Lydia. Maya remains a show-off and an attention-seeker (she plays the sitar and performs a hilarious Cobra Dance), but she is not a righteous know-it-all like Mary Bennet. As Troost

[110] Only this time, Mr and Mrs Bakshi have four daughters instead of five, as the film condenses the number of the Bennet sisters and does not feature the counterpart of Kitty, who mostly just functions as Lydia's sidekick.
[111] Emma Woodhouse is an exception.

and Greenfield notice, "the Bakshi family is both a narrative and a moral center" in the story (147). Even William Darcy comes to appreciate Indian family life and acknowledges its superiority. When asked what he likes about Indian culture, the man answers that, "it's nice the way the families come together" (Chadha 00.34.32.). Then he contrasts this image with his own dispersed, broken family.

The character of Aisha Kapoor's father also confirms the thesis that the image of parents in India film adaptations of Austen's novels is softened. Mr Kapoor is considerably more likeable than his literary counterpart. Contrary to Mr Woodhouse, the insufferable hypochondriac, Mr Kapoor is wise and reasonable. Unlike his British counterpart, he never expresses any concern about his health and does not seem distressed over his diet (even though the food does play an equally important role in the film adaptation as in its source text—the family gatherings usually take place at a table with food to share). In fact, Mr Kapoor does not mind eating microwaved "gajar ka halwa[112] at night with his daughter, which cannot be considered healthy. Contrary to his literary counterpart, the Indian Mr Woodhouse appears rarely throughout the movie. Perhaps by reducing the frequency of Aisha's father's appearance the filmmakers aim to suggest to the audience that the presence of Mr Kapoor in his daughter's life is not as overwhelming and oppressive as Mr Woodhouse's in Emma's life. Unlike Austen's Mr Woodhouse, Ojha's protagonist considers his daughter's happiness and comfort more important than his own and is always there to give her good advice. Thus, one of the most prominent differences between Mr Woodhouse and Mr Kapoor is visible in the men's reactions to their daughters' relationships with the Mr Knightley/Arjun character. While Mr Woodhouse "is miserable" about the revelation and eventually his distress is reduced "to resignation" (Austen 483), Mr Kapoor is thrilled to hear Aisha has feelings for Arjun and compliments her for her choice of partner before he encourages the girl to confess her love to Arjun. The man dispenses his wisdom, as he tries to reason with Aisha and explains to her why the relationship between Arjun and Shefali is out of question. With this scene, the filmmakers relate to other Bollywood movies, such as *Dil Chahta Hai* (2002). The film features a similar scene, in which the father tries to convince his son about the need to be with the woman he loves.

Typically of the recent Bollywood films, the adaptations directed by Gurinder Chadha and Rajshree Ojha, relate to Bollywood cinema by the use of intertextual references: *Bride and Prejudice* refers to Manoj Kumar's *Purab Aur Paschim*; *Aisha*, in turn, makes allusions to *Kabhie Kushi Kabhie Gham* and to *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai.* In both cases the most obvious intertextual moments take place nearly at their end. The fist fight between Darcy and Wickham in Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice* happens at the cinema after Lakhi runs away with Johnny. The men's brutal interaction is filmed

[112] a dessert pudding made of carrot, usually associated with the Punjab region

against the screening of Manoj Kumar's movie. The moves of Darcy and Wickham copy those of the characters from the movie that is being shown at the cinema at that very moment. In Ojha's film, in turn, Aisha watches *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* after her argument with Arjun and weeps as she recalls their interactions—with this intertextual reference the filmmakers try to indicate that the relationship between Anjali and Rahul resembles that of Aisha and Arjun. Bollywood filmmakers relate to other Bollywood blockbusters because they hope that such references will draw more attention to their movies. Such intertextual references add to local consumption.

Aisha, however, does not include intertextual references only to Bollywood cinema. Obviously, the most perceptible filmic intertextual connection is with Amy Heckerling's *Clueless*—which only highlights the fact that the film is a global product. These references are visible both in some scenes, such as in the scene featuring the fight for a remote control, as well as in the film's narrative or its aesthetics. Like in *Clueless*, it is Aisha's voiceover that introduces the viewer to the story of the protagonist's life, intertwining the events with numerous fragments in the poetics of the music video or TV commercial. Similarly to Heckerling's American adaptation of *Emma*, the diegetic world of Ojha's film features the characters smoking marijuana and getting drunk in popular clubs like yuppies. Their everyday outfits follow the trends of Western fashion, which requires parting with the old-fashioned sari. In *Aisha*, the Western dress code and knowledge of English determine class affiliation. Only the provincial Shefali initially wears traditional clothes, and it seems that her gradual internal transformation would not be possible without changing her image. The situation is therefore analogous to that presented in Amy Heckerling's film, with the difference that in *Clueless*, in which the main characters are in their teens, the issue of appropriate clothing seems justified and inscribed in the realities of the school environment. In the world of adults, however, pairing couples based on dress codes does not seem a logical choice, the more so as the filmmakers had the opportunity to appeal to significant class differences in India. These, however, have been reduced to the choice of the appropriate outfit—which shows that the film does not particularly delve into the theme of westernisation, but only casually addresses it.

In spite of some minor modifications in the original plotlines, Indian adaptations of Jane Austen's novels seem to follow the original trajectory of events more closely than these adaptations with the change of genre dominant. *Bride and Prejudice* and *Aisha* modernise and relocate most of the main characters and plotlines of Austen's literary original. While the Woodhouses, the Bennets, the Bingleys, Mr Darcy and Mr Knightley negotiate the relationship between marriage, money and social status in an England affected by the rise of industrial capitalism, the Bakshis, the Kapoors, the Bingleys, Will Darcy and Arjun Brunan take on the same tasks in an India changed by corporate

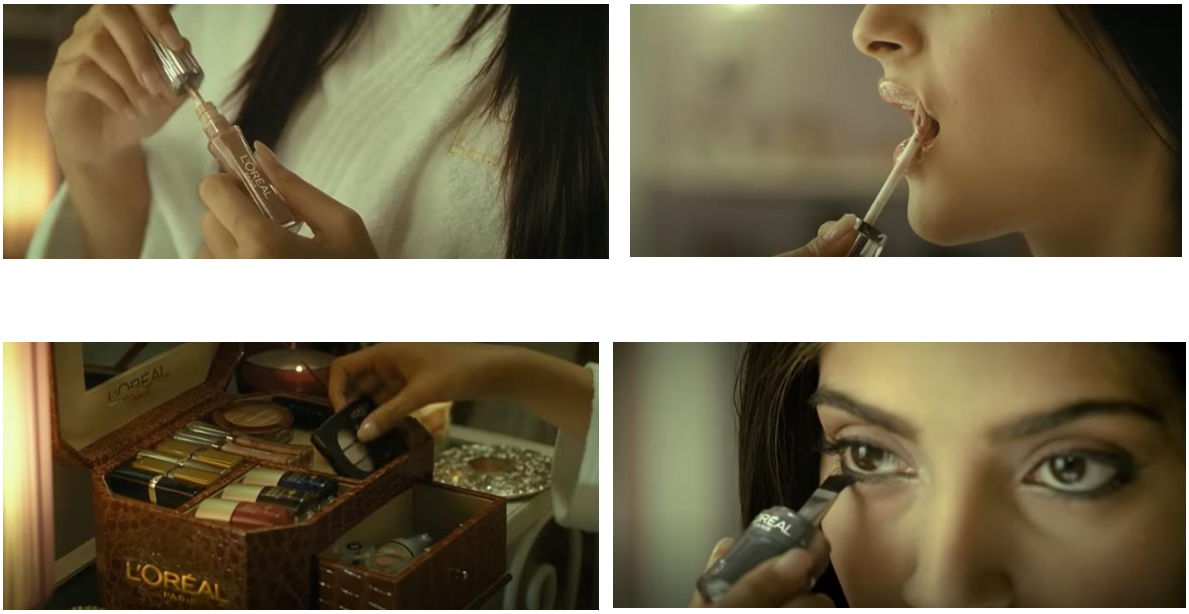
globalisation (Mathur 10). *Aisha* alters all the major characters of *Emma* into Indians and focuses on the story of an attractive, rich, but also pampered resident of the contemporary Delhi, who spends her time mainly throwing parties, doing shopping and matchmaking. When she meets a modest traditionalist, Shefali (the film counterpart of Harriet Smith), she decides to transform her into a progressive and fashionable, westernised woman and set her up with the wealthy heir of the confectionery company, Randhir Gambhir (the counterpart of Mr Elton). Obviously, her actions are criticised by Mr Knightley's counterpart, the investment banker Arjun Burman. In *Bride and Prejudice*, in turn, Elizabeth Bennet alters into a young, Indian girl—Lalita Bakshi. Mr Darcy becomes an American millionaire and an owner of a luxury hotel chain, whereas Charles Bingley, whose name is now Balraj Bingley, is a British Non-Resident Indian. George Wickham, in turn, changes his name to John and is depicted as an English backpacker, wandering between England and India. Mr Kholi, the film counterpart of Austen's Mr Collins, is pictured as a distant relative of the Bakshi family who, after making money in California, comes to India to look for an Indian wife. These modifications in the characters' nationalities allow for introducing the theme of (neo)colonialism and nationalism.

Described by one of the reviewers as "East meets West", Chadha's movie marries a very English *Pride and Prejudice* with classic Bollywood format "transforming corsets to saris, … the Bennetts to the Bakshis and … pianos to bhangra beats" (Adarsh). The film adaptation was meant to be global and succeed internationally even if it delivers some postcolonial resentment at Anglo-American cultural failings. The re-visioning of white Britain's imperial identity is foregrounded in the movie by changing Mr Darcy into an American hotelier magnate—such a modification shifts the narratorial focus from Britain to the US as a symbol of globalisation and a global coloniser. With London being reduced to a stop-over on the way from Amritsar to Los Angeles, the US becomes the real imperial power in the film. In this respect a question arises whether globalisation may be interpreted as a token of imperialism. In his *Culture and Imperialism,* Said defines imperialism as practice, theory and attitude of the dominant centre—metropolis, which dominate over the distant territory (9). The natural consequence of imperialism is colonialism—the settlement and cultural conquest of these territories.

Through the image of William Darcy, the adaptation features the cultural imperialist perspective of the main male character who finds India undeveloped and feels empowered to ridicule its culture and then colonise it, by opening a luxurious hotel and earning money on Indians. Yet, the colonial subject—Lalita Bakshi—rebels herself against his attitude and makes him change his perspective. Thus, the coloniser is influenced by the Indian indigenous community. Since the film

was supposed to deliver a simple story for a wide audience, rather than ambitious work which highlights a problem of colonialism and generates discussions and controversies, "the resentment at Anglo-American cultural failings" is not thoroughly explored in the movie. *Bride and Prejudice* presents Darcy-like prejudices of the West which view Indian society as peculiar, but these prejudices are often voiced or presented in a humoristic manner—the difficulties which the main male protagonist has with dropping Indian trousers or his comparing Indian dancing moves to patting a dog are supposed to amuse the audience. In this way, the problem of cultural/colonial difference is certainly trivialised, and therefore the film directly renounces any engaged political agency.

The Indian adaptation of *Emma* addresses the postcolonial issue in an equally light manner. The westernisation of *Aisha*'s eponymous heroine manifests itself mainly in her love for Western labels—Prada, Louis Vuitton, Dior, or L'Oreal. The woman buys expensive designer clothes, which highlights her wealth. With the shots featuring the protagonist doing shopping the filmmakers undoubtedly try to relate to Austen's Emma's wealth and high social status. However, Aisha's fascination with Western fashion and style brings to the viewer's mind rather Cher Horowitz than Emma Woodhouse. Throughout the first half of the film, Ojha's adaptation is definitely following *Clueless* in the amount of attention it pays to the eponymous protagonist's fashion sense (Kenney). As in the American film, a whole range of recognisable global brands appear on the screen: Victoria's Secret, Dior, Louis Vuitton, L'Oreal, as well as well-known institutions such as PETA. In a few cases, the "product placement" strategy is visible—which once again establishes the film as a global product, appealing to the masses. One of such moments is captured during the scene featuring Aisha doing make-up.



4.2.1-4.2.4. Aisha doing make-up with L'Oreal cosmetics

The scene bears signs of hybridisation, as it resembles a TV-commercial of popular cosmetics. The whole sequence of shots lasts ten seconds, which is rather long. The close-up shots focus not on Aisha, but on the cosmetics with the brand's name clearly visible—such shots purposely promote the brand. The filmmakers use the shallow focus, which renders a portion of the frame in sharp detail while leaving the rest of the image soft. The sequence forces the audience to pay their full attention to the whole process of doing make-up with L'Oreal cosmetics—shallow focus isolates the object, as it blurs the background. Since L'Oreal is actually a French brand and not Indian, putting an emphasis on Aisha using European cosmetics presents her more as a world socialite and a cosmopolitan, globalised character. The addition of the scenes featuring the characters buying or praising European fashion and cosmetics and presenting the knowledge of English language and journeys to English-speaking countries as a token of being modern amplifies the theme of India's cultural colonisation by the neo-liberal globalised economy.

The first half of the film quite often brings to mind L'Oreal or Dior commercials, not just in the case of the above-mentioned scene. The medium of film definitely requires some visual indications of the main heroine's financial well-being and social status, yet focusing too much attention on Aisha doing shopping in malls makes Ojha's protagonist something Austen's Emma Woodhouse is not—a shopaholic preoccupied by her looks, and it reduces the theme of Westernisation to western fashion's influence on the characters' stylisation. In fact, according to Jennifer Hopfinger, "All we learn from Aisha about wealthy Delhiites is that they're fabulously well-dressed"[113].

4.2.5. Aisha on a shopping spree with her friends.

[113] Hopfinger, Jennifer. *Austen's 'Emma' Becomes Bollywood's 'Aisha.'* in: *The Bollywood Ticket,* 8 Aug. 2010. http://www.thebollywoodticket.com/reviews10/austensemmabecomesbollywoodsaisha808.html

The attached medium shot presents Aisha on one of her shopping sprees with her friends. Unlike the previous shots featuring the main heroine doing make-up, this one depicts every element of the frame in crisp detail—owing to which the audience can read the names of the brands. It is an important piece of information as the names that appear on shop windows inform the audience about Aisha's admiration for western fashion and about the heroine's (or her father's) wealth and social status—not everyone can afford to shop in Louis Vuitton's and Dior's.

Clad in a short white dress combined with sunglasses and a black beret (even though she is in a mall so there is obviously no need for sunglasses or a beret) Aisha resembles a Hollywood diva when comparing to her companions, and she acts like a diva as well, as she always comes to the fore, leaving her friends behind as if they were her backdrop. Aisha becomes the main focus of the viewers' attention, as she takes the position in the centre of the frame. The scene starts with a boom shot—at first all the audience sees are the women's feet, clad in different types of shoes. The camera booms up to reveal the whole silhouettes of the heroines. The boom shot suggests quite clearly that the world surrounding the eponymous heroine is filled with shopping escapades, Louis Vuittons and Diors. As the camera zooms out, the three women go forward as if they were on a catwalk at a fashion show. The camera movement allows the audience to notice the shop windows on both sides of the heroines. The symmetrical framing of the shot presents similarities and differences between the protagonists. Through the composition of this shot's frame, featuring Aisha between Shefali and Pinky, the filmmakers indicate that the main heroine combines Western and Eastern values and, as a result of that, enables Shefali and Pinky to socialise with each other. With her modest outfit Shefali represents the traditional East—out of the three women she is most modest; she is the only one who does not show her legs and does not carry any bags with newly bought clothes or cosmetics. No wonder the shot features no extravagant shop windows on her side—the countrified Shefali is not dominated by Western consumerism, unlike her companions.

Conversely, Pinky Bose, outspoken and sexually daring, represents West, both with her easy-going demeanour throughout the movie and her edgy, westernised fashion sense, clearly depicted in the photo. The heroine combines over-the-knee leather shoes with provocative black shorts, which adds a great deal of sex appeal to her stylisation, whereas her loose Mickey Mouse T-shirt adds an element of nonchalance to it and highlights the woman's laid-back style—it obviously provides another element of Western culture with the picture of Walt Disney's popular cartoon character as well. Such an image is characteristic much more of a Hollywood party girl than a Bollywood siren. The character of Pinky Bose is one of the main deviations from the original structure of Austen's novel, as well as from what the audience usually sees in Indian movies. Pinky's and Aisha's attires

stand in stark contrast with Shefali's costume. The two women's westernised style of clothing radiates with a threat of promiscuity and departs from Indian dress code—unclothed legs and white (the colour worn in times of grief) short dresses are socially unacceptable in most regions of India.

In Chadha's film, the cultural critique of colonialism is mainly channelled through the main heroine's protective attitude towards India. Lalita finds Darcy's aversion towards arranged marriages cliché. The woman denies that such arrangements are forced on children by their parents and compares the concept to a "global dating service". Furthermore, when Darcy suggests that investing in a luxury hotel in Gao will positively influence the country's economy, she lashes out at him. The heroine feels insulted and openly states she does not want India to become "a theme park" for wealthy foreign tourists (Chadha 00.26.45). The protagonist's indignation results from the fact that many citizens cannot afford to stay in such a hotel, and therefore it would be occupied mainly by the foreigners. Lalita accuses Will of wanting people "to come to India without having to deal with Indians… Five-star comfort with a bit of culture thrown in" (Chadha 00.26.35-00.26.43.). She then dismisses Darcy as an imperialist, arguing that Americans have been more than happy to take over this role from the British.

According to E.A. Claydon, the main protagonist's strong attachment to her country's culture, her deep sense of national identity as well as her emancipated attitude and strong personality are altogether the reason why the happy ending of the story requires a flexible combination of traditional demeanour with feminist values (102). Yet, although Lalita feels attached to Indian culture and defends her country's traditions and values, she rebels against them the moment Mr Kholi sets his mind on her. While singing a song "No Life without Wife," with a Grease-inspired melody and rap overtones (which quite clearly refers to western music), the heroine presents herself to be more hybrid than a typical "demure, sari-clad, conventional Bollywood heroine who is untouched by any 'anti-national' western influence" (Mathur 10). The film does not depict Lalita aspiring to a career (as according to Mr Kholi most American women do), but the heroine refuses to stay at home and commit herself solely to house chores while her husband earns the living. The woman openly admits she wants a modern, western marriage: "I just want a man with a real soul / Who wants equality and not control" (Chadha 00.47.38-00.47.40). Lalita combines eastern and western cultures more than she knows. The jeans-wearing tractor-riding heroine appears equally comfortable while dancing a traditional bhangra at an Indian wedding and as she is sipping a drink at a Los Angeles restaurant. Similarly, Lalita's easy-going behaviour while playing cricket with a group of Goan children does not differ much from her carefree attitude towards a group of foreign tourists in India, for whom she plays the guitar. According to Claydon, the heroine can only achieve harmony through a marriage

with a foreigner, because, paradoxically, such a union will allow the woman to maintain her own personality as well as to cultivate her own culture (50).

The cultural critique is not aimed only at the white American characters of *Bride & Prejudice*, however, but also at those westernised characters, whose cultural identity appears unclear at times, for example through the juxtaposition of Balraj Bingley and Mr Kohli—the two heroes cannot imagine coming back to India to settle there, yet they both want to marry Indian women. Mr Kholi openly admits that the reason why he is determined to find himself a wife from India is because Indian women are "traditional" and not "outspoken and career-orientated" like those who come from America (Chadha 00.34.35-00.34.38). While Balraj and Mr Kholi may share their views on the choice of a potential wife, their attitudes towards the residents of India as well as local customs and festivities differ radically. Balraj Bingley appears to have acquired what Homi K. Bhabha calls the hybrid cultural identity. The term refers to mixed identities which emerge when two or more cultures intermingle with each other[114]. Throughout the film Balraj takes active part in local festivities and customs–he dances to *bhangra* at the wedding, abides by traditional Indian dress code and even sings in Hindi. The man combines western and eastern cultures as he lives and works in England but cultivates Indian traditions when visiting India.

Balraj Bingley functions in the film as a foil character to both Will Darcy (like in the novel), whose identity at the beginning of the film is far from hybrid, and to Mr Kholi, who mimics the Americans in their cultural values and language. The notion of mimicry is used by Bhabha to describe the manner in which a colonial subject reflects the coloniser in terms of cultural values, characteristics, and language. In *Bride and Prejudice*, Mr Kholi tries hard to portray himself as American rather than Indian. He boasts about being a green card holder and disparages his fellow countrymen in his efforts to console Darcy, who has had a hard time adjusting to India. The man clearly alienates himself from Indians both by his attitude and because he lives in America, not in India. But since he is not American, Mr Kholi appears to belong nowhere. He is an Indian expatriate and as a result of this displacement he remains somewhere in-between the two countries[115].

In his attempt to support Darcy and show (unsuccessfully) that he understands the American, Kholi puts himself out of Indian context by saying: "These Indians don't know how to treat tourists right, there is no sophistication" (Chadha 00.54.48-00.54.52). By calling the Indians "them", as opposed to "us", the hero refuses to identify with his compatriots, and, instead, presents himself as

[114] The theorist elaborates on the concept of *hybridity* in his *The Location of Culture* (1994).

[115] Salman Rushdie writes about the concept of hybrid identity among migrants in his "Imaginary Homelands".

American [116]. His statement is counter-argued by Mr Bakshi, who points out that India's potential is still undiscovered, as the country gained its independence no earlier than in 1947. Lalita's reply is even more accurate in this case: "What do you think your U.S. was like after 60 years of independence? They were killing each other with slavery and blindly searching for gold" (Chadha 00.45.28). By addressing the phrase "your U.S." to Mr Kholi, Lalita marks the difference between the man and her family, which results from the fact that he allowed America to "colonise" him.

In "Of Mimicry and Man" Bhabha notes that colonial mimicry may carry an undertone of mockery—which would cause an ambivalence in the relation between the coloniser and the colonised. Mimicry may subvert colonial power, as in the process of mimicking the colonisers, the colonised may unintentionally mock the colonisers and expose them. This is the case with the film counterpart of Mr Collins, who is depicted as a boorish Indian expat boasting about his new L.A. life and who, just like his literary prototype, delivers comic relief. Thus, the original Mr Collins' admiration for Rosings and Lady Catherine de Bourgh translates into an obsession with the American Dream, lifestyle and living conditions and, obviously, an admiration for Lady Catherine—Darcy's mother and an American businesswoman. The example of mocking American culture through Mr Kholi's mimicry is presented in the scene which features the Indian expat dressed like a rap singer and dancing and singing to "Must Be the Money". The man's ridiculousness results from a specific kind of hybridisation of his character—the man's attitude mixes the worst aspects of American and Indian attitudes: materialism of one and sexism of the other.

In *Aisha* "the ideal hybrid, post-colonial subject who combines tradition and cosmopolitanism or Westernisation" is exemplified by Aarti Menon, the counterpart of Austen's Jane Fairfax (Garcia-Periago 4). Similarly to her literary predecessor, Aarti is the only woman in the movie who actually has to work to earn a living. Yet, unlike Jane, the Indian woman is not resigned to an unwanted position of a governess. On the contrary, she enjoys her job as a banker. As Rosa M. Garcia-Periago notices, the independent and self-sufficient Aarti delivers a positive image of female empowerment as well as of diasporic individuals and she seems a model of what Aisha needs to do (Garcia-Periago 3-4). As Madhava Prasad and Tejaswini Ganti point out, the NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) are presented in the post-1990s Bollywood movies as still maintaining their Indian identity. Thus, Arti's comeback to India has nothing to do with her American Dream coming to an end (as Aisha assumes), and everything to do with the woman's nostalgia for her family and friends. Even though Aarti has

[116] Colonial gaze alters people into observed objects and thus it underwrites colonial power. The concept of colonial gaze is thoroughly explained by Frantz Fanon in his semi autobiographical critical work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), in which the author reflects upon being identified as an object of the white gaze.

grown up in the U.S., and Aisha comes from and lives in Delhi, it is Aarti who notably manifests her Indian identity through her knowledge of Hindu religious rituals. In the Diwali celebration scene Aarti draws the attention of all of her friends the moment she starts singing a traditional Indian song and reveals how accomplished she is. The scene cleverly mirrors the situation from Austen's novel when Jane Fairfax becomes a centre of attention at the social event, during which she demonstrates how well she can play the piano. If Jane Fairfax is more musically accomplished than Emma Woodhouse, then, as far as Indian traditions and rituals are concerned, Aarti is more talented than Aisha. The scene has, however, a deeper meaning, as Aarti's performance shows the heroine's deep respect for the tradition and indicates she has not forgotten or rejected her Indian roots. On the contrary, Aarti's performance during the Diwali festival promotes the indigenous customs and values of her country—the impression deepens as the heroine wears a traditional saree.

In *Aisha*, Westernization seems to be a factor which determines class affiliation. Aisha, Aarti, Arjun, Pinky, Mr Kapoor and even Randir can all speak English and dress themselves according to Western fashion. Their images stand in stark contrast with Shefali's—the Indian counterpart of Miss Smith. In Austen's novel, Harriet Smith's social status was considered lower than Emma's due to the girl's unknown parentage and lack of sophistication. Here, the inferiority of Ojha's Shefali lies mainly in her lack of Westernization. The heroine does not come from Delhi like Aisha. She is a country girl, who is often ridiculed because of her unfashionable and non-westernised clothes. Throughout the movie several protagonists comment rudely on the heroine's status as a village girl—including Aisha's businessman father and her best friend, Pinky Bose. At the beginning of the film Pinky makes fun of Shefali's outfit and calls her a "behenji". This derogatory term is used to refer to traditional women—Shefali arrives in Delhi to search for a husband. Her family is considering an arranged marriage. When the audience sees her for the first time, the heroine wears the traditional Punjabi salwar kameez. Randhir presumes she is attending another wedding where the dress code is Indian. The hero invites Aisha and Shefali to a polo match and mentions that the dress code is Western. Soon the Indian village girl transforms into a hybrid subject combining Eastern and Western values (Garcia-Pertago 4). In the early stage of this transformation, Shefali becomes almost a copy of Aisha—she imitates her movements and style. Yet, when she becomes aware of her friend's manipulative nature and realises Aisha still does not find her equal, Shefali begins to retreat from Aisha's world. By the end of the movie, the viewers see how self-confident and comfortable with herself and her clothes the heroine has become. As Garcia-Pertago notices, by combining Western outfits with Indian salwar kameez, the woman turns into a balanced in-between subject (4).

The cultural diversity of the film protagonists allows the receivers to view Austen's prose from a different perspective, crossing ethnic, cultural and geographical boundaries (Sutherland 357). Even though the plots of *Bride & Prejudice* and *Aisha* closely follow the original trajectory of events, the adaptations do not centre on the meeting of different social classes—rather, the stories are about the mingling of cultures. Wilson points out "cultural difference as the foremost source of social tension" (328) in Gurinder Chadha's film—through the uneasy union of Punjabi Lalita Bakshi and American Will Darcy, the character of the Americanised Mr Kholi, and the near seduction of Lakhi Bakshi by English Johnny Wickham.

In the movie, class differences between Austen's protagonists are transferred to the conflict of cultures, which is especially visible when a middle-class Indian family interacts with wealthy non-residents—British Indians and American multinational business owners. Clearly, the problems caused by pride in social status mix with prejudices rooted in cultural parochialism (Niemczyńska 79). The initial prejudices and images associated with nationality are formed mainly on the basis of stereotypes: an Indian woman should respect traditions, a rich American is probably convinced of his country's superiority, whereas a rich Briton is associated with aristocracy. The issue of prejudice is shown quite clearly in the relationship between Lalita and Darcy. The man is initially critical of Indian culture, but eventually appreciates its advantages—he finally acknowledges the superiority of Indian family life. Will's behaviour, considerably more polite than that of Austen's Darcy, is misinterpreted by Lalita due to some understatements and misunderstandings. Unlike in the novel, the main protagonists start at odds because of the man's ignorance in the matter of cultural mores rather than his purposely rude behaviour. Chadha's Darcy does not make disparaging remarks about Elizabeth's film counterpart nor any other woman at the event. Nevertheless, Lalita is equally disappointed with Will's conduct although he does not disdain the company of either her or Indians in general; yes, he refuses to dance, but that is because he does not know how to dance to bhangra and feels shy about it. The man has only just arrived in India and is still studying local customs.

The relationship of the main couple is doomed to difficulties from the very beginning. The protagonists have different nationalities, and their financial statuses differ considerably as well. Nevertheless, it is puzzling to present Darcy as a rich foreigner. Originally, Elizabeth and Darcy come from the same country and class (they were both born in the landed gentry). The difference between them was mainly financial[117]. The filmmakers decided against portraying Darcy as a rich Indian (such a substitution would be expected since Elizabeth and Darcy were of the same race) and, consequently,

[117] Even though Mr Bennet was a gentleman like Darcy, he married beneath him. Darcy considered the Bennets inferior mainly due to Mrs Bennet's origins and her deportment.

they delivered more hardships for the couple to overcome. By depicting Elizabeth Bennet as an Indian girl and Mr Darcy as a wealthy American who considers opening a hotel in India, Chadha presents the main heroine as colonised and the main hero as a coloniser—which is indicated in the opening sequence of the film.

The first time the audience sees Lalita, the woman is working in the field. Clad in a white T-shirt and jeans, she is driving a tractor. Working in the field in reference to a film that conveys colonial undertones brings the connotations of slavery.

4.2.6-7. Establishing shots of Lalita working in a field

Conversely, Darcy is featured getting off the plane, dressed in an expensive dark suit. The establishing shots introduce the two main protagonists to the audience and show how much their lifestyles, types of jobs and even styles of clothing differ, which proves that the future lovers come from two completely different worlds. Thus, the opening sequence indicates the couple need to face these differences to be together. The montage of shots, which alternately show Indians working in the fields and an elegantly dressed American coming out of the plane in a suit, builds the image of Darcy as a rich man who came to conquer a less civilised and poorer country.

4.2.8-9. Darcy getting off the plane and waiting for his luggage

The impression of a "white saviour", so typically presented in post-colonial movies, strengthens the moment the hero begins to criticise Indian traditions and economy, and then he confesses his plans to open a hotel in Goa—which, according to him, would be beneficial to the Indian economy.

Interestingly, the filmmakers do not present Darcy as a wealthy Englishman and thus decentralise Britain from the position of the empire. Instead, they decide on substituting the British coloniser with one of its former colonies in the role of an imperial empire. Such an equivalence which takes the form of a postcolonial mimicry mirrors to some extent hypocrisy of the literary Darcy who looks down on the Bennets even though they are of the same class as he and his family (and higher class than his best friend who does not own a land). Meanwhile, the film Darcy's colonial gaze positions him and his country in the role of the colonisers even though America used to be colonised as well—which is why Lalita expects Darcy to show more respect towards a fellow former colony and its residents.

The courtship plotline which involves Will Darcy pursuing Lalita Bakshi adopts the colonial theme and the dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised to provide an explanation why the two characters start at odds. As Eckstein notices, Will Darcy's pairing with Lalita is the film's only justified breakage of norms of culture—which the filmmakers disarm by making the American a more desirable match than his English rival, Johnny Wickham—who is romantically interested in Lalita as well (8). Contrary to the English traveller, who seems to live on a boat in the former imperial centre of London, Darcy lives his own American dream in Los Angeles (21). Clearly, the movie aims at making the viewers feel positive about Will Darcy—not only by depicting him as handsome, rich and powerful, but most of all because the man's attitude towards India appears somehow 'reformed' by his feelings for Lalita. The hero finally acknowledges the beauty of India and its culture, which apparently makes him worthy of the heroine's affection. Additionally, the fact that Darcy is presented as American—as opposed to British coloniser—makes it easier for the audience to forgive him for his ignorance and tactless behaviour towards Indians.

While the romantic plotline which resolves around the characters of different races radically departs from the conventions of Bollywood cinema, the interracial marriage which brings neither economic benefits nor social advancement appears to have been impossible to accept for Asian viewers of *Bride and Prejudice*. As a consequence, Chadha's adaptation of Austen's novel ends up with Lalita Bakshi's eventual marriage to Darcy, a white wealthy American, whereas her younger sister Lakhi does not marry Johnny Wickham, a penniless English traveller. After all, Johnny Wickham is not only the main villain of the popular story, but he is also white, English, poor and comes from a lower class, as he is the son of Darcy's nanny and on top of all he is the actual descendant of India's former colonisers. If Lakhi had married the English vagabond, it would have been disgraceful for the Bakshis since he is neither Indian nor a rich foreigner. And since Bollywood films tend to end well, the filmmakers diminish the drama which results from the original affair between Austen's Lydia Bennet and John Wickham in order to provide a happier ending of the adapted story. Originally, Lydia has no option but to marry the officer if she wants to avoid a scandal and save her family from shame and social exclusion. In Chadha's version, Lakhi is saved from Wickham and reunites with her family.

Such alterations partially result from the fact that weddings seem to gain more significance in Bollywood cinema than they do in Austen's prose. Weddings are meant to bring joy as they strengthen family ties. They cannot be treated as a source of misery in the case of Indian adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, as they allow for family reunions, which are cultivated in Indian traditions. Thus, Lakhi cannot elope with Johnny Wickham at the cost of her family, and the sorrow caused by Miss Taylor's eventual matrimony in *Emma*—"it was Miss Taylor's loss which first brought grief" (Austen 8)—needs to change into sincere joy in *Aisha*. For Austen, the theme of the wedding is important as well because it is the culmination of her heroines' stories. The plots of the writer's novels are aimed at connecting the main couples. All of her main female protagonists marry the men they love at the end of the stories—all six novels written by Austen end like that. However, the author is not interested in describing the wedding celebration itself. Meanwhile, in the Bollywood adaptations of her prose, the celebration of the wedding is almost a part of the protagonists' daily routine. The accumulation of the wedding scenes in both Indian adaptations highlights the importance of the theme even more. As Garcia-Pergo notes, the Bollywood adaptations of Jane Austen's novels need to involve the wedding scenes, even at the cost of significantly limiting the source texts they are based on (6). Thus, both Indian adaptations amplify the amount of weddings: while *Bride and Prejudice* features four such scenes (and actually begins with a Punjabi wedding—an obvious addition to Austen's literary original), *Aisha* includes at least three. Furthermore, both movies end with a wedding, and they also start with a wedding. In this way, the celebration of the wedding reception

constitutes a narrative buckle in the case of both adaptations. Just as *Emma*'s plot begins with Mrs Taylor's wedding, *Aisha* starts with the wedding of the main heroine's aunt. Unlike in Austen's novel, the story does not end, however, with Aisha and Arjun's wedding, but Aarti and Dhruv's. Since both Aarti and Dhruv are former diasporic individuals (they came back to India from New York and London), their union indicates a respect for Indian traditions affirmed by Bollywood aesthetics and conventions (Garcia-Pergo 6). Interestingly, the film scene features all the film couples—the Eltons, the Knightleys, the Martins, and the Westons—joining in an improvised Bollywood dance to celebrate the union. Such a manoeuvre additionally amplifies the theme of the wedding celebration.

Similarly, in accordance with the Bollywood cinema conventions, the importance of festivals and holidays is also amplified by the addition of scenes featuring the characters celebrating Holi—which recreates the Radha/Krishna myth—or Diwali—the festival of lights. Conversely, even though Austen does mention Christmas, the writer chooses not to describe the celebration of this holiday in her novel. The Bollywood movies, however, often include scenes featuring the celebrations of festivities, as they enable family reunions during which the family share traditional food and sing songs—thus cultivating cultural traditions. Thus, in *Aisha*, Mr Burman invites his son Arjun, along with his girlfriend Aarti and the Kapoor family to celebrate Diwali together. In Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice*, in turn, Will Darcy openly praises the fact that Indian families get together, and participates in such family reunions as a guest.

Bride & Prejudice obviously shifts its focus on race and culture—as opposed to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* which introduces the issue of money and social connections as the main obstacles between Darcy and Elizabeth. In this regard, the film presents pride as the foundation of national as well as diasporic identity, which needs to be cultivated. Chadha depicts Indianness through both the visual layer of the film and the elements of the plot. The dancing and singing scenes featuring the characters wearing the traditional salwar kaez are characteristic of the Bollywood conventions and, thus, they all refer to Indian culture. The film also exemplifies the typical Indian deportment through the Bakshi family and their sense of cultural identity. Meanwhile, Mr Kholi (who eats with his bare hands) and Lalita's younger sister (who performs the hilarious Cobra dance), whose mannerisms are exaggerated, present Indianness at the extreme. The references to the Hindu culture and religion are also signalled through the song lyrics and the dancing as well as the lack of kissing scenes and such elements of set design as signboards with the word Vishnu and the presence of cows on the streets of Indian town.

Through the predominance of Indian accents over the British in the movie *Bride and Prejudice* clearly renegotiates the colonial power dynamics between Britain and India. Throughout most of the

film the audience is faced with images of India—the establishing shots feature Golden Temple, the streets of Amritsar, the Goa beach, etc. Moreover, most of the film characters are Indians too (even if some of them moved to different countries). The depiction of Bingley as the British Indian Balraj is supposed to represent British immigrants whereas white British identity is actually limited to a single male protagonist, Johnny Wickham (Mathur). Since Wickham remains the only villain in the movie, white British identity is associated with a calculated exploitation and duplicity. The re-visioning of "Britishness" is also accentuated by the movie's visual layer. During the Bakshi family's visit in London, England is presented first by a panning shot which covers everything from Big Ben to a mosque, and later by a shot of Buckingham Palace through a window of Balraj and his sister's apartment. The fact that the view of the royal residence comes from the British Indians' flat visualises London's multiculturality and juxtaposes it against the capital city's self-representation in terms of an imperial tradition symbolised by the monarchy.

Similarly to heritage costume films which tend to present a highly stylised depiction of England, the Indian adaptations beautify India and present its filtered image to the viewers. The viewers never manage to see "the real India" which Lalita and Johnny Wickham talk about, as the movies amplify the beauty of the country with the use of breath-taking shots of monumental buildings like the Golden Temple in Amritsar both early in the morning at sunrise and late at night or at sunset, as a background for a singing Lalita. The shots of crowded streets with people and cows passing by present a stereotypical image of India but cut down on the country's ugliness—no shots of starving people lying on the streets appear in the movie. In fact, the film does not show the real poverty of India at all and thus the audience fails to see the dust and dirt of certain regions of the country, the famine of Indians or their undeveloped economy. The streets of India may be crowded, but they are not littered, unlike in real life. Once again, the cinematic adaptations of Austen's novels offer a false vision of a beautified country to attract the viewers' eye and to provide a suitable foundation for a love story—a marketing strategy used by the filmmakers of heritage cinema.

4.2.10-11. The aerial shot of an Indian city and a close-up shot of one the streets in this city present how crowded this country is.


4.2.12-13. The establishing shots of Golden Temple both at night and during the day sets the action of the film in India.

Thus, what the audience actually gets is a sort of a collage of "theme park" imagery in a Bollywood style—which is exactly what the main heroine threaded India to become if Americans start opening hotels in her country. In this respect, the woman's words become a metacommentary in the film. The image of India presented for Western audiences is exactly the same, as the DVD-cover hails—the movie goes through four weddings and, therefore, it reduces India to festivals and weddings and depicts the country as full of vibrant colours and eye-catching dance routines.


4.2.14-15. A crowd medium shot of dancing Indian
women, dressed in traditional salwar kaez (on the left) and a full crowd-shot of dancing Indian men (on the right)

4.2.16. An overhead shot of dancing Indians

The presentation of dance scenes in an adaptation of Jane Austen's prose may be justified by the fact that, as John Wiltshire notices, "the courtship romances that constitute the basic plot of Jane Austen's novels do resemble as well as include the balls and dances that feature in them" (74). Indeed, courtship and dances abound in the British writer's prose, and they are even more dominant in their Bollywood adaptations. According to Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti, "to talk of Bollywood is inevitably to talk of the song and dance sequence" (1). While in Austen's prose the balls become a conducive setting for the future lovers to get to know each other and for the courtship to actually take place, Bollywood musical scenes not only allow for social interaction but also for the exploration of Indian traditions and values. They also introduce the protagonists to the audience as well as give the viewers an insight into the characters' emotions. For instance, the first two songs in *Aisha*—"By the way" and "Suno Aisha" obviously introduce the main protagonist of the film. "Lehrein," in turn, gives the audience an insight into Aisha's misery after she and Arjun depart from each other. Since the lovers' "separation is commonly associated with images of threatening rain clouds, lightning, and rain" (Sarrazin 400), rain has a prominent presence in this song, and thus it hints at the heroine's emotional state. The song used in the film's final scene, "Gal Mitthi Mitthi Bol", is considered an authentic marriage song, which celebrates the interrelationship of love and music in an Indian wedding (Garcia-Periago 8). Since the inclusion of a song in an Indian adaptation aims at celebrating an Indian tradition, the function of a musical scene obviously differs from Jane Austen's ballroom dances.

The blooming love of the main couple is accompanied by music as well. The L.A.-set musical sequence featuring compressed scenes from the main characters' dates becomes a turning point in the characters' plotline. The sequence sets the couple in different romantic sceneries: in a restaurant while sitting next to each other and listening to a Mariachi band, or on a beach at sunset while an African American gospel choir is singing a theme song. The romantic plotline is further amplified by the montage of the sequence which uses elements of mise-en-scene and tropes typical of romantic comedies: sea landscapes, walks on the beach, dancing among the fountains, watching sunsets together. The addition of such an imaginative combination shows that the shots made in the U.S.A. are equally stylised as those made in India and, simultaneously, amplifies the film's multicultural character. The surfers who come running up from the waves towards the couple with their hands lifted resemble Indian dancers a little bit, but at the same time their presence refers to *Baywatch,* an American TV series popular in the 1990s. The appearance of the gospel choir on the beach, in turn, is definitely unexpected and rather ridiculous, but it does provide an obvious reference to American culture and religion.

4.2.17. Lalita and Will on the beach surrounded by the surfers and the gospel singers

The filmmakers mix Indian and American styles, combining the conventions of Bollywood and Hollywood to bring the two different worlds of culture together—both visually and with regard to the film's narrative. A deliberate accumulation of American clichés, featuring simultaneously a gospel choir, a *Baywatch* couple running in tight red speedo gear and a number of surfers waving their boards, presents a stereotypical and untruthful depiction of the U.S. In the light of the story, this stereotypical, false image of America may also represent Lalita's depiction of the U.S. The above-attached shot positions the heroine and Will Darcy in the centre point of the frame, surrounded by the accumulated symbols and "indicators" of Americanness. Through the addition of such a scene the movie indicates a clash of two stereotypical perspectives.

On the level of fiction, the addition of this L.A.-set musical sequence marks a turning point in Lalita and Darcy's relationship—the heroine starts to open up to the man and accept the cultural differences between them. Up until this moment, the woman is determined to reject the hero no matter what he says or does when they are in India—the addition of scenes featuring Lalita scolding the hero leads to the amplification of the woman's disdain towards the man and her prejudice towards his country. She starts to see Darcy differently in the U.S., when she visits the country. Such a sudden change of heart shows how shallow Lalita's thoughts have actually been—the heroine's prejudices were not grounded in true knowledge and understanding of a foreign culture. In fact, the girl's initial aversion to Darcy was fuelled by her hurt feelings. Similarly, Darcy's false idea of Lalita's homeland was not based on the actual knowledge of "the real" India. The juxtaposition of the two protagonists' equally stereotypical and prejudiced perspectives is motivated by the original matching of two proud and prejudiced characters. Elizabeth Bennet and Lalita Bakshi hold prejudices towards their future husbands after their pride was hurt. Meanwhile, both Fitzwilliam and Will are excessively proud of

their positions and find their future wives' whereabouts and social rank unequal. Thus, the film counterparts of Austen's protagonists mirror their pride and prejudice—the two fundamental features of the literary characters' personalities—and inscribe them into cultural context.

The American pride is presented within the movie through the Darcy family's feeling of superiority and a resentment towards the much simpler Indian lifestyle—which clearly echoes the haughtiness of their literary counterparts. Will's life resembles the legendary American dream, and the man takes pride in the liberty and possibilities which his nation has provided for him. During his stay in India, the hero is frustrated by the poor internet connection and the electricity that keeps shutting down. Such inconvenience hardly ever happens in the USA. The man is proud of living in a more developed country, where people live more conveniently and they get to know each other before they get married, not the other way round.

The adaptation portrays casual American arrogance in Darcy's thoughtless cultural insensitivity. Yet, simultaneously, the film is sympathetic to the hero's overwhelmedness—after all, the man is being thrown right into the middle of a big, loud local celebration on his very first day in a foreign country, whose traditions and customs he has no clue about. While originally Austen depicts Darcy as proud and haughty, the Americanised Darcy is more ignorant than proud. His lifestyle of a rich American businessman differs radically from Lalita's and since he lives and works in the U.S. and has never been to India before, he does not understand Indian traditions and culture. The man is blinded with his own ignorance just like Austen's Darcy is blinded with pride. In the novel, Austen suggests that Darcy's behaviour is fuelled by his social awkwardness[118]. His difficulties in approaching newly met people make Mr Darcy seem aloof and arrogant. *Bride & Prejudice* gets that element of social awkwardness quite right. Chadha's Darcy does not intend to be rude towards Indians. The film portrays the protagonist as lost in Hindu culture rather than deliberately impolite. Consequently, Will's first conversation with Lalita ends with misunderstanding. The woman is irritated when Darcy expresses his disapproval of arranged marriages, but surprisingly refuses to comply herself when the choice of wife for Mr Kholi falls to her. Since the characters have similar views, the heroine's reaction to Darcy's words seems incomprehensible and simply exaggerated.

In fact, throughout the movie Darcy has to struggle for both Lalita's and her parents' approval and gets it in the final scene of the film. At times, the recipient almost has the impression that the Indians are the ones who are hostile towards the American and not the other way round. The heroine and her family are guided by racial prejudices towards the American as well, which becomes clear at

[118] During her visit in Rosings, Mr Darcy confides to Elizabeth that he finds it difficult to start a conversation with those whom he does not know.

the beginning of the movie. When Lalita's mother first lays her eyes on Darcy, the woman openly states that "it is a pity that he is not Indian," as if his foreign nationality made him unworthy of her attention (Chadha 00.07.40.). In the novel, Elizabeth's mother secretly hopes that Darcy will marry one of her daughters. Meanwhile, Mr and Mrs Bakshi do not even consider it. Mrs Bakshi even asks Balraj to find Lalita a Hindu candidate for a husband—moreover, she makes this request in the presence of Will. What amplifies the prejudices towards the American is the addition of numerous scenes which feature Lalita misinterpreting and twisting Darcy's words. The heroine constantly accuses the man of having opinions he never actually expressed. Thus, it is the American who needs to defend himself against Lalita's accusations throughout the film and not the other way around—which subverts the colonial gaze ascribed to Darcy and his imperial ambitions. Phrases like "You, Americans…" or "Your U.S. government …" clearly emphasise the woman's prejudices towards Americans—an attitude Lalita is determined to accuse Darcy of having. The heroine's initial prejudices against Darcy echo the literary Elizabeth's prejudicial treatment of Fitzwilliam Darcy.

Just like choreographed musical scenes featuring Indians dancing in colourful outfits are a clear indication of Bollywood, and Indian pop culture, music and dancing become the representations of Americanness in the film—this is demonstrated when Mr Kholi tries to dance hip-hop at a party in India and plays an R&B song, "Must be the Money" and another when "Take me to Love" is sung by a Black American spiritual choir on the beach in California. Throughout the film Americanness is mainly represented by Darcy and his family—his mother Catherine and his sister Georgiana, who come from L.A., and do not know a lot about Indian culture. Aleksandra Niemczyńska elaborates on this view and states that Darcy's family becomes an expression of the American worldview in Chadha's film: the hero's mother, Catherine, dressed in the style of Nancy Reagan, symbolises the Republicans, while his tolerant and relaxed sister Georgie connotes the Democratic Party. Mr Kholi, in turn, as their family's accountant, is a parody of the neo-conservative administration of G.W. Bush (Niemczyńska 150). Apart from that, E.A. Claydon points out that Chadha's film transforms negative depictions of the two male characters—Mr Darcy and Mr Collins—and pictures them as "ugly Americans": Darcy represents the neo-imperialists and the dominant whereas Mr Kholi, the Indian counterpart of Mr Collins, connotes those conservative and comical (53-54).

As the film's director admits herself, Darcy is "a handsome American, as opposed to an ugly American, but he has enough attitude to need a good Colonialism/Imperialism 101 from Lalita" (Roy-Chowdhury). The "othering" of India is visible in Darcy's dismissive attitude towards the country. During their first conversation Lalita immediately dislikes the hero as his attempts at small talk are

filled with casual condescension towards her homeland. The man criticises India's imperfect infrastructure, and comments on the country's customs and traditions, calling the idea of arranged marriages "backward." On top of that, the hero describes Bhangra as an "easy dance" which resembles "screwing in a light bulb with one hand and patting a dog with the other" (Chadha 00.08.12.)

The heroine concludes that Darcy finds India inferior to America, and therefore "beneath" him. The cultural snobbery of the West which manifests itself in Darcy's comment is challenged by Lalita, whose ripostes to such disparaging comments make the heroine the movie's chief spokesperson for India. Thus, when Lady Catherine undermines the need to go to India because yoga and Deepak Chopra are also available in the US, Lalita asks her if travelling to Italy has become pointless since Pizza Hut opened around the corner. Likewise, the woman challenges Darcy's stereotyping of India as the backward Other which finds arranged marriages still the norm and points out the similarity between Indian arranged marriages and the match-making attempts of Darcy's mother to find a wife for him. The heroine does not try to prove the superiority of the East over the West, but to make Darcy and his family realise that it is futile to evaluate the country as better or worse on the basis of the differences between them and their cultures—which she achieves through her demeanour and spoken confrontations with Darcy and his mother.

The conflict between the two main protagonists strengthens, as Lalita misunderstands the hero's perception of the ideal woman—she believes he expects a perfect female to be "subservient". The heroine refuses to be "colonised" and fiercely fights against it. She feels threatened as Darcy's behaviour indicates that the protagonist finds her country in need of being colonised—the man wants to open a luxury hotel in Goa and supports his idea with a statement that such an investment will stimulate the country's economy. Thus, he paints himself as a "white saviour" of a savage, uncivilised country and his false pretexts to help the country's economics—in truth he wants to earn money on Indians and not for them—becomes the new face of capitalist neoliberal colonialism. Lalita's hostile attitude reveals how worried she is about Americans developing their business in India. Obviously, her worries are to some extent justified as the introduction of American "investments" in India subordinates the country thoroughly to the American system of predatory neoliberal economy. Still, such changes seem to be portrayed in the film as far less detrimental than the importation of western values—Johnny Wickham's relaxed sexual mores almost corrupt the heroine's younger sister, Lakhi.

The film inevitably heads towards cultural hybridisation once the main couple overcome their pride and prejudice. Such an assumption is visualised by the juxtaposition of the initial and final

scene. At the start of the movie, Darcy keeps complaining about different aspects of life in India and publicly shows his irritation and disbelief. His discomfort is clearly visualised in the initial wedding scene, as he has endless trouble with the drawstrings of his Indian trousers—which becomes a metaphor for his difficulties in adapting to Indian culture. By the end of the film, however, he is confidently playing an Indian drum for the sort of crowded celebration that previously made him uneasy. By playing the instrument with Indian musicians, the hero openly expresses his acceptance of the culture in which his beloved was raised. Darcy's behaviour stands in stark contrast with his social awkwardness in the initial wedding scene—with a smile on his face the man is comfortably playing on drums with a group of Indians. In that very moment, Darcy becomes an embodiment of cultural mingling, as he visually combines the two cultures with his attire—dressed in his American shirt he is holding a traditional Indian instrument—the dhol (a double-sided barrel drum with which the musicians create the beat to which Bhangra is danced).

4.2.18-19. A medium dirty shot of Darcy feeling uncomfortable in his Indian outfit

4.1.14. A medium dirty shot of Darcy embracing Indian culture

In the first scene, a wide-angle shot presents Darcy fidgeting uncomfortably in his Indian outfit. The second wide-angle shot differs significantly from the first one, even though Darcy remains

in the central point of the frame, surrounded by Indians as in the previous shot. Yet, he is not making a wry face anymore, the man is smiling and apparently having fun. His posture is relaxed, he does not mind mixing his attire with the elements of Indian culture. The tone of the photo is different as well; the colour palette is brighter than in the first shot, which may indicate that the protagonist does not feel overwhelmed by his surroundings anymore.

4.2.20-21. The medium close-up shot of Darcy looking at Lalita and the low angle shot of Lalita looking at Darcy

Both in the opening and ending scene, Lalita and Darcy do not talk to each other. When the characters' eyes meet for the first time, the heroine is standing upstairs looking at Darcy, who is watching her closely. Such an arrangement of the two protagonists can be understood in two ways. On the one hand, mesmerised Darcy, staring at Lalita in awe, may bring a connotation of Romeo Monteque standing under Juliet Capulet's balcony. The shot-reverse-shot editing emphasises the intensity of the hero's stare. The indication of love at first sight makes the scene more emotional. At the same time the theme fits in with the conventions of Bollywood cinema. On the other hand, the fact that Lalita literally looks down on Will may be interpreted rather as an indication of her initial contempt for the man, given that for most of the film the heroine criticises Darcy (and Americans in general) and picks on his every word. If that is the case, the arrangement of the characters—Lalita standing on the first floor and Darcy on the ground floor—can be interpreted as an obstacle that the couple has to overcome in order to understand each other and be together. The shot-reverse-shot editing and characters' positioning in this scene may therefore indicate that the colonial gaze is reciprocated by the colonial subject in this adaptation: as the story unfolds, the viewers learn that Lalita's perception of America and its inhabitants is equally stereotypical and prejudiced as Will's viewpoint of Indians and their country.

In the final scene, the characters also do not say anything to each other. Their dialogue is built with music and the shot-counter-shot montage technique. Contrary to the initial scene, the characters easily overcome the space that separates them. Darcy's manifestation of his openness to Indian culture

puts him closer to Lalita. The woman runs up to Will and overcomes the space between them. They stand next to each other, which suggests that the lovers have finally found balance between their cultures. None of them feels superior to the other and finds their own culture and traditions superior to another. The scene of the couple's reconciliation can be interpreted as a meeting of two cultures. It indicates that Darcy has finally managed to adjust to Indian culture and that Lalita has also figured out how to adapt. At first, she is "sceptic of globalism" (Seeber), but in the end the woman learns to moderate her attitude, at least with regard to Darcy. Cultural mingling is therefore unavoidable.

4.2.22-23. The medium dirty-shot of smiling Lalita cuts to the medium dirty-shot of a smiling Darcy.

The final scene of *Bride & Prejudice* is very sentimental, as it suggests that in the face of true, sincere love, words are unnecessary, because lovers can understand each other without them. Throughout the scene, only music played on drums can be heard. The filmmakers use it as a tool to orchestrate Will's final embracement of Indian culture in his reunion with Lalita. Before the heroine spots Darcy, the background music gradually increases in volume to accentuate the man's appearance. The musical chords get louder and more accented the moment the woman finally spots her lover and runs to him. The editing forces the audience to track Lalita's eyes. As the woman smiles, the camera cuts and zooms in to Darcy, who is looking at her with a smile on his face while playing the dhol alongside a group of Indian musicians. Then the camera cuts back to the heroine who comes closer. The moment she approaches the man, the music subsides—the stand-still, face-to-face formation of the film's main protagonists embodies the meeting of America and India. The over-the-shoulder shot features Darcy deviating his eyes from Lalita to look at her parents in a silent request for their approval of their union. When he receives their nonverbal acceptance—a nod and a smile—his gaze falls again on the face of his beloved. Lalita accepts the silent marriage proposal as she clings to Darcy and lays her head on his torso.

Characteristically of Bollywood cinema, Indian film adaptations of Austen's prose are devoid of intimacy and physicality on the set. Kisses during the courtship are unacceptable, which is also typical of Austen's fiction. As Hopkins points out, Austen's protagonists do not kiss, which is

"something that has posed problems for film directors, who either ignore this fact and then get pilloried by critics for doing so or obey it" (4). As an example, Hopkins mentions Joe Wright's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice,* which provides two alternative endings—the ending without a kiss is targeted at British viewers whereas the ending with a kiss is addressed to an American audience. Thus, in accordance with the conventions of both the Bollywood and the Jane Austen tradition, the main couples of *Bride and Prejudice* and *Aisha* do not share passionate kisses throughout the movies. In the final scene of Chadha's film, the lovers' reunion is sealed not with a kiss, but with a cuddle—Darcy embraces Lalita, and the smiling woman lays her head on the man's chest. In Ojha's movie, in turn, although the scene with Arjun's declaration of love is very romantic, the couple do not kiss either. In a very Romeo-and-Juliet like scene at Aisha's house, Arjun climbs the balcony of Aisha's room to declare his love. He kisses the heroine on her cheek, forehead, and nose yet not directly on the lips. Other couples do not share a kiss either—Shefali and Sorab neither kiss nor touch and even though it is indicated that Pinky Bose and Randhir have sex, it only happens off-screen. Thus, the lack of physical intimacy during courtship in Jane Austen's novels perfectly translates into Bollywood conventions, and no modification is required in this case.

Since acquiring a parental consent to marriage is required in Indian tradition, the short exchange of looks between Darcy and Mr and Mrs Bakshi in the final scene of *Bride and Prejudice* is an ultimate proof of Will's reformed perspective. Lady Catherine is not present in the scene. Nevertheless, by asking Lalita's parents for approval, Will partially follows the Indian tradition of arranged marriage. Notably, prior to his first proposal, Darcy did not ask for the Bakshis' blessing and, thus, he was rejected. Apparently, at that time he still was not ready to build a stable relationship with an Indian woman. Conversely, the man's gesture towards Lalita's parents in the final scene suggests that he finally began to understand and respect Indian customs, which is necessary to achieve equality in his marriage to an Indian woman.

The next scene features two married couples and the overwhelming joy of their wedding guests. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has a more bittersweet ending: Elizabeth's younger sister is forced to marry a penniless womaniser to avoid scandal and they are always in need of money, Darcy agrees to support them for the sake of Lizzy's peace of mind, and Mr Bennet, while happy for Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage, is also miserable about it—his beloved daughter and the only person in the house whom he respects leaves Longbourn, and thus he is left to live with a constantly nagging wife and two not particularly smart daughters. Chadha has simplified the ending of Austen's story and made it more positive, as a happy ending fits to the Bollywood cinema's conventions. By focusing on music and characterizations as well as dramatic presentation of the lovers' reconciliation the

filmmakers depart from the original narrative and redirect the attention of the 21st-century audiences on the issue of cultural tensions. These, however, are resolved in a rather naive manner—the final scene suggests it is enough to learn to play the local instrument in order to get rid of cultural prejudices—which shows how lightly the adaptation treats the theme.

Aisha resolves cultural tensions brought by westernisation in an equally naive manner and, simultaneously, presents the ending of the adaptation's source text more positively than its author: Aarti and Dhruv invite Arjun, Shefali, and Aisha to their engagement party and marry in what the audience may mistake for a quadruple marriage ceremony at the end of the story. Conversely, the ending of Austen's *Emma* is far more bittersweet: the news about Emma and Mr Knightley's engagement affects heavily Emma's relation with Harriet, who is unable to accept another heartbreak and the fact that once again the man of her dreams was interested in her friend, rather than in her; Mr Woodhouse, in turn, panics at the news of his daughter's engagement and is devastated by her decision (even though he has always liked George Knightley); in truth, not all of Emma and George's wedding guests wish them luck—the Eltons, for example, gossip about the wedding couple and criticise their choices in public. Apart from all of these reactions, Austen makes it quite clear that Emma's marital happiness needs to be paid for with certain sacrifices—the heroine is not going to settle for a long time at her husband's estate, as the brides usually did after getting married. Instead, Mr Knightley will have to move in with her and her grumpy, extremely absorbing father. Clearly, re-adapting Jane Austen's prose into a different cultural context requires not only modifications in the characters' composition, but it may also result in changing the tone of the story's ending—because a given culture and its traditions do not allow for all the originally described behaviours of the characters.

Clearly, Indian adaptations have a tendency to soothe the adapted stories' endings and the characters' vices. They definitely depict Austen's heroines' parents as more caring than the literary originals. They diminish the vices of the main protagonists' future-husbands, and they present even some of the side-characters far more positively than the British author. Thus, in Chadha's retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Kholi develops, and he undergoes changes as the story unfolds. In Austen's novel, the only satisfaction Charlotte Lucas might have from marrying Mr Collins results from running a house her husband owns. In the film, however, Kholi's affection makes his wife, Chandra Lamba[119], truly happy. While in Amritsar he appears ridiculous and quite primitive, in Los Angeles the man shows the other, kind and caring, side of his nature. Thus, his ridiculousness becomes milder, and the Indian counterpart of Mr Collins is not a flat character (like in the original *Pride and*

[119] the same initials are used intentionally

Prejudice), as he is more complex and dynamic than Austen's Mr Collins. Even the Eltons and the Churchills of *Emma*'s Indian adaptation are depicted as close friends of the main heroine. Jealousy or rivalry cannot put an end to any relation in these Bollywood movies—Aisha is envious of both Aarti and Shefali and in the end she remains in good relations with both of them. Moreover, both Aisha and Arjun are invited to Aarti and Dhruv's wedding, however odd this may be (the characters switch partners—Aisha used to date Dhruv, and Aarti is Arjun's former girlfriend). Even the most immoral behaviour is not unequivocally condemned in Bollywood. Throughout the movie Dhruv is clearly presented as an immoral character—he makes a move on Aisha during their first encounter, then tells Arjun that he does not mind sharing Aisha with him when Arjun reprimands him for treating the woman well, and finally he engages in a public kiss with Aarti, with whom he previously has not exchanged a word and who was Arjun's girlfriend at that time. Yet, in the second half of the film the hero explains himself to the shocked Aisha, wishes her happiness with her future life partner and sincerely apologises for his rude behaviour on their date. His demeanour changes dramatically and all of a sudden, as if the filmmakers were trying to cover up the unpleasant impression that the character aroused in the audience. Such a manoeuvre suggests that the story does not involve the appearance of an anti-hero and simplifies the original narrative.

Since Bollywood movies are products for sale on the global market, they offer a certain oriental vision of India rather than its truthful depiction. The change of culture dominant appears therefore mainly on the visual level as it is destined for export. As Eckstein notices, the Indian adaptations of Austen's prose no longer bid for "the British mainstream, but for the British (and Euro-American), *and* the Diaspora, *and* the Indian mainstream, self-confidently catering to a number of very different veritable markets at the same time" (23). As global products, the Indian adaptations of Austen's prose are meant to convey simple stories for wide audiences. Thus, the films simplify the original narratives by changing their endings into more sentimental, offer more positive portrayals of the adapted characters and do not delve into such serious matters as (post)colonial issues thoroughly. The movies casually show that the colonisation strategy has changed along with the coloniser. In both cases, Westernization replaces Britain as an empire. Thus, the role of a coloniser is played by the USA and the globalisation it embodies. The way Americans colonise India differs, however, from the methods of the British. Rather than bringing Christianity, schools and "culture" (as it was in the case of the British), the colonisation strategy takes on the false appearance of beneficence in the case of Americans in Chadha's movie adaptation. The Americans try to capitalise on India's ethnicity, which they recognise as a value, and thus they impose corporate domination over Indians. Obviously, the movies do address the problem of colonisation but they do not treat it seriously. While Ojha reduces the process of westernisation to compulsive shopping for western clothes and cosmetics, Chadha

trivialises the issue by using the colonial gaze mainly as kindling for spark in her rom-com's narrative. In both cases the postcolonial theme serves as a background for unfolding romance between the main protagonists—which supports Eckstein's thesis that the films "consciously avoid the postcolonial logic of cultural confrontation between the coloniser and the colonised. Instead, [they] seek out global alignment and common ground between cultural norms and conventions, thereby conforming to the dominant logic of globalism, i.e. that of the market" (23).

4.3. Austen's Protagonists in China

According to Ang Lee and James Schamus[120], *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* should be perceived as a retelling of Austen's first published story but with the addition of fight scenes. The filmmakers refer directly to their Chinese movie as "*Sense and Sensibility* with martial arts"[35] even though it adapts only selected elements of the original story.

In one of her letters, Jane Austen admitted that the world she depicts usually focuses on the lives of "three or four families in a Country Village,"[121] and her novels prove this to be true. Similarly, the diegetic world of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* centres on the inhabitants of three houses. One of them is occupied by Shu Lien, Li Mu Bai and other warriors, who may be considered a self-made family of warriors. The second house is that of the Governor in Beijing, who accommodates Jen and her maid—Jade Fox, the disguised criminal and murderer of Li Mu Bai's teacher. The third house belongs to Sir Te, who becomes the new owner of Li Mu Bai's sword, the Green Destiny. The plot of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* focuses on a stolen sword of a Wudang warrior and on two romances—the relationship of Li Mu Bai and Shu Lien, and the love affair between Jen and Lo.

Obviously, the movie does not follow the trajectory of events from Austen's novel closely. Instead, it centres on the character dynamics and romantic plotlines, but changes their denouements. The modified story of the Dashwood sisters is presented with the use of "the most populist, if not popular, genre in film history—the Hong Kong martial arts film" (Lee 7). As the director points out, the team used "this pop genre almost as a kind of instrument to explore the legacy of classical Chinese culture" (7). By introducing the narrative elements of *Sense and Sensibility* into the wuxia film

120 the director and screenwriter of both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

121 See, *Jane Austen's Letters*. Ed. Deirdre Le Faye. Oxford: OUP, 1995.

genre—a traditional Chinese genre featuring chivalrous martial artists fighting for justice and abiding their own codes—Ang Lee has managed to attract the viewers from the West.

In fact, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* has turned out to be Ang Lee's most globally recognised film. It is the first Chinese-language film in history which became a mainstream American blockbuster, and the highest-grossing foreign-language movie ever to open in Britain and America—it earned almost 127 million dollars (Dilley 118). The mainstream acclaim of a subtitled motion picture in Mandarin reflects its global appeal. The film has achieved both commercial and critical success, as it won four Oscars, four BAFTA awards and two Golden Globes. It also received ten Academy Award nominations—no other foreign-language film has won so many nominations by that time (118).

As the term suggests[122], wuxia stories focus on the adventures of martial arts heroes or heroines and are usually set in ancient or pre-modern China. The fight between good and evil and the final triumph of the righteous are the main themes in wuxia movies. Their importance results from the appearance of the wuxia hero, who becomes a "knight errant", fighting for justice (Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong* 132). In this respect, evil is embodied by those who refuse to follow the rules of Giang Hu (the warrior's world) and disturb its order.

According to Catherine Gomes, "the figure of the wuxia hero or heroine is driven by three fundamental codes: chivalry and honour, loyalty and revenge" (49). Martial artists are expected to solve conflicts in honourable duels and ought to be loyal towards their teachers—the master-apprentice relationships and the heroes' training in Shaolin[39] or Wudang[40] schools are common themes in martial arts movies. Therefore, the plots of wuxia movies revolve around skilful warriors, who feel obligated to fight for justice and who are "pledged by duty to avenge any harm done to family, friend, or teacher" (Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong,* 123).

The decision to adapt the story of Austen's Dashwood sisters for a wuxia martial arts movie might be justified to some extent by the fact that the genre puts a great emphasis on the issue of morality—one of the central themes of Jane Austen's prose. In fact, the movie appears to adapt the themes introduced by the British author rather than those which are typical of wuxia stories. As Erika Junhui Yi notices, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* centres on a meditation on love and life rather than on the showdown between good and evil (2). And while the story of retrieving an important stolen item is definitely a traditional theme in wuxia movies, the romance plotline is not usually

[122] The term *wuxia* literally means "martial arts heroes"—it is a compound noun, which combines two words: wǔ (which translates into "martial", "military" or "armed") and xia (which means "hero", "chivalrous" or "vigilante") (Gomes 49).

emphasised in such films (3). Nevertheless, Ang Lee focuses on the theme of individuals pursuing true love and freedom—which is understandable if he intends to relate to Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Thus, the plotline of a stolen sword becomes a background for the story of Shu Lien and Li Mu Bai's repressed love. By the end of the movie the viewers come to realise that Mu Bai's decision to leave Giang Hu and get rid of the sword was dictated by the desire to start a life with Shu Lien. The protagonists never get their "happily ever after", as Mu Bai dies while finally admitting his love for Shu Lien. Hence, as Yi points out, the filmmakers choose a melodramatic ending for the characters' story rather than an ending typical of traditional wuxia movies—in which the positive protagonists usually do not die (2). Their survival acts as a symbol for the triumph of good over evil.

The story of tragic relationships doomed to failure due to social conventions and warrior codes alters Lee's film into a martial arts melodrama. The melodramatic conventions are noticeable even in the fight scenes. Their editing involves cuts and jumps, but mainly between the faces of the opponents and their swords. Thus, the elements of the Chinese wuxia film genre are treated selectively. Since wuxia heroes or heroines are usually pictured as "knight errands with chivalry graces", who do not display romantic feelings towards other protagonists of the opposite sex, the characters of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* divert from the image of a traditional wuxia hero as well.

Lee distorts the wuxia genre to build a sense of universality and familiarity and to change a local film genre into more globalised—altogether it aims at attracting broader audiences. The director manages to create a hybridised movie, in which human emotions and the poetry of particular scenes are emphasised, and the duels are embellished. The viewers' attention is captivated by effective stunts and the editing of fight scenes which, along with the POV shots, contribute to the receivers' feeling of being right there at the exact moment of the action. The use of straight cuts and jumps for editing makes the change of shot fast which, in turn, adds to the dynamics of the scene.

The introduced modifications are meant to appeal to Western viewers, targeting mainly five groups: "the art house crowd, the young, females, action lovers, and the popcorn mainstream" (Lee 121). The movie's exoticness and poetic aesthetics attract the attention of the art house crowd. Women might be more interested in romance and feminist themes, and the action lovers are keen on watching the martial arts fighting scenes. Young people may find their interest both in the fighting scenes and romantic plotlines. The popcorn mainstream might be drawn, in turn, by the cast, especially the performance of Chow Yun Fat and Michelle Yeoh. Altogether, the five groups of viewers form the multicultural target audience of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Lee 121-123). The film appeals to it as it mixes the elements of Chinese and Western narrative, which alters a traditional wuxia movie into a globalised film.

Since, as Christine Klein notices, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* "focuses on the tension between the characters' Taoist aspiration to follow the 'way' and their Confucian sense of obligation to others" (19), the movie inscribes the adapted narrative into Chinese tradition and intertwines its two popular philosophies—Confucianism and Taoism. Confucianism puts an emphasis on abiding by and respecting social rules, principles and codes—including the warrior's code and social etiquette in patriarchal society. Taoist tradition, in turn, can be associated with naturalness and living in harmony with one's nature, as Judith A. Berling notices (10). The two classical thoughts find their embodiments in the films' characters and their conflicts, especially in Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien. Their repressed love for each other mirrors a conflict between Taoism (freedom) and Confucianism (traditional social morals and patriarchy) in the story. Therefore, as J. Zhang points out, the conflict between Taoism and Confucianism—which translates into Li Mu Bai and Shu Lien's internal conflict between their desire for each other and sense of duty—constitutes the core theme of the film (8).

A common criticism of Ang Lee's film is that it is "not Chinese enough", or that it presents a hybridised vision of Chinese culture (Dilley 122). According to Chris Berry and Mary Farquhar, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* "projects a mythic, cultural version of Chineseness for Chinese and non-Chinese audiences" (69). The ethnic diversity of the diaspora manifests itself through the mix of accents and origins—the film's cast speaks with different accents, as the filmmakers intended "to make an all-Mandarin-speaking film" (Lee 7). And since the cast as well as the crew were selected from all Chinese diaspora cultural zones, they are transnational and represent the entire China. Additionally, James Schamus' screenplay brings a non-Chinese element to the narrative—as it was originally written in English and then translated into Mandarin because neither the screenwriter nor the actors who played the leading roles were fluent in Mandarin. In fact, Michelle Yeoh and Chow Yun-fat, who played Yu Shu Lien and Li Mu Bai, first needed to study the language in order to play their roles. Yeoh could not even read Chinese and memorised her part line-by-line in pinyin (Dilley 122).

Some critics, including Kwai-Cheung Lo, find it hard to categorise *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* as a Chinese or Hollywood film, however, because its financing was based on advance sales of the international distribution rights to miscellaneous American, Japanese, and European companies[123]. Lo also points out that the money for the movie was provided by the Parisian bank (246). Since Lee's movie received far greater public acclaim in the West than in Chinese-speaking markets, some critics accuse the director of turning a Chinese martial arts film into an Americanised,

[123] such as Sony (located in Tokyo), Sony Pictures Classics in NY, Sony Classical Music, Columbia Pictures in Hollywood and Columbia Pictures Asia

Hollywood blockbuster and "an orientalist version of kung fu, set adrift from its Chinese roots" (Dilley 120). Whitney Dilley explains that the filmmakers "had to shoot for a balance between Eastern and Western aesthetics, and a balance between drama and action" (121). Thus, the pacing of the movie differs from that of typical wuxia martial arts films—the first fight occurs after around fifteen minutes, which is rather long for that sort of movies. Also, the characters of martial arts films are not required to perform effective stunts and, at the same time, enact dramatic emotions—which is the case in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The argument that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* adopts the Hollywood patterns of pacing for mainstream action movies is rebutted by Yeh and Davies, however. The scholars claim that the film does not follow the above-mentioned patterns, as it "starts and closes very quietly" (190)—the subdued pacing is not a generic convention of a typical action film, in which the action begins rather immediately.

As Ang Lee explains, the distortion of the wuxia genre was motivated by the filmmakers' intention to live up to the Western viewers' expectations. The director openly states that:

> With *Crouching Tiger* the subtext is very purely Chinese. But you have to use Freudian or Western techniques to dissect what I think is hidden in a repressed society — the sexual tension, the prohibited feelings. Otherwise, you don't get that deep. Some people appreciated it; others don't because it twists the genre. It's not "Chinese." But to be more Chinese you have to be Westernised, in a sense. You've got to use that tool to dig in there and get at it (27).

The entangled romantic relationships and the feminist undertones of the story are the themes the Western audience finds familiar. Meanwhile, martial arts movements, enriched with the dance-like choreography and miscellaneous weapons as well as the gravity-defying jumps, the poetic charm of the landscapes and the melancholic but melodious music are typical of Chinese wuxia movies (Yi 2). However, by adding the narrative elements which are considered typical of Western genre films, the filmmakers divert from a typical wuxia story.

The feminist undertones in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are definitely a factor due to which the narrative of Lee's movie twists the conventions of the traditional wuxia genre. Even though female characters appear in wuxia stories, the amount of attention the heroines of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* attract is rather unusual (Howe). Additionally, the earlier wuxia movies feature positive female characters trying to avenge their virtuous parents or husbands, whereas the anti-heroines are pictured as undoubtedly negative characters—morally corrupted, dangerous and annoying (Chan 3). Yet, the women in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* are more complicated than the stereotypical wuxia heroines. Even though Jade Fox is introduced as a villain[41] in the story, she considers herself a victim of gender inequality—Li Mu Bai's master seduced her and afterwards he

refused to teach her the Wudang swordsmanship, because he considered her inferior and unworthy of this knowledge. Since Jade Fox is a woman, she cannot be taught by Wudang masters. For the same reason, the heroine was never taught to read and write. Gender inequality makes it impossible for her to educate and improve her combat skills. Such misconduct changes the perception of Jade Fox—she might be perceived simultaneously as both the main villain and a victim. Jen Yu, in turn, who is considered a positive character, combines features of both a heroine and a villain. She does not kill anyone, yet she steals and lies and, therefore, acts in an immoral way. In her arrogance and constant anger, the girl continuously refuses to behave rationally. Consequently, her reckless demeanour leads to the confrontation of Jade Fox, Shu Lien and Li Mu Bai, during which the man dies. All in all, neither Jade Fox nor Jen Yu is truly one dimensional.

While the complexity of female characters and the fact that the film's action is driven by women break the conventions of a Chinese film, these decisions bring the movie's narrative closer to Jane Austen's oeuvre. Similarly to the narrative of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the action of *Sense and Sensibility* and other Austen's novels focus on female characters—it is their choices that influence the events: Jen's desire to free herself from the gender role which the society imposes on her affects her choices and actions. Shu Lien, who is also entrapped in social conventions, tries to coax the younger woman back into a role deemed suitable for her.

What links the Chinese retelling of *Sense and Sensibility* with the British writer's literary original is the reinvention of the heroines' different attitudes towards the boundaries placed on women in a patriarchal society. Shu Lien fully accepts the existing division of male and female roles in the society—this echoes Elinor Dashwood's acceptance of the patriarchal order which organises Austen's world of Regency England. From the heroines' perspective, such an attitude is a guarantee of order and continuity of tradition. Jade Fox's rebellion against the patriarchal system and her disrespect for social norms is punished with social seclusion—when Jen rejects the woman's companionship—and the anti-heroine's death at the end of the film. In *Sense and Sensibility*, a rebellion against the social norms is condemned as well: Eliza Williams' love affair and her run-away with John Willoughby ends with the girl's pregnancy and social seclusion. Marianne Dashwood and her film counterpart, Jen Yu, in turn, are torn between a complete rejection of the social order and its acceptance. The protagonists wish for a change of the prevailing order so that women's personal choices were not compromised by tradition and social connections. Out of all the three attitudes, Marianne and Jen's perspective seems to be the most idealistic and improbable to come true—while the younger Dashwood sister grows up and embraces the reality as it is, Jen jumps off

the Wudan mountain. Such a modification of the plot allows the filmmakers to divert the story back towards the conventions of the wuxia genre.

The shackles of social conventions become the direct cause of the heroines' suffering, both in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Elinor Dashwood hides her love for Edward Ferrars because she adheres to social decorum. Her Chinese counterpart, Shu Lien, makes the same choice when she decides to repress her romantic feelings for Li Mu Bai—in this way she remains faithful to the warriors' code. According to Howe, the romance plotline of Li Mu Bai and Shu Lien reminds of a classic Jane Austen theme, as the protagonists are "romantically constrained by custom" (1). The subtle eroticism of the never fulfilled romance between Li Mu Bai and Shu Lien keeps the audience in anticipation for the protagonists' emotional union that comes too late. Conversely, the love scenes between Lo and Jen depict passionate interactions between the two characters. Their romance starts at the desert, where the couple may enjoy themselves in a secluded place, at least for a while. Contrary to Shu Lien and Li Mu Bai, the lovers do not hide their emotions—they make love to each other and fully enjoy their time together until they part. Before she leaves, Jen gives Lo her comb as a sign of her feelings. The intimate gesture echoes the situation in which Marianne Dashwood gives Willoughby her lock of hair.

The repressed love of Shu Lien and Li Mu Bai stands in opposition with the passionate relationship of Jen and Lo. This juxtaposition of the two romantic relationships in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* mirrors the contrast between the repressed love of Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars and the relationship of Marianne Dashwood and John Willoughby. Since the filmmakers present the story with the conventions of Chinese wuxia film, the dichotomy between fast-burning desire and immoderate constraint is mirrored in the movie's fight scenes, in which the self-control of Li Mu Bai and Shu Lien is contrasted with the unbridled, poorly thought-out moves of Jade Fox and Jen Yu.

Similarly to the narrative of Jane Austen's novel, the story within *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* mediates between passion and prudence, freedom and obligation, sense and sensibility. These opposite forces are incorporated by the two heroines and their relationships: Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien represent "crouching tigers" whose "sense" of responsibility and duty manifests itself in the lovers' restraint and discipline; Jen and Lo are the "hidden dragons" whose "sensibilities" are expressed by their intemperate passion and recklessness. Before the movie is over, the disciplined "tigers" need to confront the dragonlike passion and the untamed "dragons" experience the need of tigerlike restraint and discipline. Such a reversal of roles is justified as it also happens in Austen's *Sense in Sensibility*. By the end of the story Elinor Dashwood needs to confront and face the feelings

she has tried to hide whereas Marianne Dashwood reflects on her emotional behaviour which became the source of her sorrows.

The director of both *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, finds the two stories quite similar, as they explore the same conflict: "I think at the core they're a lot alike […] There's *sensibility*, a passionate, romantic force; if you go overboard, it can be destructive. On the other hand, there is *sense*—restraint, social code, obedience, repression" (Lee 78). The way in which this conflict between Romanticism and Rationalism develops depends on the polarity of the experiences of the main heroines (Leung). Thus, the dynamics between sensibility and sense in Austen's narrative is explored by Ang Lee not only by juxtaposing two romantic plotlines, but as Kohler-Ryan points out, through the sisterhood—of blood in *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and of spirit in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (9).

The story of Yu Shu Lien and Jen Yu's relation is a retelling of the Dashwood sisters' relationship. The prototypical characteristics of Austen's heroines are thus largely recreated in the protagonists of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Elinor's silent longing, her composure and wisdom manifest themselves in Yu Shu Lien's demeanour throughout the greater part of the movie. The emotional repression, cultivated by both heroines, finds its outlet in moments of passionate outbursts: Elinor's "almost savage" (Thompson 167) lashing out at Marianne's accusations echoes Shu Lien's furious reaction at Jen's words, whereas Shu Lien's heartbreaking cry when Li Mu Bai finally admits he loves her resembles Elinor's uncontrollable sobbing at the news of Edward Ferrars' love confession and his broken engagement to Lucy Steele. Such occurrences indicate that "sensibility" is a "crouching" and "hidden" force that has the potential to agitate the calmest exterior of "sense" (Leung). If Shu-Lien is endowed with Elinor's sense, then Jen shares Marianne's sensibility. The heroine's passionate reading of wuxia stories as a form of romantic escapism mirrors Marianne's deep appreciation for William Shakespeare and Walter Scott—in both cases the acknowledgment of literature affects the women's judgement of people. The heroine's passionate love affair with the brigand Lo, who is equally charming and reckless as John Willoughby, is compromised by the unromantic reality. Just like Willoughby loses Marianne and can only watch her starting a new life with another man, Lo is equally helpless when he loses Jen. Similarly, the man can only observe the woman disappearing from his life as she jumps off the Wudang Mountain. (17)

All in all, neither of the main heroines keeps balance between sense and sensibility in their actions. Since Shu Lien tries too much to keep her sensibility under control and decides to hide her affection for Li Mu Bai, the balance in her life is disturbed. The woman preserves common sense even in matters of the heart and she suffers because of that. Contrary to Shu Lien, Jen's actions are

driven by her sensibilities. In order to release the pent-up emotions, the heroine rebels: she engages into a love affair with an outcast, runs away from home and disguises herself as a man, hiding her true identity. Since Jen does not act in accordance with common sense, she easily falls prey to the manipulative Jade Fox, who uses her as a tool to hurt Li Mu Bai. Just as in Austen, sense and sensibility must strike a balance. Thus, the moment the women end up in a martial arts duel, neither of them actually wins; neither sense nor sensibility is victorious.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon presents the alternative ending of the Dashwood sisters' stories. Both of them end poorly since neither of the heroines manages to moderate sense and sensibility. The fight between Shu Lien and Jen can be interpreted as the symbolic struggle between the traditional and the adventurous or between the above-mentioned opposite forces—sense and sensibility. The juxtaposition of sense *versus* sensibility also works in the Asian context, which means that it is universal. In the Chinese context, the opposing forces find their representations in the concept of *yin-yang*. Like sense and sensibility, yin and yang can be perceived as both complementary and opposing forces. While yin symbolises passivity and darkness, yang represents activity and light. In this regard, yin finds its embodiment in Shu Lien, who refuses to act on her feelings towards Li Mu Bai. Yang, in turn, is embedded by rebellious and active Jen. The darkness and light opposition translate in the case of two women into old and young.

As their quarrel reaches its peak, the establishing shot frames the two heroines in a fighting position.

4.2.1. A long shot establishes the scene of Shu Lien and Jen Yu's duel.

The symmetry of the shot allows the audience to visualise the differences and similarities between the two women. At the moment of the fight the audience is fully aware of the differences between the two heroines. Shu Lien—a powerful warrior, a loyal friend, and a virtuous wife-to-be, who wishes to

honour the memory of her deceased fiancé rather than pursue true love—tries to uphold the tradition. The rebellious nature of Jen makes her the opponent of Shu Lien. Jen seems to despise male authority in general and refuses to be tamed by any man, including her lover, Lo. The girl's character inherits some of Jade Fox's disdain towards men. Rude and wild, Jen steals Li Mu Bai's sword and insults him by calling Mu Bai's training place—Wudang Mountain—a "whorehouse". Then she starts a fight in an inn—another narrative trope of Chinese wuxia film—and beats up all men who approach her. Jen is the opposite of a typical wuxia heroine. The protagonist does not fight with dignity and shows no respect towards her opponents. In the inn she lies about defeating Li Mu Bai. Apart from that, she insults and humiliates those who ask her to teach them. Her rebellious and wild nature reaches its peak the moment the heroine jumps off the cliff, which might be interpreted as the only way to have ultimate real freedom, even though it might mean killing herself.

Throughout the film the heroines refer to each other as "sisters" and the establishing photo before the heroines' fight highlights the physical similarity between these two—both tall and slim, clad in white outfits and with their long black hair pined up, they stand next to each other in a similar pose: holding swords with one hand and lifting the other. Even their facial features and expressions are alike—neither is smiling, their dark eyes and full lips show seriousness and readiness to fight. The clear age difference that also exists between the Dashwood sisters is also very noticeable between their film counterparts. In both cases sense is stereotypically presented as a feature that comes along with age—as the older heroines are presented as wiser and more emotionally balanced.

4.2.2.-4.2.3. The establishing shots of Yu Shu Lien (on the left) and Jen (on the right) before their fight

Unlike previous wuxia movies, *Crouching Tiger* features considerably fewer fighting scenes. In fact, the narration of the relationships among the protagonists takes up more time than the martial arts action—contrary to typical wuxia movies, Ang Lee's film centres on the tension between family duty and historical misogyny which limit women's roles. Additionally, not only does the movie feature fewer fighting scenes but the movements of the warriors are slower. According to Law Kar,

a historian at the Hong Kong Film Archive, "in Chinese martial arts films you don't let the action slow down; you just feed them more fights. Ang Lee knows how to weave inner drama with outer drama. That may be the Hollywood way" (Landler). The historian indicates that the choreography designs of the fighting scenes is strictly connected with the characters' emotions. The magical realist elements of the film, like the fighters walking on water and balancing on bamboo branches, are supposed to emphasise the emotional states of the film's protagonists. According to Ang Lee, wuxia films offer the audience "an imaginary world away from the harsh reality caused by political turmoil and economic as well as social upheaval" (283). Hence, some wuxia stories include the elements of fantasy. In Ang Lee's movie these elements are most visible during the fight scenes—the protagonists' combat skills are highly exaggerated and seem even supernatural. Wuxia heroes and heroines are able to defy gravity: they can fly, cover large distances in one stride, run across water surfaces, mount and jump on trees, or even jump over and climb high walls.

The most effective scenes featuring an airborne battle among wispy bamboo plants or Jen's suicidal leap in reference to an ancient legend in the final scene strengthen the dream-like aura of the film and fit within the conventions of the movie which aims at presenting the imagined vision of China, and not necessarily its historically truthful depiction. As Whitney Dilley points out, the action of the film takes place during the Qing dynasty, somewhere between 1644 and 1911, but the exact time period is not specified, because the movie was never supposed to be historically accurate (Dilley 121).

Since the movie does not show "the real China", it is obvious that the change of culture dominant is only apparent. The cast may compose of Asians, but they are English-speaking Asians, who needed to learn Mandarin in order to play their parts. The genre dominant may seem to be classified as Chinese wuxia martial arts movie, but in fact, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* or, as Ang Lee once called it, "*Sense and Sensibility* with martial arts" is a wuxia melodrama which centres on the psychology of its protagonists. The film features many scenes with a heavy focus on close up shots. They allow to emphasise the emotions each protagonist experiences both at the time of a fight and a conversation. Such long spans of close-up shots in fight scenes are rather unusual. Yet, the director of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* uses them quite frequently, as they help manifest the characters' passion and prowess at martial arts. Some scenes begin with point of view shots, owing to which the viewers feel as if they participated in the scene as well. Frequent close-ups on the characters' faces allow the filmmakers to accentuate the protagonists' emotions: Li Mu Bai's sorrow (due to which the hero decides to give the Green Destiny to Sir Te), Shu Lien's deep but unspoken affection for Li Mu Bai (which the heroine represses out of a sense of loyalty to the warrior code she

shares with Mu Bai); Jen's desire for personal freedom and her disdain towards male warriors and Jade Fox' hatred towards men (due to which she kills Li Mu Bai and his teacher). The director takes a similar approach as Jane Austen, who portrays the axionomy of her main protagonists in such a way that the receivers are able to easily read through their emotional motivations (Klingel Ray 7-8). Thus, melodrama conventions overbalance the conventions of a wuxia movie and divert the story towards a less local film genre. Even the shot compositions do not aim at introducing the viewers to Chinese culture. They may present some characteristic Chinese buildings, but the effect is similar as that one in Gurinder Chadha's *Bride and Prejudice*—all the audience gets is once again a "theme park", a collage of breath-taking, picturesque shots that aim to seduce the viewer's eye.

Conclusion

The study conducted in this dissertation shows that, in order to adjust to the tastes and expectations of a late twentieth century/ early twenty-first century recipient, loose adaptations of Jane Austen's prose transaccentuate the major themes of the writer's stories with regard to the assumed expectations of the target group to which the film is directed. The filmmakers try to update the stories originally conceived in the Regency era by adopting tropes and themes typical of genres whose conventions these movies follow. The analysis provided by this dissertation also shows that contemporary cinema treats Austen's prose instrumentally—the adaptations in question adapt only selected elements of the original narratives which their filmmakers consider most alluring to watch (or having the most discernible commercial potential) and reduce the elements irrelevant for their movies.

A closer analysis of films loosely based on Jane Austen's prose shows that these adaptations return to the close adaptations' tendency to transaccentuate the romantic plotline and the theme of love at the expense of the main original themes of the novels—these are either overshadowed or entirely reduced. Such a transaccentuation requires amplification of the sexual tension between the main protagonists as well as the amplification of the love triangle trope—which dramatises the adapted narrative and, consequently, excites the viewers. The amplification of sexual tension, in turn, enforces radical changes in the characters' composition: the addition of scenes featuring verbal jousts between the lovers-to-be as well as the beautification of the protagonists. Consequently, the adaptations of Austen's prose create a neurotic heroine of the story—which is exactly what Austen's women are not—and their handsome suitors, often mesmerised by the heroines since their first encounters. Meanwhile, the proliferation of shots of attractive actors and actresses as well as the beautiful, luxurious interiors of the main male characters' houses, and/or picturesque landscapes, attracts the viewers' attention, but at the same time diminishes the authenticity of Jane Austen's stories, which obviously do not aim at harlequinising the Regency era. Also, the addition of scenes of the future lovers' interactions overbalances the scenes featuring some minor protagonists and often regulates the reduction of their plotlines and the condensation of the characters' number—otherwise the films would be just too long.

In both cases—close and loose adaptations'—the use of the above-mentioned strategies result in the transaccentuation of the films' visual layers. At first sight, this transaccentuation may appear less noticeable in loose adaptations than in costume melodramas—mainly because loose adaptations

continuously modify the movies' scenography with regard to genre conventions which these films follow. Nevertheless, the overall effect is similar to that achieved by heritage cinema: the subsequent loose adaptations of Austen's prose establish the novelist's prose as sentimental love stories.

The movies analysed in this dissertation are global products of mainstream cinema aimed at a wide audience. It is therefore hardly a surprise that the operations used in the adaptation process—addition, reduction, substitution, condensation, inversion and transaccentuation—become blockbusterisation tools. Most of the above-mentioned strategies were initiated by heritage close adaptations of the British novelist's prose. The global success of these adaptations—both critical and commercial—has clearly become a recipe for a successful literary adaptation. This is evidenced by the fact that the filmmakers of loose adaptations of Austen's prose use virtually the same adaptation strategies focused on emphasising the romantic plotline, but they use modernised scenography and/or follow various genre conventions, which somehow give the (misleading) impression of something new and fresh. The repetitive strategies can be read as conventions which might indicate that the movie adaptations of Jane Austen's prose form their own film genre.

In the context of the literary source texts, these cultivated conventions impoverish the original narratives and modify Austen's characters' motives, behaviours and personality traits. As shown in the analysis above, the decision to accentuate the romantic theme entails a whole range of modifications. As a result of these alterations, Austen's narratives are adapted for stories which focus on these particular elements which the British novelist does not actually accentuate herself. Furthermore, these stories revolve around the heroines who, as it turns out, upon closer analysis, do not really differ much from each other in terms of their composition. Thus, by emphasising the romantic plotline, loose adaptations substitute Austen's female protagonists with model heroines of romance stories, who seem to combine selected, most fundamental personality traits of Austen's women, and condense them into a new "Austenian hybrid" heroine type, who, just like Elizabeth Bennet, makes too hasty judgments and expresses her opinions often too bluntly or provocatively, just like Emma Woodhouse, manipulates reality to her advantage, and who, just like Marianne Dashwood, builds her own fictional world based on false ideas taken from the novel, and dreams of something more special than what surrounds her. These characters are therefore largely exaggerated, in some cases even caricatured.

The adapters consciously focus their attention on the most dynamic female characters out of all the writer's literary prototypes, because it was them and their stories that guaranteed the commercial success of costume close adaptations—which is additionally proved by the fact that the changes taking place in the images of Anne Eliot and Fanny Price in late heritage adaptations also aim at making the heroines more similar to Austen's more dynamic and energetic women.

Capitalising on Jane Austen's heroines results therefore in adopting a "special girl" trope—a person attractive, outspoken, impulsive in her passionate nature, mentally strong and courageous yet sensitive, and definitely not passive or toned down. Meanwhile, the uniqueness of the original literary characters lies in the fact that these women are so regular. Created in the spirit of the tales of "everyman", Austen's novels present stories that could actually happen in Regency England. As the British writer's biographers[124] point out, the depiction of these stories' heroines and their behaviours was based upon the author's personal observations and her inspirations with the conversations she conducted or overheard—hence the impression of the reality of these characters. Thus, while the author herself created a catalogue of "every-girl" characters who nonetheless represent different personality types and with whom the Regency women could identify themselves—they were probably experiencing similar dilemmas as a result of the oppressive patriarchal system prevailing at that time—loose adaptations of Austen's prose establish her novels as beautiful fairy tales revolving around a new type of a heroine, whose collective personality portrays her as untameable and thus interesting enough to watch.

Men, in turn, become far more emotionally expressive than their literary predecessors and even heritage film counterparts. They are, however, equally attractive as in costume adaptations from the 1990s and the beginning of the 21st century; this seems obvious, as the visual layer is still important for the filmmakers. The convention of saving the day is radically reduced in loose adaptations. The heroes' bravery manifests itself in their ability to talk about their feelings. Emotional expressiveness becomes the fundamental trait of the modified type of Austen's male characters in loose adaptations. This feature, however, is treated instrumentally as it strengthens the image of a "special girl" within the adapted story—men realise the value of their brides much earlier.

To a large extent, this modified construction of Austen's heroines and heroes is a result of the reproductive success of national heritage cinema. As discussed in the first chapter, it was the late heritage melodramas which initiated the tendency to portray the main heroines of Austen's stories as far more agitated and emotional than their literary counterparts. Similarly, it was the early heritage adaptations that started the fashion for harlequinisation of Austen's male protagonists by sexualising their physical appearance and amplifying their interest in the main heroines.

The stories conceived by Jane Austen evoke interest in authors and filmmakers from all over the world, and although they draw inspirations mainly from the novels' romance theme and courtship plotline—which they adjust at their discretion to the requirements of pop culture—no signs of that interest coming to an end have been noticed. In fact, a closer analysis of changing tendencies suggests that another cycle of costume adaptations is coming. Inspired by Autumn de Wilde's *Emma*, and

[124] such as Gross Vernon-Meyer or Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska.

Carrie Cracknell's *Persuasion,* the new versions will probably allow for colour-blinding cast and use solutions that, on the one hand, will create a rather shocking impression of realism, for example, by including scenes featuring the heroines falling into puddles of mud after urinating in the middle of the forests (like in Cracknell's *Persuasion*) or having a nosebleed in the middle of stressful conversations (like in de Wilde's *Emma*), and, on the other hand, they will emphasise the inauthenticity of the presented story, for example, by including a colour-blind casting in the role of landed gentry or by using such stylistic means as breaking the fourth wall. Some of these new techniques are used in the most recent costume adaptations, including Roger M. Bobb's TV movie, *Sense & Sensibility,* from 2024.

Apparently, the nostalgic aesthetic of heritage cinema films is still very popular among contemporary viewers, which to some extent explains why the British writer's prose presented in the aesthetics of heritage cinema is, in the eyes of the filmmakers, a guarantee of reimbursement of costs. Since the rich catalogue of Austen's novels' film adaptations include such movies as *Fire Island*, *Before the Fall* and *Love Magick,* a cycle of period adaptations based on Austen's novels, which lets in not only mixed races, but also mixed orientations may appear in the near future as well. And since it is said that the popular period series, *Bridgerton* is inspired by Jane Austen's prose[125], the future costume adaptations might allow even bolder sex scenes than John Alexander's *Sense and Sensibility* or Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park.*

Of course, adaptations of the writer's prose can also go in a completely different direction. Considering how many independent transmedia narratives based on Austen's novels have already been created, including modernised YouTube series in the form of vlogs, such as *Emma Approved*, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* or *From Mansfield with Love* or the newest podcast series *Pride and Prejudice* from 2023, these may be followed by subsequent vlog or podcast adaptations.

These types of adaptations would certainly create further fields for research. Yet, it is by no means clear that adaptations of Jane Austen's works must be limited only to filming the novelist's popular stories or recording podcasts based on her works. As it turns out, the writer's prose has great potential to function in other media, including games. In fact, the first games referring to the "Austenian world" have already been created. Although the first attempt, *Pride and Prejudice Board Game,* failed to arouse much interest due to its simple mechanics, the MMORPG game, *Ever, Jane: The Virtual World of Jane Austen,* raised $109,000 on Kickstarter in 2016 and was enthusiastically received. Then, the tabletop *Good Society: A Jane Austen Roleplaying Game* from 2018, which focused on the themes of family obligation and social ambition, was reprinted in 2022 owing to

[125] See, Maureen Lee Lenker's article in "Creator Chris Van Dusen reveals the five pop culture period pieces that inspired *Bridgerton*" in *Entertainment*.

a successful Kickstarter campaign. In recent years,a widely appreciated board game has also been created, with a setup and graphic design referring to Austenian England. Dan Hallagan's board game *Obsession: Pride, Intrigue and Prejudice in Victorian England* met with a highly positive acclaim—its stock ran out very quickly, and the game was soon released in Board Game Arena. Illustrated with the drawing of Pemberley estate, the strategic game introduces the players to Derbyshire at the end of the 18th century and invites them to Austenian world of social conventions in which they need to build their own social position, throw balls, matchmake, and even spread gossips.

The unwavering admiration for everything related to the British novelist's work confirms that Austenmania is still on. Jane Austen's global appeal raises many areas that have the potential to be explored, starting from films, series and theatre adaptations, whose analysis is not included in this dissertation due to the selection requirements, and ending with games based on the writer's prose. The study conducted in this dissertation allows to answer the research questions. But the conclusions were drawn on the basis of the analysis covering only a handful of films inspired by the writer's prose (around twenty), while almost a hundred of them have already been released, and new ones are coming out all the time—which means that the research still has room for updates.

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STRESZCZENIE W JĘZYKU POLSKIM

Niniejsza rozprawa doktorska poświęcona jest analizie procesów, jakie zaszły podczas tworzenia filmowych adaptacji prozy Jane Austen. Skupia się ona na porównaniu literackich typów postaci stworzonych przez pisarkę oraz ich filmowych odpowiedników z uwzględnieniem wykorzystanych filmowych środków stylistycznych oraz zabiegów narracyjnych. Rozważania te pozwalają odpowiedzieć na sformułowane we wstępie dysertacji następujące pytania badawcze: w jaki stopniu adaptacje filmowe powielają wizerunki bohaterów Austen i umożliwiają reprodukcję ich charakterystycznych cech osobowości?; jakie zmiany zostają wprowadzone, aby dostosować je do gustów i oczekiwań odbiorców końca XX i początku XXI wieku?; jaki wpływ mają takie modyfikacje na recepcję bohaterów i świata znanego z prozy Austen?

Odwołanie się do komparatystyki jako metody badawczej pozwala naświetlić wzajemne powiązania zjawisk literackich i nieliterackich oraz wydobywa istniejące między nimi kontrasty i podobieństwa. Ponadto wykorzystana zostaje analiza neoformalna, gdyż to współpraca stylu oraz formy, z uwzględnieniem kontekstu historycznego i kulturowego wpływa na odmienność celuloidowych Bennetów czy Darcych, służąc modyfikacji wybranych cech będących atrybutami ich powieściowych pierwowzorów.

W doborze materiału badawczego wzięto pod uwagę jedynie mainstreamowe filmy pełnometrażowe powstałe po roku 1995 r., będące swobodnymi adaptacjami *Dumy i uprzedzenia, Rozważnej i romantycznej* oraz *Emmy*. W rozprawie posłużono się zmodyfikowaną typologią Johna M. Desmonda i Petera Hawkesa. Kluczowe stały się dwie zaproponowane przez nich kategorie – adaptacja bliska i adaptacja swobodna. Adaptacje swobodne prozy Austen – stanowiące podstawowy korpus dzieł analizowanych – przenoszą akcję powieści z Anglii okresu regencji do innej epoki czy kraju lub umieszczają ją w obrębie innego kontekstu kulturowego. W grupie dzieł analizowanych znajdują się również filmy utrzymane w innych niż melodramat konwencjach gatunkowych. Adaptacje bliskie powieści Austen, to z kolei melodramaty kostiumowe, które w większości zachowują zarówno miejsce, jak i czas akcji, lecz wykraczają poza konwencje gatunkowe znane z literackich pierwowzorów. Modyfikacje zastosowane przez twórców swobodnych adaptacji mogą zatem przebiegać w trzech kierunkach: zmiany czasu akcji, czyli uwspółcześnienia, zmiany dominanty gatunkowej oraz zmiany kontekstu kulturowego. Każda z tych strategii modyfikacyjnych omawiana jest w osobnym rozdziale niniejszej dysertacji.

Rozprawa ma charakter teoretyczno-analityczny i składa się ze wstępu, czterech rozdziałów oraz zakończenia. Rozdział pierwszy stanowi wprowadzenie do dalszych analiz, poświęconych adaptacjom swobodnym. Z tego względu skupia się on na kostiumowych ekranizacjach powieści Jane Austen powstałych w łonie kina dziedzictwa narodowego, a także omawia tendencje oraz zmiany w nich zachodzące. Rozdział drugi koncentruje się na analizie adaptacji uwspółcześniających fabułę i przenoszących akcję do Anglii lub USA na przełomie XX i XXI wieku. Rozdział trzeci uwzględnia analizę filmów, w których nastąpiła zmiana dominanty gatunkowej, a więc komediach romantycznych oraz filmach grozy i ich parodystycznych wariantach. Przedmiotem zainteresowania rozdziału czwartego są dzieła osadzające akcję powieści pisarki w odmienny (ale i odległym) kręgu kulturowym. Dokonano w nim omówienia indyjskich i chińskich adaptacji prozy Jane Austen.

Układ rozdziałów odzwierciedla swego rodzaju gradację związaną z modyfikacjami dokonywanymi w procesie adaptacji. Rozprawę rozpoczyna rozdział poświęcony adaptacjom bliskim, które wydają się w najmniejszym stopniu zmieniać pierwotną fabułę. Każdy kolejny skupia się na kategorii wprowadzającej istotne zmiany, wpływające na oddalanie się od oryginału. Struktura rozprawy sugeruje zatem, że proces adaptacji powieści Jane Austen ewoluuje, a popularyzację jej prozy i dostosowanie jej do gustu współczesnego odbiorcy ułatwia zastosowanie szeregu różnych operacji adaptacyjnych. Praca odwołuje się tutaj do zaproponowanych przez Marka Hendrykowskiego w książce *Współczesna adaptacja filmowa* siedmiu operacji adaptacyjnych, którymi są: transakcentacja, substytucja, addycja, redukcja, inwersja, kondensacja i amplifikacja. Ewolucja sposobów adaptacji prozy Austen nie oznacza jednak, że z początkiem każdej nowej tendencji kończy się poprzednia. Wręcz przeciwnie, tendencje przeplatają się i wzajemnie na siebie oddziałują, często dając początek nowym zjawiskom, modom, niekiedy cyklom filmowym.

Badania przeprowadzone w ramach tej rozprawy dowodzą także, że kino traktuje prozę Austen instrumentalnie, gdyż twórcy kolejnych filmowych adaptacji decydują się na wykorzystanie tylko takich aspektów oryginałów literackich, które uznają za najbardziej interesujące, nośne lub wykazujące największy potencjał komercyjny, jednocześnie ignorując lub eliminując elementy, które uważają za nieistotne z punktu widzenia fabuły, konstrukcji postaci czy przekazu własnych dział. Modyfikacje, dokonywane zarówno na poziomie treści, jak i formy, adaptowanego utworu służą przede wszystkim poszerzeniu kręgu odbiorców, zapewnieniu każdemu widzowi – choć z różnych powodów – filmu atrakcyjnego. Jak się jednak okazuje, komercjalizacja powieści Austen odbywająca się w procesie filmowej adaptacji niejednokrotnie prowadzi do ich znaczącej pauperyzacji i zubożenia, co często motywowane jest chęcią wyeksponowania uniwersalnych aspektów tej prozy oraz dążeniem do wyeksploatowania ich wizualnego potencjału.