Gender Dynamics in Recent Adaptations of Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the B.A. in English Language and Literature and German Language and Literature at the University of Rijeka

Rijeka, September 2020

Abstract

This thesis analyses the representations of gender dynamics in the two contemporary adaptations of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813): the BBC miniseries *Pride and Prejudice* written by Andrew Davies and directed by Simon Langton from 1995 and the film *Pride and Prejudice* directed by Joe Wright and written by Deborah Moggach from 2005. By examining their different approaches, the thesis shows that both adaptations convey modern readings of Austen's novel which showcase Elizabeth and Darcy's romantic relationship as the primary focus while disregarding Austen's ironic voice and remarks about the hypocrisies of the social classes. However, when depicting women's position in the Regency society, both Wright and Davies translate Austen's criticism of the social norms by emphasising the importance of intellectual education for women and the absurdity of societal expectations of women during this period.

Key Words: Jane Austen, Pride and Prejudice, Regency, Joe Wright, Andrew Davies, adaptations, marriage, romantic

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1. Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a classic like Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) must be in want of a contemporary adaptation. The novel portrays the lives of the genteel classes of Regency England and with the famous opening sentence of the novel: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in a possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife." (Austen 1) immediately sets up Austen's ironic style and suggests at her mockery of the high society. As we read on, we can see that this "truth universally acknowledged" is actually the opinion of the neighbourhood and that it is not the man who must be in want of a wife, but rather vice versa. The plot of the novel follows the lives of the Bennet family, country gentry; more specifically, that of the second daughter Elizabeth Bennet and her relationship with a rich aristocrat Fitzwilliam Darcy. The story begins with the news that a young man, Mr Bingley, leased the mansion nearby Netherfield Park. After Mr Bennet made acquaintance with him, the Bennets attend a ball at which Mr Bingley and his close friend Mr Darcy are present. While Mr Bingley enjoys himself and spends most of the evening dancing with Elizabeth's older sister Jane, Darcy is not pleased with the gathered society and refuses to dance with Elizabeth. This causes a change in the public opinion of him as a very amiable man, which was formed immediately at the beginning of the evening, merely on account of his looks and income. In the following passage Austen criticises this tendency of the public to shift its opinions:

> Mr Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report, which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. He was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his

> company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance (11).

By using Darcy's character, Austen shows how public opinion is often quickly developed and formed without enough facts and is therefore unreliable and prone to change. The plot continues with Jane visiting the Netherfield mansion and catching ill, since she was caught in a downpour, and Elizabeth walking to Netherfield to take care of her sister. After they return home, Mr Collins, an ignorant clergyman who will inherit Mr Bennet's estate, visits their household. Mr Collins represents the ideals of many Englishmen at the time; namely that young women should read "a serious stamp" for instruction. For this reason, he refuses to read the novel he is given, saying he never reads novels, but chooses Fordyce's *Sermons* instead (Austen 78). By choosing overbearing Mr Collins as a representative of people with such beliefs, Austen makes a subtle critique of the people who find novels to be an inadequate literature. Soon after his arrival, he proposes to Elizabeth and she refuses him. After Elizabeth's refusal of his offer, Mr Collins makes an offer of marriage to Charlotte Lucas, Elizabeth's very good friend, who accepts him. In the meantime, the Bennet sisters get acquainted with the militia officers. One of them is Mr Wickham, who tells Elizabeth how he lost his inheritance because of Darcy. In the spring Elizabeth visits Charlotte, who now lives near the estate of Darcy's aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Elizabeth and Darcy run into each other various times, and one day Darcy unexpectedly proposes to Elizabeth and she refuses him, accusing him of meddling into Jane and Bingley's affairs and of his mistreatment of Wickham. By sharing community's judgement of Darcy with no proper evidence or facts except for his "insufferable pride", Elizabeth is "presented not as a typical person, but as a typical member of her community. She assents to and helps propagate collective judgements; she takes her opinions for universal truths" (Deresiewicz 509). After the proposal Darcy retreats, but soon afterwards he gives her the letter where he explains his dealings with

Wickham and Bingley. The letter makes Elizabeth re-evaluate her own opinions and behaviour, and she behaves coldly toward Wickham when she returns home. The militia is now leaving and Lydia, Elizabeth's younger sister, persuades her father to give her permission to spend the summer in Brighton, where Wickham's regiment is stationed. Elizabeth again goes on a journey with her relatives, the Gardiners. They visit Pemberley and encounter Darcy, who then shows them the grounds. Shortly thereafter, Elizabeth receives two letters from Jane, telling her that Lydia eloped with Wickham, and hurries home. When Wickham's real character is discovered, Austen shows how the community still has the confidence in its judgement, even when it was wrong: "All Meryton seemed striving to blacken the man who, but three months before, had been almost an angel of light" (329). According to Deresiewicz (506): "Revisionism saves the community from an admission of error and what seems an even greater threat, of uncertainty." After the unsuccessful search for Lydia, Mr. Gardiner sends a letter saying that the couple is found at last and that Wickham has agreed to marry her. They return to Longbourn, but soon leave for the North. Mr Bingley also returns to Netherfield and proposes to Jane, who accepts his offer. After this, Lady Catherine de Bourgh visits the Bennet household and says to Elizabeth that she heard her nephew wants to marry her. She demands that Elizabeth promise to reject his offer, but Elizabeth refuses to make such promises. When Darcy finds out about this, he renews his offer of marriage, and Elizabeth accepts it.

Using Elizabeth's character, Austen displays how even the most open-minded individuals can be influenced by public opinion, and her story can be thus seen "not as an exercise of freedom, but as an effort to achieve freedom" (Deresiewicz 504). Seen from this perspective, according to Deresiewicz,

> *Pride and Prejudice* can be seen as Austen's most deliberate and sustained critique of community – a constructive critique, since the novel ends by sketching an alternative

> vision of communal life that corrects what has been shown to be vicious and preserves what has been shown to be cherishable in it (504).

Together with the course of events and the representations of characters and their behaviour, as individuals and as community, Austen manages to give a critique of the high society with her ironic remarks and playful suggestions of hypocrisy.

Like other popular classic works of literature, *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted many a time to screen. Nowadays, there are multiple adaptations of Austen's work – more than 50 movies and TV shows adapting Austen's novels came to life in the last 30 years alone (Warren, 2020). In this thesis the focus will be on two recent adaptations, and the way the gender dynamics are presented in them, both through characters themselves as well as through symbols. The thesis will analyse the BBC TV series *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995 adapted by Andrew Davies and directed by Simon Langton, and the film *Pride and Prejudice* from 2005 directed by Joe Wright and written by Deborah Moggach. While the former adaptation offers a representation focused on a period-specific vision of Austen's world and the Regency society of the novel, the latter gives a somewhat more contemporary approach in which Romantic ideas of love and nature are introduced into the otherwise rational, Augustan storyline. The aim of this thesis is to show that even though these adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrate different approaches to the text, they both depict gender dynamics by focusing mainly on the romantic relationships of the characters, rather than on the economic realities of the time and the critique of social norms suggested by Austen. The critique they manage to convey, however, is the one concerning the boundaries forced upon women in the Regency period and the importance of the intellectual education for women.

The analysis will be done through a close reading of the two adaptations and relevant literature on this topic. Firstly, I will start by analysing the social norms in the Regency society and the notion of what it meant to be "an accomplished woman". I will continue by

demonstrating that dance is a metaphor for marriage in the novel and the adaptations, and that adaptations are using hands as motif for the physical attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy. Furthermore, the two depictions of Mr Collins and Darcy's proposals of marriage made to Elizabeth will be compared and contrasted in order to highlight the difference between the two kinds of marriage and between the women who follow society's rules and the ones who do not. Also, the representation of the letter in both adaptations will be compared since the letter signifies the turning point in Elizabeth's perception of others and herself. I will continue by analysing the depiction of the feelings which Pemberley estate evokes in Elizabeth, and how this scene was used in the adaptations to portray the physical attraction between Darcy and Elizabeth. Finally, I will conclude by analysing the related importance of the outdoors in the adaptations, with special focus on the use of Romantic notions of nature in Wright's adaptation.

2. The world of social dances

Strictly defined, the Regency period lasted for a decade, from 1811, when the king's eldest son George became Prince Regent and governed the country in his father's place because the king George III was deemed unfit to rule due to his illness, until 1820, when king George III died. A more general definition of the period includes the decade before the prince came to the throne, as well as his reign as the king George IV, which ended in 1830 (Sales 15). Among the ruling classes in the Regency period, manners and social status were considered the most important values. Since the former was obtained through proper education and the latter through advantageous marriage, people strove to provide the best education and find the most fitting partner for their children in order to secure their own and their children's position in the society. Ballrooms were some of the places where people could meet and eventually court each other. Consequently, it was very important to be educated on the ballroom etiquette and general social decorum. In the following chapters I will analyse the importance of possessing good manners during Regency and what it meant to be "an accomplished woman". Because marriage was the main objective for young women, due to limited life choices, I will look at the dance as the key metaphor for (future) marriage in the novel and the adaptations. I will also emphasise the importance of hands as a symbol of the physical attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy in the adaptations.

2.1. Regency society and the notion of "an accomplished woman"

The Regency era was characterised by strict codes and rules of behaviour that applied both to men and women in almost every area of life. As Byrne points out: "Manners are key indicators of human behaviour in society. They can reveal social status and its vicissitudes – a matter of great interest in Austen's age, which was a time of rapid social mobility" (297). Bearing in mind that manners indicated social status and its change, it is no wonder that with

the change of fortune also came a change of manners. However, this particular word could convey many different meanings, differentiating between “character of mind”, “general way of life; morals; habits” and “ceremonious behaviour; studied civility”, and Austen’s novels always touched upon every topic of the spectrum. (Byrne 297). Being fond of “the great character of mind”, Austen was not afraid to explore the limits of socially accepted behaviour through her heroines. For instance, while it was considered unbecoming for a woman to walk alone in a public place, Elizabeth Bennet walks to see her sister at Netherfield, to the astonishment of Mrs Hurst and Miss Bingley (Austen 36). Another example of the Bennet sisters breaking the rules of socially acceptable conduct and thus mortifying Lady Catherine, is that all the sisters “were out” – meaning that they were all introduced to society at the same time as eligible to marry. When asked how is it possible that the younger ones were out before the older ones were married, Elizabeth replies: “I think it would be very hard upon younger sisters, that they should not have their share of society and amusement because the elder may not have the means or inclination to marry early” (Austen 187), showing her open-mindedness and impatience with the tradition while defending her parents’ unconventional decision.

In Austen’s novels there are also various examples where she portrays the characters at higher social positions who act condescendingly towards the lower ranks and thus implies that the high ranking that a person obtains, either by birth or by money, does not necessarily mean that the person will possess the manners of good and polite behaviour. In *Pride and Prejudice,* this is especially stressed in the characters like Fitzwilliam Darcy and the Bingley sisters. Mr Darcy is described as “haughty, reserved, and fastidious, and his manners, though well bred, were not inviting” (Austen 17), and the Bingley sisters are described as well-bred women but proud and contemptuous, while their brother, Mr Bingley, possessed a good humour and kindness in his manners (Austen 15, 16). Through these characters Austen reveals that, while

in theory the term “politeness” included elegance and kindness, the terms “manners and morals” rarely went together in real life (Byrne 304).

Naturally, politeness and manners were linked to a person’s education. However, the term “education” as understood during the Regency period carries significantly different meaning than the term “education” today. While today education is considered as learning of certain skills and practices, the society in the Regency period understood it as: “a process of socialisation and acculturation based on moral self-discipline and designed to fit the individual for a range of related roles in life, according to sex and rank” (Kelly 252). Thus, it can be concluded that people were mostly educated on the etiquette; the accepted rules of behaviour in certain social circles and the roles they were expected to fulfil, while schooling in particular bodies of knowledge constituted only a part of education (and exclusively for men). The education of men and the education of women in the Regency were notably different. As Kelly (256) points out, while men in the middle classes and the gentry received professional education, women were deprived of intellectual education of this kind and were trained in the so-called “accomplishments”. “Accomplishments”, as well as other elements of female education, like basic schooling (literacy, numeracy), household management and religious instruction were mostly taught at home, sometimes ending at boarding school, since women were excluded from the schools that provided more advanced education. Not only were they deprived of the advanced education, but Kelly (258) also claims that “learning” among women was condemned by many writers in Austen’s time because it was equated with “male education” and limited to their participation. On the other hand, he suggests that “accomplishments” were criticised for not providing women with intellectual independence and thus leaving them dependent on men’s judgement and authority. However, they were the preferred alternative since they [accomplishments] “enabled marriageable and married women to display the cultural distinction that demonstrated social distinction and advanced upper-

and middle-class family interests" (Kelly 257). Following this quote, it can be concluded that the accomplished women made their families and themselves more respectable in the society.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen provides an insight into this topic early on in the novel, through the discussion between Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Mr and Miss Bingley on what it means to be an accomplished woman. When Mr Bingley says that all young ladies are accomplished and Mr Darcy disagrees saying that he cannot know more than half a dozen ladies that are really accomplished, Miss Bingley, a daughter of the *nouveaux riches*, states her opinion on the matter as follows:

> A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word accomplished; and besides all this she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved (Austen 43,44).

Miss Bingley voices the values and beliefs of the city and the social change. Austen undermines her statement by adding a crucial element to the female education and accomplishments expressed by Mr Darcy: "All this she must possess, and to all this she must yet add something more substantial in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (Austen 44), highlighting the importance of reading and downgrading the practice of learning the particular etiquette of the society.

In the film by Joe Wright and Deborah Moggach, Mr Darcy [Matthew Macfadyen] says that "the word [accomplished] is indeed applied too liberally" and when he says: "Of course, she must improve her mind by extensive reading" Elizabeth [Keira Knightley] abruptly shuts her book expressing dissatisfaction claiming: "I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder now at your knowing any. (…) I never saw such a woman. She would certainly be a fearsome thing to behold" (*Pride and*

Prejudice 00:20:30 – 00:21:21). Since women received only the essential tuition during the Regency period, through these lines Wright and Moggach show the importance of female intellectual education and emphasise the fact that a woman should educate herself of her own volition, but they mostly stress the novel's criticism of the excessive expectations of women in Austen's time. The similar conversation unravels in the adaptation by Andrew Davies and Simon Langton, yet here Mr Bingley partakes in the discussion not only by saying that all young ladies are accomplished, but also by listing some of the qualities of an accomplished woman, which are originally said by Miss Bingley in the novel. When he says: "But all young ladies are accomplished. They sing, they draw, they dance, speak French and German, cover screens, and I know not what.", Darcy [Colin Firth] replies: "There are not half a dozen who would satisfy my notion of an accomplished woman". To this Miss Bingley adds: "Oh, certainly. No woman can be really esteemed accomplished who does not also possess a certain something in her air, in the manner of walking, in the tone of her voice, her address and expressions". Darcy finally concludes this notion by saying that a woman must improve her mind by extensive reading ("Episode 1" 00:45:04 – 00:45:37). By making Mr Bingley list some of the beliefs originally uttered by his sister, Davies creates an effect of a unified front of the high society making a statement to Elizabeth – who is socially inferior. When Elizabeth [Jennifer Ehle] replies that she is no longer surprised that Darcy knows only six accomplished women, Miss Bingley is the one who says: "You are very severe upon your sex, Miss Bennet" to which Elizabeth replies "I must speak as I find". Miss Bingley then takes the opportunity to further stress the social inferiority of Elizabeth's position by saying: "Perhaps you have not had the advantage, Miss Bennet, of moving in society enough. There are many very accomplished young ladies amongst our acquaintance" ("Episode 1" 00:45:38 – 00:46:01). Through this scene and using the character of Caroline Bingley in particular, Davies and Langton highlight the values and expectations of the higher society and their condescending

attitude towards lower social ranks. Another example by Davies and Langton where Miss Bingley tries to mock Elizabeth is when she says: “Miss Bennet despises cards. She is a great reader and has no pleasure in anything else” (“Episode 1” 00:44:14 – 00:44:21), which later proves to be a futile endeavour when Darcy stresses the importance of reading. The 1995 miniseries puts a special emphasis on the superior attitude of the higher classes, while the 2005 film is more focused on stressing the unreasonable expectations of such society. However, both adaptations convey the novel’s criticism of society’s expectations of women, as well as its emphasis on the importance of female education, not in terms of manners and behaviour, but in terms of intellectual improvement of mind in the age of revolutionary change. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the more accomplished a woman was, the better her prospects of marriage were; which was ultimately the main objective for women of the time.

2.2. Motifs and metaphors for marriage and relationship

The plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is full of symbols and metaphors. As much as they are highlighted in the novel, visual media make them even more vivid due to media specificity. One of the most important metaphors in the book and the adaptations is that of a dance. It symbolises relationships and marriage and is therefore the perfect tool to emphasise gender dynamics. According to Adams (55), Austen’s heroine must move through a courtship dance while judging dancing partners for appearance, character and compatibility, for possible marriage as much as for the dance. However, she must wait to be chosen as a dancing partner and cannot choose him herself. This way, through their speech and gestures, men show what kind of future they could offer to their partners. Similarly, Daiches (291) claims that: “Jane Austen’s world is a woman’s world, and the male characters are simply symbols of the different fates in store for women.” Therefore, it can be concluded that the dancing partners are perceived as eligible bachelors who introduce themselves and their position in the society

in the ballroom and the dance that follows reflects the partners' compatibility. Aside from the amiable characters, a grotesque character like Mr Collins appears occasionally, symbolising the fate which is not in the best interest of some dancers. That he is incompatible with Elizabeth is clearly shown through their dance. In the miniseries from 1995, Mr Collins [David Bamber] is depicted as a very clumsy dancer who is not educated enough about the dance itself as well as on the manners and proper behaviour. When he and Elizabeth are dancing, he collides with another dancer, while Elizabeth is instructing him on how to dance properly ("Episode 2." 00:29:50 – 00:29:58). Langton here uses the dance itself to show that Elizabeth and Mr Collins together make a poor match. Similarly, Mr Collins [Tom Hollander] in the film from 2005 is just as uncouth and fails to recognise the proper rules of behaviour. However, his impropriety is not portrayed in his movements and the dance itself, but through his attempts at making a conversation with Elizabeth while dancing, which only result in her discomfort and the disruption of her conversation with her sister Jane (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:37:02 – 00:38:15). With him being constantly interrupted while talking because of the other dancing partners and the fact that he and Jane are talking to Elizabeth at the same time, Wright creates a seemingly chaotic situation which implies their incompatibility.

In comparison to Mr Collins, dance not only serves to portray the compatibility of Elizabeth and Darcy, but also mirrors the development of their relationship. Starting with Darcy's statement that Elizabeth is "tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me [to ask her to dance]" (Austen 12), we can see that Darcy sees her as a woman of an inferior social position who is not good enough to be his dancing partner, or in other words, his wife. He gradually changes his opinion of her and when he asks her to dance with him, she refuses, just like she refused his first offer of marriage. When he asks her to dance with him the second time at the Netherfield Ball, she accepts; this is again mirrored in the acceptance of his renewed proposal of marriage (Adams 59). From the beginning of the novel, the events on the

dance floor and the results of many dances reflect the stop-start rhythm of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship. The dance motif finally reaches culmination at the Netherfield Ball and is manifested in Elizabeth and Darcy's tense conversation in which she accuses him of his ill-treatment of Wickham, and he replies with constrained answers while they are dancing (Elsbree 118-121). Their dance, however, is portrayed like a collision of two very similar characters. When dancing, Elizabeth even remarks that they are alike saying:

> I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room and be handed down to posterity with all the éclat of a proverb (Austen 104).

In the miniseries, Langton portrays their similarity with the elegant dancing which stands in sharp contrast with Mr Collins's awkward moves. He further emphasises their compatibility through the character of Mr Lucas, who approaches them and congratulates: "Allow me to congratulate you, sir. Such superior dancing is rarely to be seen. I'm sure you know your fair partner is well worthy of you" ("Episode 2." 00:32:28 – 00:37:35). Wright, on the other hand, focuses exclusively on the two of them as the main objective of the spectator's gaze. Their heated conversation is paralleled by the rising music in the background, reaching the climax when they stop dancing in the middle of the room as their dialogue unravels. When they continue to dance, other dancers disappear and we can see only the two of them, dancing as if the others were not there, depicted completely alone in the ballroom (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:38:51 – 00:41:22). The meaning of this "isolation" scene is that even when they are arguing, they can only see each other – everyone else disappears (Grandi 48). This also emphasises their compatibility and resemblance, as much as the fact that they are both individuals who find it hard to find their place in the society.

Hands are another very important recurring motif in the adaptations. By applying synecdoche – a representation of the whole with a single part – adaptations switch the erotic attention from the body to only one part of it – the hand. The conventional phrases such as "Please do me the honour of accepting my hand" (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:09:10-1:09:13) which have lost their visual power are revived in the adaptations by becoming a symbol of passion (Grandi 46, 47). Grandi (47) argues that hands are not only the substitute for the body, but also "the most effective way of expressing the erotic potential of physical contact…the symbol of the couple's physical attraction." For example, Wright uses this symbolic image of the hand when Darcy gives Elizabeth his hand to help her get into the carriage after her visit at Netherfield. We can see that she is surprised at the contact with him and the camera later shows that his hand is seemingly quivering after the contact (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:25:18 – 00:25:26). This is also the case in the 1995 miniseries: after Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley, as Darcy helps her to get into the carriage, the camera shows only their clasped hands, suggesting their growing attraction ("Episode 4." 00:52:37 – 00:52:40). Both Wright and Langton use the image of hands to signal the intimacy and the physical attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy, while they use dance as a tool to portray the characters' dispositions and stress the dynamic relationship of Elizabeth and Darcy which eventually resulted in marriage.

3. Two kinds of marriage

The Regency period could be dubbed as the period of fusion of the earlier traditions, neo-Classical literary values giving way to those of the age of sensibility and the new Romantic ideas. One of the new Romantic concepts was also that of marriage for love. While the majority was still looking at the matrimony as an economic(al) contract and the opportunity to climb the social ladder, with the advent of the French revolution and the Romantic movement and prompted by their ideas, people started thinking differently. A French diplomat Louis-Alexandre de Launay, Comte d'Antraigues talked primarily about marriage as the crucial problem that needs to be changed at the breakout of the revolution in 1789:

> A nation, for so long oppressed by despotism and its laws, all of a sudden becoming mistress of its own destiny, aspires for liberty... Who would not tremble with horror to think that in this nation paternal authority nonetheless disposes of the hearts of young people for the sake of convenience; ... that sentiment and love are not even heard. … It is not a marriage; it is a sacrifice, a sacrilege (Desan 15).

Desan (15) further explains this quote by adding that as the revolutionaries aspired to build a new society, the essential part of the revolution was rethinking the concept of marriage. Seen in this light, the main heroine of the novel, Elizabeth Bennet, can be read as an example of a woman who wishes to marry only out of love and Mr Darcy as a man who chooses to propose to a woman he loves in spite of society's expectations. In order to further demonstrate that *Pride and Prejudice* promotes the idea of marriage for love as the ideal marriage, I will analyse the two proposals by Mr Collins and Mr Darcy to Elizabeth that represent two kinds of marriage. I will also compare Elizabeth and Charlotte Lucas's attitudes to marriage as exemplifying the difference between women who are ready to "rebel" against the society's rules and the ones who conform to them.

3.1. Marriage of convenience

Throughout the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, both men and women are engaged in the quest for the most advantageous marriage available to them. The contemporary readings of Austen's novels, including the adaptations analysed in this thesis, convey her texts as romantic escapes from the harsh reality, while she was primarily an author who used the irony to expose the economic realities of her time. The adaptations from 2005 and 1995 convey novel's critique of the society mostly through Mrs Bennet – a money-oriented character who is constantly complaining and changing her opinions as it suits her. This however only shows her folly and discards the representation of the biased society as a whole.

In Austen's society, wealth usually came from (the acquisition of) landed property, which was inherited by the male heir, so the fate of an accomplished woman was either to find an eligible husband or to remain a spinster with little or no financial support (Daiches 289). Keeping in mind that other options for women, such as being a writer or a governess, involved work for money and/or accommodation and were thus deemed not respectable enough among the higher classes, it is no wonder that some critics even stated that there is no representation of true love in Austen's novels. Daiches even suggests that:

> Miss Austen knew only too well that in that kind of society genteel young ladies cannot afford true love: their objective must be marriage, and marriage with someone eligible. In Jane Austen, only the poor can afford passion (290).

Since "mercenary marriage" was nothing out of the ordinary in the Regency society, a character like Mr Collins, insufferable but with a position at Lady de Burgh's estate and as the only heir to Mr Bennet, considered himself an eligible bachelor. Because of this he could not grasp the idea of Elizabeth refusing his offer of marriage and believed she did so only to encourage his suit. She had to repeat her refusal numerous times, while he still firmly believed she eventually meant to accept his proposal (Austen 120-125). Davies and Langton make Mr

Collins tall and oppressive, with the air of certainty and confidence about him that makes the spectator believe he is convinced Elizabeth could never refuse his offer ("Episode 2." 00:45:49 – 00:50:40). Conversely, Wright and Moggach portray Mr Collins as a small and awkward person, who is evidently nervous when proposing Elizabeth and talks very rapidly and monotonously. His "certainty" that she will accept his offer lies in the circumstances of their situation, not in his own self-esteem and belief that he is worthy (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:47:10 – 00:49:30). Sørbø (180) aptly suggests that he is portrayed as small and unobtrusive figure to make him more compatible with Charlotte, who is portrayed just as plain and insignificant in this adaptation. She also adds that when camera follows him around at the ball, the audience is forced to observe his small stature and loneliness in the room full of people and is therefore prepared for his match with Charlotte (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:34:34 – 00:34:52).

Wright and Moggach soften Charlotte's character by discarding her mercenary views on marriage proposed in the novel and make her more romantic. When she and Elizabeth are talking about Mr Bingley and Jane at the Netherfield ball, Charlotte says Jane should show her feelings towards him more openly: "There are few of us who are secure enough to be really in love without proper encouragement. Bingley likes her enormously but might not do more if she does not help him on. … We are all fools in love" (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:43:32 – 00:43:47). By using the pronoun "us", Charlotte implies that she is one of the people ready to fall in love. The last sentence is also somewhat suggestive as it alludes to Charlotte's own wishes of "being a fool in love". Through her discourse, we can conclude that she wishes to marry for love, but her fantasies are short-lived because of the circumstances of her situation. She finally shows her frustration when she informs Elizabeth of her engagement to Mr Collins and says:

> There is no earthly reason why I shouldn't be as happy with him as any other. … Not all of us can afford to be romantic. I've been offered a comfortable home and protection, there's a lot to be thankful for. … I've no money and no prospects. I'm already a burden to my parents (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:55:12 – 00:55:39).

From these lines we can conclude that even though she wants to marry for love, she is still aware of her social position and realises that she will not receive another offer of marriage. The 1995 Charlotte shares this understanding of the world and her position, but she is not a romantic character and shows almost no feelings. Although Davies and Langton dramatize Charlotte's original opinions about woman's need to secure a husband and the randomness of happiness in marriage proposed in the novel, there is no bitterness in her attitude. She is very unruffled and rather collected as she explains her engagement to Mr Collins very calmly, convincing the audience that she is indeed satisfied with her engagement (Sørbø 142). She says to Elizabeth: "I'm not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home" ("Episode 3." 00:01:57 – 00:02:20). Only later when Elizabeth visits her, she hints that she is, like in the novel, happiest away from her husband saying: "It often happens that a whole day passes in which we have not spent more than a few minutes in each other's company. … I find I can bear solitude very cheerfully. I find myself quite content with my situation, Lizzy" ("Episode 3." 00:29:29 – 00:29:47). What the adaptations fail to convey is the indication presented in the novel through Elizabeth's thoughts that Charlotte will be faced with frustrations in the future life with Mr Collins:

> Poor Charlotte! It was melancholy to leave her to such society! But she had chosen it with her eyes open; and though evidently regretting that her visitors were to go, she did not seem to ask for compassion. Her home and her housekeeping, her parish and her poultry, and all their dependent concerns, had not yet lost their charms (Austen 246).

The implication that her new situation has "not yet" lost its charm is left out from the adaptations. While Davies and Langton portray Charlotte as a placid girl who loves to be alone, Wright and Moggach present a Charlotte who wants to be a romantic but cannot. However, they are both sensible characters who convince the audience that they got what they wanted in the end, so the romantic idyll of Elizabeth and Darcy's storyline is not disrupted, but rather reinforced.

3.2. Marriage for love

Marrying for love with no regard for wealth during the Regency was tantamount to breaking the social norms. Consequently, Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* with the main heroine defying the odds and fulfilling her wishes is unsurprisingly often a template for a post-feminist writing. The BBC adaptation is one of such readings, introducing Elizabeth as a woman who does not need guidance or help from others, unlike in the novel where, for instance, Jane advices Elizabeth not to be disillusioned (Sørbø 137). It is important to emphasise that while in the novel the first longer conversation is between Jane and Elizabeth about Mr Bingley and his sisters, in the series, the first time a longer conversation appears, it is between the sisters in their darkened bedroom at night, when they express their wishes for love in a marriage. Elizabeth is the first who says: "If I could love a man who would love me enough to take me for a mere fifty pounds a year, I should be very well pleased. … But such a man could hardly be sensible, and you know I could never love a man who was out of his wits." Jane also confides in her sister that she has the same wishes: "I should so much like to marry for love" and the dialogue ends with Elizabeth saying: "I am determined that nothing but the very deepest love shall induce me into matrimony" ("Episode 1." 00:07:25 – 00:09:00). This conversation conveys Elizabeth's opinion on marriage from the novel but intensifies the concept of ideal marriage and puts focus on the dream of married love. It

simultaneously prepares the audience for the fulfilment of this dream that comes in the last scene of the series (Sørbø 138).

When Darcy proposes to Elizabeth for the first time, he expects the acceptance of his offer. The fact that he believes he does not have to win her approval shows how women were objectified in the Regency society (Belton 191). Just before his proposal, the series shows a very nervous Darcy who seems like he does not know what to do, he looks at Elizabeth, he sits down, then gets up. This is a visual, physical, representation of his mental struggles which are voiced in the first sentence he says to Elizabeth: "In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you" (Austen 214). He further continues by telling her that his decision will not satisfy his family or friends and that he is aware it is irrational, but he cannot be helped. When Elizabeth refuses him, he holds his breath with hands clasped behind his back, evidently showing shock and puzzlement. As Elizabeth accuses him of destroying her sister's happiness and of his ill treatment of Wickham, his anger rises, and he starts to walk about the room once again. As their argument dissolves, he says goodbye with a curtsy and leaves the room ("Episode 3." 00:48:14 – 00:53:36). In this scene of proposal Elizabeth is seated and Darcy is standing and is shot from below. The audience is thus watching the proposal from Elizabeth's point of view and sees Darcy with the corner of the room behind him and the ceiling above his head, which creates a claustrophobic image, hinting at his feeling of being trapped by his wishes. By foregrounding Darcy as a character who chooses to go against the society's expectations, Davies and Langton create a romantic hero who is ready to fight for the woman he loves. After her refusal of his hand, however, he must learn to change his attitude and to look at her as an independent person, while Elizabeth's opinion of Darcy must go through an equally profound change. Through this transformation and their eventual union, the 1995

miniseries subtly foregrounds the romantic relationship of Elizabeth and Darcy (Belton 191-194).

Whereas Davies follows the novel in setting Darcy's proposal indoors, Wright decided to completely alter this scene from the novel and stages Darcy's proposal in nature while it is raining, using the rain as a parallel to the quarrel that unravels in the scene. Unlike Davies, who adapted the scene mainly by taking it word-for-word from the novel, Wright's screenwriter, the novelist Deborah Moggach, took great liberties in changing the words uttered by Darcy in this proposal. Darcy started the proposal by saying that he had struggled in vain and could bear it no longer, but then started talking fast, listing the obstacles he chose to overcome and finally told Elizabeth he loved her: "I love you. Most ardently" (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:09:01). Precisely this change of Austen's original text creates a lasting impact on the audience. When Elizabeth rejects him, he is in a state of disbelief and asks why he is rejected so impolitely. As the dialogue continues, he explains to her his motives for separating Mr Bingley and Jane, which is originally written in the letter that arrives after the confrontation in the novel. The conversation reaches its climax when she mentions Mr Wickham and Darcy becomes visibly distraught. He approaches her and they are standing very close to each other, he is even leaning into her as if contemplating to kiss her. Finally, he retreats and apologises for taking up much of her time. In accordance with the events of this scene, it can be concluded that Wright's Darcy presents a Romantic deviation from the customary social decorum of the time, rather than the neo-Classical ideal.

His second proposal is also changed, staged in a misty meadow at dawn, with both of them looking ruffled and in a state of half-dress: she is barefoot and has a coat over her night dress and he wears a long, open coat and unbuttoned shirt. The state of their clothes implies another Romantic notion: that they could not sleep from the torment of their love. They even admit this to each other immediately when they meet in the meadow (*Pride and Prejudice*

1:51:57 – 1:54:07). Their disorderly state may also imply that love defies the formalities and expectations of society (Sørbø 172). When Darcy renews his proposal and admits that his feelings and affections have not changed, he again says that he loves her, repeating it three times. She accepts his offer merely by taking his hands into hers, kissing them and saying: "Well then. Your hands are cold" (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:55:29-1:55:36). The reference to his hands again alludes to the physical attraction between them.

While Wright and Moggach are adapting the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy more freely, changing Austen's lines in the proposal and even sometimes stepping out of what was considered proper behaviour at the time with their characters, Langton and Davies stay loyal to the etiquette of the period and maintain Austen's discourse so as to convey the more "period authentic" representation of the story. Nevertheless, both adaptations focus primarily on the romantic relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy and neglect Austen's ironic remarks on marriage and social classes.

4. The letter as a vehicle for self-reflection

The letter that Darcy wrote to Elizabeth (Chapter 35) has great importance because it is the means by which Elizabeth realises her own prejudice and reflects on her actions. When Darcy gives her the letter, she reads it with curiosity, but with extreme prejudice against any explanation he has to offer. When she reads his account of her sister and the events at the Netherfield ball, she becomes angry and regards it as false, but when she reads about Mr Wickham and his dealings with Darcy, her feelings become more difficult to define. After re-reading the letter, however, she starts to think about Mr Wickham and his actions more profoundly, realising dishonest duplicity on Wickham's side:

> How differently did everything now appear in which he was concerned! His attentions to Miss King were now the consequence of views solely and hatefully mercenary. His behaviour to herself could now have had no tolerable motive; he had either been deceived with regard to her fortune, or had been gratifying his vanity by encouraging the preference which she believed she had most incautiously shown (Austen 236).

Her outlook on this situation thus changes radically and the story about Wickham makes her condemn her own actions: "She grew absolutely ashamed of herself. Of neither Darcy nor Wickham could she think without feeling she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd. 'How despicably have I acted!' … 'How humiliating is this discovery!'" (Austen 236) With Elizabeth's concluding sentence: "Till this moment I never knew myself" (Austen 237), the novel showcases Elizabeth's discovery of her own prejudice and her realisation of the error in her own judgement. Consequently, the contents of the letter foster Elizabeth's self-reflection and the change of her opinion of Darcy.

The 1995 miniseries shows Darcy's dealings with Mr Wickham as he is writing the letter. When Elizabeth starts reading it, she seems to be disturbed by Darcy's letter, but is still

mostly angry at his meddling into Jane and Bingley's affairs. The part where he explains his dealings with Wickham which expose her own prejudice surprises her but seems to have no influence on her; consequently, Elizabeth's humiliation and the self-reflection on her own character and actions is omitted from the adaptation. When Darcy continues to explain why he separated Bingley and Jane, Elizabeth feels provoked and makes a number of resentful remarks while reading the letter: "Insufferable presumption! ... Very impartial! … A hateful man!". When she comes to the part where Darcy says that: "there is but one part on which I do not reflect with satisfaction", she bursts out sarcastically: "Really, you astonish me!" ("Episode 4." 00:09:44 – 00:12:40) Through these remarks, Davies conveys the heroine's first angry response to the letter. However, unlike in the novel, Elizabeth's change of opinion and her shame at being the prejudiced one is excluded from the adaptation. Only later does she admit to Jane that she was indeed influenced by the letter saying: "I was very uncomfortable. Till that moment I never knew myself" ("Episode 4." 00:22:44 – 00:22:31). However, this is conveyed in such a manner that it only indicates that she had changed her opinion about Darcy and Wickham, not that she recognised her own fault and weakness that needs to be corrected. As Sørbø (134) suggests: "The 1995 Elizabeth, then, is quite as independently minded as the character of the novel, but rather than moving towards a serious, existential self-confrontation, she seems mostly to be sure of herself". Hence, this version of Elizabeth's character underlines the notion of an idealised "strong independent woman" who does not have to rely on anyone for her self-validation and does not have any faults.

As already mentioned, Wright and Moggach combine the contents of the letter with Darcy's proposal. In the film, the part of the letter about Jane and Bingley was mentioned only in one sentence, since Darcy had explained it all in the first proposal scene. These changes in the adaptation have a different effect on the heroine: all of her anger prompted by Darcy's meddling in her sister's affairs and his insults to her family were expressed during the

proposal itself, so that when she later receives the letter, Elizabeth only reads the true story about Wickham and can dwell only on her own mistakes. She utters no words upon receiving the letter; as we hear Darcy narrate the contents of the letter in the background, Wright places her in front of a mirror where she contemplates her own weaknesses and faults while staring at her own reflection. This is quite a literal representation of Elizabeth's self-reflection, and so when Charlotte suddenly asks her "Are you all right?", she replies with trembling voice: "I hardly know" (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:15:50 – 1:15:59). The insecurity in her voice signals the beginning of Elizabeth's realization of her own prejudice, but the final revelation of her "blindness" comes when she visits Pemberley.

While the 1995 adaptation uses the letter to present the account of Darcy's actions and excludes the humiliation that Elizabeth experienced, the 2005 adaptation stays somewhat loyal to the portrayal of self-reflection, even though it significantly alters the novel's description of it. Therefore, neither of the adaptations completely convey Austen's rendition of the letter or of Elizabeth's recognition of her own flaws and her subsequent transformation.

5. Nature, the Pemberley estate and its significance

The protagonists' estates are of huge importance in Austen's novels: as already mentioned, they put people in certain social classes and determine one's wealth. When Elizabeth sees Pemberley grounds for the first time, she thinks to herself: "And of this place I might have been mistress!" (Austen 276), and we see that the first thoughts of regret for refusing Darcy's offer start emerging, as well as Austen's suggestions at Elizabeth's own mercenary side. In this chapter I will explore how the 1995 miniseries and the 2005 film use Pemberley to express the physical attraction between Darcy and Elizabeth besides conveying her regret and admiration of the Pemberley grounds. Also, I will stress the importance of nature in Austen's novel and how the contemporary adaptations use nature to emphasise gender dynamics in the story. In particular, the focus will be on Wright's adaptation and his use of "pathetic fallacy".

5.1. First thoughts of regret and second thoughts of Darcy

The adaptation by Davies and Langton is characteristic for its added "Darcy scenes". Instead of shortening the plot of the novel and cutting the less relevant scenes, this adaptation enlarges it by adding extra scenes that were not originally in the novel, giving the audience an insight into Darcy's life and his daily activities. According to Sørbø (148), Darcy's swim at the lake and the following confrontation – which is added to the scene of Elizabeth's visit to Pemberley – is probably the most renowned scene in the history of classic adaptation. It is combined and paralleled with the scene where Elizabeth takes the tour of the art collection inside of Pemberley. When Elizabeth enters the picture gallery and the housekeeper shows her Darcy's portrait, the camera focuses on Elizabeth's gaze and only then shows the spectator Darcy's full figure in the picture. The next moment the living Darcy is taking off his clothes. Then the camera focuses on his calm face in the painting and simultaneously shows his disturbed face by the lake. With the accompanying rising music in the background, he takes a

deep breath and dives into the lake. These scenes show Elizabeth's growing attraction and Darcy's attempt to cool his. Her rising interest in Darcy is thus manifested through her gaze and the erotic suggestiveness of the two paralleled actions. This suggestiveness continues in the following scene that leads up to their unexpected meeting. After her tour of the gallery Elizabeth is walking on the grounds and Darcy is, in his wet clothes, walking towards the house, while in the novel he appears from behind the house. This creates another visual parallel of them walking towards each other, both inwardly and physically, intensifying the hidden eroticism of the novel. They are both ignorant of each other's presence and this only enforces their mutual appeal (Sørbø 149). Elizabeth becomes attracted to Darcy because seeing Pemberley allows her to see the new version of Darcy who is not a proud and conceited man. Davies even transforms this into words which are uttered by her aunt: "Perhaps the beauty of the house renders its owner a little less repulsive, Lizzy?" ("Episode 4." 00:40:48 – 00:41:00) to which Elizabeth answers in the affirmative, suggesting to the spectator that she is indeed starting to regret her decision and that she is having second thoughts about Darcy. As they spend more time together at Pemberley, we see the change in their relationship and, since we are given an unprecedented perception into Darcy's life, can assume that his feelings toward Elizabeth have not changed. Because of it, his renewed proposal at the end does not come as a surprise.

Wright's film, on the other hand, focuses exclusively on Elizabeth and her point of view and is, in this respect, similar to the novel. However, Wright's Elizabeth is portrayed as a simple girl who is in awe when she sees Pemberley for the first time: she abruptly stands up, surprised, and then starts to giggle. While Austen's Elizabeth fell in love with the grounds and the nature of Pemberley, Wright takes us immediately into the house, showing the grandeur and the extreme wealth of the estate as we observe the scenery from Elizabeth's perspective – that of the middle-class tourist. Wright also changes Elizabeth's walk through the art gallery,

where she is no longer looking at pictures, but at sculptures. Pictures and portraits become white marble bodies; family pictures are replaced with famous works of art: Canova's *Sleeping Endymion*, Albacini's *Wounded Achilles*, Tadolini's *Hebe*, Bartolini's *A Bacchante* (Grandi 49,50). Although the three-dimensional, naked bodies have unmistakeable erotic connotations, Wright's crucial symbolism lies in spinning the camera around the gallery to frame the sculpture of the *Veiled Vestal Virgin* by Raffaele Monti and Elizabeth's face. Grandi designates the close-up of the "veiled" sculpture and Elizabeth's face as:

> The immediate visual translation of Elizabeth's inability to see and the circular pan with which the camera frames a succession of the faces of the two women suggests a possible identification between them. The statue of the woman whose eyes are covered by a veil makes Elizabeth understand her blindness and prepares her to "see" what is waiting for her at the end of the gallery (50).

Elizabeth's identification with the veiled sculpture conveys her own self-reflection and her inner transformation described by Austen. Her admiration of the Darcy sculpture convinces us now that her feelings have reached the final stage of transformation and that she is starting to fall in love with him. The fact that the whole gallery scene is almost entirely white, unlike the rest of the film, also serves as a visual turning point and indicates a sort of baptismal new beginning (Sørbø 171). Elizabeth is also wearing a white dress in place of her usual brown or gray which serves this visually metaphorical purpose. For Wright, Elizabeth's confrontation with herself comes during her visit to the Pemberley estate and further leads to a development of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship.

The mercenary considerations and views implied by Austen (through Elizabeth's thoughts) are however ignored in both adaptations as they use Pemberley to convey the physical connection and attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy. BBC's adaptation uses the lake scene to stress the newfound eroticism in the story and, even though Wright translates

Elizabeth's first meeting with Pemberley as an epiphany, he uses the sculpture gallery to indicate the importance of physicality in his adaptation.

5.2. The outdoors and the Romantic notions of nature in Wright's adaptation

Since nature and the outdoors represent freedom and escape from the social rules, it is no wonder that Austen's main heroine loves spending time in nature, especially when she wants to be alone – far from the confines of society. Berglund points out that: "Apart from providing fresh air and exercise, the frequent walks constitute a way for the young women to escape the pressure of society and acquire this solitude, which is an absolute necessity for spiritual survival" (214). Langton conveys the importance of nature in his adaptation by showing us how Elizabeth enjoys spending time in nature already at the beginning of the series: we see her walking, running and picking flowers ("Episode 1." 00:01:50 – 00:02:26). After she refused Darcy's offer of marriage and she wants to be alone to reflect upon this event, we can see her again walking and running in the woods the following day, just before he gives her the letter ("Episode 4." 00:08:39 – 00:09:09). When she is sightseeing with the Gardiners, she even acknowledges her astonishment with the landscape saying: "Beautiful!" ("Episode 4." 00:37:26 – 00:37:48) Through these scenes, one can see Elizabeth's connection to the nature and her own finding of inner peace when she is outdoors. Similarly, Wright uses nature to portray Elizabeth's solitude and isolation from the society. This is especially highlighted in her own "isolation scene" – where she is standing on the edge of a cliff and gazing upon the vast landscape below her (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:19:37 – 1:20:21). Through this scene Wright implies that she is an isolated individual but also that she relates to and is similar to nature. Moreover, in Wright's film nature is a sort of an omnipresent spirit that mirrors characters and reflects their emotions – this is known as "pathetic fallacy", strictly defined as "the attribution of human feelings and responses to inanimate things or animals" (The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable). The best example of pathetic fallacy in the film

is the previously mentioned proposal in the rain – the storm reflects the quarrel between Elizabeth and Darcy. Another example finds place immediately after Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth and she and her mother start running away towards the lake while geese are running with them. Geese here quite literally mirror Mrs Bennet's behaviour, but they also signify the constant mayhem in the Bennet household with Mrs Bennet at its head (*Pride and Prejudice* 00:49:55 – 00:50:00). Another animal that echoes human behaviour is a parrot. When Elizabeth visits Lady Catherine de Bourgh with Charlotte and Mr Collins, Lady Catherine is dominant and imperious in every conversation and, unless she was the one who initiated the conversation, interrupts anyone else who tries to talk. The parrot who is squawking in the background and thus hindering the discourse resembles Lady Catherine's behaviour (*Pride and Prejudice* 1:02:18 – 1:02:55). By using pathetic fallacy, Wright mocks improper behaviours of some characters, but most importantly underlines the unity between characters and nature, which lies at the core of the Romantics' ideas regarding nature.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, Davies and Langton render a period-specific version of the novel, while Wright and Moggach offer a new Romantic perspective on the story. However, both of these contemporary adaptations foreground Elizabeth and Darcy's romantic relationship through the modification of Austen's discourse and various symbols and motifs, but fail to convey most of the novel's ironic critique of the society. Fordyce's *Sermons* are hardly mentioned in the adaptations, so Austen's critique of people who regard novels as irrelevant is non-existent, and the community's shifting opinions are only translated through the complaints of Mrs Bennet, so there is no presence of the critique of the community as a whole.

Wright and Davies do touch upon the topic of women's roles in the society by conveying the novel's critique of the limitations experienced by women in the period and the suggestions on the importance of education for women. Also, the adaptations use dance to stress the (in)compatibilities of the characters and the development of Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship, and they use the symbol of hands to allude to their physicality. Through the character of Charlotte Lucas, a woman who abides by society's rules, Davies portrays a placid young woman who does not wish to be romantic, but only wants to get married and Wright presents a woman who realises she is not in the position where she could choose to be romantic, so she eventually gets what she wants. In both adaptations she is contrasted with Elizabeth, who refuses to marry a man she does not love.

Darcy's proposal is dramatized more freely in the 2005 film, while Davies and Langton remain loyal to Austen's text and the surroundings described in the novel. However, the romantic relationship still remains the main focus. While Wright somewhat indicates Elizabeth's self-reflection and a harsh critique of herself presented in the novel after reading Darcy's letter through the use of the mirror, Davies and Langton make no room in their adaptation for Elizabeth's humiliation and she is portrayed as an independent woman with no

regrets, so the novel's suggestions of her being "a part of the flock" are lost. Finally, when portraying Elizabeth's amazement with the Pemberley estate, both adaptations connect Pemberley and its grounds to the physical attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy and they use nature as a mirror of characters' behaviour and to emphasise Elizabeth's isolation.

Even though the 1995 adaptation may seem like the one that is more period specific and loyal to Austen's text, it adds a whole new "Darcy perspective" which changes the novel's point of view, shifting its primary focus from Elizabeth and her desire for a marriage for love. On the other hand, while introducing the Romantic ideas more openly and being more lenient with the conversion of Austen's discourse, Wright and Moggach's adaptation dramatizes the novel by focusing exclusively on Elizabeth and her point of view, and is in this respect more in line with Austen's depiction of Elizabeth. Nevertheless, both adaptations omit the biting representations of hypocritical society presented in Austen's novel and concentrate on the romantic relationship, focusing on the idea of love overcoming all obstacles instead of on the representation of the economic realities of the time, which were the primary focus of the novel.

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