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**Jane Austen from Page to Screen: How Current Society and *Pride and Prejudice* have  
Shaped *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Mansfield Park* on Film**

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Abstract of the Thesis

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While Jane Austen's novels were published over two hundred years ago, her stories continue to captivate audiences through print and the screen. There seems to be a growing tradition of adapting certain novels, such as *Pride and Prejudice*, over other ones like, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Mansfield Park*. In this paper I explore how the former three novels differ from *Pride and Prejudice* from their heroines and heroes to the romantic relationships between the two protagonists. Then I take into consideration the large impact of Colin Firth's Mr. Darcy in influencing Austen's other heroes such as Captain Wentworth, Henry Tilney and Edward Bertram, by giving them more emotions and love speeches. All of these elements help prove why these three novels are often adapted less frequently than the forever popular *Pride and Prejudice*.

**Table of Contents**

**Acknowledgments v**

**Jane Austen from Page to Screen: How Current Society and *Pride and Prejudice* have  
Shaped *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Mansfield Park* on Film 1**

***Northanger Abbey* 4**

***Persuasion* 11**

***Mansfield Park* 17**

**Film Adaptation 23**

**The Emotional Mr. Darcy 29**

**Additional Male Scenes 31**

**Professing of Love 35**

**Conclusion 39**

**Bibliography**

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## **Jane Austen from Page to Screen: How Current Society and *Pride and Prejudice* have Shaped *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Mansfield Park* on Film**

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that at least once a decade, a Jane Austen novel will be made into a film and more importantly that the novel chosen will be her most popular, *Pride and Prejudice*. Although Austen's novels were published some two hundred years ago, they continue to find an appeal with today's audience. Men and women alike wish they could travel back in time to Jane Austen's era, where people appeared more polite and life more orderly. Filmmakers have found a way to profit from this dream by using the screen and transporting its viewers to the Regency era.

The films created within the past twenty years range from costume dramas to modern adaptations of Austen's narratives. There have even been films that immerse modern-day women into Austen's universe. One of these is Dan Zeff's 2008, *Lost in Austen*, which shows what can happen when an overly enthusiastic Jane Austen fan finds herself face to face with Elizabeth Bennet and trades places with her. A similar film is Jerusha Hess' 2013 *Austenland*, based on Shannon Hale's novel, which follows a young American woman who attends an Austen resort in England where she dresses up as if she were a character in one of the novels. Both of these protagonists are obsessed with Andrew Davies' 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice*, chiefly because of Colin Firth's portrayal of Mr. Darcy. This iconic version of *Pride and Prejudice* is what put Austen on the map in the 90s and several directors have tried to emulate it, whether by another *Pride and Prejudice* film or an adaptation of another Austen novel. These films show Austen fans what they dream of doing, which is escape into the world of Austen's characters and walk among them.

Jane Austen's novels have become so popular over the last hundred years that people



dedicate their lives to the study of her stories, whether they do so in academia or at home for pleasure. Even those unfamiliar with Jane Austen's work recognize the title *Pride and Prejudice* and the name of Mr. Darcy. While *Pride and Prejudice* is one of Austen's most popular novels, it is not her only one. There seems to be a growing tradition of adapting some of Austen's works, while pushing others to the side. The question is why does this continue to happen and why does it happen at all.

Jane Austen wrote six novels in her lifetime, though two of them, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, were only published after her death. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma* are currently adapted repeatedly on screen and in print. Her three other novels, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Mansfield Park*, however, are not as popular and have been adapted for the screen only a few times. All three have captivating stories about maturing, finding love, and being happy, just like their predecessors, but they have not been given a chance to prove themselves because spectators are expecting another version of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, despite the many versions in existence. In this paper I intend to explore why these three novels often become altered when made into film, specifically in the romantic relationship between the hero and the heroine and in the portrayal of the new "emotional" hero in order to resemble *Pride and Prejudice*. To do this I will first analyze each text looking at the heroines, heroes and forms of love used in the narratives as well as their endings. In order to fully appreciate and analyze the films spectators must be familiar with the texts to see how different they are from the more successful model of Austen's fiction, *Pride and Prejudice*. Spectators should begin with *Northanger Abbey* and be aware of the controversy about whether Austen would have wanted her early Gothic satire published. They need to understand how this piece of fiction is a satire on the Gothic novel, which differs drastically from the plot and

characters of *Pride and Prejudice*. The romantic relationship between the innocent Catherine Morland and the literate Henry Tilney shows young love and how an Austen hero does not need to embody Darcy's seriousness. *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice* contain several similarities in their texts, one specifically is how both Elizabeth and Anne refuse two marriage proposals. *Persuasion* shows how friendship and time can make the heart grow fonder. The specific sections from Captain Wentworth's point of view foreshadow filmmakers' attention to the male character's perspective. *Mansfield Park* differs the most from *Pride and Prejudice*, and yet directors continually make Fanny Price an outspoken heroine so that she resembles Elizabeth Bennet. Readers who are familiar with the text will recall how Mary Crawford embodies characteristics of the stereotypical Austen heroines such as Elizabeth Bennet or Emma Woodhouse. A close reading of the beginning of the novel reminds readers of the types of marriages that occur at this time and how unromantic they are. The lack of romance between Fanny and Edmund does not look promising for the central couple, forcing filmmakers to make some changes. After a thorough discussion of these elements in the novels, I will discuss what is considered an accurate novel-to-screen adaptation and how modern society plays a big part in the way the novel gets changed. Then I will look at the iconic portrayal of Colin Firth's Mr. Darcy and compare how filmmakers try to give his attributes to other Austen heroes by creating additional scenes of manly emotion as well as professions of love.

## Northanger Abbey

*Northanger Abbey* is one of the first novels Jane Austen wrote and several scholars see it as the work of a young Austen “defining the parameters of her craft” (Mac Adam xiii). She began writing in the fall of 1798 and by 1803 had a manuscript titled “Susan” (Mac Adam xiii). In his introduction to the Barnes and Noble edition of *Northanger Abbey*, Professor Alfred Mac Adam states that, “in an 1817 letter, [Austen] rather flippantly remarks, ‘Miss Catherine is put upon the shelve for the present, and I do not know that she will ever come out’” (xiii). Austen herself did not believe she would see her “Susan” in print, and yet after her death her brother published this manuscript and renamed it *Northanger Abbey*. This posthumous publication poses the question whether Austen would have wanted this manuscript to be published at all. I pose that question to stress that both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* began as different manuscripts, “Elinor and Marianne” and “First Impressions,” but these originals were never published, which shows that Austen edited them. It is possible that she did not get a chance to do as much for *Northanger Abbey*, but we will never know. Mac Adam ponders that “Austen *may* have changed the 1803 text when she recovered it a decade later, but we cannot know to what extent because no manuscript exists” (xiii). He does not stress the word “may,” but it is important to note that this is a speculative remark, though it could be very true.

The question whether *Northanger Abbey* should have been published becomes relevant when one considers the ending and the deus ex machina device of Eleanor’s romantic relationship with the Viscount. The entrance of the Viscount allows for a happy ending for both Eleanor Tilney and the central couple of Catherine and Henry, but it seems too easy. Mac Adam clarifies this ending by stating that “Because Austen is writing with a comic view of society, her protagonist, Catherine Morland, will triumph, even if this means her author must resort to a deus

ex machina to extricate her from her dilemma” (xxv). This type of ending could explain the unpopularity of the novel, compared to *Pride and Prejudice*, because it seems rushed and things are fixed in a very odd manner. Henry Tilney appears too understanding and perfect of a man when he accepts Catherine’s apology for accusing his father of bringing about his mother’s death. This sudden acceptance seems highly unrealistic for his character. Unfortunately scholars cannot go back in time and ask Austen if she would have altered the final manuscript of *Northanger Abbey*, particularly where this matter is concerned.

*Northanger Abbey* has only been adapted into film twice and arguably the movies generated are not that accurate (a further discussion about film accuracy as a criterion for film adaptations to be discussed later), yet the protagonist, Catherine Morland, still resembles the reader who wishes to escape into the world of a novel. In order to do so she redesigns her world to resemble fiction, which sounds very similar to what current Jane Austen fans do every time they read an Austen novel or watch a film. Readers should easily identify with Catherine, yet there is a generational gap. In order for 21<sup>st</sup> century readers to understand the world of *Northanger Abbey* they must take a moment and do some research about the literature of that time. On doing so they will realize that Austen’s work is a satire on the Gothic novels of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Like her fellow satirists of the time, Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, and Henry Fielding, Austen “deploys ironic and humorous stereotypes in *Northanger Abbey*, especially when she delineates important secondary figures, usually duplicitous or morally questionable characters, such as Isabella and John Thorpe or General Tilney” (Mac Adam xiii). These characters do not show much depth so “rather than explain their thoughts or motives, Austen theatrically uses their speeches and actions to reveal their shallowness and egoism” (Mac Adam xiv). This is apparent, for instance, when Isabella keeps talking about how stupid men are and

says she wants to be left alone, yet evidently knows where to go in order to catch up with them: ““And which way are they gone?” said Isabella, turning hastily round. ‘One was a very good-looking young man’” (*Northanger Abbey* 37). Her brother, John Thorpe, is just as egotistical because he is barely willing to listen to anyone else talk. The reader never learns how these characters truly feel because of their flatness, which makes it easier to love the siblings one minute and hate them the next. Meanwhile it is “Austen’s heroine, Catherine Morland, who embodies the novelistic spirit: She possesses the evolving personality and matures *as if she were real*” (Mac Adam xiv italics).

*Northanger Abbey* is a satire on two kinds of novels, the Gothic novel and the True novel. In Austen’s day, the Gothic novel was extremely popular and she writes *Northanger Abbey* in defense of the novel, to show it can go beyond the Gothic. The Gothic novel is the genre read with delight by Catherine, Isabella and even Henry Tilney. This type of genre “seeks to arouse the irrational in the reader” using fear, horror, amazement or dread just to achieve its goal (Mac Adam xv). The settings of these novels “are often haunted castles located in remote forests” and the plot is “strong on action and setting, but weak in character development and plausibility” (Mac Adam xvi). This was a form of popular literature at the time whose “appeal [was] broad and not directed to highly literary and, presumably, refined reading public” (Mac Adam xvi). One of the novels Catherine reads, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, was extremely popular. Her work inspired other Gothic writers such as Matthew Gregory Lewis who wrote *The Monk*, another novel Catherine is shown reading. The success of Radcliffe not only inspired writers to write like her, but also led writers like Austen to criticize the Gothic. At this time readers would be familiar with *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and could see the similarities between that text and *Northanger Abbey*. Today that connection is not so readily made. G.K.

Chesterton shows that this assumption could already be made in his time when he states, “Those ingenious moderns...have swallowed all the solemnities of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and never even seen the joke of *Northanger Abbey*” (Mac Adam 249).

Meanwhile the True novel “seeks to give us the inner lives of ordinary people who evolve over time, like [the] societies in which they live” (Mac Adam xvi). Even though Catherine is obsessed with the Gothic novel and wishes her life to become one, she is in fact living in a True novel. As readers, we watch her mature from an eighteen year old innocent into a young woman who eventually gets married. Waldo S. Glock speaks of Catherine as a “heroine of modern life” because “she embarks on life, the author tells us, under ‘unpromising auspices,’ with neither the accomplishments nor the expectations of a true heroine” (36). He even goes as far to say that she stands for an “ordinary woman of the nineteenth century, a creature of flesh and blood comically presented in such commonplace circumstances as to assume a symbolic status representing all those unknown persons whose lives will be uneventful, desperate and tedious” (Glock 36-37). Mac Adam points out that it is not until Henry Tilney “shows her how foolish she is” (xvi) that she begins to behave like a character in a True novel rather than being “spellbound by gothic romance” (xvi). *Northanger Abbey* begins with “Austen [flaunting] the insignificance of Catherine Morland in order to draw a parallel between her close focus on the ordinary, provincial people, and the heroic world of epic and chivalric romance” (Mac Adam xviii). The novel begins with the sentence, “No one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in her infancy would have supposed her born to be a heroine,” (*Northanger* 7). Here the narrator seems to be questioning Catherine’s appropriateness as a main character before she has been introduced. But as Mac Adam points out, Austen is showing a clear distinction between the books Catherine likes and the one the reader is currently reading. Glock supports this view by

saying that the Gothic scenes at Northanger “emphasize by contrast that Catherine cannot find happiness in fantasy and romantic retreat from reality” (38). She has to be satisfied and accept the “general ordinariness of life, as epitomized by the witty and original, yet totally unromantic Henry Tilney” (Gluck 38).

Catherine Morland can be argued to be the most innocent and naïve of Austen’s heroines because of her young age. Her extreme youthful tendencies are exaggerated and therefore force her to believe everything people say, allowing her imagination to get carried away until it has gone too far. An example of her blurring the line between reality and fantasy is when she appears to speak about the horrors in London, but in reality is just talking about a new book arriving at the library. She also imagines the Abbey to resemble something right out of one of her Gothic novels and is disappointed when she sees it is actually quite modern. These are all harmless mistakes until she suspects General Tilney of foul play and of having caused his wife’s death. On this matter she has gone too far, and yet this false accusation helps her to grow and develop. It is Catherine’s expulsion from Northanger that “symbolizes the sudden and almost traumatic experience of maturing, of losing her innocence” (Gluck 43). When she leaves “this paradise of the imagination” and returns to reality she is ready to “acquire that experience of the wholeness of life without which common sense and pure imagination are equally futile” (Gluck 46). All of Austen’s heroines undergo a change and moment of realization, but Catherine experiences the most radical transformation. While it has been established that the narrator is not criticizing her, it is difficult to admire Catherine when she is described as never learning “or understand[ing] anything before she was taught; and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid” (*Northanger* 8). Elizabeth Bennet or Emma Woodhouse would not be described in this fashion. Elizabeth Bennet is very headstrong and stands up for what she

believes in, while Emma acts confidently before she has all the facts. Catherine is unlike either of these heroines because she has yet to understand who she is and to find herself away from home, on a visit to Bath. Not only is she coming to terms with her identity, she is also adapting to a new location. Mac Adam describes Bath as “a place of temptation and deception” adding that Catherine’s “childhood innocence [is] left at Fullerton” (xx). Bath is the place where Catherine learns the love of reading from Isabella Thorpe and that sets up her later “delusions” at the Abbey. Catherine is at a very impressionable stage in her life and the combination of literature and the Thorpes is not a good one. It is fortunate that Henry Tilney is there to serve as a teacher and love interest, in a very Knightley fashion.

When the reader first meets Henry Tilney he resembles a prince charming or a fictional hero from one of Catherine’s novels. He first appears when she needs a dance partner and gallantly saves her from loneliness at a party. Once Catherine begins to spend time with the Thorpes, Henry Tilney is nowhere to be found, yet when she needs him he appears by her side. Even though he is fictional, he seems too good to be true for the reader to accept as a compatible mate for the realistic Catherine because he is an embodiment of the heroes she reads about. She first meets him in the Lower Rooms when she is paired to dance with him and there we learn that he appears to be, “about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very intelligent and lively eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it” (*Northanger* 19). All of these traits are positive, but the last one is particularly interesting: “if not quite handsome, [he] was very near it.” This phrasing could relate back to the satiric formula of the novel, but it can also indicate Catherine’s view of Henry. She has not been in contact with many men outside of her family, so to her Tilney is handsome or what she believes to be handsome. This lack of experience once again shows her innocence and young age. It could also be Austen’s way of



telling us that Henry Tilney is not as handsome as some of her other male protagonists. If this description is taken literally, then he may be more human and ordinary, making him a good match for Catherine.

Mr. Tilney is introduced in chapter three of the novel, long before Catherine meets the Thorpes. After she meets them he can no longer be found and this makes her find him more attractive and interesting: “This sort of mysteriousness, which is always so becoming in a hero, threw a fresh grace in Catherine’s imagination around his person and manners, and increased her anxiety to know more of him” (*Northanger* 30). Perhaps if Tilney were around for a longer stretch of the novel, Catherine would not like him as much as she does. He fulfills several literary requirements with his character. He arouses Catherine’s imagination by his disappearance, but he continues to do so when he takes her to the Abbey. He jokes with her and asks, “And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as ‘what one reads about’ may produce?-Have you a stout heart?-Nerves fit for sliding panels and tapestry?” (*Northanger* 148). Here Tilney plays off the question Catherine has previously asked him when she wants to know whether Northanger Abbey “is not a fine old place, just like what one reads about?” (*Northanger* 147). He decides to take it upon himself to work on her imagination and play a little joke on her. He is capable of seeing that it is a joke, but Catherine believes his every word. This shows that he could be a good influence on her if he talked to her seriously. Sue Parrill describes Mr. Tilney as “probably the wittiest of Jane Austen’s male characters” (179). She believes his behavior makes him resemble such men as Frank Churchill or Henry Crawford rather than “the other good guys of Austen’s novels who tend to be serious and stodgy” (Parrill 179). This once again puts Henry Tilney in a category all by himself. He is the hero to Catherine in the novel, and thus proves that not all heroes need to have Mr. Darcy’s seriousness.

## Persuasion

While *Northanger Abbey* was one of the first manuscripts Jane Austen worked on, *Persuasion* is known to have been her last. While critics say that *Northanger Abbey* shows a young Austen beginning her craft, *Persuasion* shows a more mature Austen reflecting on her life. Susan Ostrov Weisser states that *Persuasion* “has often been seen as the thinking reader’s *Pride and Prejudice*” (xiii). This is an interesting remark because of the impact that *Pride and Prejudice* has had on other Austen novels as well as films. Weisser’s comment suggests that *Persuasion* may be intended for the mature reader, which is fitting because its heroine too is the oldest of all the previous Austen protagonists. In her novel, *Jane Austen the Novelist*, Juliet McMaster speaks about how people take Catherine, Marianne, Elizabeth and Emma as the “essential Austen model” and how they “forget that Elinor, Fanny and Anne are also heroines” (72). She states that these three women have “less to learn, because they have the right principles from the beginning; but each has a significant progress nonetheless” (McMaster 72). This idea of being “forgotten” is essential to *Persuasion* and to Anne Elliot, who is not mentioned in the first paragraph of the novel. She is merely a background character in the beginning and this is shown by the early description of her father:

“Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up a book but the Baronetage, there he found occupation for an idle hour, and consolation in a distressed one; there his faculties were roused into admiration and respect, by contemplating the limited remnant of the earliest patents; there any unwelcome sensations, arising from domestic affairs, changed naturally into pity and contempt, as he turned over the almost endless creations of the last century and there, if every other leaf were powerless, he could read his own history with an interest which never failed-this was the page at which the favorite volume always opened: ELLIOT OF KELLYNCH HALL” (*Persuasion* 3).

Many of Austen’s works do not begin with the main character, but this detailed passage makes it appear that Sir Walter Elliot will be the main character of *Persuasion*. This lengthy statement shows his character and the interest he focuses on himself. It is also ironic that his “favorite

volume” opens at “Elliot of Kellynch-Hall” as he must lease his most prized home in the first chapter. Only in the next short paragraph do we learn that he has three daughters and that his wife has passed away. While Anne Elliot will be the main character, the reader barely knows anything about her at this point. She rarely speaks, yet Lady Russell goes to her for advice. Her early description is somewhat similar to that of Catherine Morland: “A few years before, Anne Elliot had been a very pretty girl, but her bloom had vanished early; and [...] even in its height, her father had found little to admire in her, (so totally different were her delicate features and mild dark eyes from his own);” (*Persuasion* 5). Here the major difference between Catherine and Anne’s characterizations is that Anne is old. While twenty-six may not seem that old today it was during Austen’s time. There are constantly moments in the novel where she is worried she is no longer the young woman Wentworth knew earlier on. Anne is at a different stage of life, where she no longer hopes to marry and may instead expect to become an old maid who looks after her sister’s children. Ann Molan argues that “Anne Elliot is very much alone in her world, more than most of the other Austen heroines” (148) and that is due to her age. While the other heroines are just beginning their lives out in the world, “Anne’s life is closing down, its horizons becoming narrow and unexpandable” (Molan 128). The description of her features is also interesting because once again it gets redirected to her father. The readers are trying to find out more about Anne and instead they are told that Sir Walter has difficulty finding anything to admire in his daughter because her features are so radically different from his own. It is obvious that he is obsessed with image, but this focus is upsetting when it makes him look down on his own daughter. Anne does not come from a supportive family like her fellow protagonists in *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, or *Emma*. Weisser points out that while “Anne Elliot is not an only child,” her sisters “are monsters of selfishness and either ignore her shamefully or

use her shamelessly” (xxvii). She has no one to confide in besides Lady Russell, who does not always give her the best advice.

Anne speaks in chapter three for the first time and the narrator makes sure to bring attention to it. Before she speaks we are told, “Here Anne spoke,-” (*Persuasion* 19) which highlights this decisive moment. This phrase prepares the reader for what is about to come and is even on a line by itself, the text skipping to a new paragraph where she actually states, “The navy, I think, who have done so much for us, have at least an equal claim with any other set of men, for all the comforts and all the privileges which any home can give” (*Persuasion* 19). Here she defends the navy, while her father has previously disparaged it. So while Anne barely speaks she does not mind standing up to her father, and this says something about her character. It also shows that she might have some previous experience with the navy, but that is not yet revealed.

While Anne might not speak as often as some other Austen heroines, she still does what she believes is right and follows her heart. She has learned from her previous mistake when she refused Wentworth and now decides things for herself. Much as Elizabeth Bennet turns down two different marriage proposals in *Pride and Prejudice*, one to Mr. Collins and another to Darcy, Anne dismisses a couple of suitors. First, she is persuaded by Lady Russell not to marry Wentworth when she is nineteen, and she later turns down Charles Musgrove’s offer of marriage. This second marriage proposal is relayed by Louisa Musgrove to Wentworth as they are going for a walk. Louisa states, “We do so wish that Charles had married Anne instead.-I suppose you know he wanted to marry Anne?” (*Persuasion* 84). Of course this comes as a shock to both the reader and Wentworth who replies “after a moment’s pause, ‘Do you mean that she refused him?’” (*Persuasion* 84). That phrase “after a moment’s pause” is crucial because it shows how shocked he is to hear this news as well as the fact that he may still have feelings for Anne and

that Anne might still have feelings for him. Louisa tells him her family believes it was Lady Russell's doing and that because "Charles might not be learned and bookish enough...she persuaded Anne to refuse him" (*Persuasion* 84). This is ironic because this situation is similar to Wentworth's, but of course Louisa does not know that, only the central couple and the reader do. The difference between Charles Musgrove and Wentworth is not that Wentworth was uneducated, but rather his profession and low status. The two rejections have Lady Russell to thank for intervening. While Anne is like Elizabeth Bennet who eventually marries one of the men she originally turned down, her situation is different because she would gladly have married Wentworth in the past. She already loved him and, unlike Darcy, Wentworth did not have to prove himself a changed man. Anne loved him for who he was; she was just persuaded not to marry him by her closest friend because of his social rank. It is also different because at the time Charles Musgrove proposed to her she had already given her heart to someone else. Elizabeth Bennet was not in love with Darcy when she turned down Mr. Collins. Despite the different circumstances, there are similarities between these two women, which supports Weisser's earlier statement that *Persuasion* is the thinking reader's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Captain Frederick Wentworth is the first hero to have a history with the protagonist, other than *Emma*'s Mr. Knightley, but these two characters differ because Knightley is an older, authoritative figure, who does not have a romantic past with Emma, but rather plays a fatherly role. Wentworth, however, shares this type of past with Anne, even though the two did not end on the best of terms. They more than likely did not believe they would ever see each other again. McMaster states that "in *Persuasion* Anne and Wentworth don't fall in love quite at first sight, but once acquainted, they are rapidly and deeply in love. And Anne's first love is to be also her only love" (118). Here, in contrast with the other Austen novels, the reader is not shown their

first encounter and how they fell in love in the past. Chapter four, offers background on Captain Wentworth and Anne's previous engagement, but that is it. Despite this lack of information their love story is just as powerful, or arguably even more so. They both hold onto those past feelings, but neither one feels comfortable to take that first step towards the other.

The past involvement between Anne and Wentworth allows the narrator to get into Wentworth's mind, which has not been done before in any of Austen's novels. Usually the narrative follows the heroine, but here there are instances where Wentworth's inner feelings are alluded to. This is a very interesting device because today's screenwriters and directors are still using it in their renditions of Austen. They give scenes to the male characters to show they have emotions too and this all begins with Wentworth in *Persuasion*. The first time the reader gets his perspective is after Anne hears that Wentworth has called her altered:

“Frederick Wentworth had used such words, or something like them, but without an idea that they would be carried round to her. He had thought her wretchedly altered, and, in the first moment of appeal, had spoken as he felt. He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a febleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity” (*Persuasion* 58-59).

So, at first, Wentworth calls Anne altered because of her looks like she believes. The two have not seen each other in seven years so physical change was bound to happen, even though Anne states he has not changed. While her physical looks have altered, Wentworth is still plagued by the events that occurred between them and thinks about how her character has changed as well. Anne is no longer the woman he knew because of the way she turned him down. It is also important to look at the way he is rationalizing in this passage. For one thing he does not remember the words he used, when he thinks of them, and he did not want her to hear that he called her such things, “but without an idea that they would be carried round to her” (*Persuasion* 58). Here he gives almost a Mr. Darcy-like first impression in expressing himself without getting

all of the facts. He spoke in the heat of the moment with all of the feelings he had been holding on to for seven years.

However, there is no allusion here to the fact that Wentworth is still in love with Anne.

That is not revealed until he speaks to his sister about the type of woman he would like to marry:

“Yes, here I am, Sophia, quite ready to make a foolish match. Anybody between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man. Should not this be enough for a sailor, who has had no society among women to make him nice?” He said it, she knew, to be contradicted. His bright, proud eye spoke the happy conviction that he was nice; and Anne Elliot was not out of his thoughts, when he more seriously described the woman he should wish to meet with. ‘A strong mind, with sweetness of manner,’ made the first and the last of the description” (*Persuasion* 59).

While he is describing the type of woman he would like to have as his future wife, he automatically describes Anne. This observation occurs only a few paragraphs after the previous one about being so furious with Anne and how much she has altered. Despite that quick outburst, Wentworth still comes to the conclusion that he wishes to be with her. This brings suspense to the novel because the readers are “in the privileged position of knowing that Captain Wentworth is also increasingly attracted to Anne,” and “spend much of this novel watching unacknowledged worth in the process of being discovered, the neglected cared for, the invisible made visible” (Weisser xxxiv). The process of the couple finding out about each other’s feelings is more exciting than knowing whether they are still in love with one another.

## **Mansfield Park**

The third novel that is underappreciated and often altered when being made into a film is *Mansfield Park*. Unlike the previous two works mentioned, *Mansfield Park* was not published after Jane Austen's death, but is her third novel to appear in her lifetime. It was published after *Pride and Prejudice*, but could not be more different from that text. Lionel Trilling states that *Mansfield Park* appeared one year "after the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, and no small part of its interest derives from the fact that it seems to controvert everything that its predecessor tells us about life" (211). While *Pride and Prejudice* "celebrates the traits of spiritedness, vivacity, celerity, and lightness, and associates them with happiness and virtue" *Mansfield Park* chooses "not to forgive, but to condemn" (Trilling 211). He further argues that the message of *Mansfield Park* is not one of social freedom, but of social stasis. Despite all of these differences, recent adaptations of the film make Fanny Price, one of Austen's most selfless and shy protagonists, mirror the spirited Elizabeth Bennet. They replace the very different Fanny with the familiar Lizzie because they know that is what spectators like. It is speculated that in Austen's time, this novel was not well received because it differed so greatly from her previous works and as a response Austen published *Emma* two years later. Today readers continue to have strong opinions about *Mansfield Park* and either love or loathe it. This could be because the story is not just a typical love story, like the two novels published before it. Although recent adaptations continue to focus on love and marriage, the book also brings up issues of politics, social mobility and morality. Austen's other novels also touch on these subjects, but *Mansfield Park* appears to be the novel that addresses them more seriously.

In *Mansfield Park* we once again have a novel where the title is a place, much like *Northanger Abbey*, but unlike that novel, most of the time is actually spent at Mansfield Park, whereas Northanger Abbey was the setting of the second volume only. In a way the house is



almost like another character. When Amanda Claybaugh describes the house she states that “outward appearances have become dangerously unmoored from inward realities” (xxii).

Mansfield Park is supposed to be a beautiful estate, but much work actually needs to be done to keep it up. From afar it looks perfect, but as one gets closer the imperfections come into view. This premise also applies to the characters who inhabit the house as well as to the visitors, who appear one way but have a different personality underneath. Characters are often deceived by others due to attraction, all except Fanny Price.

Fanny is rarely considered the favorite Austen heroine because she is the farthest from the Austen stereotype. She is extremely passive; for most of the novel she is sickly and weak and simply hides in the background. Other than being a moral outlet for Edmund she does not need to be present for the actions of the story to take place, yet from the beginning she is the catalyst of all the action in the novel. Claybaugh explains that “*Mansfield Park* is unique among Austen’s novels for beginning when its heroine is still a young girl” (xvi). The novel opens when Fanny is ten years old, and the reader watches her grow up quickly. There is a time lapse similar to the one in *Persuasion*, but in this novel readers see Fanny as a child among her cousins, whereas in *Persuasion* they are only informed of past events by the present characters. Also as in *Persuasion*, *Mansfield Park* shows the social, business-like transactions of getting married during this time. Right at the start of chapter one we learn that Miss Maria Ward, “had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet’s lady, with all the comforts and consequences of a handsome house and large income” (Austen 3). There is no mention of true affection between the couple in this opening sentence. The word “captivate” suggests attraction, but not mutual affection. The narrator shows that Maria (the future Lady Bertram) is more concerned with the

title that comes with the union. The phrase “had the good luck” suggests that she was in the right place at the right time. As for her other two sisters: “Miss Ward, at the end of half a dozen years, found herself obliged to be attached to the Rev. Mr. Norris, a friend of her brother-in-law, with scarcely any private fortune, and Miss Frances fared yet worse” (Austen 3). Mrs. Norris finds herself “obliged to be attached,” which shows her feelings towards her husband, while Fanny’s mother, Frances, “fared yet worse” because she chose love over a business transaction. Right at the beginning of the novel, *Mansfield Park* shows the realities of marrying for love in a time when love was not always an option. Fanny’s mother chose love and wound up with “a large and still increasing family, a husband disabled for active service, but not the less equal to company and good liquor, and a very small income to supply their wants” (Austen 4). The choice of marrying for love forces Fanny’s mother to send her daughter off to Mansfield Park to have a better life than her parents can provide.

Unfortunately, her mother’s sentimental idea of a better life is unduly optimistic. Before Fanny reaches Mansfield Park, she is already being judged by the other family members. Mrs. Norris states, “I don’t think she would be so handsome as her cousins” (Austen 6). She has not seen the young girl and already she shows a dislike for her. These are grown adults yet their opinions resemble those of the young children in the house. Mrs. Norris states, “though I could never feel for this little girl the hundredth part of the regard I bear your own dear children, nor consider her, in any respect, so much my own, I should hate myself if I were capable of neglecting her” (Austen 7). Fanny is still Mrs. Norris’ niece, but because of her social status Mrs. Norris will not take her to her bosom as she does Maria and Julia. Fanny will remain a charity case for her because she is presented as a duty and therefore a burden to the rest of the family. Sir Thomas states,

“Should her disposition be really bad, we must not, for our children’s sake, continue her in the family; but there is no reason to expect so great an evil. We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions, and very distressing vulgarity of manner; but these are not incurable faults; nor I trust, can they be dangerous for her associates” (Austen 9).

This statement by Sir Thomas shows the power he holds over Fanny, even before she makes her way to Mansfield and onto the page. He controls whether she stays or leaves and this power remains with him for the duration of the novel. No matter how many years she resides at Mansfield, Fanny will always be a visitor. Sir Thomas speaks of getting rid of Fanny for the children’s sake, if her disposition is really bad, but she is part of the family, by blood, whether they want her there or not.

Just as Anne is introduced later in *Persuasion*, Fanny makes her first appearance in chapter two and is still unnamed in the opening line: “The little girl performed her long journey in safety” (Austen 11). The absence of her name already shows she is in the background, even though her arrival triggers the action of the novel. As with Catherine Morland and Anne Elliot, Fanny’s physical description is not flattering, even for such a young girl:

“Fanny Price was at this time just ten years old, and though there might not be much in her first appearance to captivate, there was, at least, nothing to disgust her relations. She was small of her age, with no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty; exceedingly timid and shy, and shrinking from notice; but her air, though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke her countenance was pretty” (Austen 11).

Despite the negative phrases about her appearance, the above description does give Fanny hope. She might not be the most beautiful, but she is young, therefore things can change and her first appearance does not “disgust her relations” who were clearly expecting worse. As a child Fanny makes a long journey by herself, but once she gets to Mansfield she barely leaves the grounds. While Edmund goes to school at Oxford, she remains behind and becomes a companion to Mrs. Norris and Lady Bertram. She almost moves in with Mrs. Norris, but then that plan is quickly altered. When the

move is suggested, Edmund wonders whether Fanny's demeanor would change if she lived with Mrs. Norris: "*Here*, there are too many whom you can hide behind; but with *her* you will be forced to speak for yourself" (Austen 24). He suggests that if Fanny did move in with Mrs. Norris she might become less timid. Unfortunately neither Edmund nor the reader will ever know if that change would have made a difference, because the move does not happen. Even if her personality had changed she would never have become like the outspoken Mary Crawford. Amanda Claybaugh and several other scholars argue that Mary Crawford resembles the model of a true Austen heroine (xiii). She is lively and outspoken, especially when trying to change Edmund's mind about becoming a clergyman. Mary is like Elizabeth Bennet who "banter[s] archly with the man she is falling in love with, and like Elizabeth, she must learn to set aside her preconceptions in order to recognize that love" (Claybaugh xiii). She is also like Emma Woodhouse who "speaks more brilliantly and speculates more dazzlingly than anyone around her," but "must learn to rein in the wit that tempts her at times to impropriety" (Claybaugh xiii). While she resembles these Austen heroines she is actually the villain of the novel, along with her brother Henry Crawford. They pose a threat to the stability of Mansfield Park, because they are two Londoners who travel to the country and undermine everything the house stands for.

Fanny and Edmund's marriage continues to be an issue *Mansfield Park* because it does not appear realistic or romantic. Early on in the novel, Mrs. Norris states that if they take Fanny in and raise her like one of their own she will not pose a threat by becoming likely to marry one of the boys, yet she does marry Edmund. Throughout the novel, Edmund is clearly falling in love with Mary Crawford and will do anything to please her. While he goes to Fanny to ask her opinion on certain matters, such as taking part in the theatricals, he appears not to see her as he sees Mary. Yet after learning Mary's true sentiments he states he will never love again. So how

can he transfer those feelings onto the “sisterly” Fanny? Juliet McMaster attempts to answer this question by suggesting that when courting Mary Crawford he was also unconsciously courting Fanny (142). She reasons that “the reader is constantly informed of how his love for Mary and his love for Fanny grow together” because the three are always “in a cluster together” (McMaster 142). “When he confesses his love for Mary to Fanny, he calls her ‘Dearest Fanny!’ and presses ‘her hand to his lips, with almost as much warmth as if it had been Miss Crawford’s” (McMaster 142). McMaster concludes that “Mary Crawford and Fanny, for Edmund, are a package deal; and at the end he simply discovers that he has mistaken the wrapping for the gift” (142). Meanwhile Martine Voiret complains that “the conclusion of *Mansfield Park*, however remains somewhat unsatisfactory. Edmund appears too much like a passive participant, a brotherly reflection of Fanny” (243). He may appear like a “brotherly reflection of Fanny,” but who else would be an appropriate and suitable spouse for her? There is no way she could survive being Mrs. Henry Crawford, because the two are too unlike one another. It makes sense for Edmund and Fanny to be left together, but at the same time it seems too good to be true. Then again novels with such a clear moralistic agenda as *Mansfield Park* are less likely to be convincingly realistic. The couple’s union at the end of the novel just shows that upward social mobility may be available to those who are worthy of it and that couples can marry for love and still be financially stable.

## Film Adaptation

Today it is extremely common to go to a movie theater and see the words “Based on the novel...” come across the screen. When spectators see this they recognize that the script has been adapted from a novel, or other piece of literary work, and therefore is not original. Some of these adaptations are from classic authors, such as Austen or Dickens, and others from lesser known works. Some audiences are drawn to the movies because they loved the book and want to see it portrayed correctly on the screen, but what should count as a correct adaptation? Filmmakers cannot please everyone, so an accurate adaptation to one person is often inaccurate to someone else. The better question to ask is whether the film is a good representative of the novel it is based on. The key word “representative” is crucial here, because no film can be an exact replica of its source text. Both scholars and movie-goers must recognize that novels and films are two different medias and genres. George Bluestone, the elder statesman of film criticism, taught that the novel and film “belong to separate aesthetic genera,” with “different origins, different audiences, different modes of production” (Parrill 10). He argued further that these two genres share “the elements of characters, narration, and language, but these are revealed or expressed in different ways” (Parrill 10). In a film the elements of picture and sound are presented to a spectator, while in a novel the readers must interpret the elements on their own. People tend to favor the book over the film due to this use of imagination. Once the characters are placed before them they feel no connection to the actors because they may have pictured them differently while reading the novel. While these added elements of sight and sound may deter some viewers, this visual aspect has the capability to “convey many ideas at once” often containing them “in the expressions on the face of the actors, in their wearing apparel, in the setting where they are seen, in the use of light, and in the editing of visual images” (Parrill 10). In Austen adaptations, characters glance at each other constantly, whether it be out of worry (the Tilney siblings in *Northanger Abbey*), jealousy (Maria as she eavesdrops on Fanny

and Henry in *Mansfield Park*) or most commonly out of love, which can be found in several of the films. The use of glances substitutes for words that cannot be made public at that moment. In the novel, the narrator is present to tell the audience what the characters are feeling, but on film it must be shown. Often the use of glances, especially between a romantic couple, is more powerful than a scene in which they speak to one another.

When a director and screenwriter re-adapt what is considered a classic novel, they take on an added stress in order to do the production justice. They must take into account they are not the first to produce the novel on screen, and must consult both the novel and previous film versions. Christine Geraghty describes the durability of a classic as “already known and [...] proved to work” (15). This is often why recent adaptations will copy elements from older versions or have characters resemble each other in looks or behavior. In Joe Wright’s 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice*, Kiera Knightley’s speech mimics Davies’ 1995 Elizabeth Bennet played by Jennifer Ehle, forcing a comparison between both Elizabeths, just as “Matthew MacFadyen in the role of Darcy is compared not just to a character in a novel but also to previous performances of the role by Laurence Olivier and Colin Firth” (Geraghty 16). Geraghty states that “through the fact of it being a new version, a version made for a contemporary audience, it promises changes and transformations not only of the original source but also of the screen adaptations that have preceded it” (15). When viewers watch the film they must recognize that departures from the novel and previous film versions are bound to occur. If producers kept making replicas of the same films, they would be boring to watch. Audiences must go into theaters with this already in mind in order not to be disappointed.

Directors and screenwriters realize the heavy burden they must carry when adapting an Austen novel. They also realize that certain elements must change in order to serve a wide

audience, including those who are familiar with the books and those who are not. Aldous Huxley, English novelist and director of the 1940 *Pride and Prejudice*, realized departures would occur when he acknowledged that “the very fact of transforming [a] book into a picture must necessarily alter its whole quality in a profound way” (Brownstein 13). In a letter to Eugene Saxton, Huxley described writing the script as “an odd, cross-word puzzle job. One tries to do one’s best for Jane Austen; but actually the very fact of transforming the book into a picture must necessarily alter its whole quality in a profound way...The insistence upon the story as opposed to the diffuse irony which the story is designed to contain, is a major falsification of Miss Austen” (Harman 173). Here Huxley grapples with staying true to Austen versus making an enjoyable film for all moviegoers. He recognizes he has two parties he must satisfy, but in the end cannot please both because “the producers insisted on simplifying the plot, dropping parts of the dialogue that were ‘too literary,’ and inserting odd bits of new material” (Harman 174). While Huxley tried to find a balance between the text and film, the producers decided to focus on the film and the audience’s needs. Instead of believing their audiences would understand the plot on their own, they found the need to simplify the story line and add new material, although one would think a 1940 British audience would have been very familiar with *Pride and Prejudice*. These additions continue to be something producers and directors bring into their Austen film adaptations today. Back in 1940, the producer’s main aim was to use it as propaganda to “get the United States into the war as England’s ally” (Brownstein 15). Here the filmmakers altered the original text to benefit the society around them. Amanda Collins states that “sometimes achieving [the audience’s] approval involves rewriting the fiction of the past to suit the needs of the present, since what is being altered is not history or historical fact but fiction written in the past” (83). Due to Austen’s wide popularity and the fact that she is canonized, filmmakers can



alter the text as they would like. Claire Harman cites Douglas McGrath, director of the 1996 *Emma*, when he spoke about the appeal of Austen to filmmakers, “I thought Jane Austen would be a good collaborator...because she writes, you know, superb dialogue, she creates memorable characters, she has an extremely clever skill for plotting-and she’s dead” (Harman 210). Even though McGrath is blunt he makes a good point because Austen does not have to be consulted when making one of her films. Sue Parrill agrees and points out that “Jane Austen’s novels are in the public domain,” therefore “it is not necessary to pay the author for their use” (3). She also points out that “it is relatively inexpensive to film an Austen adaptation. It requires no expensive special effects, no exotic locations, and only a small cast. It can get more expensive if the studio wants to populate the roles with stars-such as Hugh Grant or Gwyneth Paltrow” (Parrill 3). Of course bringing in more expensive and well known stars draws in more moviegoers.

In an appeal to their audience, filmmakers concentrate on the romance aspects of Austen’s novels. They cast beautiful actors to make people who are not familiar with Austen’s work pay to see the film. Amanda Collins mentions that “these films take liberties with [Austen’s] text, and [...] attempt to fulfill the current societal need for romanticism” (88). While this may appeal to audience members unfamiliar with Austen’s work, this may discourage others from viewing the film. The ex-editor of the men’s magazine, ‘Nuts,’ Phil Hiton, has objected strongly to the vulgarization of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*: “She is about more than romance, that’s just the engine that drives the plot along...Unfortunately when adapted for film and TV the good stuff often ends up on the cutting room floor in favor of a handsome actor walking out of a lake” (Harman 208). The scene Hiton speaks of is none other than the ever-controversial Mr. Darcy lake scene from Andrew Davies’ 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* that has been analyzed repeatedly by past scholars. This scene has nothing to do with the original narrative and appears

to be added just to focus on Darcy's body. Several scenes in this adaptation show Darcy washing or bathing, yet personal hygiene is never mentioned in Austen's work. There has been much debate on what the scene was meant to symbolize, such as a baptism or rebirth, yet Davies has said, "I just thought it was a funny scene. It was about Darcy being a bloke, diving in his lake on a hot day, not having to be polite-and then he suddenly finds himself in a situation where he does have to be polite" (Reynolds). While Davies claims there is no further meaning behind this iconic scene, it continues to be analyzed by film critics, scholars and audiences.

Not all Austen fans find the focus on the romantic demeaning. Valarie Cossy, a student of literary film translations of Austen, found the film scripts to "take each novel as some raw material on the basis of which one can create a new artifact, better suited to the expectations of one's audience" (Harman 215). Ellen Belton classifies an adaptation as "successful" when it "enters into conversation with the original that animates the viewer's pleasure in both works. The goal of the adaptation is not only to rediscover the prior text, but also to find new ways of understanding it and to appropriate those meanings for the adaptors' own ends" (Geraghty 43). Viewing the films this way, creates a new point of view from which to look at Austen's texts and a new discussion, which "keeps a novelist alive" (Parrill 8). New aspects of the stories can be discovered that were never noticed before. The release of these films can also get people to read the original texts, especially with the help of the publication of new editions of the novels, which usually have a new cover from the movie (Parrill 8). While students should not solely rely on the films "teachers have testified that the films provide their students access to the novels so that they can better appreciate them" (Parrill 8). It might also help them understand some of the content, depending on the version they watch. The more "radical" approaches can bring into conversation Geoffrey Wagner and his three categories of adaptations: transposition,

commentary, and analogy (Parrill 9). Most novels adapted into films are transpositions that follow the novel closely. A good example would be Andrew Davies' *Pride and Prejudice*, which adds "some incidents and some dialogue," but does not "deviate from the main course of action" (Parrill 9). A commentary alters the novel slightly, with a new emphasis or structure. An example of this would be Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* because it "reinterprets the novel, using the historical time and the characters of the novel, but altering in significant ways their nature and their motivations" (Parrill 9). An analogy uses the novel as a point of departure. Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* "moves the characters from the nineteenth to the twentieth-century, changes their names, and has them talk in 'mall-speak'" (Parrill 9). Today analogy is becoming more and more popular in Austen adaptations, especially with the popularity of YouTube and updating the female protagonists into vloggers. Students exposure to *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* or *Emma Approved* could bring into conversation what aspects get lost when a nineteenth century British novel gets moved into twenty-first century America, as well as what is gained.

## **The Emotional Mr. Darcy**

The focus on the romantic aspects of Austen's novels has caused the male protagonists to become more emotional beings. Cheryl L. Nixon comments, "the recent film adaptations of Austen are successful because they, quite literally, "flesh out" her male characters" (23). She adds that "what was good enough for her female heroines is obviously not good enough for us; the films must add scenes to add desirability to her male protagonists" (Nixon 23). Clearly these men are desirable on the page, otherwise they would not have endured for so many years, but modern audiences long for more from her heroes. Harman discusses Austen's heroes as two-dimensional "even the manly ones, such as Captain Wentworth and Colonel Brandon, are shown in retirement or furlough; Darcy is too gentlemanly to be caught in the act of manliness [he is shown sitting in a parlor rather than hunting], Edwards Ferrars and Edmund Bertram are both young and pious, and Henry Tilney is downright girly, with his knowledge of muslins and chat about books" (202). She sees these men as "so non threatening that a conscientious screenwriter such as Andrew Davies felt it necessary to introduce scenes of "manly pursuits" in his adaptations" (Harman 202). These heroes need to be the perfect combination of manly and emotional, a standard only a fictional man can uphold. Nixon claims that "while Austen's male protagonists prove their worth by meeting a demand for social restraint, they prove their worth to moviegoers by meeting a demand for emotional display" (27). Yet the "emotionally extravagant, supporting male characters such as Wickham, John Thorpe, [and] Elton are punished by social censure and a lack of marital fulfillment" (Nixon 26). So the emotional traits these male heroes need to have must be extremely specific, otherwise they become the antagonists of the story. To prove there's a difference between these two types of emotional men "the films invent or focus on moments showing that the principal male characters are sensitive and responsive to other

people's needs" (Voiret 238). Several critics point out that the heroes become more sensitive, especially when in the presence of children. In Wright's 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy only smiles in the presence of his sister and this helps alter Elizabeth's thoughts of him. These men "have been modified to embody the characteristics of the new man" (Voiret 238) proving once again that filmmakers are catering to the audience's idea of the "perfect" man.

Austen's novels focus more on the heroines and their thoughts, creating periods of time where the male hero is absent and the reader does not know what he is doing. Davies' *Pride and Prejudice* fills in these missing gaps of time by adding scenes of Darcy by himself. These scenes assume something of Darcy's character that is not shown in the novel. They make him more of an emotional figure who is struggling to come to terms with his feelings for Elizabeth. Lisa Hopkins agrees that these new scenes "focus on his feelings, his desires, and his emotional and social development" (115). Charles Wenz comments that "Darcy is seen fencing, and at Pemberley he is dripping wet in shirtsleeves, after an energetic dip in the lake, when he meets Elizabeth. These scenes and others of Lydia and Wickham in London, are added to show the modern viewer that gentlemen did more than just dance, pose in drawing rooms and shoot wildlife" (Hopkins 116). The additional scenes make Darcy appear more human, even though he is fictional. During moments of Davies' *Pride and Prejudice*, it appears Darcy becomes the central figure or main focus rather than Elizabeth. After he is shown at Lydia and Wickham's wedding and negotiating with the Gardiners, we "never lose sight of Darcy" (Hopkins 118). All of his heroic deeds that are surprisingly revealed in the novel are already known to the viewer before they are revealed to Elizabeth and her family. The element of surprise is exchanged for the audience's pleasure in seeing the deed done. Before Darcy wins over Elizabeth, he has already won over the viewer.

## **Additional Male Scenes**

The recent Austen adaptations do not have the hero outshine the heroine, as in Davies' *Pride and Prejudice*, but the use of additional scenes involving the male protagonists continues to be a device used in films. In these scenes the male protagonist is often alone, but can be with others, and reveals his feelings for the heroine to the viewer and sometimes for the first time to himself.

In Adrian Shergold's 2007 *Persuasion*, there are several scenes where Captain Wentworth, played by Rupert Penry-Jones is the focal point. When Anne and Wentworth are first reacquainted at Uppercross he gives her a stare, which is designed to pierce the viewer's soul, extremely reminiscent of Firth's stare when he watches Elizabeth, whether out a window or from across the room. His face takes up the entire screen and the viewer cannot see Anne's reaction right away. It is almost as if he is staring at the viewer who is taking Anne's place, forcing a connection between the spectator and Wentworth. Not until after they are introduced and Wentworth replies they are acquainted, does he realize Anne is looking at him and he looks away. Later Anne is shown playing the piano in an empty room and the audience can see Wentworth in the doorframe behind her watching, unnoticed by Anne. Once again his stare shows a longing he cannot act on, yet when she looks behind her he is gone. He only allows himself to take these secret glances when she is not looking and when he does speak with her he barely makes eye contact. These emotional scenes create a growing tension that can be found all throughout the film and novel. The audience wants the couple to act on the feelings they are bottling up inside, but are too nervous to act on, and cannot wait to see the two unite.

These early scenes only show that Captain Wentworth might still feel something for Anne or that he wishes to speak with her. These are all inferences the viewer and critics must

make because there is no narrator to tell us how he truly feels. In order to share his feelings, there are two added scenes in which Wentworth speaks with his good friend, Harville, at Lyme. These scenes occur after Louisa Musgrove falls and Anne has returned to Bath. In the first scene, Wentworth tells Harville that he does not care for Louisa in a romantic way and feels guilty of having led her on. He cannot believe he was so thoughtless in the matter and Harville suggests that he should take leave from Lyme, forcing Wentworth to visit his brother. The other scene occurs after Wentworth has returned to Lyme and learns of Louisa and Benwick's engagement. He states, "I imagined myself indifferent to her, that I was only angry and resentful. Too late, too late I only began to understand myself and her. Never have I met her equal in good sense or sweetness of character. She's perfection itself. I've never loved any but her." This profession of love reassures the audience that he is still in love with Anne, but Harville's comment, "We are talking now of Anne Elliot" confirms our suspicions as does Wentworth's response, "Of course, who else?" Once again this conversation adds more tension to the situation. His speech to Harville also prepares the viewer for the letter he will write later to Anne professing his feelings.

Patricia Rozema's 1999 *Mansfield Park* also contains additional scenes of manly emotion. As mentioned earlier, Edmund and Fanny's marriage at the end of the novel has always been an issue when confronting the novel's conclusion. Critics have doubted that Edmund loves Fanny as a wife and is not simply using her as a replacement for Mary Crawford. In Rozema's film it is obvious early on that Edmund has romantic feelings for Fanny. After Fanny speaks up to Sir Thomas, regarding a comment he makes about slaves' inability to reproduce, Sir Thomas notices how much she has changed and matured in the time he has been away. Once he speaks of her physical changes in front of everyone, Fanny becomes self-conscious of being the center of attention and runs off. The next scene shows Fanny in the stables putting a saddle on her horse to

go out for a ride, despite the pouring rain. Edmund enters and the two talk about what has just happened with Sir Thomas. As Fanny mounts her horse, Edmund shouts to her, “Fanny, you really must begin to harden yourself to the idea...” and then she is gone and he speaks softly, “of being worth looking at.” This is the first time the audience sees that Edmund cares for Fanny as more than a sister or cousin. In the preceding scene he is shown impatiently waiting inside looking out the window for her return. As he is looking out the window, Sir Thomas, who has been speaking with Mary for the first time, approaches. Sir Thomas says that Edmund has chosen a good woman with a fine, established family. Of course the viewer realizes Sir Thomas is speaking about Mary Crawford, but Edmund is so consumed with his thoughts of Fanny that he asks, “The Prices?” His father stares at him harshly and the camera zooms onto his face, which now takes up the entire screen. He shouts, “The Crawfords!” and then the camera focuses on Edmund’s face who looks extremely disappointed. This conversation shows exactly what Juliet McMaster proposed when she stated that Edmund was simultaneously courting Mary and Fanny and in the end “simply discovers that he has mistaken the wrapping for the gift” (142). Here Rozema shows how similar these two women can be and how they can be mistaken for each other by Edmund. It also creates a stronger love triangle between Mary, Edmund and Fanny than in the novel.

Rozema’s film changes a lot of Austen’s text, but it brings up Edmund’s romantic feelings towards Fanny earlier, which makes the audience root for them to win in the end. This differs from the novel where Fanny “waits patiently for the man she loves to realize that he loves her” (Parrill 80). He might not completely come to terms with his feelings towards Fanny, but it is clear something is there. The film makes the cousins’ marriage more of a taboo, which is frowned upon by Sir Thomas. As strange as it is for a twenty-first century person to think that



two first cousins could get married, Sue Parrill notes “the marriage of first cousins was much more common and acceptable in Jane Austen’s time than it is today” (100). In the novel, Sir Thomas is apprehensive about the union “because he considered his sons worthy of a better match,” while in the film “[the] romance suggests something of a modern disapproval” (Parrill 101). It is not until the villainous Mary Crawford is exposed that Fanny is deemed worthy by Sir Thomas.

## Professing of Love

Professing one's love is a common feature for ending an Austen film thanks to speeches made by Mr. Darcy and Mr. Knightley. Darcy's second proposal to Elizabeth has one of the most iconic lines in all of Austen. Filmmakers often alter aspects of the novel, but more than likely this line will remain: "If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once. My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me on this subject forever" (*Pride and Prejudice* 239). The popularity of this speech has caused filmmakers to create similar speeches for novels that do not have them. Patricia Rozema gives Edmund a similar speech at the end of *Mansfield Park*. He begins, "Fanny, I've loved you my whole life" to which Fanny responds, "I know, Edmund." The two have said they loved each other so many times that she does not realize he means it differently. He clarifies, "No...I've loved you as a man loves a woman. As a hero loves a heroine. As I have never loved anyone." After he has made his true feelings known the two finally kiss and then Lady Bertram says to Sir Thomas, "I see those two have finally gotten somewhere."

In Maggie Wadey's 2007 *Mansfield Park*, Edmund does not make such a romantic speech to Fanny. As in the novel, Edmund suddenly realizes his feelings for Fanny suddenly. Once he realizes how he feels, he acts like an adolescent boy with a crush, stuttering when he is around Fanny or running to catch up with her. When he goes to see her in her room, she is washing her hair, but she tells him to come in anyway. After some conversation Edmund states, "You know, I've always loved...this room." This statement shows how afraid Edmund is to admit his feelings to Fanny and be rejected. Despite his worrying, the compliment about the room tells Fanny all she needs to know, which is further proved by her smile as he exits.

Both Rozema and Wadey's accounts of the profession of Edmund's love are far more romantic than what Austen intended. In the novel Edmund's revelation is described as follows:

“Scarcely had he done regretting Mary Crawford, and observing to Fanny how impossible it was that he should ever meet with such another woman, before it began to strike him whether a very different kind of woman might not do just as well-or a great deal better; whether Fanny herself were not growing as dear, as important to him, in all her smiles and all her ways, as Mary Crawford had ever been; and whether it might not be possible, a hopeful undertaking to persuade her that her warm and sisterly regard for him would be foundation enough for wedded love” (Austen 408-409).

As has already been said, this paragraph does not do justice to Fanny and Edmund's romantic love for one another. Austen must have foreseen everyone's doubts; soon the narrator adds, “I only entreat everybody to believe that exactly at the time when it was quite natural that it should be so, and not a week earlier, Edmund did cease to care about Miss Crawford, and became as anxious to marry Fanny as Fanny herself could desire” (Austen 409). Rozema gives the beginning of this statement to Fanny's voiceover narration to set up Edmund's love speech.

Following the romantic speech trend is Jon Jones' 2007 *Northanger Abbey*, with the popular Andrew Davies as screenwriter, who creates a romantic speech for Henry Tilney addressed to Catherine Morland. At the end of the film, Tilney describes to Catherine all the confusion that has taken place and John Thorpe's involvement in it. It is a very nice summary for those who are not familiar with the novel. Their conversation continues:

Catherine: “I thought you were so angry with me, you told him what you knew. Which would have justified any discourtesy.”  
Henry: “No! The discourtesy was all his. I-I have broken with my father, Catherine, I may never speak to him again.”  
Catherine: “What did he say to you?”  
Henry: “Let me instead tell you what I said to him. I told him that I felt myself bound to you, by honor, by affection, and by a love so strong that nothing he could do could deter me from....  
Catherine: “From what?”  
Henry: “Before I go on, I should tell you there's a pretty good chance he'll disinherit me. I fear I may never be a rich man, Catherine.”  
Catherine: “Please, go on with what you were going to say!”  
Henry: “Will you marry me, Catherine?”  
Catherine: “Yes! Yes I will! Yes!  
[*They kiss, and she backs him into a wall in her passion*]

Here Tilney does not profess his love for Catherine in one line of dialogue. The couple's conversation shows the feelings they share as well as Catherine's age. She keeps interrupting Tilney with questions showing how anxious she is to find out how he feels. It is a cute and romantic union between two characters who need to conquer outside forces to eventually be with one another. Meanwhile in the novel most of what Henry reveals is told in prose rather than in dialogue and at the beginning of the next chapter the two are engaged. The narrator tells us,

“Mr. and Mrs. Morland's surprise on being applied to by Mr. Tilney, for their consent to his marrying their daughter, was, for a few minutes, considerable; it having never entered their heads to suspect an attachment on either side; but nothing, after all, could be more natural than Catherine's being beloved, they soon learnt to consider it with only the happy agitation of gratified pride, and, as far as they were alone concerned, had not a single objection to start” (*Northanger* 233).

There is no romantic speech in the novel, instead the reader receives Catherine's parents' reactions, who seem surprised at first, but then come to terms with what has happened.

Both Roger Michell and Adrian Shergold's versions of *Persuasion* are extremely accurate in using Wentworth's letter to profess his feelings to Anne. He writes:

“I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone forever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone I think and plan.-Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes?-I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which empowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice, when they would be lost on others.-Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating in F.W. I must go, uncertain of my fate; but I shall return hither, or follow your party as soon as possible. A word, a look will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening or never” (*Persuasion* 223-224).

Wentworth's eloquent letter is in response to the conversation he hears between Harville and Anne about how women love longest. The major difference is in the way the letter is given to Anne. In Michell's film, Wentworth leaves the letter for Anne to see when he comes back for his

umbrella, while in Shergold's version Harville gives Anne the letter while she is running around the Royal Crescent. In Michell's film Anne reads the letter while sitting with Mrs. Musgrove. The audience first hears Wentworth's voice reading the letter and then Anne's voice reads over his. Meanwhile in Shergold's film, it is only Wentworth's voice heard as Anne runs around the crescent trying to find him. Both of these letter readings are extremely reminiscent of Darcy's letter in Davies' *Pride and Prejudice*. There Darcy reads aloud his words as Elizabeth reads them. Here there are two different takes on the same scene. Michell's Anne remains stationary, while Shergold's is moving around more than she has done throughout the film. Her movement shows how anxious she is to tell Wentworth how she feels before it is too late. She has made her decision before reading the letter, but after reading it she is even more determined to find him. The big difference in Shergold's film is that Wentworth has not overheard Anne and Harville's conversation about women loving longest. Instead in this version Anne has this conversation with Benwick earlier at Lyme. We also do not see Wentworth write the letter.

All of these speeches, whether added or from the text, are so powerful because they come from silent men who finally voice their feelings. Audiences expect to see these professions of love made at the end of a film followed by a kiss and filmmakers will continue to deliver.

## Conclusion

Jane Austen is one of the greatest storytellers of all time. Her novels continue to transcend time and space and find a place in people's hearts no matter what their age. She has the power to make a reader feel connected to fictional characters who supposedly lived two hundred years ago. Her six plots follow "a young woman's initiation, growth to maturity," which eventually leads to her "choice of the right husband" (McMaster 15). All of her novels "have a familiar and predictable outline, a recognizable rhythm," (McMaster 15) but take different turns that leave the readers on the edge of their seats. Austen created female protagonists that readers wish they could befriend from the outspoken Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* to the matchmaker Emma in *Emma*. These two women often overshadow the other female protagonists from Austen's lesser known works, but the women in them need to be celebrated too. Catherine Morland from *Northanger Abbey* is Austen's youngest heroine and has the most to learn and experience. She embodies readers who wish they could literally dive into one of their favorite novels. Anne Elliot from *Persuasion* proves that true love can endure eight and a half years apart and become stronger from that absence. The silent Fanny Price from *Mansfield Park* remains the moral compass that all people should strive to be no matter how high the standard. These three heroines and their novels are often forgotten when people speak about Austen, but they should not be. *Northanger Abbey* is a great piece of work from an early Jane Austen who was trying her pen at being a satirist. Once readers recognize this and have knowledge of Gothic literature, they will more fully appreciate the novel. *Persuasion* comes close to *Pride and Prejudice* as one of Austen's greatest love stories showing friendship in love. *Mansfield Park* helps show the types of marriages that took place in Austen's time and the hope that love will win out in the end.

Jane Austen's novels will continue to be adapted into films and television series due to the love the public holds for Miss Austen. Some of the recent films begin to resemble *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance in making Fanny more of an Elizabeth or letting Wentworth have Darcy's stares, but this caters to what the audience wants to see. In an essay on "The Cinema," Virginia Woolf feared "that movies would rip off the plots of novels and vulgarize and diminish them" (Brownstein 16), but this has not been the case. While differences are bound to occur because they come from two different medias, films bring added elements that novels cannot provide. They show the readers the landscape, the period dress and glances the narrators can only describe, not show.

Austen's films continue to focus on the romantic aspects of her novels because that is what viewers expect. Devoney Looser maintains that "the recent Austen adaptations have been popular because they represent a 'mainstreaming' of modern feminism" (Parrill 7). This comment is interesting because of the focus that has been placed on the male protagonists in recent adaptations. Several scenes have been added from their perspective in order to show their emotional side, which viewers long to see these men have. These additional scenes all began with Davies' Darcy, but continue to be used. Colin Firth's iconic portrayal of Mr. Darcy paved the way for all future actors, no matter what Austen hero they perform. Fitzwilliam Darcy has had such an impact on American and British culture that all Austen men must follow in his footsteps.

Film adaptations are a great way for both Austen scholars and students to examine the route Austen's novels have taken on screen over the past two decades and the way society has had an impact on them. Perhaps if viewers had been first introduced to *Persuasion* on screen, actors would resemble Captain Wentworth rather than Darcy, but we will never know. However

one thing is for certain: as long as there is an Andrew Davies you can bet that Jane Austen's novels will continue to be made into films for years to come.



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