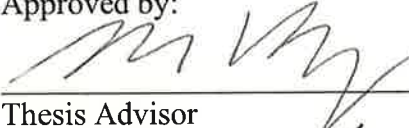


**The Object of the Gaze: Eroticizing and Objectifying Mr. Darcy in
Langton's *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)**

Prepared by: David L. Townsend

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Approved by:



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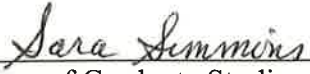
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Thesis Committee Member

5/3/2011

Date



Dean of Graduate Studies
Master of Arts in English Education

5-5-2011

Date



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Abstract

In the first portion of the paper, I examine Simon Langton's BBC *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and the manner in which the director depicts Darcy's character. Because of the sparse nature of Darcy descriptions in the source text, Langton expounds on Darcy's character in the BBC adaptation, and it is primarily through eroticizing Darcy's body, casting Colin Firth's character as an object of the female gaze. Despite Darcy's aloof presence in the beginning of the novel (and film), Langton takes Mr. Darcy's character, one readers are not supposed to like, and renders him not only tolerable, but an object to be adored. The chief means through which the director crafts a likeable Darcy is by making the viewer a voyeur, granting access periodically to Darcy's interiority. By including additional Darcy scenes, ones not featured in Austen's novel, such as the famous pond scene, the fencing match, and the bathing scene, viewers are granted access into some of Darcy's most intimate moments. As a result, the viewer, who sees Darcy as an eroticized object, also sees him as a man of longing and desire. With the inclusion of these additional scenes, the viewer is afforded his or her own insights pertaining to Darcy's character. While it is true that Elizabeth still serves as the primary vessel through which we understand Darcy's enigmatic persona, these brief scenes grant the viewer insights and moments where he or she can assess the male hero's character on his or her own.

In the next part of the paper, I explore the techniques used by director Joe Wright in his adaptation, *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), to craft an enigmatic-yet-likable Darcy. Though many film critics assert that Colin Firth's Darcy is, in fact, the "definitive Darcy," to be fair, Matthew Macfadyen's Darcy in Wright's adaptation is a different man. Firth's Darcy stares longingly out of windows; he is a man of reflection and introspection. Macfadyen's Darcy, at several points throughout the duration of the film, is positioned as a central figure within a room. Within these scenes, Darcy serves as the object of the gaze and the locus of desire not only for Elizabeth, but for the viewer as well. Additionally, what makes Macfadyen's Darcy unique is the fact that he is depicted as a broken man. Wright achieves this through the use of synecdochial symbolism. By emphasizing Darcy's hands, eyes, and face, the director highlights that he is a sum of individual parts; he is not yet whole. Even if only for a few seconds, Darcy is reduced to individual parts, which is Wright's way of emphasizing not only Darcy's discomfort and awkwardness in social scenes, but also his inner conflict—repression vs. expression. It is not until Darcy is able to articulate his desires and break free from the expectations of his society that he can marry Elizabeth, thereby making him whole.

The Object of the Gaze: Eroticizing and Objectifying Mr. Darcy in Langton's *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (2005)

Creating a Thoughtful Enigma: Examining Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* (1995)

Despite garnering a lukewarm reception both critically and commercially during her lifetime, Jane Austen and her works of social satire have endured for nearly two centuries.¹ It was not until the 1970s and 1980s, however, when there was a renewed interest in all things Austen.² Though many Austen film adaptations emerged in these decades, Austen-mania was not officially launched until the 1990s when six Austen adaptations were released within the two-year span of 1995-1996.³ Among the many Austen adaptations that surfaced in the 1990s, one that acquired significant critical and commercial success was the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995).⁴ Starring Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy and Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet, this Austen adaptation "created more interest than any other cable network-produced miniseries in history" (Teachman 143); in turn, *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) has left an indelible mark on Austen adaptations and the Austen brand.

When director Simon Langton's *Pride and Prejudice* first aired in Britain in September of 1995, according to Jojo Moyes's article "BBC Cashes in as 'Phenomenon' Has Nation in a Swoon," the six-week miniseries garnered over ten million viewers, and once it was released on video several weeks later, over seventy thousand copies were sold within the first week (Par. 3). Naturally, as is often the case with film adaptations, particularly with highly-contentious Austen adaptations, comparisons were made between the BBC miniseries and the source

text. The six-episode miniseries, well over five hours in length, is set during the Regency period when Austen first composed the novel. *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), while it is largely faithful to the source text in terms of both characterization and plot, does, however, take some creative liberties, predominantly in the form of its additional Darcy scenes. By shooting additional scenes where Darcy is alone, the director presents the viewer with opportunities to share intimate moments with the male lead, as opposed to gaining his acquaintance solely through the lens of Elizabeth Bennet, and it is, perhaps, these departures from the source text that have caused the film to have such a lasting impact on popular culture.

The sparse descriptions of Darcy in the source text are expounded upon in Langton's adaptation, primarily through eroticizing Darcy's body, casting Firth's character as an object of the female gaze. The gaze, as discussed by the likes of Laura Mulvey and Mary Ann Doane, refers largely to a film theory concerning the treatment of women in film. According to Mulvey and Doane, females are typically objectified on screen. Though the objectification of women in film has been a frequent topic of discussion in cinema studies for years, recent scholarship has focused on the objectification of men, which has evolved into what is commonly referred to as the female gaze. Throughout the adaptation, Colin Firth serves as the object of the viewer/consumer's gaze.⁵ On the cover of the DVD, for example, it is the image of Colin Firth's Darcy that stands in the foreground, and it is he who is subjected to the consumers' gaze. Also, as the filmmakers were doing promotion for the series, it was Colin Firth's face that was plastered

seemingly everywhere,⁶ and all eyes were on Firth. Though some criticize Austen's limiting characterizations of her male characters,⁷ Langton carefully crafts Darcy's character, adding scenes where viewers are afforded insights into his complex character. Despite Darcy's aloof presence in the beginning of the novel (and film), Langton takes Mr. Darcy's character, one readers are not supposed to like, and renders him, at the very least—to use the word he initially uses to describe Elizabeth Bennet—"tolerable" (Austen 17).

The chief means through which Langton crafts a likeable Darcy is by making the viewer a voyeur, granting access periodically to Darcy's interiority, vulnerability, and personal musings. Unlike Austen's novel, the 1995 miniseries provides viewers with momentary glimpses into the private sphere of Mr. Darcy, thereby allowing viewers to develop their own attachments to the seemingly aloof and pompous character. By incorporating additional Darcy scenes into the film, the viewer is put into the position of Elizabeth in Austen's novel, and we, too, partake of the viewing, judging, and assessing of Mr. Darcy. However, our examination of Darcy becomes more than an act of reconnaissance, as we grow increasingly attached to his character as the film's narrative progresses. For many, their strong attachment to Firth's Darcy stems from the most famous of the added Darcy scenes, the one where Colin Firth's character arrives back at Pemberley only to dive into the pond on the outer grounds of his estate. When interviewing Colin Firth on an episode of *Inside the Actor's Studio*, host James Lipton describes the scene, noting, "There are very few scenes in the history of motion pictures that have a name. This is called the pond scene. It has been

honored in Channel Four's *Top 100 TV Moments of All Time*" ("Inside the Actor's Studio: Colin Firth"). To this, Firth responds mockingly that the script called for a transparent shirt and a chiseled chest, neither of which was present at the time. Though Firth jokes about the scene, there is no denying the power that scene had on its viewers. Carol Dole expounds on the scene's impact in her article "Jane Austen and Mud: *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), British Realism, and the Heritage Film," noting, "The 1995 BBC miniseries of *Pride and Prejudice* made the demands of the body palpable with its famous 'wet T-Shirt Darcy'" (Dole n. pag.). Firth may bemoan his lack of contoured abs, but when his character emerged from the pond, the viewers swooned.⁸ The Mr. Darcy of society, the man everyone thinks he or she knows, would never take a midday plunge into the pond. It is not the definition of Firth's chest that created such a memorable scene; rather, it is sheer voyeurism—the act of watching the private actions of a private man—that draws Elizabeth and the viewer closer to Darcy's character.

Aside from this famous scene, there are several others in the film that serve to eroticize Darcy's character, such as Darcy's gallant horesback ride and his heated fencing match. Neither of these scenes are present in Austen's novel, yet the addition of these scenes in Langton's film allows the director to attach further dimension to his character. Coupled with his pride and arrogance, Darcy has duly demonstrated his affability; these scenes accomplish even more, as they eroticize Darcy by accentuating his masculinity. The images of Darcy on horseback with reign in hand visually represent Darcy's power and control. Similarly, Darcy's fencing may be also construed as a visual metaphor, one firmly

establishing not only his willingness to fight but also his capacity to succeed. These activities serve to reinforce Darcy as a desirable male, as these are traits often associated with masculinity in our culture.

Another scene in the film that eroticizes Darcy's character, albeit via a different method, is the scene in which Darcy ascends from a bathtub, fully exposing his back, and it is in this moment that Darcy is rendered in one of his most vulnerable positions in the film. Yet again, the director allows the viewer into one of Darcy's most intimate and private acts—bathing. Despite the brevity of the scene, its significance cannot be understated. Through much of the film, we do just as Elizabeth does—we examine, judge, and assess Mr. Darcy's character, yet in this scene, Darcy reveals all of himself, while the viewer continues his or her scrutiny. While one may wonder why exactly the audience is afforded access into Darcy's bathroom, it is this breach of Darcy's privacy that ultimately reveals he, too, is quite vulnerable. After relaxing in the tub for several moments, Darcy slowly emerges from his bathwater, and one of the servants drapes a robe around him. He then walks over to the window overlooking the fields and gardens, and he stares longingly at the grounds below where Elizabeth scampers about with a dog. In moments like these, viewers begin to understand that Darcy is not uncaring and disconnected. Instead, he is a man of great feeling, sentiment, and desire; he, however, reigns in his emotions. In all of the aforementioned Darcy scenes, Colin Firth's character serves as the object of the gaze, the locus of desire, and these additions are the ones that are highly regarded by viewers, yet they are the moments when the adaptation strays from the source

text the most, as these moments are wholly absent from Austen's novel. Thus, the film eroticizes Darcy, casting Firth as an object of the viewer's gaze, to help generate a newfound interest in an Austen classic for a contemporary society that thrives on voyeurism. Langton's film is, in a sense, a hybrid of two worlds—Austen's and our own—and it is the film's eroticism of Darcy that ultimately makes the contemporary viewer want more. Austen's novel leaves much to the reader's imagination; therefore, Langton gives viewers just a taste of what Austen does not: skin, and the result—Darcy-mania.

While eroticizing Darcy serves as a chief component in fleshing out (pun intended) his character, *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) also sketches out his character by depicting him as a man of both reflection and introspection. From the onset of the film, Darcy's countenance possesses an omnipresent severity, accentuating his lack of affability. Darcy's intensity, of course, is underscored by his actions—he is seemingly quite eager to squelch Bingley's budding romance with Jane, and his demeanor is flippant at best whenever trapped in social settings. As is the case with the source text, viewers of the film have an immediate aversion to Darcy's character; with the adaptation, however, it is Darcy's own stern looks that creates said aversion. The first time Darcy is introduced is at the Netherfield Ball where he distances himself from the merry-making. As he stands apart from the crowd, Darcy looks on, and the severity in his eyes makes it look as if he is judging the partygoers. To counteract Darcy's initial sternness, the film summons forth a reflective Darcy, a man who stares meaningfully and yet enigmatically outside of windows. This Darcy provides a sharp contrast to the man to whom viewers have

already been introduced. Shortly after Darcy expresses to Bingley how disadvantageous a union with Jane would be, the camera takes viewers into Darcy's private bathroom. He slowly emerges from his bathwater, and one of the servants drapes a robe around him. He then walks over to the window overlooking the fields and gardens, and he stares longingly at the grounds below where Elizabeth scampers about with a dog. In moments like these, viewers begin to understand that Darcy is not uncaring and disconnected. Instead, he is a man of great feeling, sentiment, and desire; he, however, reigns in his emotions. It is only through Langton's choice to provide viewers several scenes revealing Darcy's interiority via his longing glances out the window that viewers become enamored with the brooding passion that lurks inside his body—the body that is eroticized as an object.

The bathtub and pond scenes, though both undeniably elicit the viewer's gaze and force the audience to question preexisting beliefs concerning Darcy's character, endow him with a romantic sensibility. The term "romantic," as I use it, possesses a dual function. For starters, the film reveals Darcy as a byproduct of British Romanticism; he revels in the intricacies of nature and is an introspective man who isolates himself from society. Coupled with Darcy's alignment with British Romanticism, he, too, is a twentieth-century cultural commodity as a hero in a romantic film. From this standpoint, the word is closely related to modern associations of the term, and what viewers would expect of a leading male in a romantic film. Deborah Kaplan's essay, "Mass Marketing Jane Austen: Men, Women, and Courtship in Two Film Adaptations," outlines the conventions of the

hero in the Hollywood romance film: "The hero is 8 to 12 years older than the heroine. He is self-assured, masterful, hot-tempered, capable of violence, passion, and tenderness. He is often mysteriously moody. Heathcliff (*Wuthering Heights*) is a rougher version; Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*) a more refined one" (177).

Having already established Firth's Darcy as a "mysteriously moody" man, one who deliberately sets himself apart from society, the director reigns in his character by showcasing Darcy's moments of introspection, rendering him a man of passion and tenderness.

The principal method through which the director attempts to soften and romanticize Darcy's initial callous image is having the character gaze out of windows, which he does at several points throughout the 1995 miniseries, as if he yearns to be a part of the landscape. While many critics argue about Darcy's midday pond plunge, ascertaining that it represents a "rebirth" for his character⁹ or the birth of a cultural icon, one oozing sexuality, or, in the words of critic Madelyn Ritrosky-Winslow, a "sexy Darcy" (241), it is blatantly obvious that Darcy appears most comfortable when he is standing by the window, seemingly in his own world, enjoying the scene (and Elizabeth) below. Not only are Darcy's window scenes indicative of the fact that he has an admiration for nature, but it also suggests that Darcy, on some level, is uncomfortable with the pretentiousness associated with the expectations of gentlemen and the aristocracy. It is this desire to break free from social constraints that further aligns Darcy with British Romanticism, furthermore, his struggle to create (or have) an individual consciousness makes him vulnerable, thereby increasing viewers' desire for the

character. Joyce Goggin, for instance, holds that the moment Darcy dives into the pond on his estate fully clothed is a pivotal moment in the film, a moment that encapsulates Darcy's "align[ment] with nature rather than with stuffy aristocratic sensibilities" (n. pag.). While one could potentially regard Darcy's dip in the water as a "turning point," it is the window motif that runs throughout the film's narrative that fully reveals Darcy's yearning to free himself from the dictates of society. Even when he tells Elizabeth, "My feelings will not be repressed," he continues looking out of the window, as he remains unable, at that point, to remove the metaphorical chains, the aristocratic ideologies, which bind him. It is only when Darcy is within a natural element (e.g. riding his horse, jumping in the pond at Pemberley, walking alongside Elizabeth in a pasture) that he is the most content, confirming the fact that he is a child of Romanticism, rather than a byproduct of aristocratic society.

Langton's additional Darcy scenes, thus, have become so integral to the viewer's conceptions of who Darcy is as a character that Ehle's Elizabeth takes a backseat, and for much of the film, she is doing precisely what the viewer is—gazing at Mr. Darcy. The film, of course, is filled with moments of silent stares,¹⁰ moments where Elizabeth stares into the eyes of the man she does not understand. Within these moments, the viewer is placed, if only momentarily, into the shoes of Elizabeth Bennet; once again, the viewer finds oneself gazing at Darcy. Like Elizabeth, the viewer experiences a similar journey as he or she tries to construct an understanding of Darcy throughout the course of the film. As the narrative unfolds, the viewer continues to scrutinize Darcy, and the gaze intensifies. There

are moments in the film, of course, where the male body is eroticized, but even in moments when the body is not on display, it is Darcy's body that elicits the viewer's gaze, as he is the enigma we do not fully understand. It is not until Elizabeth and the Gardiners arrive at Pemberley that she and the viewer reach an epiphany, thereby gaining a true understanding of Mr. Darcy. As she enters his art gallery, her eyes fixate on a portrait of Darcy, and she meticulously inspects every aspect of his countenance. In this scene Darcy is both literally and metaphorically an object that elicits the gaze of Elizabeth and the viewer. Austen's Elizabeth, a character who is often lauded for her "fine eyes" (Austen 18), becomes just that in Langton's adaptation. Elizabeth remains the primary vessel through which the audience understands the character of Mr. Darcy, as we uncover the complexities of his character just as she does. The additional Darcy scenes, however, provide viewers with an understanding that Elizabeth does not have; though it is true that we often identify with what she sees, the viewer is privy to his or her own intimate Darcy moments. In the end, Elizabeth and the viewer have something in common—after gazing at Mr. Darcy for an extended period of time, he, undoubtedly, becomes the enigma we must understand and a locus of lust and desire for both Elizabeth and the viewer.

Adapting the Adaptation: Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)

Austen fervor remained high in the wake of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), and ten years after the debut of the BBC miniseries, a new Darcy emerges in Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), a film which stars Keira Knightley as Elizabeth Bennet and Matthew Macfadyen as Mr. Darcy. Despite receiving

mixed critical reviews,¹¹ the film has sparked interest in *Pride and Prejudice* for a new generation. One of the key criticisms of Wright's adaptation, and to be fair, of most literary adaptations, is the issue of fidelity. Because fidelity is often regarded as "the most appropriate criterion to use in analyzing adaptation" (Leitch 161), critics tend to emphasize absence in adaptation, versus what is actually present. The BBC adaptation was lauded for its fidelity to Austen and praised for its innovativeness; Wright, however, made it clear early on in the making of *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) his intention in making the film was never to pay respect to Austen, noting: "Jane Austen is a writer of the parlor, but in cinema, you want to step out, get some air. . . And I didn't want to be too reverential to Jane Austen's dialogue. I don't believe people spoke like that then; it's not natural" (DeGennaro n. pag.). Whether or not Wright was successful in what he set out to accomplish is of little consequence; what is important to note is that his adaptation, unlike the BBC miniseries, runs slightly over two hours, and much is, in fact, altered from the source text. Much of Austen's satire is lost in *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), and as one critic points out, the use of the ampersand in the title is in itself indicative of the film's flirtations with interpretation (Roche, n. pag.). Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) is inventive in its own right, and while it may possess some similarities to the 1995 miniserial, the film ultimately panders to the conventions of the Hollywood romance, thereby making Austen's story palatable for the latest generation of moviegoers.

In Wright's adaptation, much of what many perceive to be the genius of Austen, the manner in which she satirizes eighteenth and nineteenth century social

constructs, is lost in translation.¹² Though highly regarded for her social satire, Austen is not known for action-packed, plot-driven narratives; on the contrary, as Rebecca Dickson contends, "In Austen, movement and action simply do not happen quickly" (45). This, of course, poses a problem for those who choose to adapt Austen. Through her social satire, Austen engages the reader both intellectually and emotionally, as the reader is forced to examine characters through the lens of society, noting the extent to which characters are representative of preexisting social constructs and ideologies (Moler 6-7). When adapting literature into film, though, particularly works like Austen's, which is deeply rooted in social commentary, it is difficult to satirize eighteenth and nineteenth century ideals; because the social conventions of modern times are so different from those of Austen's times, an additional challenge evolves in making the average modern viewer relate to or care about the issues of another time. If it is true that an adaptation like Wright's, in fact, "indicates more about the time of its own creation than the time period represented" (Chan n. pag.), then, it should be no surprise that the film accentuates its romantic plotline, as it is this element of the plot with which modern audiences most preoccupy themselves. The social satire of Austen's day offers little, if any, relevance to the modern viewer; thus, it is used sparsely throughout the film. The romantic plotline, which is a subplot in the source text, takes precedence in Wright's film, as this is what draws in viewers, and like Kathleen Kelly in Nora Ephron's *You've Got Mail* (1998) who reads *Pride and Prejudice* every year to revel in the tale between Elizabeth and

Darcy, we, too, sit in anticipation wondering if Elizabeth and Darcy will be united in the end.

Though Wright's adaptation seeks to bring Austen's story to a new audience, no matter how his film is different from the miniserial, there is no escaping the fact that Wright's film is assessed by the standards of the BBC adaptation. T. S. Eliot argues in his "Tradition and the Individual Talent," that whenever a new piece of art or literature is created, the manner in which we perceive and understand all art changes, and new art will "be judged by the standards of the past" (Eliot 348). Though *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted several times prior to the 1995 miniseries, it is the BBC adaptation that has garnered the most critical acclaim and commercial success; it, therefore, has set the standard for *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations. Despite the direction or outcome of Wright's film, it inexorably functions as a reaction to the adaptations which precede it. Even if Wright's intentions are completely different from Langton's, because both films are adaptations of a famous Austen text, Wright's film will be evaluated not only as an Austen adaptation, but as an adaptation of a preexisting adaptation, as a reaction to a previous standard.

"You have bewitched me body and soul": Objectification and Synecdochical Symbolism in *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)

Although *Pride and Prejudice* invites us to identify with and trust Elizabeth's character from the onset, the same cannot be said for Mr. Darcy, a character who, at the beginning of the novel, is "discovered to be proud, to be

above his company, and above being pleased” (Austen 18). The challenge faced by filmmakers when adapting *Pride and Prejudice* becomes taking a character like Mr. Darcy, a man people are supposed to initially dislike and misunderstand, and somehow also make him enigmatic, a feat which Wright accomplishes the first time we meet Darcy at the first ball at Netherfield. In the past, filmmakers have adapted Darcy’s character through a host of different methods and techniques,¹³ most notably in *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) where the director purposely added scenes which highlight Darcy’s isolation, vulnerability, and romantic sensibilities. Firth’s Darcy has become a cinematic icon and has been pegged on multiple occasions as the “definitive Darcy.”¹⁴ Inevitably, all subsequent portrayals of his character exist in Firth’s shadow. Wright does approach Darcy’s diffidence with a manner similar to that of his predecessors. In efforts to render Darcy’s character accessible for a modern audience, Wright fetishizes and eroticizes his character, albeit in a slightly different manner; Wright relies heavily on synecdochical symbolism to emphasize parts of Darcy’s body, ultimately casting Darcy as an object for the female gaze. It is my contention that Wright’s treatment of Darcy as an eroticized object, achieved primarily through the use of synecdochical symbolism, enables him to reveal the complexities of Darcy’s character, just as Langton does in his film through the use of additional Darcy scenes. In *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), Darcy is cast as an eroticized, desired object, one which captures the gaze of the female viewer for the film’s duration.

It is evident early on in the film that Wright is planning to explore the nuances of Darcy’s character in a manner reminiscent of Langton’s miniserial—

he is to be both aloof and alluring. From the moment viewers are first introduced to Darcy in Wright's film, he instantly seizes the gaze of the audience. Prior to Darcy entering the scene, Jane and Elizabeth are engaging in a dialogue about men, and Jane remarks to Elizabeth, "One of these days, Lizzie, someone will catch your eye and then you'll have to watch your tongue." Interestingly enough, Darcy then enters the room, instantly seizing the gaze of Elizabeth and the rest of the partygoers. In a scene reminiscent of the parting of the Red Sea, the partygoers split into two distinct sides of the room, allowing Darcy, Bingley, and Caroline to walk through the center of the room. At this point, the music has stopped, and everyone is gawking at the newcomers as they strut from one side of the room to the other. When the festivities commence, the camera slowly fades from Darcy and his guests, and the partygoers continue with their merrymaking. Despite the presence of the up-tempo music, the couples happily dancing, and the numerous conversations taking place, it is a silent, dimly-lit Darcy who commands the gaze of the audience. He represents the "other," the forbidden, and his supercilious demeanor incites curiosity among viewers. The standoffish nature of his personality begs the audience to question his identity and his willingness to remove himself from society, even those within his social sphere. Despite the fact that the camera follows Elizabeth, as it does for much of the film, the few moments that the camera pans away Elizabeth, Darcy's face positions him as an object of the gaze for the viewer.

Seized by the enigma of Mr. Darcy, viewers study his character, as they try to understand the mystery and allure surrounding his character. A few

moments later in the film, Elizabeth visits a bedridden Jane at Netherfield. After having had the opportunity to visit her sister, Elizabeth, Caroline, Bingley, and Darcy are sitting in the drawing room, engaging in casual conversation about what it means to be an accomplished women. What is most remarkable to note about this scene is the physical placement of Darcy; he is positioned squarely in the center of the room, and he not only has garnered the gaze of Elizabeth and Caroline, but the gaze of the audience as well. Soon afterwards, Caroline and Elizabeth "take a turn about the room," and they begin walking, not allowing their eyes to veer from Darcy the entire time. The scene involves two participants, both of whom are vying for the affections of the central object. Due to the nature of society, however, neither female, no matter how willing she may be, is allowed to pursue Darcy; thus, they romp about the room, ogling the man they both desire. In the preceding scene at the ball, he is an object of interest for the partygoers, and in this scene, he functions yet again as an object of desire. When Caroline and Elizabeth decide to sit down, they position themselves on different sides of the room, Caroline on the left, Elizabeth on the right, and directly in the center of the frame is none other than Darcy. The staging of this scene serves not only to position Darcy as an object of interest, but it establishes an emergent battle for Mr. Darcy's affections. Darcy commands the gaze of both women, yet the positioning of the female characters in the scene's conclusion is of equal significance. Wright's adroit use of the camera in this scene "represent[s] the narratorial voice" (Gervitz, n. pag.); the viewer can visually note that the two women, who are on opposing sides of the room, both display an interest in Mr.

Darcy. As they take their turns about the room, fixating on the room's central object, the viewer, too, takes part in their game of stares. Even in this scene, Darcy is distant, but his placement as the central object in the room commands the attention of viewer. At this point in the film, though, Darcy is still a mystery to viewers; however, depicting him as an object in the center of the room serves as an affirmation that he is worthy of the viewer's gaze, and more importantly, it reminds the viewer that there are aspects of his character that have not been revealed. Because of the enigma which still surrounds his character, the viewer, like Elizabeth and Caroline, has a vested interest in Mr. Darcy.

Wright's treatment of Darcy in the first few scenes in which he appears is reminiscent of Langton's treatment of Darcy in the BBC adaptation. Both directors set up Darcy as the "other," a mysterious figure who lurks in the distance, physically separating himself even from his own society. By incorporating window scenes throughout the film's narrative, however, Langton develops a reflective Darcy, and it is apparent to viewers that he is a man of substance and depth, a man the audience eventually grows to adore. Macfadyen's Darcy first appears to be rather unlikable as well. His haughty demeanor throughout the ball scene seemingly demonstrates that he feels he is wholly superior to the company which surrounds him. In spite of Darcy's arrogance, the manner in which the camera pans away from him, leaving him in shadows, creates an air of mystery about his character, inevitably making the viewer want to know more.

As the film progresses, Wright begins to utilize another technique,

synecdochical symbolism, to develop Darcy's complexity by evoking both a vulnerability and romantic sensibility within his character. The end result, of course, is creating a likable, objectified hero. The first time Wright uses synecdochical symbolism occurs in the scene when Elizabeth and her family are preparing to leave Netherfield to return home to Longbourn. After exchanging farewells, Darcy extends his hand to help Elizabeth into the carriage. The camera zooms in and focuses on Darcy's hand as he quickly removes it from Elizabeth's grasp after she successfully mounts the carriage. As Darcy turns to walk away, the camera, still fixated on his hand, emphasizes Darcy's anxiety and awkwardness after his momentary intimate encounter with Elizabeth. Austen scholar Sarah Ailwood comments on Darcy's awkwardness in Wright's adaptation, noting that he "is not a social performer and only a reluctant social participant" (n. pag.), which the audience can clearly see as the camera zooms in on Darcy's fingers as he stretches them in an effort to regain composure. It is obvious that he is unaccustomed to, or rather uncomfortable with, physical contact, even in actions as seemingly trivial as the touch of a hand. Even though the camera focuses on Darcy's hands for only a few seconds, these moments reflect Darcy's discomfort, and the audience notes his excitement and fear in touching Elizabeth. If Darcy's longing stares in previous scenes were not some indication that he possessed an attraction towards Elizabeth, the discomfort he feels upon touching her hand provides the necessary confirmation. The agitation, though, stems not from his inability to verbally articulate his feelings of attraction, but from a source much deeper. Lydia Martin discusses what she surmises to be

the root of Darcy's anxiety, noting that the few seconds the camera zooms in on Darcy's fretful hand provides viewers with a powerful symbol, one of his imprisonment (n. pag.). Darcy is a man who earns ten thousand pounds per year; he is a man of great respectability and material wealth. Because of societal expectations, Darcy must marry a respectable woman, yet the woman to whom he is attracted is of an inferior birth; a union between the two of them would be frowned upon by members of his social class. The viewer witnesses his inner struggles and, as a result, is able to note an evolution within Darcy's character, for the viewer understands him as being more than a man with a pompous air; rather, he is a man filled with unfulfilled desires and expectations.

Throughout several key points in the film, Wright focuses on parts of Darcy's body, namely his hands and eyes, to showcase his social awkwardness, vulnerability, and lack of poise when around Elizabeth. The day after Darcy and Elizabeth dine together at Rosings Park, Darcy arrives at Mr. Collins's home to speak with Elizabeth. Throughout the scene Darcy is immobile, save for his constant hand spasms. His skittish demeanor upon charging into the room reveals that he has some pressing issue on his mind, a matter of urgency that he would like to express to Elizabeth. Though startled by his sudden entrance, Elizabeth initiates the conversation:

Elizabeth: Mr. Darcy, please do be seated. I'm afraid Mr. and Mrs. Collins have gone on business to the village.

Darcy: This is a charming house. I do believe my aunt did a great deal to it when Mr. Collins first arrived.

Elizabeth: I believe so. She could not have bestowed her kindness on a more grateful subject. Shall I call for some tea?

Darcy: No. Good day, Miss Elizabeth.

Within the aforementioned scene, there are many uncomfortable pauses, yet it is Darcy's inability to contain the movements of his hands that is the scene's most noticeable element. As he contemplates what he is planning to say to Elizabeth, he coddles an object, what appears to be a pair of gloves, and shifts it from one hand to another. Additionally, at several points in the scene, Darcy's fingers stretch out and then compress. By focusing on Darcy's hands, viewers are once again privy to the fluttering emotions he is so desperately trying to control.

Even if only for a few seconds, Darcy is reduced to a pair of jittery hands, which is Wright's way of emphasizing not only Darcy's discomfort and awkwardness in social scenes, but also his inner conflict—repression vs. expression. Elizabeth's inferior social class, however, prohibits him from acting upon his feelings. It is society's expectation that he marry a suitable woman; because Elizabeth would not be deemed suitable by members of high society, Darcy continues to repress his feelings. Darcy's inability to compose his hands, though, is an important symbol because it serves as a visual confirmation of his inner conflict. As much as he may want to express himself, at present, he is allowing societal dictates to govern his behavior. Since Darcy's hands showcase his discomfort in social situations, their agitation connotes an inner turmoil, issues lurking beneath the surface begging to be brought to light. The hand spasms signify that his inner conflict is manifesting itself externally, and it appears as

though it will only be a matter of time before Darcy has to decide either to prolong his repression or embrace his affections for Elizabeth, the feelings that are becoming increasingly more difficult for him to stifle.

While Darcy's hand flutters begin to convey the depth of his inner turmoil, in the film's rain proposal scene, Wright's use of synecdochical symbolism extends beyond Darcy's hands to his eyes and face. Shortly after Darcy barges into the Collins's home and shares an awkward moment with Elizabeth, the film comes to one of its climactic points, the proposal scene in the rain. In the moment just before Elizabeth storms across the bridge, during one of Mr. Collins' monotonous sermons, Colonel Fitzwilliam incidentally tells her of Darcy's involvement in the dissolution of Bingley and Jane's relationship. When Elizabeth glances back at Darcy, he is looking down; then, suddenly, he lifts his head, his eyes instantly capture the gaze of Elizabeth, the camera, and the audience. Unable to sustain eye contact with Darcy, Elizabeth gasps and then runs out in the rain. Elizabeth is soon joined by a wet, disheveled Darcy; during their conversation, the camera fixates on Darcy's face, and his repression finally yields to his passion in the following scene:

Darcy: Miss Bennet, I have struggled in vain but I can bear it no longer. The past months have been a torment. I came to Rosings with the single object of seeing you. I had to see you.

Elizabeth: Me?

Darcy: I've fought against my better judgment, my family's expectation, the inferiority of your birth, my rank and

circumstance, all those things, but I'm willing to put them aside and ask you to end my agony.

Elizabeth: I don't understand.

Darcy: I...love you. Most ardently. Please do me the honor of accepting my hand.

In these lines, unlike in the novel, Darcy tells Elizabeth that he visits Rosings Park for the sole purpose of seeing her. While it is true that Darcy pauses on several occasions as he delivers these lines to Elizabeth, it is significant that at no point in the scene does the camera zoom in on Darcy's ill-composed hand, even in spite of his reference to it. On the contrary, Elizabeth, the camera, and the audience stare into Darcy's face, his eyes particularly. The viewer's gaze fixates on Darcy's furrowed brows and crinkled eyes. When he speaks to Elizabeth concerning his part in breaking apart Bingley and Jane, there is a severity in his eyes, a willed determination to do right by his friend, yet almost simultaneously, these eyes, like the ill-composed hands from previous scenes, express suffering and anxiety. At this point, there is no doubt that Darcy cares deeply for Elizabeth, and it is only his position within society that inhibited him from declaring his romantic feelings sooner.

Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy's advances is perhaps the most important plot element within the scene; however, Wright places an added emphasis on Darcy's face, so that the audience, along with Elizabeth, may note his vulnerability and feel his developing sexual tension. Early on in the scene, Darcy confides in Elizabeth, informing her that he has "fought against his better

judgment, [his] family's expectation, the inferiority of [her] birth, [and his] rank and circumstance," thereby insulting Elizabeth. In his revelation, however, it is evident via his facial expressions that he, too, has been wounded. Being a man of great material wealth, though it may have its perks, for Darcy, means that he cannot marry Elizabeth without his society frowning upon their union. In that sense, Darcy expresses that he is a victim, and his efforts to repress his attractions were futile. Catherine Stewart-Beer, in her article "Style over Substance? *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) Proves Itself a Film for Our Time," discusses Wright's depiction of Darcy as a victim; she contends that *Pride & Prejudice* (2005), ultimately, takes the character of Darcy and renders him a victim of his upbringing, a victim of his fortune, and a victim of his loneliness (Stewart-Beer n. pag.). This scene makes it evident that Darcy, despite his position in society, is a victim of circumstances. As he professes his feelings to Elizabeth, the camera fixates on his face, which is laden with pain and strife. Similarly, the atmosphere at the time of Darcy's declaration is ominous; the sounds of rain and thunder serve as the scene's backdrop, as if to echo his struggles. At the end of the scene, once Elizabeth fully rejects Mr. Darcy's advances, and she states, "[You have] made me realize that you were the last man in the world I could ever be prevailed upon to marry," thunder continues to bellow in the distance. With the sounds of thunder and pouring rain in the background, the camera shifts immediately to a close-up of Darcy's face. He leans forward, and with an open mouth, Darcy attempts to say something to Elizabeth, but he only utters a half-groan, an abortive attempt to speak. Darcy has fully revealed himself to Elizabeth and now

can say no more. His face, at least at this moment in the film, serves as a symbol, a visual representation of the inner torment and agony he feels. Now, having exposed his most private feelings to Elizabeth, Darcy shows that he is a sensitive, vulnerable being, and not thwarted and socially inept. After their tête-à-tête, the sexual tension is at its highest, but Darcy and Elizabeth's inability to act on their impulses further accentuates the extent to which they are immobilized by one another. In Elizabeth's case, her pride is wounded; as for Darcy, he finally acts on his attraction, but he is not yet ready to break fully from the social mores that discourage him from marrying "a woman of inferior birth." The proposal scene in the rain, though, is critical in the development of Darcy's character, for this is the moment when he first unmask himself, showcases his vulnerability, and verbalizes his struggles to Elizabeth (and the viewer).

After Darcy articulates his feelings towards Elizabeth, the central element of Wright's plot becomes if and when the two will unite, which is why the moments at Pemberley are significant in the adaptation, as they serve to heighten the viewers' anticipation of their potential union. At the beginning of the scene, as Elizabeth and the Gardiners venture through the countryside of Derbyshire, their conversation turns to Mr. Darcy and his estate, and Elizabeth expresses her reasons why she has no desire to go to Pemberley, noting his wealth to be her primary objection. Mr. Gardiner, appalled by his niece's snobbery, chides her, saying, "My heavens, Lizzy, what a snob you are. Objecting to *poor* Mr. Darcy because of his wealth. The *poor* man can't help it" (emphasis mine). The pauses in her speech, which end in her objecting to Darcy's wealth, heighten the viewer's

awareness of Elizabeth's prejudices against affluence. Mr. Gardiner immediately rebuts Elizabeth's remarks, rebuking her for her snobbery, and ironically commenting twice on *poor* Darcy. His use of the word "poor" to describe Darcy, though somewhat ridiculous, is fitting in some respect, as it points out Lizzie's snobbery against the upper classes. Elizabeth's comment to her uncle demonstrates that it is difficult for her to separate Darcy from his wealth; her impressions of him stem primarily from materiality. It is not, however, until Elizabeth reaches the Pemberley estate, which has itself come to symbolize both fetish and commodity in both the 1995 miniserial and Wright's adaptation¹⁵, that she *fully* recognizes the extent to which Mr. Darcy is a man of great material worth. When Elizabeth views Pemberley from afar for the first time, she giggles, and it is evident that her anxiety quickly morphs into an air of excitement. Only a few seconds after Mr. Gardiner censures Elizabeth's snobbery, Wright uses a long-angle shot so that Elizabeth, the Gardiners, and the viewer can capture the size and splendor of Pemberley (Goggin, n. pag.). Prior to this moment, Darcy was linked with lavishness and luxury, and Elizabeth's wounded pride inhibited her from accepting wealth as anything but negative; before the viewer's eyes, however, one can note that upon seeing Pemberley for the first time, Elizabeth's understanding of wealth (and of Darcy) begins to change.

It is not until the gallery scene at Pemberley, though, that Wright continues Darcy's objectification, transforming him from a character who elicits the viewer's gaze to an actual physical object. Mesmerized by the opulence of the estate, Elizabeth begins meandering about, eventually winding up in

Pemberley's art gallery where she finds herself ogling its statues. At one point, she even touches some of the objects displayed on the tables, which, according to Austen scholar Laurie Kaplan, makes Elizabeth appear materialistic (n. pag.). While it is true that Elizabeth's desire for materialism does come to the forefront in the scenes at Pemberley, it is predominantly because of the film's treatment of Darcy as an object of the gaze. Ambling about, an awestruck Elizabeth walks at a pace much slower than the Gardiners, as if to soak in every aspect of the place. When she reaches Pemberley's art gallery, the first object which seizes her attention is the *Veiled Vestal Virgin*, a statue of a woman whose eyes are concealed by a veil. A bright-eyed Elizabeth stands for several moments wholly introspective and reflective. The manner in which the camera easily transitions from Elizabeth's face to the *Veiled Vestal Virgin* establishes an immediate contrast between the two;¹⁶ like the statue, she, too, is eroticized, come-hither virgin. More importantly, though, before the audience's eyes, we begin to see Elizabeth's attitudes towards Darcy softening and her feelings deepening. With every subsequent step, Elizabeth is met with various nude sculptures; Elizabeth's confrontation with these objects "allows her to confront her sexuality" (Troost 493-4). Just a few moments before, viewers see Elizabeth as she identifies with the *Vestal Virgin*, but as she walks about the gallery and notices the various nude statues, her facial expressions indicate a keen interest in sexuality; her curiosities are piqued. Before Elizabeth reaches the end of her gallery walk and comes to the room's central piece, she reaches the room's final statue, which she thoroughly inspects. The figure is highly eroticized, featuring a woman lying on her right

side, buttocks slightly arched, with her face firmly looking forward. The camera then immediately pans from the most sexually charged figure in the room to Darcy's bust, which is situated in the center of the gallery. This marks the fourth time in the film where Darcy has been strategically stationed in the center of a room,¹⁷ and each time his physical placement solicits the gaze of Elizabeth and the audience. Within this scene, though, as Elizabeth inspects the lifelike statue, she seemingly has a very different opinion of Darcy from the moments before she visited Pemberley.¹⁸ Having just departed from the gallery's most eroticized statue, Elizabeth views Darcy's statue with a different mentality. Elizabeth stands by the statue and admires Darcy's handsome features, and as she continues staring at his statue, it is clear that the statue, much like Darcy himself, stands tall and proud, an object to be adored by Elizabeth and the viewer.

In the final scenes of the adaptation, Darcy remains depicted as a sum of individual parts not yet whole, which leads up to the film's conclusion: Darcy must fulfill his destined role as a hero in a Hollywood romance by marrying the heroine. Once he weds Elizabeth, he will no longer be conforming to the dictates of his social sphere, nor will he be a victim of loneliness. For Darcy, a union with Elizabeth would make him whole. In the final moments of the film, Darcy, having walked in the early morning towards Longbourn, meets Elizabeth in a field close to her home. Darcy informs Elizabeth that his feelings toward her remain unchanged, and he says to Elizabeth: "My affections and wishes are unchanged, but one word from you will silence me forever. If, however, your feelings have changed... I would have to tell you, you have bewitched me body

and soul and I love... I love...I love you and never wish to be parted from you from this day on.” Within these lines, yet again, an emphasis is placed on Darcy in parts; however, unlike previous scenes in the film which highlight Darcy’s hands and eyes, he speaks here of possessing two distinct parts—body and soul. After their interactions at Pemberley, Darcy is more in love with Elizabeth than ever, and it is his love for his Elizabeth that has made him feel whole. No longer an ill-composed hand, a pair of vulnerable eyes, or a loving face, Darcy embodies physical and spiritual wholes in the forms of body and soul, which is why the ending of this scene should come as no shock for the modern audience when Elizabeth kisses Darcy’s pale, cold hand. The focus on Darcy’s hand at the end of the scene serves to signal Elizabeth’s desire for Darcy’s hand in marriage, and Darcy’s ultimate end as a romantic leading male is fulfilled with their union.

Conclusion

Langton’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and Wright’s *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) both take Austen’s novel, which has captivated readers for two centuries due to the wit and charm of Elizabeth Bennet, and place additional emphasis on developing Darcy’s character. Austen’s novel is lauded by critics for its brilliant satire and social critique, and while much of that satire is preserved in Langton’s adaptation, his additional emphasis on Darcy allows viewers to foster a richer connection with his character than they are afforded in the source text. Having Darcy physically isolate himself, longingly peer out of windows, and reveal his bare body provides the viewer with several opportunities to be alone with Darcy and attempt to unravel the enigma that is his character. These private, eroticized

moments, which are noticeably absent from *Pride and Prejudice*, are central in Langton's depiction of Darcy. Colin Firth's Darcy, though he is at times aloof and abrasive, is a man of introspection and feeling, and it is Firth's vulnerable, romantic portrayal that captures the hearts of the masses. Because of the impact Langton's miniseries had on popular culture, it established a standard for Austen adaptations, one that Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) could not escape.

Though it may be argued that the focus of Wright's film is, in fact, on Elizabeth, Wright, too, creates an enigmatic figure in Mr. Darcy, and as the camera follows Elizabeth, it is the man lurking in the shadows who elicits the gaze of the viewer. Unlike Langton's Darcy who stands glancing out of windows, Wright develops Darcy's character via the use of synecdochical symbolism to show visually he is not whole. By focusing on his jittery hands, his longing eyes, and even a physical replica of himself in the form of a statue, Wright objectifies his hero, accentuating the fact that he is a sum of parts. It is only Elizabeth Bennet, a woman who has "bewitched [him] body and soul," who can take Darcy's disparate parts and make him whole. Even though *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) inevitably reacts against standards set by Langton's miniserial, Wright's adaptation stands on its own as a modern romance of our time, and while no one may out-Firth Colin Firth, Matthew Macfadyen puts a new face to Mr. Darcy. Firth or Macfadyen—either way, in both adaptations, it is Darcy who serves as the object of the gaze and locus of desire.

¹ Kenneth Moler's *Pride and Prejudice: A Study in Artistic Economy* discusses Austen's moderate successes as a writer during her lifetime. Moler writes: "Jane Austen was neither a best-selling

author nor the recipient of a great deal of critical attention in her own day" (8). However, Austen has always had a loyal following, one which has only increased in the twentieth century.

² Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield, in the introduction to their book *Jane Austen in Hollywood*, point out that between 1970 and 1986 there were seven feature-length films and miniseries produced based on the works of Austen. Due to these adaptations and ones that would inevitably follow in the forthcoming decades, Austen's influence and popularity soared.

³ Many Austen critics and scholars have noted that Austen's popularity was at an all-time high in the 1990s. Bonnie Blackwell, Shannon Wooden, Anna Despotopolou, and Debra Teachman all acknowledge Austen's surge in popularity in the 1990s. Teachman, in fact, quotes a *Newsweek* article entitled "Jane Austen Does Lunch," an article highlighting Austen's omnipresence in the 1990s, one which states, "[the] season's hottest star has been dead 178 years, but the great English novelist is all over the screen" (qtd. in Teachman 142).

⁴ Troost and Greenfield comment on the popularity of the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) in *Austen and Hollywood*, noting that within one year *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) sold 200,000 copies, over 50,000 copies being sold in the first week of release (2).

⁵ Laura Mulvey's seminal essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" has informed significant scholarship on film theory in the past few decades. According to Mulvey, Hollywood cinema has been forever grounded in a patriarchal ideology, and the only way to change that would be to redefine the manner in which films are created and the way we receive them. Within her work, she assumes that Hollywood films are marketed towards heterosexual men, and the films are created so that men will receive visual pleasure. Thus, she discusses at length—the male gaze. In the wake of Mulvey's article, many critics have joined the conversation, suggesting the gaze does not have to be masculine. In the case of *Pride and Prejudice* (where Colin Firth's Darcy serves as the object of the gaze), the heterosexual man is not the ideal viewer who would receive visual gratification; rather, the film invites a feminine and homosexual gaze, as it is Darcy's body that is the object of desire.

⁶ One of the best articles on the BBC adaptation's objectification of the male body is "Mr. Darcy's Body: Privileging the Female Gaze," an article written by Lisa Hopkins, which is included in Troost and Greenfield's book *Austen in Hollywood*. Within the article, she recounts her experience watching the adaptation nearly a year and a half after the film first aired in Britain. Even when composing the article, she commented that several articles emerged in various publications talking about Colin Firth's Darcy—and everywhere one looked, there he was. For the remainder of the article she discusses the manner in which the filmmaker casts Firth's Darcy as an object for the visual pleasure of the female viewer.

⁷ In "Of Woman Borne: Male Experience and Feminine Truth in Jane Austen's Novels," Sarah R. Morrison comments on the polarization present among Austen scholars. While some view her as a subversive revolutionary figure whose work extends far beyond the parlor rooms, others feel that her work is limiting, and her portrayal of male characters—both heroes and villains—always winds up "flat." The critics who feel Austen cannot adequately depict male characters remark that she "marginaliz[es] the male experience" (Morrison 338). Those who hold the opposing view tend to overemphasize the roles of the characters who they perceive to be well-rounded "in a misguided attempt to assert Austen's historical relevance and the profundity of her art" (Morrison 338). Despite where critics find themselves in this debate, it is one that persists among Austen scholars, as Austen's male characters—whether they be marginalized or overly complex—tend to be problematic, particularly when adapting into film.

⁸ The article "BBC Cashes in as 'Darcy Phenomenon' Has Nation in a Swoon" details the impact Colin Firth's Darcy had on legions of fans of the television miniseries. Not only were viewers

enamored with the series, but Firth and his iconic character seemingly overnight became national sensations (in both the United Kingdom and the United States).

⁹ In her article "Balancing the Courtship Hero: Masculine Emotional Display in Film Adaptations of Austen's Novels," Cheryl Nixon asserts that the 1995 miniseries adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* incorporates significant visual symbols throughout the film's narrative, particularly to help develop Darcy's character. As is the case with most criticism on the BBC adaptation, she, too, discusses the significance of the pond scene—at least in terms of reading it as a visual symbol for the development of Darcy's character. She asserts that this scene makes Darcy " 'more alive' and 'more human,'" adding that it represents an "emotional rebirth" (23).

¹⁰ Within the first part of her article "Sex and Scullery: The New *Pride & Prejudice*," Jen Camden discusses silence in Langton's *Pride and Prejudice* (1995). She holds that the silence incorporated throughout the film "mimics the language of Austen" (Camden, n. pag.). In that respect, the BBC adaptation is maintaining fidelity to the source text; there are no melodramatic love scenes or over-the-top moments in dialogue. On the contrary, on many occasions throughout the miniseries, there is silence—moments when characters reflect on preceding events and conversations (allowing the viewer, too, to process what has transpired) and moments to help develop the complexity of the characters, particularly Darcy's.

¹¹ To understand the extent to which reviews of the film are mixed, one can refer to *Persuasions On-Line* Volume 27, Issue Number 2 to get a full sampling of the film's reviews. Catherine Stewart-Ber, for instance, in her article "Style over Substance? *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) Proves Itself a Film of Our Time" notes that the film received mixed reviews, adding that she feels it was produced to reflect our existing thoughts on romance (Stewart-Ber n. pag.). Megan Woodworth, on the other hand, contends that the film is a bastardization of Austen, adding that "the novel is transformed from a brilliant analysis of social and marital politics to a generic fairytale... deflated into a saccharine Cinderella story" (Woodworth n. pag.). Others regard Wright's interpretation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* favorably (See Ann-Marie Paquet-Deyris's article "Staging Intimacy and Interiority in Joe Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005)" for another favorable review.)

¹² See Megan Woolworth's article "'I am a gentleman's daughter'? Translating Class from Austen's Page to Twenty-first Century Screen" to see how one critic views Wright's *Pride & Prejudice* (2005) as a failed adaptation, due primarily to the fact that Austen's satire is lost as Wright thrusts the romantic subtext of the novel at the epicenter of the adaptation. Similarly, Troost and Greenfield mention that adaptations of Austen typically result in the sacrifice of Austen's satire. Additionally, they also contend that in attempting to condense Austen to two hours for the big screen often trivializes the plot and reduces the characters' complexities (7).

¹³ Adapting Darcy's character to film, rife with a number of challenges, is an issue that filmmakers have addressed in different ways. For starters, in Robert Leonard's 1940 adaptation, there are several additional scenes that enhance Darcy's character, rendering him more likeable to the audience (i.e. teaching Elizabeth how to shoot an arrow). More importantly, though, as Liora Brosh points out in "Consuming Women: The Representation of Women in the 1940 Adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*," Darcy, as well as the other male characters in the novel are objectified, just as the women are.

¹⁴ Madelyn Ritrosky-Winslow, among other critics, has been cited saying that Colin Firth's Darcy is, in fact, the "definitive Darcy."

¹⁵ In her essay "'A Correct Taste in Landscape': Pemberley as Fetish and Commodity," H. Elisabeth Ellington writes that Austen's novels are as much about landscape and property as they are about anything else. Additionally, Ellington argues that the as one reads Austen's novel, one

becomes a lover and consumer of landscape, just as much as one loves the story itself (91). In adapting *Pride and Prejudice* into film, Ellington argues that the consumerism and fetishism surrounding landscape intensifies (92). Pemberley and Darcy become synonymous with one another—in both Austen's novel and its various adaptations.

¹⁶ The first time the audience ever meets Darcy, he is standing between Caroline and Bingley, as they are preparing to join the festivities at the opening ball in the film. A few moments later in the film, Darcy is sitting in the drawing room writing a letter to Georgiana. As he sits, he does so in the middle of the room; Elizabeth and Caroline circle him several times as they walk about the room. Later, when Darcy comes to visit Elizabeth at Mr. Collins' home, he is once again standing directly in the middle of the large windows. The centering of Darcy's statue, then, marks the fourth time that he has been strategically centered to elicit the gaze of Elizabeth, other characters, and the viewer.

¹⁷ The scene in which Elizabeth walks about Darcy's art gallery inspecting the various statues has become one of great discussion among critics of Wright's adaptation. Susan Fraiman, for instance, contends that the moments Elizabeth spends in the gallery capture the complexity of Austen's novel. For her, the *Vestal Veiled Virgin* captures the complexity of Elizabeth and her faulty understanding of Darcy's character; meanwhile, Elizabeth's interactions with the bust of Darcy clearly indicate that her "feelings towards the man have begun to soften" (Fraiman, n. pag.). Linda Troost views the scene a little more severely, suggesting that this is the moment that Elizabeth must confront her sexuality (494).

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