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Katharina Tobisch

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## **Abbreviations**

P&P: Pride and Prejudice

AASAT: An Assembly Such as This

D&D: Duty and Desire

TTR: These Three Remain

YMD: Young Master Darcy

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## **Introduction**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen's works are now as popular as ever. There is so much information to be found on the internet about the Jane Austen Fandom that it is a little overwhelming at first. There are countless internet blogs dedicated to the 19th-century writer, containing reviews of hundreds of works of Jane Austen fanfiction. It is truly remarkable that almost two-hundred years after her death, there are still so many people fascinated by and engaging with Jane Austen and her world. One adaptation that definitely helped Jane Austen gain this postmortem celebrity status that she has today was the BBC miniseries *Pride and Prejudice* from 1995, which brought about the release of several other movie or TV adaptations of Austen's work, as well as countless internet blogs and fansites.

As there is so much material available, it would far outreach the scope of this thesis to describe every single movie adaptation, Austen-dedicated blog or work of fanfiction in detail, so instead, in the first part of the thesis, I am going to write about the history of fanfiction and the history of the Jane Austen Fandom, as well as giving an overview of and mentioning some of the most important and famous works thus created. I will also try to find answers to the question why, almost 200 years after her death, there are still so many people fascinated by and engaging with the works of Jane Austen, and why, of all of Austen's novels, *Pride and Prejudice* is taken as the basis for most Jane Austen-related fanfiction stories. As of September 2015, the website fanfiction.net, where users can upload their creative works, lists more than 3000 stories based on this novel, which is more than the stories based on Austen's other completed novels taken together (there are 335 stories for *Emma*, 174 for *Sense and Sensibility*, 135 for *Persuasion*, 63 for *Mansfield Park* and 39 for *Northanger Abbey*). But also among authors who publish Jane Austen fanfiction in book form, *Pride and Prejudice* is clearly the favorite. Svensson (2013: 206) calls these kinds of Austen-related novels 'professional fanfiction', since, as opposed to amateur writers who post their stories in online forums mainly to receive feedback and discuss various aspects of their own text or the source text with a community, professional fanfiction authors also receive money for their efforts and their works are discussed publicly. Of course, very often, the authors of professional fanfiction first post their stories on fanfiction forums before they decide to publish them in book form. Sometimes, in various internet blogs, these novels are also referred to as 'sequels', however, this is a bit misleading, since the term implies that a story is being continued. While there are numerous stories that do indeed continue *Pride and Prejudice*, and, for instance,

speculate about Elizabeth's and Mr. Darcy's married life, this is far from being the only way that authors engage with Austen's work: there are also prequels that tell stories about a character's childhood, or retellings where the story is narrated from the perspective of a different character, just to name a few examples. So, in my thesis, I am also going to refer to these novels as 'professional fanfiction'. There is no complete list of all the Austen-related professional fanfiction novels, as new ones are published constantly, but *Austenprose* and *Austenesque Reviews*, two of the most important websites containing reviews of Austen-related novels, also list much more reviews for novels based on *Pride and Prejudice* than for any other of Austen's works – so it is fair to assume that this is the novel that also inspired the most professional fanfiction. Thus, there must be something about the novel *Pride and Prejudice* that is especially appealing to modern audiences, and I am going to try to find out what this is.

In the second part of my thesis, I will do a close analysis of selected works of professional fanfiction based on *Pride and Prejudice*. I decided to choose the *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* trilogy by Pamela Aidan. It is a retelling of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* from the perspective of Mr. Darcy, consisting of three novels: *An Assembly Such As This* (2003), *Duty and Desire* (2004) and *These Three Remain* (2005). In 2010, Aidan wrote a short novella called *Young Master Darcy*, which I am also going to analyze. Pamela Aidan started posting her stories on fanfiction forums before she decided to publish them in book form and thereby become a professional fanfiction author. I picked these novels because they are among the most famous works of their genre, given that thousands of copies were sold worldwide, and they were even translated into Spanish, Italian and French. I will analyze these novels in terms of plot, characters and style. Furthermore, of course, one has to consider that while Austen's novels are set in the time she lived and thereby, she wrote about what she knew; Aidan's work was written 200 years later; thus, she had to do a lot of research to make sure that her novels are historically accurate and credible. Although Aidan said in interviews that she tried to stay as true to the period as possible, I will try to determine if and in which way the famous Austen boom of the 1990s had any impact on Aidan's writing.

# **1 Theoretical Framework**

## **1.1 Intertextuality**

The term ‘intertextualité’ was invented in 1967 by Julia Kristeva.

At its least presumptuous, the word ‘intertextuality’ merely indicates that one text refers to or is present in another one. (Mai 1991: 51)

In other words, every author is influenced by other texts they have read before in their writing, and intertextuality describes the mechanisms that link texts to each other. According to Kristeva, in intertextuality, “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another.” (1980: 36) Barthes even affirms that

[a]ny text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognizable forms: the texts of the previous and surrounding culture. (1981: 42)

Jenny sees intertextuality as something very positive; as an “accumulation of artistic wealth”:

Intertextuality speaks a language whose vocabulary is the sum of all existing texts. [...] This confers on the intertext an exceptional richness and density. (Jenny 1982: 45; quoted in Mai 1991: 44)

According to Broich (1985), there are three ways of intertextuality. The author may be unaware that there is intertextuality, or he may be aware of it and tries to hide it, which would be plagiarism, or the author may make an intentional reference expecting their readers to understand it. In the case of fanfiction, the authors make intentional references to the source text, thus we are dealing with the third way.

When intertextually analyzing my chosen texts, I will be using the terminology proposed by Genette (1993). He calls the ‘prior’ text ‘hypotext’ and the texts following it ‘hypertexts’. Thus, *Pride and Prejudice* is the ‘hypotext’ and the three novels of the *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* trilogy, as well as the novella, are its ‘hypertexts’.



## 1.2 Fanfiction

After giving brief definitions of the phenomenon of fanfiction, this chapter will also examine why this relatively new genre is so successful. The term ‘fan’ is an abbreviated form of the word ‘fanatic’. It has its roots in the Latin word ‘fanaticus’. Originally, this meant “of or belonging to the temple, a servant, a devotee”, but it quickly assumed more negative connotations. Today, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines the term as “of persons inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy”, thus, it describes people who have an “excessive and mistaken enthusiasm” for something. It can also be used referring to madness “such as might result from possession by a deity or demon” (quoted from Jenkins 2013: 12). According to Jenkins, the term ‘fan’

[n]ever fully escaped its earlier connotations of religious and political zealotry, false beliefs, orgiastic excess, possession, and madness, connotations that seem to be at the heart of many of the representations of fans in contemporary discourse. (2013: 12)

The abbreviated form ‘fan’ first appeared in the late 19th century in journalistic accounts describing followers of professional sports teams (originally in baseball). The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* gives us the following definition: “a person who admires sb/sth or enjoys watching or listening to sb/sth very much”. This definition leaves out the religious element and it closely corresponds to the way fans are seen in popular culture today. Some fans then take this admiration a step further – it is not enough for them to passively read, watch or listen, but they use the person, novel or film they admire so much as an inspiration for their own writing. This type of writing belongs to the genre of fanfiction, which the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* defines like this:

[a] type of literature, usually written on the Internet, by people who admire a particular novel, film/movie, etc, with characters taken from these stories

All these definitions are very positive – it is a good thing if people have found something they are so enthusiastic about that it even inspires them to get creative themselves. On the internet, there are countless communities where everybody can publish their own work of fanfiction or read stories written by other users. The largest of these websites is fanfiction.net, which has more than two million registered users, and where new stories are added every day. Users can add stories from any kind of fandom – the categories range from books, movies and musicals to comics and computer games.

However, many negative stereotypical images of fans also exist today. For example, some people see them as excessive but “mindless consumers” (Jenkins 2013: 23) who should “get a life” outside this fictional realm they are so obsessed about. Jenkins opposes this view and shows understanding and also appreciation for the fans’ practices:

Fans, like all of us, inhabit a world where traditional forms of community life are disintegrating, the majority of marriages end in divorce, most social relations are temporary and superficial, and material values often dominate over emotional and social needs. Fans are often people who are overeducated for their jobs, whose intellectual skills are not challenged by their professional lives. Fans react against those unsatisfying situations, trying to establish a “weekend-only-world” more open to creativity and accepting of differences, more concerned with human welfare than with economic advance. (2013: 282)

However, he also acknowledges that it is unhealthy to stay in this “weekend-only-world” for too long and that “nobody can live permanently within this utopia”.

Jenkins further states (2013: 18) that fans often do something which is deprecated in academic circles, namely treating fictional characters as if they were real people who have a life outside the world presented in the novel and that, in general, fans often propose interpretations of fictional worlds which do not correspond to those suggested by academics, which are seen as superior, more trustworthy and of more value. In other words, fans are criticized from all sides: some people criticize them for being too passive, but when they actively engage with fictional worlds, their interpretations are quickly being criticized as ‘trivial’. Thus, academics have the power to determine which interpretations of a literary work are valid and which are not. This practice already begins in school:

The teacher’s red pen rewards those who “correctly” decipher the text and penalizes those who “get it wrong”, while the student’s personal feelings and associations are rated “irrelevant” to the task of literary analysis. (Jenkins 2013: 25)

In other words, young children are taught already to become ‘passive recipients’ instead of learning to actively engage with a text. However, Michel de Certeau proposes a different model. He describes readers as ‘textual poachers’, who

[a]re travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write. (De Certeau 1984: 74; quoted in Jenkins 2013: 24)

So, according to de Certeau, fanfiction writers are the ones who have the courage to resist those meanings established by the dominant classes and propose different ones. However, one

has to consider also that the meanings and interpretations that fanfiction writers see in a text do not always have to be in opposition to those in academia, or those proposed by the writers of the original texts. According to de Certeau,

[r]eaders are not simply poachers; they are also “nomads”, always in movement, “not here or there”, not constrained by permanent property ownership but rather constantly advancing upon another text, appropriating new materials, making new meanings. (Jenkins 2013: 24)

Applied to the example of fanfiction writers, this would mean that they do not engage with a single text, but with several different texts, and that their fandom does not have to be restricted to one particular domain. Taking the example of the Jane Austen Fandom, the author Emma Tennant wrote fanfiction on both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*, and on the website *Austenprose*, a Jane Austen fansite which I am going to write about in more detail later, there are frequently references to the TV series *Downton Abbey*. In addition, there are many fanfiction authors who do not concentrate on one single Austen novel, but write fiction in which the characters from all of Jane Austen’s novels are united and meet each other. One such example is *Old Friends and New Fancies* by Sybil G. Brinton, which, published in 1913, was one of the earliest works of Austen fanfiction ever written.

Jenkins makes a call to scholars and teachers to reconsider their position. “Education can be a force for the democratization of cultural life” (2013: 26). But by imposing certain ideologies and interpretations on the students and not accepting and appreciating the students’ own interpretations, we are doing the opposite of democratization. Furthermore, Jenkins states that

Unlike the readers de Certeau describes, fans get to keep what they produce from the materials they “poach” from mass culture, and these materials sometimes become a limited source of economic profit for them as well. Few fans earn enough through the sale of their artworks to see fandom as a primary source of personal income, yet, many earn enough to pay for their expenses and to finance their fan activities. (2013: 49)

In the case of Jane Austen, there are numerous of works of fanfiction based on her novels which have been published in book format, that is, so-called ‘professional fanfiction’. Thus, these authors of fanfiction definitely did get money for their works.

It is also interesting to note that most fanfiction is written by women. For Jane Austen’s regency romances with their strong emphasis on the characters’ relationships with each other, this does not seem surprising, but according to Jenkins, there is also a strong female

community, for example, writing Star-Trek-related fanfiction. According to Jenkins, men and women employ different reading strategies and focus on different things while reading:

Female readers entered directly into the fictional world, focusing less on the extratextual process of its writing than on the relationships and events. Men's reading acknowledged and respected the author's authority, while women saw themselves as engaged in a "conversation" within which they could participate as active contributors. (2013: 108)

To refer to a cliché, when retelling a story, while men "want to deliver a clear simple structure of the chain of information", women focus more on details and the personal relationships between the characters. They also frequently let their own interpretations slip in. Thus, women are particularly prone to all those strategies and practices that fanfiction authors typically employ.

Another important point that Jenkins makes is that

Fandom recognizes no clear-cut line between artists and consumers; all fans are potential writers whose talents need to be discovered, nurtured and promoted and who may be able to make a contribution, however modest, to the cultural wealth of the larger community. (2013: 280)

In the Austen fandom, there are many writers, among them also Pamela Aidan, whose fascination with the original material inspired them to start creative writing – even if they had never done it before.

According to Bronwen (2011: 1)

The term *fanfiction* (sometimes abbreviated as *fanfic*) refers to stories produced by fans based on plot lines and characters from either a single source text or else a "canon" of works; these fan-created narratives often take the pre-existing storyworld in a new, sometimes bizarre, direction.

In the case of Jane Austen, as she has written six novels altogether, we are dealing with a canon<sup>1</sup> of texts. But these novels are apparently not enough material for some readers; they fell in love with the characters and want to know more about them. Thus, they invent prequels

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<sup>1</sup> The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines the term 'canon' as "a list of the books or other works that are generally accepted as the genuine work of a particular writer or as being important", thus, texts that are considered 'serious' literature. However, in Bronwen, and also in this thesis, the word is used to describe all the works which are used as a basis for the works of fanfiction.

or sequels to Jane Austen's novels, set the story into another century, or retell the story from the perspective of another character (e.g. Mr. Darcy). However, there is often disagreement among fans as to what can be subsumed in the canon. Some people count only the novels themselves, while others also consider the movie adaptations or even comments made by the directors or screenwriters. According to Van Steenhuyse (2001: 168)

[i]n the Austen fandom [...] there is a rift between fans who base their stories primarily on the adaptations and fans who "focus principally on the books" because the latter "claim some intellectual superiority over the first group" (Thompson 2008)

There are many different kinds of Austen fans. There are those who like her because of her novels, and there are also those who mainly like the film adaptations and who have not necessarily read the original novels. The former group often claims a sort of intellectual superiority over the latter. In addition, it is natural that when reading a novel, everybody forms their own interpretation of the characters. Thus, when writing fanfiction from a certain character's point of view (e.g. what Pamela Aidan did in her Darcy-trilogy), a writer has to take into account that other readers might not share her interpretation. According to Yaffe (2013: xviii), fans feel a "tension between the desire for community and the desire for exclusivity", that is, on the one hand, they want to share their enthusiasm with someone else, to see that they are not alone with their interests and thereby that there is no reason to be ashamed about them (which is now, thanks to the internet, easier than ever), but on the other hand, they care so much about the characters and have formed their very own personal picture of them, so that it hurts them to see someone else introducing a completely different picture.

According to Jenkins (2008; quoted in Van Steenhuyse 2001: 168), fan texts are grounded in 'negative capability', that is, "gaps and details in the source text which invite readers to use their own imagination." Some of these elements are gaps or holes (events which must have happened, but which are not narrated in the original text), silences (elements which are missing for ideological reasons) and potentials (elements which suggest how the story could have continued, or how it could have taken a different course). Furthermore,

Fans appear to have a predilection for negative capability which relates to characters and their relationships. (Van Steenhuyse 2001: 168)

Of course, there can be many different interpretations as to why a character does certain things. As I have already mentioned, fan writers usually weave their own interpretation of the original text into their story, and also find arguments to defend it.

According to Jenkins the main motivation for fans to produce fanfiction is:

The fans' response typically involves not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism, and it is the combination of the two responses which motivates their active engagement with the media. Because popular narratives often fail to satisfy, fans must struggle with them, to try to articulate to themselves and others unrealized possibilities within the original works. Because the texts continue to fascinate, fans cannot dismiss them from their attention but rather must try to find ways to salvage them for their interests. (2013: 23)

Thus, fanfiction always arises out of a certain dissatisfaction with the original text. The text is fascinating for its readers, but there is just something which is not quite right for them, or something that is missing, which needs to be added or reworked. It is clear that when doing so, it is possible for new characters to arrive on the scene, who might be so successful that they are taken up by other authors of fanfiction. These new elements of the story then form part of the 'fanon', that is

[s]omething not in the canon, invented by a fanfic writer but convincing enough to be adopted by others (Pugh 2005: 242)

Writers of fanfiction might also invent stories taking place in an 'alternate universe'. For example, the story could take place in a different time period from the canon. Again taking the Jane Austen Fandom as an example, according to Pugh

[a] missing scene becomes an alternate universe story the moment it seems illogical that later canonical action follows from it. By this view, a story in which Elizabeth believes a warning about Wickham earlier in the story, and changes her behavior toward Darcy, is an alternate universe story, while a story in which she dismisses such a warning is a missing scene. (2005: 63)

There are different theories as to when to date the origins of fanfiction. Some scholars argue that it "can be traced back several millennia to mythic stories", while others say that

[f]anfic should be understood within the culture of fandom, starting either in the late 1960s with Star Trek fanzines; or, in the 1920s with the formation of Austen and Holmes societies. (Xu 2011: 82)

However, it was only after the invention of the internet that fanfiction really became a well-known and common practice (Bronwen 2011: 2).

## 2 The Jane Austen Fandom

Jane Austen's novels have never been out of print, so it seems strange to speak of an Austen revival. Nevertheless, a revival that some have termed "Austenmania" has produced a virtual industry flourishing widely in the United States and England (Pucci & Thompson 2003: 1)

In this chapter, I am writing about the history of this 'Austenmania', first Jane Austen's general reception history in Britain and America, and then the history of Jane Austen fanfiction, as well as giving an overview of the most important works of Austen-inspired books, movies and internet series that show how Austen has influenced popular culture. Later, I am also going to try to find reasons why, almost 200 years after her death, Jane Austen's novels are still so popular.

During her lifetime, Jane Austen did not achieve fame. She wrote the first versions of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* in her early twenties, and her father sent those manuscripts to publishers in 1797, but they were both rejected. In 1803, Jane Austen sent a manuscript called *Susan* (later known as *Northanger Abbey*) to a publisher. He said that he would print it immediately, but did not keep his promise. Jane Austen was already thirty-five when in 1811, a publisher called Thomas Egerton issued *Sense and Sensibility*. Egerton later also went on to publish *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813 and *Mansfield Park* in 1814. In 1815, *Emma* was issued by the publisher John Murray. Jane Austen's other two novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, were published only after her death, also by Murray (Brown 1966).

Jane Austen was very private about her works; nobody except her family knew that she was a writer, as her novels did not appear under her original name. According to Brown

*Sense and Sensibility* was headed "By a Lady". *Pride and Prejudice* was described as "by the author of *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Emma* as "by the author of *Pride and Prejudice*". *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were posthumously issued together in four volumes as "By the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, etc." (1966: 10)

According to Yaffe (2013: 19) she did so

[p]erhaps to avoid the notoriety that might attach so someone, especially a woman, working in the then disparaged genre of the novel.

Although the sales of the novels were not large, Jane Austen was greatly admired by a number of fellow authors and poets, such as Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Coleridge and later Alfred Lord

Tennyson. However, in the mid-19th century, “Austen’s restrained Regency romances looked old-fashioned and irrelevant” (Harman 2009: 6).

## 2.1 Jane Austen’s Reception History

In 1870, more than fifty years after the author’s death, Jane Austen’s nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh published *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, which contains biographical information about his aunt. The memoir was criticized for painting a softened picture of Jane Austen, and disregarding the fact that she was a sharp critic of the society and the conventions of her time. However, Austen-Leigh’s work definitely shaped how Jane Austen is seen in popular culture today, namely

[a]s a universal Aunt Jane in a perfect Hampshire cottage – sweet, cosy, ladylike, amateur and unthreatening. (Vickery 2011)

It also brought about the new release of her novels, and, in accordance with the memoir, she began to be marketed as a romantic, sentimental figure. According to Scholer (2009: 8), one reason for Jane’s appeal among the Victorians was that her books described a “simpler time before industry and factories ruled England”. The novels were shortened and thereby made accessible to different kinds of readers. The most expensive editions were those by Macmillan of the 1890s, containing illustrations by Hugh Thompson, which “depicted a very romantic Austen, with pretty girls, dandy gentlemen, and cherubs” (Scholer 2009: 9). In the preface to the Macmillan edition of *Pride and Prejudice*, the British literary critic George Saintsbury coined the term ‘Janeite’, to describe a person who is enthusiastic about Jane Austen and her world. This newly discovered interest in Jane Austen grew more and more, and some people even began to worship her like a religious figure. The author William Dean Howells was the first to call her ‘divine Jane’, and although he meant it satirically, this concept was readily taken up by the public. In the early 20th century, the academic A.C. Bradley said in a lecture to a group of Cambridge undergraduate students: “like myself, you belong to the faithful”, and the writer Rudyard Kipling, an ardent Janeite, described Winchester, the place where Jane Austen is buried, as “the holiest place in England” (Harman 2009: 124). Also in America, Jane’s fame was growing. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century,

America was going through its own problems of the industrial age. Well known American writers of the period such as Mark Twain, James Fennimore Cooper, and Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of a wild, unkempt natural world. These writers gave a male perspective to literature. American literature up until this point had been a very



masculine canon; Austen represented an acceptable feminine perspective and a backlash from the lack of American social structure. (Scholer 2009: 9)

America also had to deal with problems of slavery, and numerous immigrants came to the country. Scholer (2009: 10) argues that lots of Americans therefore longed for a “homogenous world, a totally white Anglo-Saxon society”, which was present in Austen’s novels. In addition, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Janeite-ism was “principally a male enthusiasm shared among publishers, professors and literati” (Johnson 2011: 234).

In Rudyard Kipling’s short story *The Janeites*, a group of First World War Soldiers become fond of Jane Austen’s novels. But also in reality, Jane Austen’s novels were recommended to British veterans who were traumatized after the war (Johnson 2011: 238). According to Paul Fussell, an American cultural and literary historian, author and university professor, for the soldiers, Jane Austen’s books were

[a]n oasis of reasonableness and normality, a place one could crawl into for a few moments’ respite (Harman 2009: 181)

During the inter-war period, the movement of Janeitism spread over to France, with the publication of Léonie Villard’s *Jane Austen: sa vie et son oeuvre*, a critical biography of Jane Austen. Consequently, more and more of Jane Austen’s novels were translated into French.

Also during the Second World War, Austen’s stories were used as a “source of solace and wit”, though to a lesser extent than during the first one. Winston Churchill affirmed that Jane Austen’s novels had helped him get through the war. (Vickery 2012)

In 1940, the British literary critic D.W. Harding wrote an essay “that helped inaugurate the scholarly study of Austen’s novels”, affirming that Austen’s fate had been “to be read and enjoyed by precisely the sort of people whom she disliked” (Lynch 2000: 8). According to Gubar & Gilbert (1979: 151), in her works, Austen makes fun of

[s]uch novelistic clichés as love at first sight, the primacy of passion over all other emotions and/or duties, the chivalric exploits of the hero, the vulnerable sensitivity of the heroine, the lovers’ proclaimed indifference to financial considerations, and the cruel crudity of parents.

Thus, according to Harding, the way the so-called ‘Janeites’ see their idol is actually only a figment of their imagination, influenced by the way Austen was portrayed in her nephew’s memoir and the subsequent marketing strategies. They see her as a romantic, sentimental

heroine and reduce her to an author of love stories, disregarding her sharp wit and irony. Harding sees Janeitism as a form of escapism; these fans use their imaginative Austen as a “refuge” when the “contemporary world grew too much for them” (Harding 1940: 166; quoted in Johnson 2000: 34). This essay sparked a new academic interest in Austen, so that

By the 1970s, she had become such a well-established topic of academic study that, according to Mazzeno, between 1976 and 1990, three hundred doctoral dissertations dealt, in whole or in large part, with her works. (Yaffe 2013: 105)

However, the convinced Janeites, if they even read it, did not let themselves be discouraged by this essay and continued their adoration. Thus, Jane Austen became one of the few authors who are esteemed both by academics and in popular culture.

Today, Janeites have more material to discuss than ever: there are not only Jane Austen’s novels, but also the numerous film- and TV-adaptations of her novels, as well as thousands of fanfiction stories published both in book form and online. They talk about their favorite topic in many different internet forums, start their own Austen-dedicated blogs, join Jane Austen Societies, or attend numerous Austen-related events and conferences. In the following chapters, I am going to give an overview of the most important Austen-adaptations, that is, professional fanfiction novels and Austen-related movies, that are on the market today, as well as introducing the most important internet blogs and other ways in which fans show their devotion to their ‘divine Jane’.

## 2.2 History of Jane Austen Fanfiction

In his memoir, James-Edward Austen-Leigh states about his aunt:

She would, if asked, tell us many little particulars about the subsequent career of some of her people. In this traditionary way we learned that Miss Steele never succeeded in catching the Doctor; that Kitty Bennet was satisfactorily married to a clergyman near Pemberley, while Mary obtained nothing higher than one of her uncle Philips’ clerks, and was content to be considered a star in the society of Meriton; that the “considerable sum” given by Mrs. Norris to William Price was one pound; that Mr. Woodhouse survived his daughter’s marriage, and kept her and Mr. Knightley from settling at Donwell about two years; and that the letters placed by Frank Churchill before Jane Fairfax, which she swept away unread, contained the word “pardon”. Of the good people in Northanger Abbey and Persuasion we know nothing more than what is written: for before those works were published their

author had been taken away from us, and all such amusing communications had ceased forever. (71)

Thus, like probably many authors do, Jane Austen did indeed speculate about what might happen to her characters after the novels ended.

In 1850, even twenty years before the memoir appeared, Austen's niece Catherine Anne Hubback, the daughter of her brother Frank, published *The Younger Sister*, a novel based on Austen's unfinished story *The Watsons*, which can be called the first published work of Austen fanfiction. The novel was published in three volumes, and today, only the first two volumes are available to be read online.

In the 1860s, another one of Jane's nieces, Anne Lefroy, attempted to complete Austen's unfinished work *Sanditon*, on which she was still working at the time of her death. However, Lefroy did not complete her task. In the 1880s, Jane Austen appeared as a character in a published story written by Sarah Fanny Malden, who invented a 'seaside romance' for her, in which Austen is engaged to a naval officer who later dies at sea.

In 1913, Sybil Grace Brinton published *Old Friends and New Fancies*, which is considered the first Jane Austen sequel ever written. Brinton was an Englishwoman born in 1874. She got married in 1908, had no children, and died in 1928, after suffering from poor health all her life. Apart from this, relatively little is known about her (Jane Austen's World 2008). The novel skillfully combines characters from all of Jane Austen's novels: Colonel Fitzwilliam from *Pride and Prejudice* is in love with Mary Crawford from *Mansfield Park*, and Kitty Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice* falls in love with William Price, a minor character from *Mansfield Park*, who is the brother of the novel's heroine Fanny Price. Virginia Woolf wrote about the novel in an essay published in the 'Times Literary Supplement'. She described it as

[a] work of great love and great ingenuity which, if taken not as fiction but as talk about Jane Austen's characters, will please that select public which is never tired of discussing them. (Yaffe 2013: 69)

In the late 1920s, Edith Hubback-Brown, the granddaughter of Catherine Anne Hubback, wrote another completion of *The Watsons*, which was probably a collaboration with her husband Francis. Hubback-Brown also wrote fanfiction based on *Sense and Sensibility* (*Margaret Dashwood, or Interference*) and *Mansfield Park* (*Susan Price, or Resolution*), which she published under the name 'Mrs. Francis Brown' (Yaffe 2014). The first work of

fanfiction based exclusively on *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1949: *Pemberley Shades* by D.A. Bonavia-Hunt. It is a sequel exploring what happens after the marriage of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Another notable work is a continuation of *Sanditon*, published in 1975, which was originally by an unknown author who simply called herself ‘Another Lady’ (in homage to Jane Austen calling herself ‘A Lady’, because she wished to stay anonymous). Later editions revealed the author’s name to be Marie Dobbs (A Literary Compulsion 2010). It includes all the 12 chapters of Austen’s original manuscript as well as Dobbs’ completion. In the 1980s and 1990s, more and more Austen-related fanfiction was published, most notably by Joan Aiken and Emma Tennant, who both wrote a series of sequels: *Mansfield Revisited: A Novel*, *Jane Fairfax: A Novel to Complement Emma* (1990); and *Eliza’s Daughter: Sequel to Sense and Sensibility* (1994) for Aiken and *Pemberley: Or Pride and Prejudice Continued* (1993); and *An Unequal Marriage: Or Pride and Prejudice Twenty Years Later* (1994) for Tennant. According to Nattress (2012), these novels have always been well-received by the public, however, publishers feared that the market could only support a limited number of authors writing in this genre.

In the mid-1990s, after the release of the BBC miniseries *Pride and Prejudice* starring Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle, which I am going to write about in more detail later, the interest in Jane Austen’s novels and her time, the Regency period, grew rapidly, so the publishers’ worries disappeared. As I already mentioned in the introduction, there are hundreds of professional fanfiction novels based on Jane Austen’s work available today. On the website ‘Goodreads’, there is a list, based on users’ votes, of the best Jane Austen-related professional fanfiction novels, consisting of 370 books. Among the top ten are all the three novels of the *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* trilogy, as well as the famous novels *Austenland* by Shannon Hale and *Bridget Jones’s Diary* by Helen Fielding – both of which were turned into movies which I am going to describe in more detail later.

### 2.2.1 Jane Austen and Fantasy

[f]ans, like other consumers of popular culture, read intertextually as well as textually and their pleasure comes through the particular juxtapositions that they create between specific program content and other cultural materials. (Jenkins 2013: 37)

Austen-fanfiction frequently combines different elements. There are many novels and stories where the Regency novel is combined with fantasy elements. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* by Seth Grahame-Smith is one example. According to Malia (2015: 21), this book belongs to the genre of ‘mashup novels’, that is, a novel that

[c]ombines text that uses the tropes of another genre, such as horror, with the text of a pre-existing work of literature into one story

The novel consists about 85% of Austen’s original prose, and the other 15% comprises a Zombie-plot invented by Grahame-Smith. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* became so successful that

[a] deluxe heirloom edition, a prequel, a sequel, a graphic novel, a book of postcards, and even a video game for the iPod Touch and iPhone followed. (Malia 2015: 23)

The prequel and the sequel do not use Austen’s original prose. Quirk book, the publisher of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, also published the novel *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* by Ben H. Winters in 2009. Other famous fantasy mashups are *Jane Bites Back* by Michael Thomas Ford, where the undead Jane Austen, known as Elizabeth Jane Fairfax, owns a bookstore in New York that sells Jane Austen inspired sequels and spin-offs, and *Mr. Darcy, Vampyre* by Amanda Grange, where, after he and Elizabeth got married, it turns out that the reason for Darcy’s mysteriously quiet behavior is that he is a vampire.

## 2.3 Films and TV series

The film adaptations of Austen’s novels can be counted to the genre of heritage films, which are “associated with costume/historical drama” and “identified with high production values and a quest for period authenticity.” (Street 2001: 106; quoted in Voigts-Virchow 2004: 9)

### 2.3.1 Adaptations of the novels

The earliest surviving film adaptation of a Jane Austen novel is *Pride and Prejudice* from 1940, directed by Robert Z. Leonard and with Greer Garson and Laurence Olivier in the main roles. According to Stovel (2013), this adaptation was strongly influenced by the ongoing Second World War, with a lot of indirect references to it. The film portrays an “Edenic

England worth defending”, and thereby paints an idyllic picture of the country. Furthermore, as a feature film, it has less time at its disposal than a mini-series, so a number of scenes are put together and thus, changes are made to the novel. For example, shortly after Lydia and Wickham return newly married, also Lady Catherine comes to Longbourn to talk to Elizabeth, in the course of which she reveals to her that Mr. Darcy was at Lydia’s and Wickham’s wedding (while in the novel, Lydia is the one who spills the secret). Also, the movie gives viewers an even more satisfactory happy ending by making Lady Catherine finally give her consent to Darcy’s and Elizabeth’s marriage.

A large number of Jane Austen’s novels were adapted into TV mini-series by the BBC in the 1970s. A mini-series renders it possible to adapt the novels more faithfully, as it can be longer than a normal feature film. The rising popularity of Jane Austen in the 1970s was not only due to the fact that the year 1975 marked Jane Austen’s bicentenary, but also because the 1970s saw a new rise in feminism: this decade “represented a strengthening of women’s political and economic equality” (Stovel 2013). Jane Austen expressed feminist ideas in her novels: Elizabeth Bennet (just like most of Austen’s heroines) refuses to marry a man she does not love, and people from the upper classes who attach great importance to decency, such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh, are often ridiculed. In 1971, the BBC produced adaptations of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*, and in 1972, an adaptation of *Emma* followed. In 1979, a BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was produced, starring Elizabeth Garvie and David Rintoul and written by Fay Weldon, who had previously written a novel called *Female Friends* (1975), about the rise of feminism in the 1970s, thus, her proto-feminist thinking is perceptible in the screenplay. For example, Elizabeth reads *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* by Mary Wollstonecraft, which Austen is known to have read herself (Stovel 2013). In the 1980s, BBC adaptations of Jane Austen’s remaining novels, *Mansfield Park* (1983) and *Northanger Abbey* (1987), as well as another adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* (1981) followed.

In 1995, another BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was released. The screenplay was written by Andrew Davies, and the main actors are Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet and Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. This mini-series led to a new ‘Austenmania’, although it was not the first time a Jane Austen novel had been adapted into a movie. One reason for this was the performance by Colin Firth, who “became the nation’s number one heartthrob” (Harman 2009: 255). The adaptation stays true to Austen’s original novel as far as the plot is

concerned, but it focuses more on the character of Mr. Darcy than the novel does, and it shows a more human side of him than the previous films did. One scene that was especially appealing to female viewers was when Mr. Darcy unexpectedly meets Elizabeth at his estate Pemberley, after took a ride and cooled himself off by jumping into a lake. A very awkward conversation between the two protagonists starts, in which neither of them really knows what to say. In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth do meet each other unexpectedly at Pemberley, but we do not get the information that Mr. Darcy went swimming before that. According to Davies, this scene was not supposed to be sexy, but he intended to create

[a]n amusing moment in which Darcy tries to maintain his dignity while improperly dressed and sopping wet. (James 2007)

But apparently, the viewers saw a lot of hidden sexual tension in it, so that this ‘wet-shirt scene’ was voted the most memorable British TV drama moment of all time (Methven 2013). According to Yaffe (xix), before this BBC adaptation,

[c]alling yourself a Jane Austen fan seemed to signify a truly refined taste, the ability to appreciate biting irony and subtle characterization. Today, it’s just as likely to signify a healthy lust for handsome Brits in tight breeches. Merely calling yourself a Janeite is no longer enough to mark your superior powers of discrimination. Now you have to spell out what kind of Janeite you are.

This adaptation brought about the release of several more Austen-related films. As I already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the movie can be counted to the genre of heritage films. There was a general trend to produce costume dramas, or ‘frock flicks’ (Higson 2004: 40) in the 1990s. Between 1990 and 2000, eighty English period dramas set before the Second World War were produced, and lots of women were involved in the making of these films (Higson 2004: 41). Thus, the movies are also mainly intended for a female audience. The producers of *P&P* (1995) considered this, and therefore the adaptation focuses more on Mr. Darcy than the novel does. The adaptation “focuses on Darcy’s inner life”, which is “visualized through bodily display” (Seidl 2003: 88).

In the same year, only a few months after the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, the first feature film adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* was released. It was directed by Ang Lee, with Emma Thompson, Kate Winslet, Hugh Grant and Alan Rickman in the leading roles. Thompson also wrote the screenplay and won an Oscar for it – altogether, the movie received

seven Academy Award Nominations. The script stays faithful to the novel as far as the language is concerned, but there is one big difference in the representation of the characters: while Jane Austen presents the passionate and sensitive Marianne as the one who has to change and learn how to govern her intense feelings, in the movie, the restrained Elinor is the one who undergoes the biggest transformation, as she learns to allow herself to show her feelings more openly. Probably, this change was made to make the movie more appealing to a contemporary audience.

The BBC adapted *Persuasion* as a feature film in 1995, directed by Roger Michell and starring Amanda Root. The L.A. Times described this movie as “the most authentically British version”, while *S&S* (1995) was described as “the audience-friendly Hollywood version [...] easygoing and aiming to please” (Higson 2004: 47).

Also in 1995, the movie *Clueless* was released, directed by Amy Heckerling, which is based on Jane Austen’s *Emma* and which is the first modern-day adaptation of a Jane Austen novel. The story takes place in an American High School setting, with the popular student Cher (equivalent to Emma) taking the new and unpopular student Tai (Harriet) under her wing. The movie was so successful that it even spun off a television series and a series of books.

In 1996, two more feature film adaptations of *Emma*, both staying true to the original, were released: an American theatrical film directed by Douglas McGrath and starring Gwyneth Paltrow, and a British TV movie directed by Diarmuid Lawrence and starring Kate Beckinsale, for which Andrew Davies wrote the screenplay. In comparison to the American version, which paints an idealized picture of the English countryside, the British movie portrays the gentry and the lower classes in a more realistic way, so it also contains implicit social criticism.

In 1999, the first feature film adaptation of *Mansfield Park* was released, directed by Patricia Rozema. This adaptation contains a number of significant changes to the novel. Instead of being timid and shy like in the novel, in the movie, the protagonist Fanny Price is extroverted and witty. Furthermore, the movie’s Fanny Price likes to write – an element which is not present in the novel. According to Stovel (2015), Patricia Rozema wanted to make Fanny Price more appealing to modern audiences and portray her in a way that was similar to Jane Austen herself, or at least, similar to how she imagined Jane Austen could have been like. For example, contrary to the novel, where Fanny Price refuses Henry Crawford’s marriage



proposal right away, in the movie, she initially accepts it, but changes her mind after thinking about it more carefully. It is well known that also Jane Austen initially accepted a marriage proposal by Harris Bigg-Wither, but then slept over it and changed her mind the next morning. The movie was not a big box office success, so, contrary to what it was, it was marketed as a “faithful adaptation” in an attempt to attract a larger audience. However, many Janeites found the movie “too overtly eroticized” (Higson 2004: 48).

In the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of modern-day film versions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* were produced, which shifted the plot into modern times and into a specific cultural setting. The first one of these movies was *Kandukondain Kandukondain*, a Tamil musical film based on *Sense and Sensibility*. *Pride and Prejudice: A Latter Day Comedy*, an American independent movie from 2003 directed by Andrew Black, shifts the plot into a Mormon setting. And, just like for *Sense and Sensibility*, Bollywood also produced their own version of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Bride and Prejudice* (2004), directed by Gurinder Chadha, with Aishwarya Rai (who also played in *Kandukondain Kandukondain*) and Martin Henderson in the leading roles. The film discusses culture clashes, as Lalita Bakshi (the Indian equivalent of Elizabeth Bennet) accuses the American male protagonist William Darcy of having prejudices against Indians.

In 2005, another film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was shot, an Anglo-American co-production directed by Joe Wright and starring Matthew Macfayden and Keira Knightley, who was nominated for an Oscar. It was the first feature film adaptation that remained faithful to the novel and time period since the 1940 version. Compared to *Pride and Prejudice* (1940) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), this one shows Longbourn in a more rustic environment, as the estate is “surrounded with mud, laundry and pigs” (Stovel 2013), also to show the Bennet family’s poverty in comparison to wealthy Mr. Darcy. But just like the 1940 film adaptation, also this one

[i]s distinctly Anglophilic, lingering lovingly on both romantic landscapes and architectural treasures (Stovel 2013).

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and the London bombings of July 2005, the audience welcomed seeing all these peaceful pictures of the English countryside. Furthermore, in order to show an England threatened by a foreign enemy, the plot was shifted to take place in 1797 (as opposed to 1813, when *Pride and Prejudice* was first published), the

decade after the French Revolution. The English countryside is presented as worth fighting for.

In 2007, the second film adaptation of *Mansfield Park* was released, directed by Iain B. MacDonald. It was only released as a television film and stays much closer to the novel. In the same year, also the second film adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* was released, for which Andrew Davies wrote the screenplay.

In 2008, another BBC mini-series of *Sense and Sensibility* was made, again with a screenplay written by Andrew Davies. In 2009, the BBC also reissued a mini-series of *Emma*, written by the Emmy-nominated screenwriter Sandy Welch. In 2010, a Bollywood version of *Emma* called *Aisha* was released. Similar to the previous versions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, the plot was moved to modern-day India.

In 2011, two romantic comedy movies set in modern times and based on *Sense and Sensibility* were released: *From Prada to Nada* and *Scents and Sensibility*. In both movies, two once wealthy sisters lose all their fortune and have to come to terms with their new situation. In *Scents and Sensibility*, the girls' (whose names are Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, just like in the original novel) father is imprisoned for investment fraud, so for the first time in their lives, they have to earn their own money. However, finding a job becomes a difficult task for them, as employers do not want to hire them after seeing their last name on the application. Elinor starts working as a cleaning woman in a beauty spa, while Marianne finds a job in an office (after having applied under her mother's maiden name). In the end, the girls both end up with their perfect partners, and they also regain financial stability, as Marianne makes her own beauty lotion from flowers, which they start to sell successfully (hence also the movie's name). *From Prada to Nada* follows a similar structure, although the protagonist's names are slightly changed here: the formerly rich sisters Nora (the equivalent to Elinor) and Mary (Marianne) lose all their money after their father's death. They have to move from Beverly Hills to a rather poor neighborhood in East L.A., to live with their Mexican aunt. In this movie, the sisters' different personalities are more emphasized than in *Scents and Sensibility*: Nora is a hard-working law student, and she tells her sister Mary, who in the beginning of the movie is mainly interested in shopping, to finish college. Of course, also this movie has a happy ending; both girls find their perfect partners and Nora even gets married.

There are also some new Austen adaptations planned for 2015: *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, an adaptation of the mashup-book by Seth Grahame-Smith, and *Love and Friendship*, an adaptation of Jane Austen's short epistolary novel *Lady Susan*, which she wrote in 1794.

### 2.3.2 Other Austen-related films and TV series

In the 1790s, Jane Austen and her niece Anna transformed *Sir Charles Grandison*, a more than 1000-page novel by Samuel Richardson, into a 10-minute play to perform for their family. Jane Austen was a great admirer of Richardson and took his novels as a basis and an inspiration for her own writing. Many fanfiction authors see this fact as a confirmation that Jane Austen would be flattered to know that even almost 200 years after her death, there is still so much fanfiction written based on her works (Austenprose 2010).

The manuscript of this early play was acquired by David Astor, owner of the 'Observer' newspaper, and the London Weekend Television arts program *The South Bank Show* soon approached him for production rights. However, after reading the play, they realized that it was not suitable for adaption into a movie, but still, they wanted to put the play into the center of a movie. *Jane Austen in Manhattan* (1980) directed by James Ivory, is about a number of theatre groups in New York who are competing for the rights to acquire and produce the early Austen play.

In 1990, the movie *Metropolitan*, directed by Whit Stillman, was released. It is about a group of young, well-educated upper-class New Yorkers who are at home on their winter break from their first year of college. Their parents are either absent or do not really care about them, thus, they are left to their own devices. The film has many allusions to Jane Austen's work *Mansfield Park*. The female protagonist, Audrey Rouget, is a fan of Jane Austen's novels, especially *Mansfield Park*. She likes Fanny Price and discusses the novel with Tom Townsend, who disagrees with her by saying that he does not like Fanny's virtue and sees nothing immoral in a group of young people organizing a play. However, there are many indirect references to *Mansfield Park* as well. Audrey falls in love with Tom, just like Fanny falls in love with Edmund Bertram, but Tom at first does not share her affection but instead falls for "the glamorous but superficial Serena Slocum" (Young 2000: 22). Rick Von

Sloneker, who probably flirts with many girls, tries to seduce Audrey, just as Fanny is courted by Henry Crawford. And just like Fanny is pressured by the Bertrams to accept Henry, Audrey is pushed towards Von Sloneker by her friends' disapproval of the socially awkward outsider Tom. However, just like Fanny, Audrey does not let herself be deceived by Rick, and Tom finds out in the end that he prefers Audrey's "intelligence and virtue" to Serena's "selfishness and insincerity" (Young 2000: 22), just like Edmund Bertram becomes disenchanted with the morally corrupt Mary Crawford. Another indirect reference to *Mansfield Park* is that the young people, while being alone in their parents' apartments, play a game called 'Truth', where "the losing players are compelled to reveal their most intimate secrets" (Young 2000: 23). Audrey does not want to join this game, however, unlike Fanny, who stays firm in her resolution not to join the theater group, she finally gives in, but generally, she is more outspoken than her counterpart in *Mansfield Park*.

In 2001, the movie *Bridget Jones's Diary* was released; based on the novel of the same name by Helen Fielding. Fielding stated in interviews that her novel was based on *Pride and Prejudice*, which becomes evident from the plot: Bridget Jones is a single woman in her thirties who works as a journalist and who is constantly urged by her mother to finally find a husband. At the beginning of the year, Bridget has a crush on her boss, Daniel Cleaver, while her parents are trying to set her up with the lawyer Mark Darcy, whom Bridget does not find attractive at all. In the course of the novel, Bridget and Daniel start dating, but one day, she shows up at his place unexpectedly and finds a beautiful girl sunning herself on his terrace. Of course, Bridget is devastated and they break up. After that experience, Bridget decides to focus on her career and starts working in television, which she enjoys a lot. Meanwhile, her parents are going through marital problems and her mom starts dating a young man named Julio, who later turns out to be a criminal. He has stolen a lot of money from family friends, including Mark Darcy's parents. However, Darcy manages to save both Bridget's mom and the money, and finally, he and Bridget come together. Fielding also wrote a sequel to her novel, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, which was adapted into a movie in 2004. The movie is further connected to *Pride and Prejudice* due to the fact that Andrew Davies wrote the screenplay for both movies, and Colin Firth played Mr. Darcy again.

In the early 2000s, two movies about the life of Jane Austen, *Becoming Jane* (2007) and *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008) were released. The first one, a British-Irish biopic, became a huge box office success, mainly because of the fact that the American actress Anne Hathaway played

the leading role. The movie focuses on Jane Austen's early life and her relationship with Tom Lefroy, whom she loved but whom she could not marry, as his uncle did not allow it because she did not have enough money. *Miss Austen Regrets*, on the other hand, focuses on Austen's later years, and it stars two actors who also had roles in the two 1996 versions of *Emma*.

*Lost in Austen* (2008) is a four-part mini-series by the British television network ITV. Its protagonist Amanda Price is dissatisfied with her love life. After her boyfriend makes her an unromantic marriage proposal, Elizabeth Bennet, the character from her favorite novel *Pride and Prejudice*, suddenly appears in her room and invites her to a time-travelling journey into Regency England. According to Kaplan (2010), this mini-series particularly resonates with Generation Y Janeites who "are nostalgic for 'Austenian' manners, clothes, language, codes of behavior, and courtesy."

*Death Comes to Pemberley*, a mystery novel by P.D. James based on *Pride and Prejudice*, has been adapted into a three-part miniseries in 2013. In the same year, also the novel *Austenland* by Shannon Hale, about a woman in her early thirties who is so much in love with Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy in the 1995 mini-series that this obsession has prevented her from entering a relationship in real life, has been adapted into a movie.

## 2.4 Internet Fandom

The 'Austen boom' created by the 1995 BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice* was not restricted to the movie industry. After the miniseries' release, the novel topped the bestseller lists (Xu 2011: 85), and shortly afterwards, the 'Republic of Pemberley' was established. This is an online community, founded by Myretta Robens and Amy Bellinger, in which fans can share their own fanfiction stories on Jane Austen's work, as well as read and comment on the work written by others. It is the largest Jane Austen fansite on the web. In 2007, it had between eight and ten million hits per month (Olimpo 2007). Writers publishing their stories on the community's website have to adhere to a certain set of rules: for example, just like Austen's novels, the stories have to take place in the late 18th/early 19th century and the characters have to be presented "in a manner faithful to their original conception", thus, the writers have to "respect [...] the source texts and their author" (Van Steenhuyse 2001: 166).

What is interesting about this fandom is that even the guidelines are written in a style faithful to Jane Austen, thus, it is implied that the community only accepts likeminded people.

Another online Jane Austen Fanfiction Community is the ‘Derbyshire Writer’s Guild’, however, unlike ‘The Republic of Pemberley’, this website does not have very strict rules as to which stories are acceptable. It is divided into two main sections, the ‘Epilogue Abbey’, featuring stories that take place in the same period as Jane Austen’s work and are written in a similar style, and the ‘Fantasia Gallery’, which contains stories that take place in the aforementioned ‘alternate universes’, i.e. stories taking place in a different time period or even involving fantasy elements such as vampires or zombies. The only rule that the owners of the ‘Derbyshire Writer’s Guild’ emphasize is that writers must not post content which is only suitable for adults, as the site is also frequently visited by teenagers or even children.

Most of the stories on both ‘The Republic of Pemberley’ and the ‘Derbyshire Writer’s Guild’ feature characters from *Pride and Prejudice*. Pamela Aidan, author of the *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* trilogy, admitted that she was inspired by Colin Firth’s performance of Mr. Darcy to start writing fanfiction, and Helen Fielding had also been a fan of the BBC adaptation prior to writing her *Bridget Jones Diaries*. Thus, many writers of fanfiction have the actor’s physical appearance and mannerisms in mind when writing about Mr. Darcy.

However, writers of Jane Austen fanfiction do not only publish their works on the ‘The Republic of Pemberley’ and the ‘Derbyshire Writer’s Guild’, but also on more general fanfiction sites. The site fanfiction.net features 3,6 thousand stories based on *Pride and Prejudice* and a search after Jane Austen yields 425 results. But the Jane Austen Fandom is also growing in the German speaking world: the German site fanfiktion.de features 157 stories based on Jane Austen’s work, most of which are based on *Pride and Prejudice*.

Also, the website ‘Archive of Our Own’, a popular fanfiction site that uses mash-ups with other fandoms, contains lots of stories featuring Jane Austen. As of September 14, 2015, a search for ‘Jane Austen’ yields 955 results, and a search for ‘Pride and Prejudice’ 1793.

Another famous Austen-related website is the ‘AustenBlog’, founded by Margatet C. Sullivan. The site has on average 3500 views per day (Olimpo 2007) and features “news about Jane Austen in popular culture”, such as new Austen-related books, events, film adaptations or even Jane Austen action figures. A similar website is ‘Austenprose’, created in

2007 by Laurel Ann Nattress, who is also the editor of *Jane Austen Made Me Do It*, an anthology containing short stories inspired by Jane Austen. Like the ‘AustenBlog’, the site offers over 600 reviews of Jane Austen’s original works, sequels, nonfiction books, movie adaptations and merchandise.

In recent years, ‘Pemberley Digital’ has been established, which, on its website, describes itself as

[a]n innovative web video production company that specializes in the adaptation of classic works onto the new media format.

One of its most popular productions is *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, which retells the story of *Pride and Prejudice* in a modern setting in the format of vlogs, that is, video blogs. In this story, Elizabeth Bennet is a 24-year old graduate student facing a high amount of student debts. She is still living at home together with her parents and her sisters Jane and Lydia, thus, Mary and Kitty are omitted from the story. In 2013, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* became the first Youtube series to win a Primetime Emmy. The modern Lizzie Bennet does not only have a Youtube account on which she posts her vlogs, but she also has accounts on a variety of social media, such as Twitter, Tumblr and Pinterest, thus, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* can be described as a kind of “transmedia storytelling” (Zerne 2013). In addition, ‘Pemberley Digital’ has produced spin-offs to the *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, in which other characters from the story, for example Lydia, post vlogs in which they tell the story from their point of view. The community has also created adaptations of Jane Austen’s novel *Emma* (*Emma Approved*), as well as her unfinished novel *Sanditon* (*Welcome to Sanditon*). In *Emma Approved*,

Emma Woodhouse is a professional matchmaker/life-coach, who has an assistant, Harriet, and also works closely with her friend and partner Alex Knightley. She encounters the same characters Emma does in the text (Mr. Churchill, Harriet, Jane and Mr. Elton), but we see occupations cleverly adjusted for a contemporary audience: Jane is an aspiring singer, and Mr. Elton is actually the politically and socially ambitious Senator Elton. In adapting the stories in this way, Pemberley Digital gives viewers and readers an opportunity to likely identify with the characters on a new personal level. (Caddy 2015: 47)

These miniseries all take place in the same fictional universe. Mr. Elton’s fiancée (the equivalent to Austen’s Augusta Hawkins) is Caroline Lee, who is also the sister of Bing Lee (Mr. Bingley in *P&P*) in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, and thus the equivalent to Austen’s Caroline Bingley. Both characters are played by the same actress, Jessica Andres. In addition, several of the characters from *Emma Approved* and *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* follow each

other on Twitter (Caddy 2015: 48). In February 2015, 'Pemberly Digital' started the production of *The March Family Letters*, a web series based on Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*.

There is another Youtube series called *Elinor and Marianne Take Barton*, a retelling of *Sense and Sensibility*, created by students of the University of Warwick. Similar to Lizzie Bennet in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, Marianne Dashwood is a university student who created a video blog documenting her life. Although the series did not become as successful as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, as of September 11, 2015, the first episode had 9.900 views. Furthermore, there is another vlog series called *From Mansfield With Love*, which started on December 3, 2014 and which is still going to run until November 2015 (new episodes are added every Wednesday and Sunday). It is a contemporary adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. The protagonist is Frankie Price (the equivalent to Fanny), who works and lives in a hotel belonging to the Bertram family. The series is produced by 'Foot in the Door Theatre', a group made up of students from the University of Winchester. As of September 11, 2015, the first episode had 13.946 views.

There is a viral Youtube video called *Jane Austen's Fight Club*, where you see women in regency dresses doing needlework and practicing the piano, but also hitting each other. Another webseries, produced by 'Babelgum', is *Sex and the Austen Girl*, which is about two women, one from the Regency period and one from modern times, swapping places. It is based on the bestselling novels *Confessions of a Jane Austen Addict* and *Rude Awakenings of a Jane Austen Addict* by Laura Viera Riegler.

Furthermore, there are a number of Youtube videos appreciating the many male actors who have appeared in period drama, such as *Jane Austen's men - Macho men* or *Period Drama Men // Sharp Dressed Man*.

## 2.5 Jane Austen Tourism

According to Watson (2009), literary tourism represents

[a] desire on the part of the tourist to construct a more intimate and exclusive relationship with the writer than is supposed to be available through mere reading.



This relationship, according to Wells, is different from person to person:

[t]he actual visit invokes and awakens a range of reactions that can include a sense of nostalgia or of longing for the particular kind of world they associate with the writer. Generalizations are valid but each visitor has some individual form of chemistry with the place, its presentation, and its associated characters and events, real-life or fictional. [...] Through occupying temporarily a house where Austen lived (or stayed), or traversing a landscape well-known to her, tourists - if they are so inclined - can cultivate feelings of a particular kind of closeness to Austen: seeing what she saw, inhabiting the space she inhabited, standing or walking where she stood or walked. (2011: 111)

### 2.5.1 Bath

Jane Austen lived in Bath from 1801 to 1806; however, as far as we know from her letters, this was not a happy time for her. Apparently, the city offered her no stability and security, and she constantly felt on display for prospective husbands. This had negative effects on her creativity: she started writing a novel called *The Watsons*, which remained unfinished, and which has quite a bleak tone: the protagonist, Emma Watson, feels that she is a burden to her parents. According to Ballinger (2013), maybe the novel was too painful for Austen to write, as also she herself might have felt a burden to her parents, as she was still unmarried. Only after leaving Bath, Jane Austen's creativity began to prosper again.

Considering this, it is ironic that the city of Bath celebrates Jane Austen as its most famous resident, and that it capitalizes on her.

#### 2.5.1.1 The Jane Austen Centre

The Jane Austen Centre is situated in Gay Street, where Jane Austen herself lived for some months in 1805. It was opened in 1999, founded by David Baldock, and it attracts 60.000 visitors every year (Yaffe 2013: 29). It features an exhibition focusing on the years that Jane Austen lived in Bath (1801-1806), and how her experiences there influenced her writing. There is also the 'Regency Tea Room', offering 17 varieties of tea, there is a possibility to dress up in Regency costumes and have a picture taken, and visitors can also watch an exclusive film about the centre, starring Adrian Lukis, who played Mr. Wickham in the 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Furthermore, the centre features a wax figure of Jane

Austen, which was created using forensic methods and which is thereby, as they say in the film of the Jane Austen center, “the most accurate representation of Jane Austen anywhere”. The staff at the center all wear Regency dresses, and they all play characters from Jane Austen’s novels. Right upon entering the centre, visitors are greeted by an actor playing Mr. Bennet. The center also has a shop, where visitors can buy books and DVDs, as well as Austen-related merchandise, such as bags, cups, soaps, t-shirts and a Jane Austen action figure. Every weekend, the centre organizes walking tours to places made famous in the Jane Austen novels that take place in Bath - *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*.

#### 2.5.1.1.1 Regency World Magazine

In 2003, the Jane Austen Centre launched the *Regency World Magazine*, which appears every two months (Bebris 2004). It features articles written by Austen scholars which are all between three and five pages long and which are analyses of Austen’s novels and their film adaptations or essays on general topics concerning the Regency World. It also features the latest news from the Jane Austen Fandom, such as announcements of new Jane Austen-related movies that are in production and reviews of new Jane Austen-related books. Other regular sections are letters from the readers, short news segments from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, ‘Regency Rogues’, which features short, one-page descriptions of real-life criminals from the Regency Period, a quite difficult quiz on Jane Austen’s novels, which asks for details that probably only true fans who read the novels several times could answer, and a little Regency comic at the end. The magazine is very colorful, with lots of pictures and advertisements for Jane Austen-related merchandise or announcements of Regency Balls all over the world.

#### 2.5.1.2 Jane Austen Festival

This festival takes place every year in September, since 2001. It features 60 events during ten days, including talks with professional fanfiction authors, theatre performances of Jane Austen’s novels, walking tours, dance workshops, and much more. The festival starts with the Grand Regency Costume Parade, in which people dress up in Regency costumes and then walk around the city. In 2014, 550 people participated in the Parade, which set a new world record for “The largest gathering of people dressed in Regency Costumes” (Choat 2014).

### 2.5.2 Chawton Cottage (Jane Austen's House Museum)

This is a cottage in Hampshire, where the British Jane Austen Society is holding its annual meeting. It belonged to the estate of Jane's brother Edward, had been adopted by rich cousins. Jane Austen spent the last eight years of her life there (1809-1817), which were extraordinarily productive. She completed all her six novels there and published the first four. It was opened to the public in 1949 (Wells 104). The cottage has 38.000 visitors a year (Yaffe 2013: 32) and it exhibits items known to have been owned by the Austen family, including a turquoise and gold ring which was bought at an auction in 2012 by the American singer Kelly Clarkson, but which was later brought back to the UK and returned to the museum, because of an export ban placed by the British Government (BBC News 2014). Visitors can view Jane Austen's writing table, or a patchwork quilt that Jane, her mother and her sister made together. The museum also exhibits other Austen-related objects (such as a hat that Kate Winslet wore in the movie *Sense and Sensibility*), and other general items from the Regency period, such as a period square piano, on which visitors have the possibility to play.

### 2.5.3 Winchester

This is the city where Jane Austen lived her last few months. She died in Winchester and was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Visitors can visit her gravestone, as well as "four vertical display placards placed in the aisle leading to Austen's gravestone" (Wells 2011: 119). On these placards,

[b]ackground information on Austen's life is chronologically presented according to the places where she lived, seemingly designed for those with no prior knowledge of Austen at all.

## 2.6 Jane Austen Societies

### 2.6.1 JASNA

The Jane Austen Society of North America was founded in 1979 by Henry G. Burke, J. David Grey and Joan Austen-Leigh, who was Jane Austen's great-great grand-niece. The society has over 5000 members by now, and in addition to launching two newspapers called *Persuasions* and *Persuasions On-line*, it organizes an annual essay contest, in which high school, college

as well as graduate students can participate. Most of the members are scholars who regularly write papers that are published on the society's website. There is an annual General Meeting, which is a three-day conference where members can hear lectures by Austen scholars and JASNA members, as well as the Regency Ball, where people show up in Regency costumes (JASNA website).

### 2.6.2 JAS

The British Jane Austen society was founded by Dorothy Darnell in 1947, to acquire and restore Chawton cottage.

JASNA officials sometimes refer to Britain's JAS as "the mother ship". With fifteen hundred members it is far smaller than its North American cousin, and its yearly meeting is more subdued than JASNA's extravagant party. (Yaffe 2013: 35)

## 2.7 Other Fan Practices

In 2009 in New York, the classical singer Joanna Manring founded a school teaching teenage girls to perform the music of Jane Austen's time, the 'Jane Austen Singing School for Young Ladies'. During the breaks, the students drink tea and watch movie adaptations of Austen's novels, and they wear Regency costumes during their performances.

Sandy Lerner spent more than 20 million dollars to renovate Chawton House, and turn it into a research library for the study of early English writing by women (Yaffe 2013: 46).

[s]cholars consulting her rare-book collection could live under nineteenth-century conditions, gaining a visceral sense of the historical moment that produced those books. (54-5)

The library was opened on July 10, 2003.

## 2.8 Reasons for Jane Austen's Fame

According to Jones (2004: 95), one aspect which makes fanfiction so appealing to readers is that it is very predictable – readers enjoy to have their own 'expectations precisely confirmed'. Also, according to Rahn, in the case of Jane Austen

[f]anfiction and filmic adaptations often engage in a nostalgic representation of Austen's works by presenting the simple rules that governed romance in Austen's times – implicitly comparing them, and finding them superior to, the contemporary dating 'minefield' (2006: 30-31)

In other words, readers of the 20th and 21st centuries are longing for a dating game which is facilitated by certain prescribed rules which will certainly lead to one's happiness in finding the right partner.

As I already mentioned, in academia

[i]t is inappropriate to talk about characters as if they were real people or in any way to speculate upon their lives before, after or outside the text itself; that biographical information about an author is irrelevant (Johnson 2011: 235)

They also believe that the plot is the driving force in a narrative. Janeites, on the other hand, frequently write prequels or sequels to Jane Austen's novels, they write fanfiction in which Jane Austen appears as a character, and, instead of concentrating on the plot "with all its forward-moving momentums", they

[d]well instead on atemporal aspects of narration, such as descriptive details, catchy phrases and especially characterization (Johnson 2011: 236).

Johnson further states that the reason for the Janeites' enthusiasm for their idol lies in a yearning for a past in which it is believed that everything was better, thus, readers can find a form of escape from their dreary and troublesome daily lives.

According to Harman, the main reason why Austen is so popular are her love stories. In the 1970s, a new imprint of romance novels, Silhouette Romances, was developed solely relying on the results of marketing research. A group of women were asked about the ideal attributes of a romance novel, and these are the results:

[t]he heroines were always to be 'young and virginal', the heroes 'strong and assertive', the plots utterly predictable and the endings happy. There was no violence, blood or pain; no slang language or obscenity and no pre-marital sex. The heroine's age should be between nineteen and twenty-seven, and she should not be 'beautiful in the high fashion sense.' The hero should be eight to twelve years older than the heroine, 'not necessarily handsome', but virile and not married, though he could be bereaved, or divorced – as long as that wasn't his fault. (Harman 2009: 248)

Most of these formulae can also be found in Austen's novels, thus, she definitely had the knack to write love stories which were especially appealing to readers, and she can also be said to have influenced the genre as it is today.

Although the novels were written around 200 years ago, Jane Austen presents issues in her novels that are still relevant today, and readers can identify with the characters. For example, some readers might admire Elizabeth for the way she stands up against Lady Catherine de Bourgh, as they have a similar person in their lives and wish they could react the same way, while others might be single women who feel that today, society does not really support them more than it did 200 years ago (a topic that is also dealt with in the novel *Bridget Jones* by Helen Fielding, which, as Fielding has stated herself, is based on *Pride and Prejudice*).

Deborah Yaffe conducted a number of interviews with Janeites, and one of them, Laurie Michael, said that she liked Jane Austen because:

I appreciate a man who is a gentleman, and so Jane Austen's heroes especially speak to me in that way. And then the heroines for their purity and modesty, as well as their wit and intelligence. They connect with things that I'm taught in the Bible, virtues that are to be cultivated. (xxi)

### **3 Jane Austen's Style**

Jane Austen's novels can be divided into two groups. Her first three novels, *Northanger Abbey*, *Sense & Sensibility* and *Pride & Prejudice* criticize romantic clichés and are written in a cheerful and ironic tone. The other three, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*, criticize society and its conventions.

All of the novels are classified as 'novels of manners'. A 'novel of manners' is

A novel which examines values, behavior and characteristics of a particular group of people with a specific historical context. (*English Literature Dictionary*)

In Jane Austen's case, this particular group is the English gentry of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An important theme in all the novels is how to differentiate between appearance and reality. All the heroines find their Mr. Right in the end, but in the course of that, they learn to comprehend society's role-play, and they also learn to comprehend many aspects of themselves which they had not realized before. Elizabeth Bennet becomes aware of her tendency to rely too heavily on first impressions, and Emma Woodhouse needs to become aware of her snobbish tendencies. Thus, the 'Happy End' does not only consist in finding and coming together with Mr. Right, but also in self-discovery. In the final chapter, the lovers always retell their stories again to each other, to prove that they have come to see their own

flaws which they had previously suppressed, and learned their lesson. Thus, these ‘happy retrospections’ prove that, as long as the love-story lasts, the lovers are unable to tell it – when they are finally able to do so, the story has come to an end (Schwanitz 1995: 115).

Also, Jane Austen was one of the first authors to use free indirect discourse, where a character’s thoughts or spoken words are rendered without quotation marks. One example for this is in *P&P*, when Elizabeth’s reaction to Wickham’s lies is described:

Elizabeth allowed that he had given a very rational account of it, and they continued talking together, with mutual satisfaction till supper put an end to cards, and gave the rest of the ladies their share of Mr. Wickham’s attentions. There could be no conversation in the noise of Mrs. Phillips’s supper party, but his manners recommended him to everybody. Whatever he said, was said well; and whatever he did, done gracefully. (*P&P* 68)

Especially the last sentence does not necessarily describe the narrator’s opinion but rather the impression Wickham made on Elizabeth and the other guests at the party. Of course, this kind of narration is very subjective, as it conveys the character’s inner lives and their personal impressions. However, all this is done with a calmness of writing, which was criticized by Charlotte Bronte, who claimed that the wild, romantic passions were completely absent from *P&P*. Everything in this novel seems to be structured and confined; there are no passionate scenes or descriptions of the wilderness of nature, which Bronte saw lacking. Also, as I have already mentioned, Jane Austen is famous for her satire; she was a sharp critic of society’s conventions, as well as of other forms of the novel that existed during her time, such as Gothic literature, a genre dealing with mysteries, murder or the supernatural, and the novel of sensibility, or sentimental fiction, which, according to Keymer (2011: 32), was

[a] genre characterized by mawkish, emotionally overwrought representations of feelings, and underpinned by an ethics in which the capacity to feel displaces traditional virtues as the highest mark of moral worth.

In *Northanger Abbey*, the heroine Catherine Morland is very fond of reading Gothic fiction, such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Anne Radcliffe. She is invited by the Tilneys to visit their estate Northanger Abbey. The old abbey reminds her of the deserted castles she read about in her novels, and when she learns that General Tilney’s wife has died and that there is one room in the castle she is not supposed to enter, she quickly starts suspecting that the General has either killed his wife or shut her up. Her suspicions turn out to be false, so Jane Austen warns her readers against the excessive reading of Gothic literature, as this could distort your perception of reality. Just like Catherine Morland loves Gothic fiction, Marianne

Dashwood of *Sense and Sensibility* loves sentimental fiction, and also her perception of reality is influenced by her reading. Similar to the heroines of her favorite genre, she frequently suffers from mood swings and swooning, and she is convinced that “broken-hearted lovers can never love again” (Keymer 2011: 33). However, in the end, she comes to love the sensible and “unglamorous” Colonel Brandon, and thus, learns that the real world is different to the one described in sentimental novels.

So, according to Keymer,

When Catherine finds that modern life is not literally a Gothic novel, Marianne finds that it is not a novel of sensibility.

Thus, Jane Austen implicitly criticizes her heroines’ naivety and excessive emotionality.

### 3.1 Influence from Samuel Richardson

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) wrote three novels: *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740), *Clarissa: Or, the History of a Young Lady* (1748) and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). James Edward Austen-Leigh wrote in his memoir that his aunt had an immense knowledge of Richardson’s work:

[h]er knowledge of Richardson's works was such as no one is likely again to acquire, now that the multitude and the merits of our light literature have called off the attention of readers from that great master. Every circumstance narrated in Sir Charles Grandison, all that was ever said or done in the cedar parlour, was familiar to her. (1870: 109-10)

Thus, it is no wonder that his works have influenced her in some way. All of Richardson’s works are epistolary novels, that is, novels consisting almost entirely of letters, which allows a direct representation of the character’s emotions. Much of Jane Austen’s early writing is epistolary, including several pieces of her juvenilia, e.g. *The Three Sisters*, *Lesley Castle* and *Love and Freindship*. Furthermore, there are even speculations that also *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* were epistolary in their original forms; however, there is no real evidence for these claims. (Bray 2003: 115)

According to Honan (1986: 170), Richardson’s writing gave Austen

[e]xamples of direct imitations of feeling, or the use of language to show accurately what is felt rather than what is premeditated.

According to Würzbach (1969: xv),



Richardson was very well aware of the artistic advantages of the letter form, which permits the description of events and emotions while they are still alive to the characters who participated in them.

However, according to Chatman,

The act of writing is always distanced from the correspondent's life, be it ever so minimally. The correspondent has intruded upon the 'liver'. Even if the delay between the event and its transcription is very brief - if the events are 'seized while hot' [...] it is still a delay. It is precisely this delay that separates epistolary and diary narratives from true story-contemporaneous forms like the interior monologue. (1978: 171)

Bray (2003: 109) adds that this disparity between the narrating and the experiencing self is the basis for Austen's use of free indirect discourse:

The way that the epistolary novel probes the consciousness of its characters did indeed have a formative influence on Austen's third-person style. In particular, the interaction between the narrating of the experiencing selves of 18<sup>th</sup> century letter writers is transferred in her novels to the dynamic between the narrator and the character. The epistolary novel thus had a crucial impact on Austen's assured handling of free indirect thought.

In addition, Richardson invented the new genre of the aforementioned sentimental novel, which became popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and which also set the stage for a new struggle between feeling and reason. On the one hand, letters provide an excellent means for expressing one's emotions, but they can also be used to convey rational thought. (Bray 2003: 81)

While Jane Austen's six published works are not epistolary novels, they do feature several letters. However, contrary to Richardson, those letters do not 'feature any kind of internal reflection' (Bray 2003: 127). Letters are rather a means to reveal something about bad or weak characters, such as Lydia Bennet, whose short letter to Colonel Forster's wife which she wrote shortly after her elopement with Wickham causes Elizabeth to cry out: "Oh! Thoughtless, thoughtless Lydia!" (*P&P* 223). Even the long letter that Darcy writes to Elizabeth after she refused his marriage proposal and accused him of having ruined the happiness of Jane and Wickham is rather a rational account of why he acted the way he did than a reflection of his own feelings. However, Elizabeth's reaction upon receiving the letter is described in great detail, thus, for Jane Austen, the feeling of the characters receiving the letters are more interesting than those of the ones who wrote them. Beebee sums it up well by saying that Austen

[t]reats the letter as a sign to be interpreted rather than as a psychological portrait or narrative (1999: 180)

#### **4 Analysis of the Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman trilogy and Young Master Darcy by Pamela Aidan**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

Pamela Aidan was born on October 18, 1953 in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, under the name Pamela Taylor. She completed a Master's degree in library science and had jobs in schools, colleges and public libraries. In January 1996, while stuck in an unhappy marriage with an abusive husband, Aidan discovered the 1995 BBC mini-series *Pride and Prejudice*. She liked it so much that she started to search the internet for more information about it, in the course of which she found numerous fanfiction websites. Her burning question was: "Why does Darcy change?", and none of the stories she read on the internet seemed to give a satisfactory answer to that question - so she decided to get creative and think about an interpretation herself.

Aidan got started by writing a short scene from Darcy's point of view, after Elizabeth rejected his marriage proposal, and she posted it on 'The Republic of Pemberley'. She got a lot of positive reactions, and so she decided to continue. In 2003, she divorced her husband and married Michael Mogen, whom she had met on the 'Republic of Pemberley's' discussion board. She now lives in Idaho with her husband (Yaffe 2013: 75-80).

The trilogy *Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman* is a retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* from Mr. Darcy's point of view. Aidan originally published her writing not only on fanfiction websites, but also on a website of her own, which was visited by thousands of people from all over the world every week (Yaffe 2013: 88). She and Michael then created their own publishing company, Wytherngate Press, and self-published the first volume of the trilogy, *An Assembly Such as This*, in August 2003, and the second volume, *Duty and Desire*, followed one year later. After self-publishing also the third part, *These Three Remain*, in 2005, Aidan accepted an offer by the renowned publishing company Simon & Schuster to publish her books. Her self-published novels had sold 75.000 copies, while Simon & Schuster then sold another 250.000. According to Yaffe:

Pamela's books were perhaps the best-loved of the many Austen spinoffs, widely praised for sticking close to Austen's language and characterization. (2013: 90-91)

Wytherngate Press also published books by two women Aidan had met on fanfiction sites, which were based on *Persuasion*, but none of these novels became as successful as Aidan's own trilogy. In 2010, Aidan again self-published *Young Master Darcy: A Lesson in Honour*, a novella and prequel to *Pride and Prejudice*, describing an episode of Darcy's childhood: 13-year old Darcy comes home from Eton during the Christmas holidays to find that his mother is seriously ill and will not survive another year. On the homepage of Wytherngate Press, it is described as a "touching coming-of-age novella".

#### 4.2 Darcymania

Jane Austen wrote six complete novels, each of which contains one, or several, male heroes. There are Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility*, Edmund Bertram in *Mansfield Park*, Mr. Knightley in *Emma*, Captain Wentworth in *Persuasion*, Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* and Mr. Darcy in *P&P*. Yet, none of the other heroes inspired such a long-going interest as Mr. Darcy – even though, as Austen does not explain to us what triggers his change, he remains an enigma and, especially at the beginning, he does not appear to be very likeable. Colin Firth said in an interview about Mr. Darcy:

I think there is a problem with his attractiveness, I think that there is very little about him which is appealing – he is utterly and unreasonably dismissive of almost everyone he meets. (Colin Firth in interview, '*Pride and Prejudice*': *The Making Of*)

However, despite this disagreeableness, even twenty years after the release of the BBC adaptation, which caused this hype that was often called 'Darcymania', the interest in Mr. Darcy is still strong. There are numerous fansites on the internet appreciating Mr. Darcy, and an Amazon search for books with Mr. Darcy's name in them brought 3436 results.

In her chapter on 'Darcymania', Malcolm compared Darcy to other famous literary heroes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights* and Edward Rochester from *Jane Eyre*. Just like Darcy, they can be described as

Gothic and Romantic types: brooding and mysterious, rather intimidating at first, and eventually true, gallant and honest. (Malcolm 2015: 74)

And yet, while these novels are also still well-known and there are certainly readers who admire these male characters just as much or even more, their fandom is clearly not as large

as Mr. Darcy's. A search on fanfiction.net for stories featuring 'Mr. Darcy' yields 714 results – almost four times as many as stories about 'Mr. Rochester' (75) and 'Heathcliff' (176). According to Malcolm, this is due to the fact that these characters invented by the Bronte sisters sometimes show “degrees of cruelty and deceit”:

Undoubtedly other heroes such as these *are* sexy and interesting, but devoted fan mania has not materialized around them in the same way. The streak of cruelty – mental and emotional – and even outright physical brutality, from some of these types of heroes makes them less attractive. (2015: 77)

Although Mr. Darcy is arrogant in the beginning, he is definitely not cruel, and furthermore, he changes and realizes his faults in the end. As I already mentioned, in Austen, this transformation is only hinted at, and maybe it is not in spite of, but because of this mysterious enigma that Darcy became so fascinating to female readers. In her trilogy, Aidan offers us her interpretation of Darcy's change.

#### 4.3 Elizabeth and Darcy in *P&P*

When Jane Austen first mentions Mr. Darcy in *P&P*, she writes:

Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a-year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend. (10)

Later, after describing that he “danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley” and “declined being introduced to any other lady”, Austen's narrator concludes that:

His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. (11)

This is another instance where Austen skillfully used free indirect discourse. It is quite harsh to call him the “most disagreeable man in the world”, just because he chooses to dance only with the ladies he already knows and apparently does not feel at ease at the ball. The narrator presents the scene from the point of view of the Longbourn neighborhood, as if he was

entering their minds, and does not consider how quick they are in making their judgment, considering that they have only just met him for the first time. Due to the use of free indirect discourse, the readers are prone to take sides with the Meryton assembly. However, looking at the scene objectively, one could argue that Jane Austen indirectly tells us not only about Mr. Darcy's pride, but also about the pride of the Meryton people. The reason they find his manner so offensive is that they have their pride too, so they react by immediately deciding to dislike him. This is exactly what Elizabeth does, too. When she hears Darcy say to Bingley that she was "not handsome enough to tempt" (11) him, her pride is wounded, but instead of crying over his hurtful remark, she is determined to tease and make fun of Mr. Darcy from now on. Her sister Jane warns Elizabeth by saying

Miss Bingley told me [...] that he never speaks much, unless among his intimate acquaintances. With *them* he is remarkably agreeable. (17)

But Elizabeth, knowing only too well of her sister's propensity to see the good in everybody, does not believe her and continues to tease Darcy on every occasion.

However, there are also instances where the narrator enters Darcy's mind. In a passage on Darcy's and Bingley's friendship, an apparently neutral narrator describes the difference between those two characters:

The manner in which they spoke of the Meryton assembly was sufficiently characteristic. Bingley had never met with more pleasant people or prettier girls in his life; everybody had been most kind and attentive to him; there had been no formality, no stiffness; he had soon felt acquainted with all the room; and, as to Miss Bennet, he could not conceive an angel more beautiful. Darcy, on the contrary, had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure. Miss Bennet he acknowledged to be pretty, but she smiled too much. (*P&P*, 15)

It is also fairly early in the novel that we first learn of Darcy's infatuation with Elizabeth, which he was first trying to fight:

Mr. Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty; he had looked at her without admiration at the ball; and when they next met, he looked at her only to criticize. But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes. To his discovery succeeded some others equally mortifying. Though he had detected with a critical eye more than one failure of perfect symmetry in her form, he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light

and pleasing; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness. (*P&P* 20)

It is then that Mr. Darcy starts trying to find ways to be near Elizabeth, however, she continues to tease him and there are several instances where the narrator shows us that Darcy is indeed proud and that he looks down upon the Meryton people: for example, his affirmation that “every savage can dance” (22), or when he says that the fact that the Bennet girls have an uncle living in Cheapside would “very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world” (31). However, Elizabeth begins to notice how often Mr. Darcy is looking at her:

Elizabeth could not help observing [...] how frequently Mr. Darcy’s eyes were fixed on her. She hardly knew how to suppose that she could be an object of admiration to so great a man; and yet that he should look at her because he disliked her, was still more strange. She could only imagine, however, at last that she drew his notice because there was something more wrong and reprehensible, according to his ideas of right, than in any other person present. The supposition did not pain her. She liked him too little to care for his approbation. (*P&P* 42)

This is another instance of free indirect discourse, with the narrator indirectly entering Elizabeth’s mind. Looking at the description objectively, one could argue that Elizabeth does indeed care for Darcy’s approbation; otherwise she probably would not even notice him looking at her.

Austen’s narrator gives us a first hint that Elizabeth might be prejudiced when she and Darcy are having a discussion of their flaws, where Elizabeth tells Darcy:

“And *your* defect is to hate everybody.”  
“And yours,” he replied with a smile, “is willfully to misunderstand them.” (*P&P* 48)

Later, when Elizabeth learns that he denied Wickham the parish that the late Mr. Darcy had promised him, and that he was the one who separated Bingley and Jane, her unfavorable opinion of him is even strengthened. It seems that she believes Wickham immediately simply because he appears to be more friendly and sociable than Darcy.

After Elizabeth tells Darcy that Wickham “has been so unlucky as to lose *your* friendship” (74), he felt

[a] tolerable powerful feeling towards her, which soon procured her pardon, and directed all his anger against another. (76)

Thus, we learn that Darcy is angry at Wickham, and it is up to the reader to decide whether this is because he unjustly hates Wickham, or because Wickham is the one who unjustly accused him. Subsequently, Elizabeth ignores Caroline Bingley's remark that concerning Wickham, "Darcy is not in the least to blame" (76) – which is not surprising, given that Ms. Bingley was shown to be unlikeable before, but Elizabeth does prove to be quite stubborn when she also ignores Jane, who says that:

Mr. Wickham is by no means a respectable young man. I am afraid he has been very imprudent, and has deserved to lose Mr. Darcy's regard. (77)

This means a lot coming from Jane, who does not want to think badly of anybody, but still, Elizabeth dismisses her warning, as Jane heard this account from Bingley and she believes that it is not surprising that he would take sides with his friend.

The next time Elizabeth and Darcy meet is at Rosings, Lady Catherine's estate. Together with Colonel Fitzwilliam, they discuss what might be the reason for Darcy's reserve. While the Colonel says that Darcy "will not give himself the trouble" of talking to strangers, Darcy himself says:

I certainly have not the talent which some people possess [...] of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done. (*P&P* 137)

This statement seems like it could come from someone who is shy, but Elizabeth's reply implies that she believes him to be not shy but arrogant – he is not afraid of social interaction, but simply does not find it necessary to engage in it.

My fingers ... do not move over this instrument in the same masterly manner which I see so many women's do. They have not the same force or rapidity, and do not produce the same expression. But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault – because I would not take the trouble of practicing.

Darcy then replies:

You are perfectly right. You have employed your time much better. No one admitted to the privilege of hearing you can think anything wanting. We neither of us perform to strangers.

This implies that he is perfectly amiable amongst his friends and family, as those people from outside your circle might hurt you – just like Wickham or Lady Catherine, who continuously points out that Elizabeth would play the piano much better if she practiced more. When

describing Elizabeth's emotional reaction when Colonel Fitzwilliam tells her that Darcy separated Bingley from Jane, Austen uses free indirect discourse again:

He had ruined for a while every hope of happiness for the most affectionate, generous heart in the world; and no one could say how lasting an evil he might have inflicted. (146)

Then, Elizabeth rejects Mr. Darcy's unexpected marriage proposal, which is insulting and full of arrogance and pride, as he says:

Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections? – to congratulate myself on the hope of relations, whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own? (150)

Elizabeth tells him that he is the last man she “could ever be prevailed on to marry” (151), and also gives him her reasons for her refusal. Consequently, Mr. Darcy writes her a letter, explaining his actions concerning Wickham, Bingley and Jane. It is only then that Elizabeth starts questioning her own behavior and judgment, however, the narrator also lets us know that this process is not easy for her, as she first reads the letter with “a strong prejudice against every thing he might say” (159). Although this letter is still full of pride, Elizabeth does recognize some truth in it, especially concerning the abominable behavior of her family, and she realizes that

[p]roud and repulsive as were his manners, she had never, in the whole course of their acquaintance – an acquaintance which had latterly brought them much together, and given her a sort of intimacy with his ways – seen anything that betrayed him to be unprincipled or unjust – anything that spoke him of irreligious or immoral habits; that among his own connections he was esteemed and valued – that even Wickham had allowed him merit as a brother, and that she had often heard him speak so affectionately of his sister as to prove him capable of some amiable feeling; that had his actions been what Wickham represented them, so gross a violation of everything right could hardly have been concealed from the world; and that friendship between a person capable of it, and such an amiable man as Mr. Bingley, was incomprehensible. (*P&P* 161-2)

It is this letter that makes Elizabeth see her faults – that she that she had been “blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd”; which is very painful to her:

“How despicably have I acted!” she cried; “I, who have prided myself on my discernment! I, who have valued myself on my abilities! Who have often disdained the generous candor of my sister, and gratified my vanity in useless or (blameable) distrust. How humiliating is this discovery! Yet, how just a humiliation! Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind. But vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the



other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself.” (162)

After this, Elizabeth and Darcy do not see each other for some time, as Darcy returns to his London home. He has just been rejected, which must have been truly painful for him, but Austen does not tell us how he is dealing with that slight – so it is not surprising that there are so many fanfiction authors trying to fill that gap.

During this time, for Elizabeth “his disappointed feelings became the object of compassion”, however, she could not “for a moment repent her refusal, or feel the slightest inclination ever to see him again.” (165). She is still angry about the way he addressed her in his letter, however, she also thinks with shame about her family’s behavior.

When Elizabeth visits Pemberley with her aunt and uncle Gardiner, Mrs. Reynolds, Darcy’s housekeeper, says about her master that she has “never had a cross word from him in my life, and I have known him ever since he was four years old.”, that “he was always the sweetest-tempered, most generous-hearted boy in the world” (190), and furthermore, that “there is not one of his tenants or servants but what will give him a good name.” (191). When they meet again unexpectedly at Pemberley, for the first time, Elizabeth really feels embarrassed upon meeting him. Mr. Darcy, although he is embarrassed too, is surprisingly changed; he is friendly to her and the Gardiners (despite their low background), and Elizabeth cannot explain why:

[n]ever had he spoken with such gentleness as on this unexpected meeting. What a contrast did it offer to his last address in Rosings Park, when he put his letter into her hand! She knew not what to think, or how to account for it. (193)

When she and the Gardiners are invited to Pemberley to meet Darcy’s sister Georgiana, Elizabeth once again reflects on Darcy’s change:

It was not often that she could turn her eyes on Mr. Darcy himself; but, whenever she did catch a glimpse, she saw an expression of general complaisance, and in all that he said she heard an accent so far removed from hauteur or disdain of his companions, as convinced her that the improvement of manners which she had yesterday witnessed, however temporary its existence might prove, had at least outlived one day. When she saw him thus seeking the acquaintance and courting the good opinion of people with whom any intercourse a few months ago would have been a disgrace – when she saw him thus civil, not only to herself, but to the very relations whom he had openly disdained, and recollected their last lively scene in Hunsford Parsonage, - the difference, the change was so great, and struck so forcibly on her mind, that she

could hardly restrain her astonishment from being visible. Never, even in the company of his dear friends at Netherfield, or his dignified relations at Rosings, had she seen him so desirous to please, so free from self-consequence or unbending reserve, as now, when no importance could result from the success of his endeavors, and when even the acquaintance of those to whom his attentions were addressed would draw down the ridicule and censure of the ladies both of Netherfield and Rosings. (201)

Elizabeth starts feeling ashamed for having rejected him, and also grateful that he still seemed to love her despite her rejection:

It was gratitude; - gratitude, not merely for having once loved her, but for loving her still well enough to forgive all the petulance and acrimony of her manner in rejecting him, and all the unjust accusations accompanying her rejection. He who, she had been persuaded, would avoid her as his greatest enemy, seemed, on this accidental meeting, most eager to preserve the acquaintance, and without any indelicate display of regard, or any peculiarity of manner, where their two selves only were concerned, was soliciting the good opinion of her friends, and bent on making her known to his sister. Such a change in a man of so much pride excited not only astonishment but gratitude – for to love, ardent love, it must be attributed; and as such, its impression on her was of a sort to be encouraged, as by no means unpleasing, though it could not be exactly defined. She respected, she esteemed, she was grateful to him, she felt a real interest in his welfare; and she only wanted to know how far she wished that welfare to depend upon herself, and how far it would be for the happiness of both that she should employ the power, which her fancy told her she still possessed, of bringing on the renewal of his addresses. (203)

When Elizabeth meets Georgiana for the second time, Jane Austen wrote:

Georgiana's reception of them was very civil, but attended with all that embarrassment which, though proceeding from shyness and the fear of doing wrong, would easily give to those who felt themselves inferior the belief of her being proud and reserved. Mrs. Gardiner and her niece, however, did her justice, and pitied her. (204)

Here, the narrator once again shows us how easy it is to be deceived in people, and that, if you immediately call someone proud, even if you had never met this person before, this reveals more information about yourself than about this other character – it shows that you are making up for your own feeling of inferiority. But Elizabeth, as she has been wrong about Darcy before, does not make that mistake twice and recognizes Georgiana's true character.

Right after Elizabeth received Jane's letter saying that Lydia had run away with Wickham, Mr. Darcy enters the room. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the scandalous behavior of one family member meant that the whole family's reputation was ruined. Elizabeth tells him what happened, but is sure that all her chances of ever marrying him were now gone. She observes Darcy

“walking up and down the room in earnest meditation, his brow contracted, his air gloomy” (212), and the narrator tells us that “never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain.”

[h]e was exactly the man who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was an union that must have been to the advantage of both: by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved; and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (239)

However, she clearly underestimates the extent of his change, as she is certain that

Had Lydia’s marriage been concluded on the most honorable terms, it was not to be supposed that Mr. Darcy would connect himself with a family where, to every other objection, would now be added an alliance and relationship to the nearest kind with the man whom he so justly scorned. (238)

So, one can argue that this is the moment that Elizabeth realizes that she is in love with Darcy – the moment when she feels like it is too late and he is becoming unattainable for her.

When she learns that someone paid Wickham’s debts and provided the money so that he and Lydia could marry, she is first convinced that her uncle Gardiner must be behind this. So, when Lydia tells her that Mr. Darcy had been at her wedding, Elizabeth can hardly believe it:

It was exactly a scene, and exactly among people, where he had apparently least to do, and least temptation to go. Conjectures as to the meaning of it, rapid and wild, hurried into her brain; but she was satisfied with none. Those that best pleased her, as placing his conduct in the noblest light, seemed most improbable. (245)

She immediately writes a letter to her aunt, asking for an explanation. She answers her that Darcy paid Wickham’s debts because he felt guilty. As Mrs. Gardiner writes in her letter:

It was owing to him, to his reserve and want of proper consideration, that Wickham’s character had been so misunderstood, and, consequently, that he had been received and noticed as he was. Perhaps there was some truth in *this*; though I doubt whether *his reserve*, or *anybody’s* reserve, can be answerable for the event. (249)

Although “her heart did whisper that he had done it for her” (250), Elizabeth, maybe also because her previous experiences have made her aware of her sometimes improper pride, is hesitant to believe it, and concludes that “it was reasonable that he should feel he had been wrong” (251).

When, after Darcy has settled everything, Bingley and Darcy visit Longbourn, Elizabeth observes that Darcy is more reserved than he was at the last meetings, and she wonders why. Furthermore, he even looks at Jane a few times, which confuses her even more. She still feels extremely attracted to him:

She was in no humour for conversation with anyone but himself; and to him she had hardly courage to speak. (258)

After he has gone, she thinks he was just playing with her:

He could still be amiable, still pleasing to my uncle and aunt, when he was in town; and why not to me? If he fears me, why come hither? If he no longer cares for me, why silent? - Teazing, teasing man! I will think no more about him! (260)

When describing this scene, Austen does not enter Darcy's mind, so we as readers again feel with Elizabeth. During the second meeting at Longbourn, Elizabeth and Darcy sit far apart, and Elizabeth's feelings are in a tumult:

Darcy had walked to another part of the room. She followed him with her eyes, envied everyone to whom he spoke, had scarcely patience enough to help anybody to coffee, and then was enraged against herself for being so silly! (262)

She is sure that Darcy is lost on her; as he was once refused, he would never make her a second proposal of marriage.

After Lady Catherine's visit, while Elizabeth defended herself admirably well against all the accusations brought against her, she is also insecure about the extent to which Darcy takes his aunt's opinion to heart, and furthermore, her last meeting with him has given her all the more cause for feeling uncertain about his affections:

If he had been wavering before as to what he should do, which had often seemed likely, the advice and entreaty of so near a relation might settle every doubt, and determine him at once to be as happy as dignity unblemished could make him. In that case, he would return no more. (277)

However, after these rather unpleasant thoughts, Elizabeth also self-confidently asserts:

If he is satisfied with only regretting me, when he might have obtained my affections and hand, I shall soon cease to regret him at all. (278)

At Darcy's third visit to Longbourn, the whole party takes a walk, and when Elizabeth and Darcy are finally alone, she takes the opportunity to thank him for what he had done for Lydia. Darcy ventures to ask Elizabeth about her feelings for him, saying that his own were "unchanged" (*P&P* 282), and when she says that hers have changed, he feels happy, but

again, Austen's narrator is not really sure about his real emotions, indicated by the word "probably":

The happiness which this reply produced was such as he had probably never felt before, and he expressed himself on the occasion as sensibly and as warmly as a man violently in love can be supposed to do. (282)

They also talk about Bingley. Darcy says he had confessed to him that he had withheld from him the information that Jane had been in London while he was there as well, and that although Bingley was angry first, he quickly forgave him. In Austen, this induces in Elizabeth a wish to tease Darcy again, but then she "remembered that he had yet to learn to be laughed at, and it was rather too early to begin" (286). So, Austen hints that Darcy's character development is not complete yet.

To conclude, there is a strong difference in the kind of education that Darcy and Elizabeth received. Elizabeth grew up in Meryton, and in the novel, it becomes clear that the people there are very quick to form their judgments, and that furthermore, they are always prone to exaggeration, which can also be noticed in the following passage, where we learn how the Meryton folk reacted when Wickham's elopement with Lydia became public:

All Meryton seemed striving to blacken the man, who, but three months before, had been almost an angel of light. He was declared to be in debt to every tradesman in the place, and his intrigues, all honoured with the title of seduction, had been extended into every tradesman's family. Everybody declared that he was the wickedest young man in the world; and everybody began to find out that they had always distrusted the appearance of his goodness. (225)

However, Elizabeth "did not credit above half of what was said", thus, she has learned to question all the notions she was raised to believe.

On page 284, Austen gives us information on Darcy's past, saying that his father has always taught him to be proud:

I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. As a child, I was taught what was *right*; but I was not taught to correct my temper. I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit. Unfortunately, an only son (for many years an only *child*), I was spoiled by my parents, who, though good themselves (my father particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable), allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing – to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to *wish* at least to think meanly of their sense and worth compared with my own. Such I was, from eight to eight-and-twenty; and such I might still have been but for you, dearest, loveliest Elizabeth! What do I not owe you? You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled.

However, this is only a confirmation of what the perceptive reader might have concluded already; that Elizabeth's rejection of his marriage proposal opened his eyes to his previously proud behavior, and that the reason for this behavior must be found in his education. There is still no answer to the question what exactly triggers Darcy's change and how this transformation really comes about. Mr. Darcy's real character is a mystery that gradually unfolds; and we do not get any internal reflections from him. Right after his rejection, he writes Elizabeth the famous letter, which, as I have already mentioned, is still full of pride. This is understandable; given that he wrote it only a few hours after his arrogant proposal, it would be quite unrealistic for him to change so quickly. After giving Elizabeth the letter, he returns to his London home – so something vital for the story must have happened there. Did the change come about simply through internal self-reflection on Darcy's part, or was there some other experience that made him aware of his arrogance? We do not know, and this is exactly the gap that Aidan tries to fill.

#### 4.4 Plot Summaries of Aidan's trilogy

##### 4.4.1 An Assembly Such as This

The plot mostly mirrors that of the first part of *P&P*, while of course, only the events relevant for Mr. Darcy, and which he gets to know, are related. For example, the fact that Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins' proposal is not narrated, as Mr. Darcy has not learned about it yet.

Mr. Darcy moves from London to Hertfordshire to the estate of Netherfield, together with his friend Mr. Bingley, Bingley's sisters Caroline and Louisa, and Louisa's husband, Mr. Hurst. At a ball in the fictional town of Meryton, he meets Elizabeth Bennet and is intrigued by her, while Mr. Bingley takes a liking for Elizabeth's sister Jane. However, Mr. Darcy has the feeling that Jane's affections are not real, and furthermore he is appalled by the socially unacceptable behavior of Elizabeth's mother and her sister Lydia - which is why he does not want to admit his feelings for Elizabeth to himself yet and he tries to fight them. Together with Caroline Bingley, he devises a plan to convince Mr. Bingley to come to London with them, to separate him and Jane. As *P&P* does not tell us what happens during that period in London, we have a 'blank' here, which Aidan fills with additional scenes: Darcy meets his old university friend Lord Brougham, with whom he and Bingley attend a soiree at Whitehall, the home of Lord and Lady Melbourne - who are real people from the upper class who lived in

the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Darcy mainly hopes that Bingley might meet a girl who could help him forget about Jane there, but instead, he finds himself in the middle of a number of scandals, as Beau Brummel, a “Regency dandy and fashion leader, famous for his elegant dress” (Knowles 2012), is so impressed by the way that Darcy’s cravat is tied, that he even calls it superior to his own way of tying a cravat. Also, Lady Melbourne enters the soiree in a see-through dress, together with a mysterious gentleman (who, in the second part, is revealed to be Lord Byron). Both events are considered scandalous enough to be mentioned in the newspaper the next day. In the end, Darcy is still in London but planning to leave for his estate Pemberley soon to spend Christmas there. He has a bad conscience for having separated Bingley and Jane, and he cannot stop thinking about Elizabeth.

There is also a small sub-plot involving Darcy’s younger sister Georgiana, to whom he writes letters regularly: he is relieved to find that she has recovered quite well, after Wickham had tried to seduce her. However, it troubles him that she wants to donate a large sum of money every year to a certain ‘Society of Returning Young Women to their Friends in the Country’, which, just like Lord Melbourne and Beau Brummel, is also not Aidan’s invention but one of “the religious and benevolent societies for impoverished or exploited women” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pierard 1997).

#### 4.4.2 Duty and Desire

Darcy decides to accept an invitation from his old university friend, Lord Sayre. He invites several of his friends to a reunion at his home, Norwycke Castle. Darcy accepts the invitation in hopes of finding a wife from his own social rank, which, he hopes, will put Elizabeth off his mind forever.

After he arrived at the castle, he learns from his valet Fletcher that Lord Sayre has lost nearly all his fortune because of his gambling addiction, which is why he had to sell all his books, as well as many of his portraits and furniture (he only kept his collection of weapons). In addition, Darcy learns that Lord Sayre’s character is not as good as he thought. Lady Sylvania is the daughter of the old Lord Sayre’s second wife, however, Lord Sayre and his brother Trenholme never got along with their half-sister and step-mother. After the old Lord’s death, they arranged for the two women to be sent to Ireland, where they lived in poverty. But recently, Lady Sylvania inherited some property in Ireland from her grandmother. The Dowager bequeathed this property to Lord Sayre, under the condition that he finds a suitable,

wealthy husband for her daughter. Upon hearing this, Darcy is impressed by the way that the two women handled their plight, and he finds himself more and more enamored to Lady Sylvania, whom he calls a “fairy princess” (ch. 6), and he was “captured by the mystery in her eyes” (ch. 8). However, his feelings for her never become as strong as those for Elizabeth.

One day, the whole party makes a trip to a collection of stones, which are called ‘The King’s Men’, or ‘The Whispering Knights’. There is an old folk tale connected to these stones: the former Lord of Norwycke Castle (who lived there around a thousand years ago) had a son who was disloyal to him. He was supported by six of his father’s knights, to whom he had promised money if they stayed loyal to him. On the night when they were to strike, they suddenly heard someone screaming ‘Treason!’, so one of them must have betrayed them. They wanted to flee, but were met by the Lord and his personal guard. The knights challenged them for a fight, except one (the disloyal one), and the son killed him. The Lord cursed them and they were all turned to stone.

Later, Miss Avery, the shy sister of Lord Manning, another university friend, finds something at the Stones which on first sight looks like a bleeding dead infant – but later, it is found out that it was a pig. Also, someone broke into Darcy’s bedroom, to steal his bleeding neckcloth (he had cut himself while shaving) and some of his hair. Darcy immediately suspects that Lord Sayre uses these charms to lure someone into giving him money – but his valet Fletcher also tells him his suspicion that one of the ladies might be using these charms to entice Darcy.

Lady Sylvania persuades Darcy to make a bet with Lord Sayre: if Darcy wins the next card game, Sayre has to give him his Spanish sword. Lady Sylvania and her companion, Mrs. Doyle, steal a local child which they hide in the castle – so that the mob would come to Norwycke Castle and possibly kill Sayre. It later turns out that Mrs. Doyle is in fact the old Lady Sayre, so she wasn’t dead after all. All the charms were warnings to Sayre. Darcy and Fletcher follow Lady Sylvania and her mother to the place where they had hidden the baby. Darcy’s immediate reaction was to see Sylvania as “a broken creature for whom the world was not atonement enough for her pain” (ch. 12). However, she then asks him if he had ever been hurt by someone really badly, which makes him think of Wickham.

Have you never desired revenge, Darcy? [...] Has no one ever hurt you, almost destroyed you? (ch. 12)

From his looks, Sylvania can see that he had indeed been hurt, so she continues:



Reason will not soothe, logic does not answer; they have no power. Embrace passion, Darcy. Embrace 'th'unconquerable will, and study of revenge. I can guide you, help you – comfort you – in the way! (ch. 12)

Thus, we have this battle between duty and desire – Lady Sylvanie acted according to her passions, and she encourages Darcy to do the same. Sylvanie reveals that she has also stolen the child as a charm to help Lady Sayre conceive – or at least, make her believe she has conceived.

However, Sylvanie is alarmed when her mother enters and wants to kill the baby, and Darcy realizes that Sylvanie had only become this wretched because of the terrible influence of her mother. Then, Sayre, Manning and Trenholme enter and the baby is saved. The remaining events are told from a flashback: Darcy is again back at Pemberley and tells Col. Fitzwilliam the whole story. The old Lady Sayre was to be sent to Newgate prison, but she killed herself first, and Lady Sylvanie finally married the Viscount of Monmouth, another university friend. In the end, we see Darcy sitting at the fireside in Pemberley, still thinking about Elizabeth.

#### 4.4.3 These Three Remain

Unlike the second part of the trilogy, this part follows the plot of *P&P* quite closely, as Elizabeth is present again. The novel starts with Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam visiting their aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, at Rosings. Just like in the beginning of the second novel, Darcy is determined to stop thinking about Elizabeth, which, however, is impossible, as she is currently in the neighborhood visiting her friend Charlotte and Mr. Collins, and which leads them to meet each other on several occasions. When he observes that Elizabeth gets on particularly well with Colonel Fitzwilliam, he becomes jealous. He realizes that he cannot deny his feelings any longer and decides to propose marriage to her, despite her low connections. Full of confidence that she will accept him, he is of course shocked when she does not, and even more enraged by all her accusations, of his being proud and arrogant, but most of all of having separated Jane and Bingley and deprived Wickham of his happiness. Darcy decides to write a letter to Elizabeth explaining the truth about what happened between Georgiana, Wickham and himself, and trying to justify his actions regarding Jane and Bingley. Then, he returns to his London home, determined to never see Elizabeth again.

Back in London, Darcy attends a party with Lord Monmouth and Sylvanie, where there are numerous philosophers and intellectuals. There, he finds Brougham disguised as a servant: he

warns him that Sylvanie accuses Darcy of having killed her mother – that is why she has made a plan to get Darcy drunk. He should be found in her bedchamber – and they would only keep quiet if Darcy donated money to a charity of orphaned Irish children – which would actually go to the Irish revolutionaries. Thus, Brougham saves him from a calamity. Later at a pub, Darcy confesses all his history with Elizabeth to Brougham. He sympathizes with Darcy, but also opens his eyes to his previous arrogant behavior. Darcy confesses the whole matter to Georgiana and starts behaving in a friendlier manner to the people around him. He returns to Pemberley, and once again is thrown into Elizabeth's company, as she is currently visiting the house with her aunt and uncle, the Gardiners. He wants to show Elizabeth that he has taken her criticism to his heart, and behaves with much kindness to her and her family. Consequently, also Elizabeth's behavior towards him becomes warmer. When he introduces Elizabeth to his sister, he is pleased to find that the two women get along very well.

However, one day, Elizabeth receives the dreadful news of Lydia's and Wickham's elopement. Darcy resolves to help her and goes to London, where, with the help of Brougham's contacts, he finds the couple. When he does not succeed in persuading Lydia to leave Wickham, he pays all of Wickham's debts, under the condition that he treats Lydia like a good husband. If he does not do that, he will be sent to debtor's prison. Darcy tells the Gardiner's about the plan, but asks them to keep it a secret, and arranges a wedding for Lydia and Wickham.

Bingley returns to Netherfield and invites Darcy. On this occasion, Darcy sees how happy Bingley and Jane are together. He confesses his mistake to him, and, although Bingley is a little angry first, he readily forgives him. After hearing that Elizabeth had denied Lady Catherine the promise that she will never enter in an engagement with Darcy, he has new hopes that their love might have a future after all. Elizabeth confesses to him that her feelings have changed substantially since he made his proposal. Once again, he asks for her hand in marriage, and this time, she accepts.

#### 4.5 Themes

In the following chapters, I will explore some of the main themes in the trilogy which are triggers for Darcy's change, namely pride, sense of duty and religion. Then, I will describe

Darcy's relationship to some of the main characters in *P&P*, as well as to some original characters introduced by Aidan - always comparing how Aidan and Austen deal with these themes, either in the same way or differently.

In an interview with the owner of the blog *My Jane Austen Book Club*, Pamela Aidan stated that she

[d]ecided to make him (Darcy) aware of his feelings for Elizabeth sooner, perhaps, than Austen intended. I probably made him more introspective than the character really is. The most obvious change is that "my" Darcy's actions are sometimes a result of insecurity, uncertainty, or family pressure rather than undiluted pride.

#### 4.5.1 Pride and Sense of Duty

Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind – pride will always be under good regulation. (*P&P* 47, *AASAT* 105)

This statement by Mr. Darcy shows that he is well aware of his pride, but he does not see it as something negative. The same applies to his sense of duty; he is proud of, as it "had made Pemberley the jewel that it was" (*AASAT* 14). When he sees Mrs. Bennet's impossible behavior at the Netherfield Ball, Darcy resolves to separate Jane from Bingley. He sees it as his duty, as:

Georgiana had only just been rescued from his one instance of neglect of his duty. He would not fail Charles similarly. (*AASAT* 183)

However, he is not convinced of the rightness of his actions:

What was he doing? Such duplicity as he contemplated was entirely repugnant to his character. (*AASAT* 180)

Thus, Aidan's Darcy is indeed capable of self-reflection - he sees that he has not judged objectively, but that his actions were influenced by his own feelings. His attraction to Elizabeth poses the biggest test to Darcy's sense of duty. He has strong feelings for her which can no longer be denied, but his pride tells him that they can never come together because of the difference in their social rank. Still, he cannot stop thinking about her, with his inner voice telling him: "she is both - mind and heart - and what you have always desired" (*AASAT* 107). There is an additional scene in *AASAT* where Elizabeth and Darcy meet in the library at Netherfield, and Elizabeth's presence excites Darcy so much that he cannot concentrate on his book anymore:

Darcy commanded his body to relax into his chair, and when a sufficient obedience had been achieved, he returned his attention to his book, only to find that not a word from the previous page had registered in his brain. (AASAT 114)

Darcy then is curious to know which book Elizabeth had been reading, and discovers that it is *Paradise Lost* by Milton, which first causes indignation in him:

What is she about, reading such ponderous verse nearly a century and a half old? It is certainly not fashionable today. Good heavens, no one reads Milton! (AASAT 116)

But only moments later, his feelings change, as he remembers that also his father read Milton shortly before his death. He takes Elizabeth's bookmark with him, which he presses to his chest, "willing the pain away". Then he also reads Milton and there is one passage which particularly reminds him of his own inner turmoil; his own internal battle between duty and desire:

*Part of my soul, I seek thee and thee claim*

*My other half... (AASAT 156)*

Thus, Darcy identifies with the passage he reads; with the meaning that Milton wants to get across. It is interesting to note here that it was only at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the message which the author was trying to convey in his work became important, thanks to the emergence of the new science of hermeneutics, which is the understanding and applying of a thought. Because of this, it was also then that copyright became a new law. According to Kittler (1994: 151),

Man muss beim Lesen die Seele des Buches suchen und der Idee nachspüren, welche der Autor gehabt hat, alsdann hat man das Buch ganz.

Kittler then cites the example of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe, where the main characters Werther and Lotte are both reading Klopstock. When they discover that they were both independently reading the same author, they realize that they are kindred spirits. Similarly, Aidan's Darcy can identify with the passage that Elizabeth chose to read, thus, for him, this is also a proof for their spiritual kinship.

Whenever Darcy is alone holding the bookmark in his hand, his attraction to Elizabeth is reawakened – it is like a substitute for a photograph of her, which, of course, did not exist yet at that time. The weaving and unweaving of the bookmark's strands becomes a metaphor for Darcy's own actions, as he says to himself:

You busily unweave your connections to her by dissuading Bingley and yet reweave them when alone with your undisciplined thoughts and stolen tokens. (AASAT 244)

Darcy's main motivation to accept Lord Sayre's invitation comes from his sense of duty: he wants to put Elizabeth off his mind by finding a suitable woman from his own rank. But the visit ends up having the exact opposite effect: Sylvanie, the lady Darcy finds himself attracted to, confronts him with his own innermost desires - his wish to take revenge on Wickham. Sylvanie is a woman who is guided by her passions and does not care what others think of her - which is something that fascinates Darcy, maybe because it is so different from the way he has been brought up. After this visit, Darcy returns to Pemberley still alone and still with Elizabeth on his mind. When, shortly after these events, he and Col. Fitzwilliam visit Lady Catherine at Rosings, he hopes

[t]hat the geometry of the garden might seep into his bones, discipline his unruly thoughts and emotions, and return them to the figures in which they had run before he'd ever heard of Netherfield. (TTR 42)

However, keeping this resolution is made much harder by the fact that Elizabeth Bennet is staying close by at Hunsford to visit her friend Charlotte Collins, so that he would frequently see her. When he finds himself jealous because of Col. Fitzwilliam's attentions to Elizabeth, even with all his sense of duty, he realizes that his affections for Elizabeth can no longer be denied, and he proposes marriage to her, perfectly sure that she would readily accept a proposal from such a wealthy man like himself. His pride clearly shows in the way he formulates his proposal:

Of the difficulties presented by the differences in our stations, the numerous obstacles presented by the inferiority of your family, I am only too aware. They are of such a nature that, indeed, no rational man may disregard their weight. I have struggled with them all and from the beginning, measuring inclination against my own better judgment and the knowledge that all of Society and my closest family will look upon our union as a degradation. It has been just these heavy impediments which have kept me silent until now upon the subject of my regard. They cannot be helped; neither can my sincere attachment to you, though I have done all in my power to conquer it. (TTR 113)

In *P&P*, Darcy's proud proposal is not rendered in direct speech:

He spoke well; but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed, and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority - of its being a degradation - of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit. (147-8)

After Elizabeth has rejected him, Darcy neglects his duty, which is completely unlike himself: he is not there for his sister, and he plays billiard until late at night, instead of welcoming the newly arrived Bingley and taking care of his business affairs. He accepts the invitation to Lady Sylvania's soiree, and Aidan gives us the following reason for his doing so:

[h]e [...] found himself curious about how the former Lady Sylvania Sayre had gotten on after the horrific events at Norwycke Castle and also not a little intrigued by what the temper of the intellectuals and artists who had gathered around her might be. Such company gave the evening an air of piquancy, and piquancy or danger outright was infinitely preferable to what consumed him now, twisting his vitals ever and again into their familiar, painful knot. (*TTR* 175)

What really opens Darcy's eyes to his own pride is his conversation with Brougham at the pub. Darcy tells his friend that he proposed to Elizabeth, saying that:

I professed my love in the strongest terms and, with even more vigor, gave her to know all the struggles I had overcome before appearing at her door to tell her so (*TTR* 210)

Brougham sarcastically replies:

Yes, yes, that would be the Darcy approach, wouldn't it? [...] Only you, my friend, would make the lady's general unfitness the leading topic in a proposal of marriage! (*TTR* 211)

The next day, when Darcy quietly reflects about this talk at home, he realizes that his behavior was not just, and that the reason for it

[w]as family pride - his pride - that all his life had invariably set at naught those outside his circle and tempted him to think meanly of the sense and worth of the rest of the world. Elizabeth had felt it, called it what anyone outside his concern would agree it to be, what even Dy had seen it to be: *pride* attested by an arrogance of mind, a conceit of class, and a self-absorption that disdained to acknowledge the rightful feelings of others. (*TTR* 217)

Up until this point, Darcy has always thought that a gentleman was someone who is able to govern his feelings, who is always dutiful, and who also shows a certain sense of pride for his high rank in society. But Elizabeth has a different idea of what a gentleman should be like. She told him that if he had "behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner" (*P&P* 150, *TTR* 117), her opinion of him might have been more agreeable. Thus, for her, a gentleman should never be arrogant or proud – but open and friendly. Darcy always wanted to behave in a way that he thought was 'gentlemanlike', but especially now, it has become difficult. Also, when his portrait had been revealed on his 21st birthday, he felt like this showed a 'true gentleman', who does not have any flaws, and he felt ashamed because he was sure that he could never

become the man in the picture. His sister Georgiana, whose portrait is to be revealed in the course of *TTR*, has the same concerns about her own picture, but at first, Darcy dismisses her worries, because he is too agitated to deal with these problems after Elizabeth had refused his proposal. However, after his talk with Dy, he apologizes to her and they have a long talk, in which she addresses the topic of this family pride that Darcy had just realized:

Brother, I have always been encouraged to think so well of myself. Insulated by wealth and rank from any serious demand upon my character, I had little experience of its worth. I have since learned that in those more important things I am poor, helpless, and needy. It was the most important lesson I have in this life to learn. (*TTR* 221)

From now on, Darcy's pride is transformed into charity and friendliness: he agrees to Lord Manning's request to introduce a friendship between Georgiana and his shy sister Miss Avery, and he is friendly to the Gardiners, who he had previously considered below his rank. As soon as Elizabeth sees that, he is finally able to win her heart.

#### 4.5.2 Religion

Throughout the trilogy, religion is an important theme. In *P&P*, religion is present (Mr. Collins is a clergyman, and it is mentioned a few times that the characters attend church), but it is not as important as in *Aidan*, who elaborates those brief allusions into full scenes.

The first time in *AASAT* that religion is dealt with in more detail is in chapter 2. At Netherfield, Ms. Bingley thanks Mr. Darcy again for sharing his prayer book in church with her the day before. Mr. Bingley is surprised by that, as both his sister and Darcy had never showed such a big interest in religion before. He wonders why this has suddenly changed, and Darcy explains to him that the day before at church, his "attention was most decidedly caught by a feminine voice coming from behind" (24), which belonged to Elizabeth. Darcy was so impressed by her singing the hymns "with such feeling and beauty" (25), that it inspired him to read *The Works of Reverend George Whitefield* again, who was a real clergyman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Christian History). Caroline only asked for Darcy's prayer book because she had noticed his enticement with Elizabeth and wanted to set his mind on herself. There is another scene in *Aidan* where Elizabeth and Darcy attend church together and Darcy shares his prayer book with Elizabeth, so he cannot concentrate on the content of the sermon.

In the beginning, Darcy's views on religion are rather skeptical. The second part of the trilogy begins with Darcy and his cousin Col. Richard Fitzwilliam attending church together. In his sermon, the priest talks about the "natural frailty" of man, which much be forgiven. Darcy disagrees, which becomes evident from his reaction:

Was he tamely to accept "frailty" as the explanation – nay, the excuse – for behavior as invidious as that which George Wickham had visited upon his sister, Georgiana, and himself? Was he expected to pity Wickham for his weakness, succor him? Resentment, as bitter as it was cold, reawakened in his chest, and the Reverend Doctor was attended to with a more critical ear. (ch. 1)

Thus, Darcy is clearly against some religious views – which is also a reason why in the beginning, he is so averse to Georgiana's newfound interest in religion, and her plan to visit the tenants and donate money to the 'Society for Returning Women to their Friends in the Country'. Darcy notices that Georgiana has become much more outspoken than before. When Mrs. Annesley, Georgiana's companion who has introduced her to religion, asks him about his views on the subject, he gives her a sarcastic answer:

I had forgotten, ma'am, that you are the widow of a clergyman. Doubtless, you are used to seeing all about you as directly from the hand of the Almighty, unlike the majority of us, who must strive in the world of men. (*D&D* ch. 3)

Lady Sylvanie is not at all religious, as she reveals in a conversation with Darcy. They talk about their dead parents, and Darcy says that he "blessed Heaven" for the fact that he could at least share his father's last years (while he was away at school during his mother's illness). Lady Sylvanie contradicts him, saying that:

I, sir, do *not* 'bless Heaven' [...] and I never shall, for Heaven is either cruel or powerless, as has been amply proved time upon time. (*D&D* ch. 9)

At those words, Darcy has to think about what Mrs. Annesley told him, and so he tells Sylvanie about her:

[a] woman who knows more of this than I [...] who has suffered far more than either of us, I daresay, recently expressed to me her confidence that *all* that happens is 'for good.' (*D&D* ch. 9)

However, he does not convince her, as she replies that whoever believes those things is a "fool". So, although Mr. Darcy does not let himself be convinced about religion by Mrs. Annesley and he does not want his sister's religious enthusiasm to be made public, this scene shows that he is also not completely against religion and that he is pretty much divided as far



as this topic is concerned. However, towards the end, Sylvanie confronts him with his “(unchristian) desire for revenge” (Steenhuyse 2001: 174).

In the beginning of the third part, Mr. Collins gives a sermon (ordered by Lady Catherine), on “Religious Affection” (48), which is supposed to be controlled and rational, instead of passionate, or, as it is expressed in the novel, supported by “Enthusiasm” (48) and “the uncontrolled flow of [...] animal spirits.” (48) Darcy is clearly against these views and does not want Lady Catherine to find out about Georgiana’s newfound interest.

Although in the end, unlike his sister, Darcy did not turn into a devoted Christian, his character develops in the same way as a good Christian is supposed to,

[h]e learns to do the right thing by his enemy, as well as his friends, his peers, his family, and, indeed, Elizabeth. (360)

#### 4.6 Characters

##### 4.6.1 Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet

Elizabeth and Darcy see each other for the first time at the Meryton Ball, but they do not enter into conversation right away. Bingley tries to persuade Darcy to ask one of the ladies waiting for a dance, but he refuses to do so, saying that Bingley was “dancing with the only handsome girl in the room”. Bingley then draws Darcy’s attention to Elizabeth. Bingley’s words, when he mentions Elizabeth, are slightly changed by Aidan. In the hypotext, his words are:

[t]here is one of her (Jane’s) sisters sitting down just behind you; who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you. (*P&P* 11)

In Aidan, he expresses himself the following way:

[s]he has a very charming sister who would, I believe, suit even your taste, at least for an evening. Let me procure an introduction. She sits out the dancing just over there. (6)

So, Aidan’s Bingley is aware of Darcy’s high demands when it comes to women; that he is not easily impressed and pleased. While Austen’s Darcy only looked at Elizabeth “for a moment”, only briefly “catching her eye”, Aidan describes Darcy’s feelings in this situation in much more detail:

A few chairs distant from where they stood sat a young woman of about twenty who, in contrast to himself, was obviously enjoying the evening. Although she was sitting

out the dance for a lack of available gentlemen, her small feet would not accept their banishment from the dancing and tapped discreetly beneath her gown. Her eyes bright with amusement in the scene before her, she seemed a favorite with many, being saluted by both ladies and gentlemen as they passed by her. She was near enough that a slight change in the direction of her gaze caused Darcy to wonder if she had been listening to their conversation. His suspicions were confirmed when her smile seemed to take on a more quizzical appearance.

*What was she thinking?* Intrigued, he allowed himself to examine her. At that moment, his object turned toward him, the smile still gracing her face, but now with one delicate brow arched in question at his blatant scrutiny. He hastily turned away, his discomposure with her discovery of him setting him further at odds with his companion. If Bingley imagined he would be content with what other men overlooked while he enjoyed the company of the only passable young woman present, he must think again! (6)

Thus, in this scene, Darcy clearly does not feel any affection for Elizabeth yet, but that quickly changes. Later, he observes how a group of officers accompanies Elizabeth and some other young ladies to their carriages:

He watched as she (Elizabeth) gently refused the arm of the young officer and motioned him off to assist one of her sisters. Then, with a sigh of pleasure, she gracefully adjusted her wrap and lifted her face to the beauty of the night sky. The simplicity of her joy caught him, and as the carriage lurched forward, Darcy found that he could not take his eyes from her. (7-8)

So here, Aidan fills the hypotext's gap as to when exactly Darcy started feeling affection for Elizabeth.

The next time Elizabeth and Darcy meet is when the ladies of Longbourn visit those of Netherfield. This visit is only mentioned briefly in the hypotext, while in Aidan's hypertext, it is further elaborated. Darcy asks Elizabeth whether she has been living in Meryton for long, to which she replies that she has been living there all her life. He then asks whether she has ever been to London, and she answers that she has been there, but not "during the season", to which Darcy replies:

I should not consider time spent in London merely to visit dressmakers' shops as having been to the city at all (32)

It is meant as a disparaging remark, which Elizabeth is aware of, but she wittily pretends to have understood it as a compliment, replying:

Mr. Darcy, you are too kind! [...] That a gentleman of your discrimination should regard my gown as a *London* creation! But I must disabuse you, I fear. It is a *local*

concoction only, but be assured, I shall certainly repeat your pretty compliment to my dressmaker. (32)

Aidan's Darcy then wonders why Elizabeth is playing thus with him, and comes to the conclusion that she must have overheard his unfavorable remark on her at the Meryton Ball. On the one hand, he feels that he "owed her an apology" (34), but then, after he cannot think about what to say and grows afraid of her reaction to it, his pride wins the upper hand again and he resolves that

[h]e would not lay himself open to the vituperation of a country nobody for the amusement of herself or her friends. (34)

At the Lucas Ball, in *AASAT*, Elizabeth gives encouragement to a shy little girl to show her needlework to the other people, who are all very pleased with it. Darcy watches this scene (which is not present in *P&P*), and it causes him to see Elizabeth even in higher esteem:

The natural grace of her figure, inclined in sweet concern for a shy child, tugged at something within him. (54)

At the Lucas Ball, Darcy hears Elizabeth sing and play the piano for the first time, which awakens much pleasure in him, as it is described in *AASAT*:

Technically, her performance was not the finest, but the lightness and emotion her fingering conveyed were arresting. Then, when she joined voice to music, Darcy learned enchantment. With growing pleasure, he surrendered to her rich timbre as it washed over his senses. The plaintive entreaty of the song and the tender expression that graced Elizabeth's features as she sang gave rise to a resonance in unexplored depths within him that spread rapidly throughout his being. Darcy leaned forward, unwilling to miss any nuance, and tightly gripped the armrests of his chair. It was all he could do to stay in his seat, so strong was the urge to draw closer. He imagined leaning over her, reaching past her to turn the score's pages [...] her warmth, the scent of lavender. (67)

In the hypotext, however, it is only briefly mentioned that Elizabeth plays the piano at the Lucas Ball:

Her performance was pleasing, though by no means capital. After a song or two, and before she could reply to the entreaties of several that she would sing again, she was eagerly succeeded at the instrument by her sister Mary. (21)

Aidan's Darcy comes to admire Elizabeth even more when they are placed in an embarrassing situation by Mr. Lucas, who wants to persuade them to dance together. When Elizabeth refuses for the first time, Darcy senses that she does so out of fear to be "dismissed" (70)

again, and so he shows her that he does not intend to do so this time. However, she still cannot be persuaded, saying that Darcy was “all politeness” (AASAT 70, *P&P* 23).

Although disappointed, Darcy could not help but admire her poise and amusement in the awkward situation into which they had been drawn. (AASAT 70)

Aidan also made some changes to the scenes while Elizabeth is at Netherfield to visit her sick sister. While they are all gathered in the drawing room, Darcy is writing a letter to his sister Georgiana, and while Austen’s hypotext focuses on and describes the conversation that is taking place around Darcy, Aidan’s hypertext concentrates on Darcy’s letter and leaves out the background conversation, which Darcy probably, as he is concentrated on the letter, does not listen to – only Ms. Bingley’s continuous praises to Georgiana, which she tells Darcy to pass on to her, are mentioned ironically by Darcy:

*I pause here to execute a request pressed upon me by Miss Caroline Bingley, in whose company I am attempting to compose this missive. It is her earnest desire that I recall her to your remembrance and apprise you of her intense longing to see you once more. My duty in this is now discharged, and you may receive her sentiments as you wish. (92)*

Before the Netherfield Ball, Darcy is resolved to apologize to Elizabeth for his remark at the Meryton Ball, while Elizabeth has just been told the lies by Wickham. Therefore, she is determined to tease him at the ball, and when they begin dancing, there is a silence between them which Elizabeth

[a]t first was resolved not to break [...] till suddenly fancying that it would be the greater punishment to her partner to oblige him to talk, she made some slight observation on the dance. (*P&P* 73)

Austen does not give us this observation in direct speech – which is another gap that Aidan fills. Her Elizabeth says the following:

This choice of dance must seem rather out of fashion to one accustomed to St. James’s, Mr. Darcy. (AASAT 161)

Mr. Darcy replies:

As I told Sir William, I do not dance at St. James’s and, therefore, do not know what is considered *dernier cri*.”

In this case, it might not be clear to modern readers that

St. James was the official palace of the King, and it was there that the elaborate balls were held to celebrate the annual official nativities of the King and Queen (in June and January, respectively), the periodic recoveries of the King from illnesses,

receptions of foreign nobility, and other important occasions. Balls at St. James's were not assemblies formed purely for pleasure and entertainment—they were among the most formal events that took place at court. (Thompson 2012)

So, Elizabeth teases Darcy by implying his snobbishness, but he denies her the pleasure. Aidan's Darcy then interprets the verbal battle that follows as Elizabeth's "vengeance for Meryton" (163).

In *P&P* (134), Darcy comes to Elizabeth asking her how her family is, upon which she replies "the usual way". Then, she asks if he had seen her sister in London, upon which he "looked a little confused". In *TTR* (25-33) on the other hand, Darcy interrupts a conversation between Elizabeth and Colonel Fitzwilliam, and after her question about Jane, he is not confused, but rather has a bad conscience, or, as Aidan puts it, "his conscience played havoc with him" (33). In *P&P*, Jane Austen mentions that Mr. Darcy had seen Elizabeth at church (135), but this is not further elaborated. In *TTR*, however, this scene is described in much more detail. As I already mentioned, Mr. Collins gives a sermon (ordered by Lady Catherine), on 'Religious Affection', which is supposed to be controlled and rational, instead of passionate, or, as it is expressed in the novel, supported by "Enthusiasm" and "the uncontrolled flow of [...] animal spirits."

Also interesting to compare is the scene in which Elizabeth and Darcy are alone together for the first time. They have a discussion on whether 50 miles (the distance between Lucas Lodge, the home of Charlotte's parents, and Rosings, where she lives now as a married woman), is far. According to Mr. Darcy, this is an "easy distance" (*P&P* 140), while Elizabeth disagrees, since it is half a day's journey. Mr. Darcy then teases her by saying: "Anything beyond the very neighborhood of Longbourn, I suppose, would appear far.", upon which she replies:

I do not mean to say that a woman may not be settled too near her family. The far and the near must be relative, and depend on many varying circumstances. Where there is fortune to make the expenses of travelling unimportant, distance becomes no evil.

Aidan's Darcy sees this remark as a clear sign of Elizabeth's attachment to him, thinking that she implies that she would not mind living at the big estate of Pemberley, so it even encourages him in his subsequent proposal.

Also, in *P&P*, the real reason why Mr. Darcy comes to visit Elizabeth that day is not revealed. He apologizes for his entrance, saying that he did not expect to find her alone - while in Aidan, this is exactly what he is hoping for. In *P&P*, after this interview, Elizabeth and

Charlotte talk about possible reasons for Darcy's visit. While Charlotte already suspects that Darcy must be in love with her, Elizabeth does not believe that possible, but rather thinks that he came because he could not find anything else to do. In *TTR*, Darcy's initial motivation for his visit was to practice his social skills - after Elizabeth had accused him of lacking them.

In *P&P*, it is mentioned that Elizabeth and Darcy meet each other a few times while they take walks through the park, but those scenes are not further elaborated - which once again gives Aidan the possibility to add some additional scenes. In *TTR*, Darcy and Elizabeth meet each other three times on these walks. During one of these meetings, Darcy shows Elizabeth a glade at Rosings, in which he and Colonel Fitzwilliam used to play when they were children. The other two refer to a conversation that Darcy and Elizabeth have during the Netherfield Ball:

"It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy. I talked about the dance, and you ought to make some sort of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples." He smiled, and assured her that whatever she wished him to say should be said. "Very well. That reply will do for the present. Perhaps by and by I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones. But now we may be silent." "Do you talk by rule, then, while you are dancing?" "Sometimes. One must speak a little, you know. It would look odd to be entirely silent for half an hour together; and yet for the advantage of some, conversation ought to be so arranged, as that they may have the trouble of saying as little as possible." "Are you consulting your own feelings in the present case, or do you imagine that you are gratifying mine?" "Both," replied Elizabeth archly; "for I have always seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are each of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room, and be handed down to posterity with all the eclat of a proverb." "This is no very striking resemblance of your own character, I am sure," said he. "How near it may be to mine, I cannot pretend to say. You think it a faithful portrait undoubtedly." "I must not decide on my own performance." (*P&P* 74)

Aidan's Darcy remembers her talking about their "similarity of minds", and he wants her to remember it and make her see that, although she was joking back then, they are really quite similar. During one of the walks, she states that she'd rather walk alone than with the wrong companion, and during the other one, he asks her:

"So, you would posit a couple's happiness in marriage with the agreement of their natures, their expectations of life, and the mutuality of their understanding?" Her silence at his question was such that he feared she again had not heard him. Finally, her answer came so softly that he had to bend to hear her. "It is a beginning, at least. Without them, I believe the chances for happiness are quite remote." (*TTR* 93)

This statement gives him even more hope that she is anticipating his affection.

When Darcy proposes to Elizabeth for the first time, in Austen, she is first compassionate, then angry. After the refusal, Austen's Darcy replies in a "voice of forced calmness" (148), but in Aidan, he speaks "in a cold rage", and later employs a sardonic tone. Parts of Austen's dialogue are cut in Aidan. When they speak about Wickham and "his misfortunes", Austen's Darcy simply "repeated" that word, while in Aidan, he "spat it out", thus, her Darcy shows more emotion. Austen describes Elizabeth as "growing more angry every moment; yet she tried to the utmost to speak with composure". According to Aidan, this worked out, as here, the heroine's voice is described as being "eerily composed". When Elizabeth accuses Darcy of not having behaved like a gentleman, Aidan's Darcy feels that "She might as well have slapped him across his face as presented him with such a charge." At the moment when Elizabeth tells him that he is the "last man in the world whom she could marry", Aidan's Darcy feels that she is "utterly, irretrievably lost" (117) to him.

When the two protagonists meet again unexpectedly at Pemberley, which results in a very awkward conversation between the two, Austen does not say that Darcy is in a dishevelled state. Aidan clearly plays with the lake scene from the 1995 BBC adaptation by slightly altering it. In her trilogy, Darcy has a dog named Trafalgar (who is present neither in *P&P* nor in the miniseries), and when he meets Elizabeth, he has just come back from a ride with his dog:

He tugged at his cravat until it hung in loose, sweat- stained loops about his neck. His coat he had already unbuttoned, nor did he have the will to rebutton it. He was both hatless and gloveless, having sent these items ahead with a stable boy, and he could feel the dust and grit of the road being rubbed against his skin by the weight of his clothing. His face...He paused to rub at his eyes and chin. No, in no state at all! (*TTR* 272)

Aidan's Elizabeth, when meeting Darcy, is "clearly uncomfortable", and Darcy tries to set her at ease, but, as we learn in Austen, he does not succeed: "every sentence that he uttered was increasing her embarrassment". The scene is rendered in free indirect discourse in Austen, different to Aidan, who also adds some additional dialogue by making Darcy ask the "blunt" question on where she was staying. Darcy notices her embarrassment and is afraid he might have said something wrong. He wants to reassure her by saying that she is always welcome at Pemberley, but Austen's Elizabeth, who feels as if she were intruding at Pemberley, is not convinced of him being sincere:

How strange it must appear to him! In what a disgraceful light might it not strike so vain a man! It might seem as if she had purposely thrown herself in his way again! (*P&P* 193)

At the second meeting at Pemberley, Jane Austen mentions that Elizabeth calls Pemberley “charming” and “delightful” (195), but she is afraid that “praise of Pemberley from her might be mischievously construed.” But the thoughts of Aidan's Darcy prove that these worries are unnecessary:

He had hardly risen from his bow when he heard the words “charming” and “delightful” applied to all she had surveyed. Schooling his features to display a more moderate pleasure at her words than he would have liked, he thanked her. “Charming” and “delightful” were commonly ascribed to Pemberley by visitors, but never before had the accolades held such significance. (276)

When Darcy asks to be introduced to the Gardiners, Austen's Elizabeth smiles because he was

[n]ow seeking the acquaintance of some of those very people against whom his pride had revolted in his offer to herself (195),

Furthermore, she finds it “consoling that he should know she had some relations for whom there was no need to blush.” Austen's Elizabeth does not believe that Darcy's change has anything to do with herself:

“It cannot be for *me* - it cannot be for *my* sake that his manners are thus softened. My reproofs at Hunsford could not work such a change as this. It is impossible that he should still love me.” (195-6).

In the next scene, Elizabeth meets Georgiana for the first time. Austen's Georgiana speaks very little – in fact, there is not one instance where she says something in direct speech – and Elizabeth “found it difficult to obtain even a word from her beyond a monosyllable.” (199). However, in Aidan, she is much more open and clearly speaks in more than just monosyllables:

“The journey was not a long one.” Georgiana reclaimed Elizabeth's attention. “Oh?” Elizabeth's eyebrow arched provocatively. “But then I have been told that fifty miles is ‘an easy distance.’ Perhaps you are of your brother's persuasion in this?” Darcy smiled on hearing her quote his words. Oh, how he had missed her repartee! “Fifty miles! In my brother's care it is easy, indeed!” Georgiana replied seriously, “but I would not regard it generally so! (290)

Austen's Georgiana joins her brother in inviting the Gardiners and Elizabeth to Pemberley again (201), while in the hypertext, her brother encourages her to speak out the invitation



alone (293). Maybe, Aidan's Darcy sees Georgiana as more open than she really is, because in Austen, she is described as significantly more shy:

Miss Darcy looked as if she wished for courage enough to join in it; and sometimes did venture a short sentence when there was least danger of its being heard. (204)

During the second meeting of Elizabeth and Georgiana, Austen's narrator mentions that Darcy does everything to encourage a conversation between the two women, but it remains open whether he succeeds:

Elizabeth saw that he was anxious for his sister and herself to get acquainted, and forwarded as much as possible, every attempt at conversation on either side (206)

But in Aidan, he clearly does succeed (297). Darcy encourages his sister to tell Elizabeth about a concert they attended in London, and, although Georgiana was clearly embarrassed first, as she "positively glowed", she finally manages to talk and relax more:

He could sense his sister's tension slipping away as, with either Elizabeth's help or his, their conversation flowed from one topic to another in a seemingly natural manner.

The next mutual scene takes place in Lambton Inn, after Elizabeth has received a letter from Jane, revealing the terrible news of Lydia's and Wickham's elopement. Austen's Darcy shouts that he was grieved, but Aidan's Darcy whispers it (311), so he remains calmer.

When Darcy and Elizabeth meet each other again at Longbourn, together with Bingley, they hardly speak to each other; he only inquires about the Gardiners and she in turn asks him about his sister. Austen's Elizabeth wonders why Darcy is so quiet and frequently looks at Jane, and Aidan gives us the reason for it: he wants to determine whether Jane shows any affection for Bingley:

As Bingley engaged Jane Bennet in conversation, Darcy considered them both. Bingley was flushed, his eyes cautiously hopeful as he carefully drew her out from her mother's shadow. His feelings were unmistakable. Miss Bennet's responses were, by contrast, measured but gracious. Bingley persisted. Her eyes warmed a little as he teased her on some point, then she laughed. A smile spread across Bingley's face and his shoulders straightened, at which Miss Bennet blushed and looked down, but not before Darcy saw the shining eyes and gentle smile that accompanied it. A beginning that held promise, he decided and wondered how he ever could have imagined Jane Bennet scheming to trap his friend into a socially advantageous marriage. (*TTR* 392)

Also, Aidan's Darcy notices that Elizabeth is quiet and wonders why:

Did she wish him gone, or did she wish him to speak? Should he allude to their time at Pemberley? Dare he attempt to continue as they had during her visit, before the arrival of the letter bearing news of Wickham's treachery? He looked again out the window as conflicting explanations for her behavior racked his brain. (392)

When Elizabeth tells him that she knows that he has helped Lydia and Wickham get married, Aidan's Darcy first thinks that the reason why Elizabeth behaved so distantly to him at the last meetings was because she blamed him for interfering - but then, he is relieved to learn that this is not the case. He makes another proposal of marriage, which she accepts.

At Darcy's next visit to Longbourn, after Mr. Bennet has given them his blessing, in the hypotext, Elizabeth and Darcy discuss their history and what it was that made Darcy fall in love with Elizabeth in the first place. In the hypertext, this dialogue is slightly changed - here, Darcy confesses that he has stolen Elizabeth's bookmark (which he does not do in Austen), and the rest of Austen's dialogue is cancelled. We also get to know that Darcy gives Elizabeth a bookmark as a wedding gift.

#### 4.6.2 Darcy's Friends

In *P&P*, Darcy has no known friends except Bingley and his cousin, Col. Fitzwilliam. Aidan fills this gap by inventing a large group of friends for him, most of whom he knows from Cambridge University, such as Lord Sayre, Lord Trenholme, Lord Manning and Lord Brougham. However, his closest friend among those is clearly Lord Brougham, whom I am going to talk about in more detail later. The other ones rather seem to be casual acquaintances, and we learn that they lack character: both Lord Sayre and Lord Manning refuse to take care of their sisters, and Lord Trenholme has a violent temper and a drinking problem. Darcy accepts Lord Sayre's invitation to Norwycke Castle not because he is particularly looking forward to seeing his friends again, but because he wants to get his mind off Elizabeth and thereby hopes that he might find another attractive woman there. Brougham, who apparently is not part of that group, is a very good advisor and a very good judge of character – and if Darcy had listened to his advice, many calamities happening in the novel might have been prevented. For example, Brougham warns him not to separate Jane from Bingley, he advises him not to accept Lord Sayre's invitation to Norwycke Castle and later Lady Sylvanie's invitation to the soiree, and he tries to open Darcy's eyes to Georgiana's newfound maturity.

And most importantly, Brougham is the one who opens his eyes to the selfish way in which he had treated Elizabeth – this talk with Brougham at the pub is actually what triggers Darcy’s change from a proud and arrogant snob to a compassionate and kind gentleman. However, it is important to mention that Darcy had not been proud and arrogant to everybody. He had always been kind to his sister, and we also learn about his kind heart earlier in *TTR*, in an additional scene with his cousin Anne de Bourgh. In *P&P*, we do not know much about Lady Catherine’s daughter – just like Georgiana, she never says anything in direct speech, and we only know that she is of poor health and that Lady Catherine would like to see her married to Mr. Darcy. We do not know why her health is so poor or how exactly her relationship to her mother is – which is another gap that many fanfiction writers are trying to fill. Also Aidan invented a new story for her – clearly showing more compassion for her situation in life than Austen did. One day, Darcy coincidentally meets her in the library, where she is desperately looking for a collection of poems by Wordsworth. Darcy finds the book for her, but accidentally lets it slip, whereupon a number of loose pages which were inside the book are scattered on the floor. Although Anne does not want him to at first, Darcy reads these pages and thereby finds out that Anne has been writing poetry for a year. Anne has not shown her poems to anyone, not even to her companion, Mrs. Jenkinson, as her mother does not approve of poetry. Just like Austen, Aidan’s narrator does not tell us which disease exactly Anne is suffering from (maybe, Anne does not even know this herself, as, of course, medicine was not as far advanced in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as it is today), but we do get to know that Anne is sure that she “will never be healthy enough to marry anyone” (*TTR* 84), and that she will “never have children”. When she came to that conviction, she started writing, because, as she said:

I wanted finally to say something, create something [...] something beautiful, perhaps [...] without Mamá’s interference or her criticism. [...] I know people think little of me; and I do not blame them, for there is little to see or admire. But, I feel things, Cousin, deeply; and when I became convinced of my future, those feelings seemed to gather and burst through to paper. [...] And I am not yet finished, not finished feeling, not finished writing what I feel.

She asks Darcy to keep her writing a secret from Lady Catherine, to which he readily agrees. He has a bad conscience for having ignored her all the time and not having seen all the beauty inside her, and he apologizes for that. She is not angry with him, but instead expresses her admiration for how he had always managed to handle Lady Catherine and also contradict her when necessary – something she herself never found the courage for.

Thus, for Aidan, Anne's withdrawn behavior is just a façade to hide the strong emotions inside her, which she is afraid to show as her mother would definitely not approve of them.

#### 4.6.3 Georgiana Darcy

We do not get to know a lot about Georgiana Darcy in *P&P*, except that she is shy and that she has suffered greatly under the hands of Wickham, but also that, according to Caroline Bingley, she is a very accomplished woman who is fond of music.

Aidan's Georgiana is a far more developed character. After her terrible experience with Wickham, she suffered greatly, which Aidan describes in a beautiful metaphor:

The gentle glow that had heretofore characterized Georgiana had receded to gray ash in her heart – wrenching retreat from the world. (AASAT 9)

In the beginning of the trilogy, Darcy is still really worried about her, but her letter from October 18 gives him comfort. She writes that her new companion, Mrs. Annesley, encouraged her to visit the families of their tenants, and she also describes how much good the care of Mrs. Annesley has done to her:

Mrs. Annesley's gentle counsel and quiet self-possession have been a soothing balm and a worthy model. You have chosen well, dear brother, and I am mending under her care into a stronger vessel. (AASAT 10)

When Darcy writes to her that he does not get along with Elizabeth Bennet, she cannot believe that it is possible that anyone does not hold her brother in such high esteem as she does, and she also proves to have a high ability to judge characters as she writes:

*Perhaps she is one who holds to first impressions, and your acquaintance, in her estimation, did not begin well? That it was a lapse in social grace which occasioned this discord between you I cannot believe. I hope that this letter finds you reestablished in her good opinion, as I cannot bear that someone should so misjudge your character, so dear you are to me! (AASAT 144)*

For Darcy, it is unusual that she gives advice to him, as it has always been the other way round, and it is hard to accept for him that his little sister is growing up. His friend Brougham, who has taken a liking for her, points out this problem to him:

Miss Darcy is many admirable things. She is, indeed, a credit to your care and liberality; but, my friend, she is a girl no longer. Beware you treat her so, or underestimate her understanding, for there is a strength in her which you have yet to see. (TTR 145)

While she was shy and obedient only a year ago, now she actively expresses her desire to meet Elizabeth Bennet and protect her brother from anyone having a wrong opinion about him. Darcy notices “a gentle, newfound compassion suffusing her countenance as she spoke” (*D&D* ch. 3)

She loves music and books and is a proficient piano player, but she says that this is not enough for her to have a fulfilled life. She also wants to do something good to other people who have suffered like she has, by donating money to the ‘Society for Returning Women’ or visiting the tenants who are less privileged than herself. When Darcy wants to forbid her to donate so much money to the Society, and when he wants to keep her newfound religious enthusiasm secret as if he was ashamed of her, they quarrel for the first time. So far, Darcy has always felt that he needs to take care and be strong for Georgiana, but now that she is not a child anymore, she wants to change that relationship and be there for her brother as well.

After he has come back to London from Kent after Elizabeth refused his marriage proposal, she wants to talk to her brother about the upcoming exhibition of her portrait. She does not want her portrait to be revealed, because she thinks that she looks flawless on it, and she is afraid that she will never become the woman in that picture. Darcy knows these insecurities – he tells her that he felt the exact same way on the day his portrait was revealed, and that he felt like this portrait showed a ‘true gentleman’, which, again, makes him remember Elizabeth’s accusations. This is in contrast to Oscar Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, where the portrait of the protagonist mirrors his moral decline, while his outer appearance remains intact.

During this conversation, Georgiana senses that something is wrong with him and she wants to encourage him to tell her about it, but he cannot do that yet, thinking:

Was it possible that she could understand his pain? Yes, he might grant that what she had experienced at Wickham’s hands had been similarly devastating before working such unexpected changes in her and bringing the singular sort of maturity she now exhibited. But while he continued grateful for the solace she had found in religion, he could not, in the cold economy of Heaven that was his own experience, find anything, not even the compassionate solicitude in Georgiana’s eyes, to draw him in that direction. (*TTR* 157)

After this whole episode, Darcy feels the sudden need to get out and do some physical exercise, leaving Georgiana alone without having finished their discussion on the painting.

However, after his talk at the pub with Brougham, Darcy apologizes to Georgiana (also for having been too concerned about himself to recognize Wickham's sinister character), and she readily forgives him. He says that he was "unforgivably selfish" (*TTR* 221), to which she replies:

"Fitzwilliam! I know you are selfish! [...] You are usually the most kind and generous of brothers, but with others, and also at times with me, you *do* look to your own concerns first." (222)

In this moment, Darcy recognizes Georgiana's maturity, and he confesses to her the whole story about Elizabeth.

#### 4.6.4 Darcy and Bingley

In *P&P*, Mr. Bingley is described as

[g]ood-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. (10)

Austen's narrator never shows him in a negative light, although it is mentioned that he heavily relies on Darcy's advice, but the narrator also justifies his doing so:

In understanding, Darcy was the superior. Bingley was by no means deficient, but Darcy was clever. (15)

Aidan's Darcy, however, has a more critical view on Bingley:

[h]e still retained an unfortunate propensity to treat anyone merely introduced to him as an intimate friend. (2)

The narrator in *AASAT* mentions that some of the "more sophisticated young gentlemen in Town" started to make fun of Bingley because of his "exuberance of character". Darcy becomes witness to one of these jokes during a card game at his club, and so he decides to "seek out the unfortunate youth and warn him away from those he had thought his friends" (2). Furthermore, he has a "propensity for falling in and out of love faster than a hare has kits" (39), which is why in the beginning, Darcy is sure that his attraction to Jane would not last long. Bingley is indeed indecisive, saying:

When I am in the country, I never wish to leave it; and when I am in town it is pretty much the same. They have each their advantages, and I can be equally happy in either. (*P&P* 36)

He is very grateful to Darcy for his continuous advice and he trusts him completely and heavily relies on him, but he also feels indebted to him and is happy when Mr. Darcy asks him to tell Colonel Forster that Wickham's presence is not wished for at the Netherfield Ball, because he sees it as an occasion to finally return a favor to Darcy.

After Darcy and Caroline separated him from Jane, he realizes it was wrong of him to assume that Jane had any other feelings for him apart from friendship. He tells Darcy:

She will always be my ideal of womanhood...her beauty, her gentleness. I shall carry her always with me, but to further *my* desires would only cause her distress; and that I could not bear (*D&D* ch. 2)

However, Darcy notices that Bingley is suffering, and

[i]t pained him to see Charles, whose habitually sunny disposition had supported his own more reserved one on so many occasions, so dispirited. (*D&D* ch. 2)

Towards the end of the trilogy, Darcy realizes that Bingley does not need his advice as badly as he thought:

Did Charles truly have so little faith in his own judgment? Had Darcy's attempt to act his mentor convinced him instead that it was safer to put his life in the hands of others he held wiser than himself? (*TTR* 247)

He then tells his friend:

If you should find yourself somewhere you discover you would rather not be, you will know what to do. You have ever landed on your feet in any social occasion which I have observed you. (247)

They agree that from now on, their relationship will be one of equals, instead of one between student and master.

In the hypotext, we learn in a dialogue between Elizabeth and Darcy that he had confessed his mistake to Bingley:

I was obliged to confess one thing which for a time, and not unjustly, offended him. I could not allow myself to conceal that your sister had been in town three months last winter – that I had known it, and purposely kept it from him. He was angry. But his anger, I am persuaded, lasted no longer than he remained in any doubt of your sister's sentiments. He has heartily forgiven me now. (*P&P* 286)

In *TTR*, this is elaborated into a full scene, in which Darcy once again encourages Bingley to follow his heart:

You are right not to depend upon me, Charles. I have proved a poor friend. Leave me out of it. What is your *own* view of Miss Bennet? (*TTR* 399)

#### 4.6.5 Darcy and Wickham

As Aidan's hypertext retells *P&P* from Mr. Darcy's perspective, of course, we know from the beginning onwards that Wickham is a man not to be trusted. However, in the hypotext, the first impression we get of him is very positive:

His appearance was greatly in his favour; he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and very pleasing address. (*P&P* 59)

The Bennet sisters meet him for the first time in Meryton, where they are later joined by Bingley and Darcy. Elizabeth is the only one of the party who notices both Darcy's and Wickham's change of countenance when they see each other:

Both changed colour, one looked white, the other red. Mr. Wickham, after a few moments, touched his hat – a salutation which Mr. Darcy just deigned to return. What could be the meaning of it? – It was impossible to imagine; it was impossible not to long to know.

Although there are only four scenes that show Darcy and Wickham together in Aidan's trilogy, he functions as an important background character, as he is often mentioned. Darcy is still traumatized by Wickham's actions to Georgiana, and he blames himself for what had happened; for not having taken better care of her. The reason why he finds that Jane "smiles too much" (*P&P* 15, *AASAT* 17) is that Wickham also used to smile a lot, but those smiles did not "indicate a happy, even disposition", but were "a practiced pose, a charade of good nature designed to entrap" (*AASAT* 18). When the Bingley sisters mock Elizabeth for her disheveled appearance when arriving at Netherfield to visit Jane, and when Ms. Bingley points out to Darcy that he certainly would not be happy if Georgiana made "such an exhibition" (*AASAT* 82), Darcy feels

[a] slight tremor shaking him at the remembrance of the exhibition of his family that had so narrowly been averted. (82)

When he meets Wickham in Meryton, one of his first feelings is worry for his sister:

*"Georgiana! My God, has he done something to Georgiana and come to throw it in my face!"* (*AASAT* 138)

He asks Bingley to tell Colonel Forster that Wickham is not welcome at the planned Netherfield Ball. The worries about his sister are soon relieved, when he reads her letter telling him that she is fine.



Aidan wrote an extra scene where Darcy comes to visit Wickham in the shabby part of town where Lydia and he resided after they had eloped, trying to bring him to his senses (*TTR* 347-9). It is remarkable how calm Darcy remains during the talk with his worst enemy. When Wickham asks him about his interest in the whole situation, he answers as follows:

Interest? My interest is simply this: that you cease to be a menace to innocent young women. I kept silent concerning your seduction of Georgiana and in so doing have allowed you to prey upon others. If I had spoken, the girl upstairs – and possibly others – would have been kept safe from your careless use of them. But I did not speak, and your indifference to the consequences of your appetites has brought the respectability of an entire family of my personal acquaintance into disrepute. What my silence has effected, I will do all that is in my power to put right. (349)

Later in Aidan, it is described that Darcy

[h]ad not moved since sitting back against his chair nor, oddly enough, had he felt the anger or disgust that heretofore had arisen with little more than the thought of George Wickham. He had an objective, and would hone to it, but something had changed, and he was able to deal with Wickham calmly. (357)

As I have already mentioned, Darcy agrees to pay Wickham's debts, buy him a lieutenantancy and continue to support him and Lydia financially, as long as Wickham behaves like a gentleman – otherwise, he would be sent to debtor's prison. This action is the strongest prove for the change of Darcy's character: he agrees to bind himself forever to his previously worst enemy and his wife, whose behavior Darcy has always found reprehensible, and he even asks Mr. Gardiner to keep his actions secret, which is in stark contrast to his previous pride. And Aidan's Wickham does not even thank him properly; he only says:

You have thought of everything, Darcy. I congratulate you. [...] Try as I might, I can find no flaw to exploit or contingency to hold over you. Remarkable! [...] You have hemmed me in quite well, you and Lydia, but in truth, the prospect is not so bad. Much to be preferred to debtor's prison or a court-martial, certainly. [...] I believe I must accept your offer, Darcy. Here's my hand on it, one 'gentleman' to another. (368)

#### 4.6.6 Darcy and Fletcher

Fletcher is Darcy's valet, but his abilities far outreach those of a usual valet. He seems to feel what is good for Darcy and sometimes interferes in his master's life, for example, once, he makes sure that Elizabeth and Darcy wear matching colors to church.

He is an expert in Shakespeare and frequently quotes him, especially in the second and third part, which is why for these parts, Aidan chose to name all her chapters after a quote from Shakespeare's plays. In the third part, we learn that his interest in Shakespeare is due to the fact that his parents were both actors.

He has developed his own unique way of tying a neckcloth, the 'Roquet'. Darcy is so angry with him when he ties his neckcloth so well that even Beau Brummel calls it superior to his own that he even wants to fire him, but then he changes his mind:

The man had been with him since he finished University, and he could not imagine instructing a new one in all those preferences that Fletcher comprehended so well. Firmness seemed to be what was called for and, perhaps, an olive branch. (AASAT 236-7)

Fletcher rescues Elizabeth's maid, Annie Garlick, from an obtrusive footman. He and Anne Garlick fall in love and he wants to marry her, but he has to wait, because Anne says she would not marry before Elizabeth is herself happily married (*TTR* 137).

#### 4.7 Young Master Darcy

This 120-page novella written by Pamela Aidan was published in 2010. It describes an important part of Darcy's childhood, namely when, at the age of 13, he spends his last Christmas with his mother at Pemberley.

##### 4.7.1 Plot

It is Christmas 1797, and Fitzwilliam Darcy comes home from Eton school for the holidays. He first resides in Erewile House, the Darcys' London home. There, his father, George, tells him that his mother, Lady Anne, is very ill, and that there is no hope for a cure. When young Darcy goes to see his mother, she tells him that she is dying, but wishes that they go on as always; they should not burden other people with this dreadful fact, thus, she asks her son to keep it a secret.

One day, after he and his family arrived at Pemberley, Darcy takes a ride on his horse, Trojan. It is getting very cold and a strong wind starts raging, so that Darcy decides to seek shelter in a barn. There, he meets a group of mummers, that is, "local villagers who got up Christmas plays" (54) who are rehearsing. The group consists of four boys and a girl, Rosamund, and

Darcy notices that their swordfights look so unreal that he decides to teach them how to do it better. He has a swordfight with Jack, a boy from the group, which Darcy wins, and so he is accepted into the group. However, he does not reveal his high rank; instead he imitates his coachman's accent and claims that his name is Will.

Darcy continues to meet the mummers to rehearse with them, but then he learns that they are going to perform the play on Christmas Eve in the exact same church that he and his family would go to. However, Darcy is determined to find a way to sneak away from his family to be able to perform.

Later, Richard Fitzwilliam (Colonel Fitzwilliam in *P&P*) arrives at Pemberley with his family, that is, his older brother D'Arcy and his parents, Lord and Lady Matlock. Darcy tells Richard that he is in a mummers' play, and Richard is willing to help him devise a plan. On Christmas Eve, they manage to hide the costume and the violin under the seats in the Darcy carriage. Richard drives with the Darcys in the carriage, and then, during church service, he pretends to suffer from a stomach ache that necessitates Darcy to "assist him to the privy" (101). In the meantime, Darcy has developed an interest in Rosamund. When he meets her on Christmas Eve, there is a boy with her, Burle, who is interested in Rosamund too and who tells Darcy to stay away from her. After the play, Rosamund kisses Darcy, but then Burle hits him and they start a fight, which is suddenly interrupted when Darcy hears his father's voice telling him to stop. George Darcy only tells his son to go to his room, where the butler Reynolds will attend to his injuries, and then he would meet him at the stable the next morning, to discuss his future in the family. When Darcy arrives there, he explains to his father how he met the mummers and apologizes for his misconduct. Although he finally does forgive him, George Darcy also shows that he is very disappointed in his son and tells him about the responsibilities of being a Darcy. In the end, we learn that Rosamund cared more for Darcy than she did for Burle, as she wrote him a note, saying that

I know your name is not Will. How surprised we all were to find you a Darcy. No matter. I would kiss you all over again. (119)

However, young Darcy is determined to meet his father's expectations from now on, and thereby throws her note into the fire.

#### 4.7.2 Characters

##### 4.7.2.1 Fitzwilliam Darcy

Pamela Aidan does a very good job in showing how Mr. Darcy became the man we know from *P&P*. Although young Darcy is described as obedient and dutiful from the beginning onwards, he also shows a kind of rebellion against his father by secretly joining the mummers' play. However, we also learn that in school, he is shy and finds it difficult to make friends. His mother warns him that people might think him arrogant because of this behavior:

[y]ou are like your father in that you are very deliberate where so many are careless or do not see the point. It leads to misunderstandings that often are...troubling. (17)

There are two important lessons he has to learn. The first of these concerns young Wickham, who is of the same age as Darcy. Wickham wants Darcy to give him money, as a schoolmate claimed that Wickham stole his compass. Wickham affirms that he is innocent; however, he wants to buy him a new compass to avoid a scandal. When Darcy hesitates to help him, Wickham says that this possible scandal would also involve the Darcys, as everyone knows that he is in Eton because of their money, so Darcy finally gives in. However, he is reminded by his cousin Richard that Wickham's misbehavior will not stop and that he is way too generous to him.

The second, most important lesson Darcy learns is that being a Darcy entails certain responsibilities. It leaves a lasting impression on him when his father tells him that as a Darcy, he is not free to choose his own wife:

I do not want you to ever, ever neglect the duties and responsibilities attached to this family as you did last night. You are different than other young men. You are a Darcy. You cannot pursue pleasure at your whim. You cannot encourage every girl you fancy. (110)

Furthermore, his father points out that Darcy's behavior was not appropriate for a gentleman:

I trust that you have learned a lesson, Fitzwilliam; a lesson in what a gentleman owes to those below him in station and what he owes to his family's prestige and honour. (110)

Thus, Aidan explains to the readers why in *P&P*, Darcy is so affected by Elizabeth telling him:

You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner. (*P&P* 150)

In the end, we see Darcy sitting alone in his room, contemplating everything that has happened. He has received a note from Rosamund, and he fondly remembers kissing her, but then the memory of his father's words, "She is not for you" (119), violently intrudes his thoughts. He realizes that he will soon be master of Pemberley, and that with his mother's imminent death, his childhood will come to an end:

She had kissed him only a day ago, yet in some strange way, the events of the week seemed to have happened to someone else—a child who was fast becoming a distant memory. For his mother, his father, for Georgiana, for all of them, he was Master Darcy, heir of Pemberley and his family's future. Can one change so quickly? he wondered. (120)

In the end, the fact that Darcy throws Rosamund's note into the fire can be seen as a metaphor of his ending his childhood and adhering to duty from now on.

#### 4.7.2.2 Darcy's parents (George Darcy and Lady Anne Darcy)

Although George Darcy certainly loves his son, at the same time, he puts high demands on him, which is reflected in the title, *Young Master Darcy*, implying that Darcy will be the master of Pemberley one day. Now that his wife is about to die, he finds it necessary to convey a sense of duty and responsibility to his son, to ensure that the name of Darcy will continue standing in a good light.

A painful incident of Darcy's childhood is mentioned, where George Darcy wrongly accused his son of having mistreated his pony. In reality, young Wickham was the one who did it, and he had even left evidence against young Darcy. But George trusted Wickham so much that he did not suspect him.

However, Aidan also gives us a hint as to why George Darcy became the way he did. In the past, he was an officer in the 'Four-and-Go Club', a club where members first have to pass a test of driving skills to be accepted. The Prince Regent tried to join and failed. One person died during the test, and George blames himself for his death. He tells his son:

I wish you to know that your father is a fallible man, and, as it is in man's nature, it is inevitable that you shall be so as well. My hope in telling you this is that, in your own battles with failings and foolishness, you will not be as heedless as I or suffer such pangs for them. (34)

In other words, George believes, or at least hopes, that if his son always adheres to duty, no one will get hurt and he will make no mistakes that he will suffer from.

As I already mentioned, Lady Anne doesn't want her son to talk to anyone about the fact that she is dying. This is not because she wants to hurt him, but because, as she says "I want us all to live while I am yet alive" (19), thus, she wants to enjoy the few moments she has left, without anyone pitying her.

She talks to Darcy about how his ideal wife is supposed to be like:

She must come from a good family, Fitzwilliam, the best family. This you must do for the honour and dignity of Pemberley. [...] Secondly, she must be your social equal with manners that reflect well upon you in every situation—in Town or in the country. You must do this for your own sake. Your wife's manners—her speech, deportment, behaviour—cannot be an embarrassment to you, Fitzwilliam, or you will never respect her or know peace. (74)

Thus, it is no wonder that Darcy first objects to Elizabeth's manners. However, she also says:

[f]or your own happiness, choose a woman who is your equal in taste and feeling, a woman who respects and honours you and for whom you feel the same. (75)

So, while, just like her husband, she is concerned about what is appropriate for Pemberley, she is more affectionate in her manners towards her son and clearly wants Darcy to be happy. However, although unknowingly, she also puts very high demands on her son: on the one hand, his wife is supposed to come from "the best family", and on the other hand, he is also supposed to love her and she should share his interests. Darcy took this advice to heart –at the beginning of *P&P* and Aidan's trilogy, although many women from his rank had indeed been interested in him, he has not settled with any of them yet as there was no one among them whom he loved. Given his parents' natures, also the following one of Darcy's affirmations from *P&P* makes more sense:

[n]o one can be really esteemed accomplished who does not greatly surpass what is usually met with. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved. All this she must possess [...] and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading. (*P&P* 33)

Lady Anne's favorite place of Pemberley is the conservatory, where she created "an extraordinary retreat of beauty and fruitfulness" (71), so her husband called the place Eden. It was George Darcy's wedding gift to her. This is how Anne describes it:

It was only glass and dirt and a few rare flowers clinging to life at the beginning, but it was rich with possibilities. Not unlike our marriage. (72)

Thus the garden and the flowers there, which take time to grow, become a metaphor for the love between Anne and George, which apparently was not love at first sight. But later, Anne adds that she and George did indeed have a happy marriage: “We have been fortunate, happy beyond our hopes and far beyond the experience of many.” (73)

#### 4.7.2.3 Robert Fitzwilliam

He is very easygoing - he does not take school too seriously, and he helps young Darcy to make sure that his mother has a good time and that she can forget her illness over Christmas. He is also very perceptive, as he notices right away, without Darcy having to tell him, that there is something wrong with Lady Anne.

There are a lot of occasions where he makes Lady Anne laugh - mostly at the expense of his father, Lord Matlock. For example, right after they arrive, he and his brother D’Arcy throw a snowball at his father. And more importantly, on Christmas Eve, the boys put up a play, including costumes, to celebrate Misrule, which, as Aidan said herself on her blog, ‘Traipsing After Jane’, is based on old English traditions. Richard plays Lord Misrule, Darcy plays Black Peter, Father Christmas’s assistant, and D’Arcy plays Father Christmas. They recite verses, and Black Peter also does acrobatic movements, such as somersaults, and everyone of the spectators (that is, their parents) gets oranges, except for Lord Matlock, who gets coal. Misrule tells him to give an account of his plans for improvement, which makes everyone laugh. Matlock finally says that from now on, he would “refrain from wearing mismatched stockings” (93), which makes everyone else even laugh harder. Darcy happily thinks that:

This is how he would remember his mother: hands to her face as she looked about the room, her eyes twinkling and spilling over with mirth and good-will. He felt the crushing sadness of the past week lift just a little. This is what Lady Anne had wanted and Darcy was satisfied. (94)

#### 4.8 Style

Different to *P&P*, which is not set in a definite time period, Aidan chose to set her trilogy in the years 1811-1812, which allows her to refer to actual events that happened at that time, such as the Luddite movement (*D&D* ch. 11), or the assassination of the British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval by John Bellingham (Parkinson 2009).

When asked about the style of her novels in an interview with the blog owner of *My Jane Austen Book Club*, Aidan replied:

I knew that I could not imitate Austen successfully. Her style is too original, too unique. Yet, I knew that I would need to approach her style simply to avoid a disconnect between parts of Austen's work that would have to be used word-for-word and my own work. I settled for a quasi-imitation that recalled her syntax and sentence structure but was not slavishly attached to it. I also helped myself to the regency slang or cant that I picked up from a long acquaintance with Georgette Heyer's regency novels of the 1940s and 1950s. It seems to have been successful!

As I mentioned before, Austen is famous for her use of irony, which she already employs in the first sentence of *P&P*:

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife. (5)

This is ironic because the novel will show us later that it is actually the other way around. In the beginning, before Darcy happens to fall in love with Elizabeth, he is not actively searching for a wife, while the less wealthy Mrs. Bennet is desperately searching for husbands for her daughters. The narrator clarifies the irony of this statement in the next sentence:

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

So, these first few sentences already give us some information about Mrs. Bennet's character. Aidan's trilogy begins in the following way:

Fitzwilliam George Alexander Darcy rose from his seat in the Bingley carriage and reluctantly descended to earth before the assembly hall above the only inn to which the small market town of Meryton could lay claim. A window from the hall above opened, allowing the lively but poorly executed music of a country dance to invade the serenity of the night air. (AASAT 1)

These sentences are not ironic, but they already give us a lot of information about the main character. Firstly, we get to know Darcy's full name and can thereby assume that he is from a higher rank, since it is typical there for people to have multiple names. Furthermore, he clearly does not want to go to the assembly, indicated by the word "reluctantly", and he seems to be judgmental, complaining that Meryton possesses only one inn, and that the music was "poorly executed" and "invades the serenity of the night air". Thus, we learn about his prejudice right away, which will later be an important element of the novel.



These are the first sentences of *YMD*:

The carriage rocked gently now as the driver began to pick his way through the teeming traffic of London. Master Fitzwilliam George Alexander Darcy sat up from his slouched position, an attitude that would have called forth his father's rebuke at such thoughtless indulgence, and pressed his thirteen-year-old face to the cold window. (*YMD* 1)

Again, the fact that his full name is given gives us an idea of Darcy's high birth, and we get the information that his father seems to be quite strict. Thus, similarly to *AASAT*, the narrator introduces an important element of the story in the first sentences.

The title of Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, stands for the novel's main themes, while the titles of the trilogy mirror the state that Darcy is in during each part. The title *An Assembly Such as This* refers to Darcy's dislike of large assemblies. At the Meryton Ball, when Bingley tries to persuade Darcy to dance, he replies:

"At such an assembly as this" – Darcy's eyes swept the room disdainfully – "it would be insupportable." (5-6)

As I have already described, in the first part, Darcy is still proud and arrogant and he has a tendency to look down upon his fellow men. The second title, *Duty and Desire*, refers to Darcy's internal battle between adherence to duty and his desire for Elizabeth. With its alliteration and the mentioning of two of the novel's important themes, it has a similar style to the titles of Austen's novels *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*. The third title, *These Three Remain*, is a quote from the Bible, which can be found in the book before the narration starts:

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*  
-1 Corinthians 13:13

Although Darcy never becomes as religious as Georgiana, his actions towards the end of the novel (introducing the friendship between Miss Avery and Georgiana, arranging a marriage between Wickham and Lydia, etc.) clearly correspond to those of 'a man of Christian faith'. Darcy does all this despite the fact that he has little hope of winning Elizabeth's heart after she has refused his proposal – he only dares to hope again when she thanks him after having found out about his helping Lydia and Wickham get married. Darcy's main motivation for doing all this; the main trigger for his substantial change, was his love for Elizabeth – and this is why, as it is said in the quote, love is the greatest of the three.

*Duty & Desire* is the novel of the trilogy that received the worst reviews on ‘Goodreads’. Many readers criticized its Gothic elements, saying that it does not fit to the other two parts. Maybe this is also due to the fact that, as I already mentioned in chapter 3, in *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen implicitly warned her readers that reading too many Gothic novels might distort their perception of reality. Aidan’s *Duty & Desire* clearly contains elements of the Gothic – it takes place in an old castle, Sylvanie uses charms, believing that they give her supernatural powers, and it even features the attempted murder of Lord Sayre and an innocent baby. Pamela Aidan stated in the Q&A to *D&D* that she was indeed inspired by *Northanger Abbey* to venture into the genre of Gothic fiction, as in this novel “Austen had some fun with that very popular genre of her time”. Thus, she did not seem to take into account that Austen actually criticized that genre. *Northanger Abbey* is a satire of a gothic novel – all the atrocities that Catherine Morland believes General Tilney capable of turn out to be just products of her imagination. However, in *D&D*, the cruelty is not only imagined – Lady Sylvanie and her mother did indeed steal a local child and intended to murder Lord Sayre, so the novel is clearly more than satire. So, although Aidan did not capture Austen’s irony, and it is debatable whether Austen would have approved of the Gothic elements in *D&D*, Aidan definitely managed to stay true to the time period. Her syntax and vocabulary correspond to that of the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and she mentions many real events and personalities of that time. So, her works can be described as well-researched historical romance novels.

#### 4.8.1 The Importance of Letters

In *P&P*, there are twenty letters altogether, while in Aidan’s trilogy, there are thirteen (five in *AASAT*, five in *D&D* and three in *TTR*). Although *P&P* is told from Elizabeth’s perspective, only nine out of these twenty letters are either written by her (two) or directed to her (seven), however, she is present when most of the other letters are opened and read. In the trilogy, however, there is only one letter that is neither written by nor directed to Darcy, namely a short note from Georgiana to Hinchcliffe, Darcy’s secretary, asking him to donate money to the ‘Society for Returning Young Women to their Friends in the Country’. Hinchcliffe then shows Darcy the letter and asks him whether he should do as Georgiana requested. Darcy receives eleven letters in the trilogy, four of which are from Georgiana, three from Brougham, two from Caroline, one from Bingley and one from Fletcher. Darcy himself only writes one letter to Georgiana.

Similar to Austen, Aidan uses letters not so much to reveal the feelings of those writing them, but rather to drive the plot and to give hints on what is to follow. For example, in Georgiana's first letter to her brother (AASAT 10), she tells him that she started visiting the families of their tenants and that under Mrs. Annesley's care, she is "mending [...] into a stronger vessel"; all of which are allusions to Georgiana's newfound interest in religion, which will be the cause of conflict between her and her brother. Also, in Fletcher's only letter to Darcy, there is a clear hint that trouble is ahead:

I found that your brush and comb were not where they had been left. What this may portend, I cannot yet say, but I intend to find out! (*D&D* ch. 8)

Another instance where letters are used as a clear warning that something bad is about to happen is when Brougham tells Darcy that he found out that Lord Sayre is in severe debt, adding: "Step carefully, my friend, for something havey cavey is afoot at Norwycke!" (*D&D* ch 9).

However, it is also interesting to note that, in Darcy's letter to Georgiana, although he is not over-indulgent in his feelings, he does express perhaps more emotions than he ever does in *P&P*. He confesses to Georgiana that he has been "greatly concerned" for her, and that he was relieved to learn that she is feeling so much better now that she is under Mrs. Annesley's care. He then expresses his pain, regret and feeling of guilt that he could not have spared her the painful experience with Wickham, and finally, he remembers an instance from their childhood:

Do you remember – it is a vast number of years ago! – when you were very little and I had the totty-headed notion that leaping upon you unawares was great sport? After I had resisted all our estimable father's appeals to my sense of justice, you will recall that with great sorrow he made short work of me with his cane. But it was your tears at my well-deserved strokes that reduced my proud boy's heart to rubble. And so it has ever been, even to the present day. (AASAT 92)

Just like in Austen, the addressee's feelings upon receiving the letter are very important in Aidan. In the hypertext, Darcy is the only character whose reaction upon receiving letters is shown – with the exception of Hinchcliffe, who confronts Darcy directly after he received Georgiana's note, which shows that he is a very reliable secretary. Darcy's reactions to a letter considerably depend on whom it is from. When he receives Georgiana's letters, his reaction is always positive – after he read the first one, he is relieved and probably more optimistic regarding her fate than before, thinking "*She will be well.*" (AASAT 10). After the second one, he is relieved to learn that Wickham, despite having arrived in Meryton, has not troubled

Georgiana any further (*AASAT* 143). Also the third one, which he receives while he is staying at Lord Sayre's house, assuring him that all is well in London (*D&D* ch. 9) leaves him full of affection. Only the fourth one leaves him with negative emotions, as here, Georgiana tells him that she met Lady Sylvanie, which leaves him worrying what she might want with his sister (*TTR* 75). It is also interesting to note that Georgiana's letters are the only ones which Darcy carefully folds and keeps at a safe place, which clearly shows that he loves his sister more than anyone else. He is clearly not so careful with Caroline's letter, informing him that she has sent for Bingley to come to London, which he threw into the fire (*AASAT* 245). The same thing happens to Caroline's second letter, where she tells him that Jane Bennet had unexpectedly arrived in London (*D&D* ch. 5). This reaction shows that he already regrets his decision to separate Bingley from Jane, and to participate in Caroline's sinister intrigues. However, there are two more letters containing information that Darcy does not want to learn (Fletcher telling him that someone has been in his room to steal his brush and comb, as well as Brougham advising him to leave Norwycke Castle), which end up in the fire. These reactions all occur while Darcy is still in this conflict between duty and desire, between his reason and his feelings, which, as I mentioned earlier, is also prominent in 18<sup>th</sup> century literature. It is only in the third part, *TTR*, that Darcy becomes aware of his previous pride and learns to change and thereby also control his temper and resolve this conflict.

## Conclusion

The Austenmania manifested nowadays by Hollywood studios, television networks, and the publishers of sequels is motivated, we are often told, by their faith in her broad commercial appeal – their sense, that is, that, ever the well-mannered lady, Jane Austen is “safe.” Where Austen is concerned, not only do these institutions feel sure of getting a return on their monetary investment. There is a matching certainty that she and her works present few interpretive or political challenges, that the culture has already got her number. (Lynch 2000: 5)

One thing that definitely makes Jane Austen so appealing to modern audiences are her romance plots. Many people like the romance genre because it is soothing and offers a short respite from reality. Furthermore, often, fans read these novels or watch these movies with a sense of nostalgia; the 19<sup>th</sup>-century world, as depicted in these works, seems much simpler and nicer than the world they are living in.

However, Jane Austen was not the only author writing love stories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other famous romance novels from this period are, for example, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte, or *North and South* (1854) by Elizabeth Gaskell. Sometimes, these works and their movie adaptations are mentioned or even reviewed in Austen-related internet forums, so they definitely speak to Janeites, but it is rarely the other way round – that an Austen adaptation is reviewed in a blog whose main focus is on the Bronte sisters, or Gaskell. Also, none of the 19<sup>th</sup> century women writers has such a big fan base as Austen, whose devotees even have their own name, ‘Janeites’ – a term that implies a special closeness to the author, referring to her by her first name. So what makes Jane Austen different? According to Vickery (2012)

Many different Jane Austens have been celebrated since 1811 – sweet Aunt Jane in her rose-wreathed cottage, sardonic critic, master stylist, mother of the novel, feminist rebel and queen of romantic comedy. I think the key to her adaptability is her restraint. Austen leaves room for the reader’s intelligence and fantasies, which has the uncanny effect of allowing each new generation to see themselves reflected back from her pages. And in another 200 years, I am sure readers still will.

I think this statement sums up Austen’s appeal very well. It is exactly her calmness of writing, which Charlotte Bronte criticized, that invites so many readers to come up with their own interpretations of the novels and their favorite characters, and weave on the stories in their heads.

But still, that does not answer the question of why it is exactly *Pride and Prejudice* that is so much loved and thereby adapted so often. Maybe, one of the reasons why Jane Austen’s *Pride*

*and Prejudice* is still so popular among readers is that the character of Mr. Darcy is so unpredictable. He is introduced to us as a proud and disagreeable man, and this notion is even strengthened when we learn that he separated Bingley and Jane and that he (allegedly) denied Wickham the living. However, after his rejected marriage proposal, he is completely altered. He is friendly to the Gardiners, who he previously dismissed as low connections, who would

[v]ery materially lessen their (the Bennet sisters') chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world. (*P&P* 31)

And most importantly, he is willing to confront his worst enemy again and even help him financially to avoid a scandal. But during his next meetings with Elizabeth at Longbourn, he is again exceptionally quiet, which, as it later turns out, is only due to the fact that he wants to determine whether he really had been wrong about Jane's supposed indifference to Bingley. On the one hand, this unpredictability increases the novel's suspense – we do not know until the end whether Darcy and Elizabeth will finally come together. On the other hand, it is not surprising that this unpredictability left so many readers unsatisfied – they wanted to find a reason for it; they felt like they had to add the information about Darcy which they thought was missing in the novel. They retold his story, and then, they published their retellings either on fanfiction sites, or, as Aidan did, in book form.

Aidan's trilogy offers a credible interpretation of Darcy's mysterious change, but this is not the only gap that she fills. She gives minor characters, who do not get to speak and about whom we learn very little in the hypotext, such as Georgiana Darcy and Anne de Bourgh, a voice; and she invents a number of new characters, such as Darcy's university friends or his valet Fletcher, who make the story entertaining and exciting to read. In *Young Master Darcy*, Aidan tries to answer the question of how Darcy could develop his pride and prejudice, and thereby goes back to his childhood to explore his relationship with his parents, and again, she gives us a credible story. In the trilogy, Darcy learns to question the values and opinions he grew up to believe, just like Elizabeth does in *P&P*. Like everyone else in Meryton, Elizabeth was taught to rely heavily on first impressions and to make quick judgments about other people, while Darcy was taught to stay away from and even look down upon everyone who comes from a lower rank than his own. Both characters were taught to have an improperly excessive sense of pride, which they learn to overcome in the course of the novel. But, unlike Elizabeth, who is totally alone in her transformation and reflections – she independently comes to her self-realizations while reading Darcy's letter, and also does not talk to her parents about them – Darcy needs the guidance of his friend Brougham to become aware of

his previous pride and arrogance, but he later also talks about his new realizations with his sister.

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### Deutsche Zusammenfassung (German Abstract)

In den letzten paar Jahren ist, besonders in Großbritannien und den USA, ein regelrechter Kult um die englische Schriftstellerin Jane Austen (1775-1817) entstanden. Jeder ihrer sechs abgeschlossenen Romane ist mehrmals verfilmt worden, und es gibt unzählige Internetforen, in denen sich ihre Fans, die sich auch ‚Janeites‘ nennen, über ihr Idol austauschen. Viele von ihnen schreiben auch eigene Geschichten, sogenannte ‚Fanfiction Stories‘, die auf Jane Austens Romanen basieren. Manche dieser Geschichten setzen Austens Romane fort und spekulieren beispielsweise darüber, was nach der Hochzeit von Elizabeth Bennet und Mr. Darcy aus *Stolz und Vorurteil* passiert, andere erzählen die Romane aus der Perspektive einer bestimmten Figur nach, und wiederum andere setzen die Romane in die heutige Zeit. Diese Geschichten haben oft die Länge von Romanen und werden, da das öffentliche Interesse so groß ist, tatsächlich nicht nur im Internet, sondern oft auch in Buchform veröffentlicht.

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit beschäftigt sich mit diesem Phänomen und geht im ersten Teil vor allem der Frage nach, warum sich gerade in der heutigen Zeit so viele Menschen mit Jane Austens Werken beschäftigen. Viele Fans schätzen Jane Austen aufgrund ihrer Liebesgeschichten, und sie verspüren Nostalgie nach einem Leben im England des 19. Jahrhunderts, wo scheinbar alles einfacher war. Jane Austen war jedoch auch eine scharfe Kritikerin ihrer Zeit und viele ihrer Kommentare sind ironisch gemeint – was jedoch von einigen Fans übersehen wird.

Es ist ebenfalls interessant, dass mehr als die Hälfte aller ‚Austen Fanfiction Stories‘ auf *Stolz und Vorurteil* basieren. In dieser Arbeit wird argumentiert, dass das vor allem an der männlichen Hauptfigur, Mr. Darcy, liegt. Sein Charakter wird von Austen als mysteriös und unvorhersehbar präsentiert – den Lesern wird nicht genau verraten, wie er seine frühere Arroganz ablegen und sich in einen wahren Gentleman verwandeln konnte. Daher entwickelten einige Fans ihre eigenen Interpretationen für dieses Rätsel – eine davon ist Pamela Aidan, mit deren Werken sich der zweite Teil dieser Arbeit beschäftigt. Aidan veröffentlichte drei Romane – eine Trilogie, bestehend aus *An Assembly Such As This*, *Duty and Desire* und *These Three Remain* – sowie eine Novelle, *Young Master Darcy*. In der Trilogie wird *Stolz und Vorurteil* aus der Perspektive von Mr. Darcy nacherzählt, während sich die Novelle mit einer wichtigen Episode aus Mr. Darcys Kindheit befasst. Mr. Darcys Charakterentwicklung wird von Aidan glaubwürdig dargestellt und außerdem werden einige

Nebencharaktere aus *Stolz und Vorurteil*, wie zum Beispiel Georgiana Darcy und Anne de Bourgh, ausgebaut. Aidans Sprachstil ist dem von Austen ähnlich und sie verwendet viele typische Vokabel des 19. Jahrhunderts die heute nicht mehr in Verwendung sind. Ihre Romane sind jedoch weniger ironisch als Austens Original. Dafür sind sie historisch gut recherchiert und es werden einige reale Persönlichkeiten und Ereignisse des 19. Jahrhunderts erwähnt – daher kann ihr Werk zum Genre des Historischen Liebesromans gezählt werden.