

MOBILITY IN AUSTEN:

“DISTANCE IS NOTHING WHEN ONE HAS A MOTIVE”



Jacqueline van der Plas

BA Thesis English Language and Culture

Studentnr: 8532389

April 2014

First Reader: P.J.C.M. Franssen

Second Reader: B. Bagchi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
CHAPTER 1: ADAPTATIONS.....	6
1.1: Introduction	6
1.2: General Theory on Adaptations.....	8
1.3: Adaptations and Motivation	9
1.4: Waiting Women in Austen	11
CHAPTER 2: ELIZABETH IN <i>PRIDE AND PREJUDICE</i> BY JANE AUSTEN	14
2.1: Introduction	14
2.2: Waiting and Compliance to Society	15
2.3: Walks and Journeys	18
2.4: Elizabeth’s Character.....	20
2.5: Sisters	24
CHAPTER 3: ELIZABETH AND AMANDA IN <i>LOST IN AUSTEN</i>	26
3.1: <i>Lost in Austen</i> : an Adaptation	26
3.2: <i>Lost in Austen</i> : the Story and Amanda Price	27
3.3: <i>Lost in Austen</i> and Elizabeth Bennet	32
3.4: Elizabeth and Amanda and the Time-Swap	34
CONCLUSION	37
WORKS CITED.....	39

INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) is the "original work of art" the TV-series *Lost in Austen* (2008) has adapted. The time span between the novel and this adaptation is almost as long as the time travel adventure Elizabeth Bennet undertakes in *Lost in Austen*. Yet, time does not count when Austen's popularity is concerned. She still appeals to modern audiences. Claire Harman says: "[Austen's] six completed novels are among the best-known, best-loved, most-read works in the English language" (1). Furthermore, Austen's appeal to modern audiences can be attributed to the many adaptations of her work. As Juliette Wells points out in *Everybody's Jane*, "Austen's popularity began to surge in 1995, thanks to the release of several screen adaptations of her novels" (2). However, time does count, when looking at the developments in adaptation theory. How true to the original is an adaptation? Gradually, this discourse on fidelity has lost its prominence. So, other questions need to be asked and new criteria have been proposed in order to arrive at a useful review of adaptations in general and those of Jane Austen in particular (see chapter 1).

Wells, in an article on Austen and a popular audience reading her, notes that "sometimes Austen's 'fans' engage in escapist reading" ("New Approaches", 78). This is precisely what the main character of *Lost in Austen*, Amanda Price, is doing at the start of the TV-series. She tries to forget modern life and its complications by reading and re-reading Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. A time swap between this 21st - century modern woman, and the 18th - century Elizabeth Bennet causes chaos in Austen's plot, and actually introduces a new main character into it, as Elizabeth is an absent figure in most of the scenes, replaced by Amanda. Christina Neckles comments on the amount of space an adaptation gives to the various characters. In fact, she argues that due to the "compressed running times of the feature-length films" it is a practical necessity to limit, for instance, Elizabeth's character

space (“Spatial Anxiety”). However, in *Lost in Austen* running time may not be the reason that Elizabeth is hardly on screen. Maybe the amount of time given to Elizabeth and Amanda has been a deliberate choice, so much so that actually less seems to be more: although Amanda features in most episodes, and struggles in both the 21st - and 18th - century story line, Elizabeth’s part, I will argue, has its very own impact.

As I will show in this paper, current adaptation theory seems to have shifted its focus from the fidelity discourse to an approach that concerns a topical interest. A topic that Nina Auerbach (see chapter 1) highlights concerns the issue of the waiting women in Austen. However, in *Lost in Austen*, it is not Elizabeth but modern-day Amanda who, being lost in Austen, waits for things to happen, engaging in escapist reading. Interestingly, Elizabeth in *Lost in Austen* is shown as the more pro-active woman. This might be a prominent vantage point in viewing this adaptation. Notwithstanding all the chaos and the introduction of Amanda as a meta-fictional character, Austen may not necessarily be lost in this adaptation, due to its portrayal of Elizabeth.

Assuming that an adaptation may drift very far from the original work of art, the questions that remain of interest are: In what way, if any, is the adaptation still motivated by the intention to highlight a specific element from the original work it is based on? And what is the effect? I will try to show that it is plausible to say that *Lost in Austen* highlights characteristic traits also visible in Austen’s Elizabeth. Moreover, the topic of interest can be said to be Elizabeth’s attitude to the notion of ‘waiting women’. In this way, *Lost in Austen* could be an example of an adaptation that attempts to combine enlightenment and commercial entertainment of a modern audience by highlighting a specific topical interest from the ‘original work of art’ in an otherwise ‘freely adapted’ modern production.

This paper will first examine several critics and authors commenting on adaptation theory in general and adaptations of Austen in particular. Apart from this, chapter 1 will elaborate on the topical interest of ‘Austen’s waiting women’ by specifically examining Nina Auerbach’s point of view on this. Chapter 2 will focus on the character of Elizabeth Bennet in Jane Austen’s novel. Having established Elizabeth’s character, with a special reference to her attitude towards ‘waiting and mobility’, chapter 3 will analyse the adaptation *Lost in Austen* accordingly. I shall argue that *Lost in Austen* reflects on this topic of ‘waiting and mobility’, and that this adaptation is partly motivated by the attempt to highlight a quintessential element of Elizabeth Bennet’s character, as she figures in the novel of Jane Austen.

CHAPTER 1: ADAPTATIONS

1.1: Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single work of art or culture, however one looks at it, must be, in some way, seen as an adaptation. With only a small reference to the opening sentence of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, many readers might immediately see a link to that much quoted first sentence. Le Faye declares that Austen's opening sentence has become "a catchphrase in everyday life" (179). In agreement with Le Faye, it can be stated that it needs no elaboration.

Probably, there would be general consent that a mere reference like this could not categorise as an adaptation. For instance, Linda Hutcheon mentions that, nowadays, the common conclusion seems to be that almost anything can be seen as an adaptation, though probably only "short intertextual allusions to other works or bits of sampled music would not be included" (170). She also suggests that fidelity to the original has ceased to be the most important point of reference. Since the need for criteria to view or examine adaptations has not diminished, many critics still discuss criteria to talk about adaptations.

In 1975, Andrew Wright, in *Jane Austen Adapted*, already discussed the need to adapt for instance the novels of Jane Austen from the vantage point of a specific goal: to achieve a wider knowledge of Austen. In principle, he admits that all adaptations, however badly done, even when they "have been tampered with", serve that purpose (421). Still, Wright, in mentioning translations, musicals, sequels and other "miscellanea", tends to adhere to the opinion that 'being true to the original' is basically a good thing. In his opinion, some adaptations have been "deservedly buried in oblivion" or "depart even more decidedly from the original" (422). Moreover, he confines his essay to 'representative' adaptations of *Pride*

and Prejudice. Of course, when Wright wrote this, the idea that ‘everything is an adaptation’ did not yet exist.

More recently, Anna Despotopoulou, in a discussion of film adaptations in general (but also of Austen’s novels), says that the issue when talking about the fidelity discourse concerns “the controversy about purist/non-purist film adaptations of literary texts....” (118). Since Despotopoulou does agree that ‘no-fidelity’ to a source text has been accepted, she seems to need another classification, juxtaposing adjectives like “most thoughtful” and “lightest of all” to rate film adaptations (116). She elaborates on this notion of lightness by a viewing of the film *Clueless* (1995), which she describes as “frivolous” and “a loose adaptation of *Emma*” (116). Moreover, in discussing film adaptations of 19th - century novels in general, she equates the notion of “most thoughtful” adaptations with a focus on “issues with topical interest” (116). Apparently, to her, a topical interest has replaced fidelity to the source text as the main criterion of quality.

In *Jane Austen on Screen*, Ellen Benton mentions several film theorists that have “sought to establish a taxonomy by which to categorize and evaluate the success of film adaptations” (176). Benton names Wagner, Klein, and Andrew, who, she asserts, all identify “three possible relationships between a film and the novel on which it is based” (176). Still, these triads, for instance “transposition”/“commentary”/ “analogy” (Wagner), and “transforming”/“intersecting”/ “borrowing”(Andrew), she goes on, offer “somewhat subjective” categories (176). Thus, Benton finally concludes that the questions to be asked in this respect should focus on what an adaptation tells about the novel and “the culture that produced it” (177). So, she prefers historical fidelity, not to a text as such, but to its culture over the focus on a topical interest as a criterion to view an adaptation. As I will point out later Nina Auerbach’s notion of waiting women in Austen is a topical interest that evokes the notion of historical fidelity, whereas *Lost in Austen* highlights a modern topical interest that

can not exactly be placed in Austen's culture, but does already figure in Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*.

1.2: General Theory on Adaptations

Although this paper's focus is on a novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen and an adaptation of that novel, *Lost in Austen*, naturally general theory on adaptations encompasses more than Austen's novels. In this respect, Juliette Wells, in an essay in which she compares popular-culture evocations of both Shakespeare and Austen, says that "the popular Shakespeare has much to offer those who examine the popular Austen" ("Austen pop" 447). Indeed, a major general theory on adaptations is based on Shakespeare.

In *Adaptations of Shakespeare*, Fishlin and Fortier discuss the evolving way of thinking about adaptations. Basically, they focus on theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare to illustrate that "the idea of originality... posits an independence where none exists" (4). Furthermore, they assert that critical theory has played a role in the way adaptation studies have developed. For instance, they note that the "sanctity of a text or the cultural taboo.....to alter them" no longer prevails. In this way, "exploration of culture and its transmission" can be seen in adaptations (1).

According to Hutcheon, in *The Art of Adaptations*, new electronic technologies "have made 'fidelity to the imagination' possible in new ways", although she dismisses the fidelity discourse as the right way to look at adaptation theory (110). More important, in this sense, is Hutcheon's view on adaptation theory. Hutcheon distinguishes three view points to look theoretically at adaptations. First, she looks at an adaptation as a "formal entity or product" in which "transposition" can result in "a shift of medium" or even in a shift of

“ontology” (8). Second, Hutcheon sees adaptations as a “process of creation”. In discussing this “process of creation” she positions the label appropriation, in the sense in which it has also been mentioned by Fishlin and Fortier. Third, Hutcheon looks at adaptations from the perspective of a “process of reception” (8). As intertextuality differs for each audience, the reception of each adaptation has a broader or narrower range. Apparently, Hutcheon only engages in the ‘fidelity criticism’ discourse, as a result of an interest in the differences of and the motivations behind adaptations, since she asserts that “fidelity to the prior work is a theoretical ideal, even if a practical impossibility” (171).

So, fidelity to the source text is not ‘a sine qua non’ for a work of art to be labelled as an adaptation. However, it must be noted that critics still value the importance of the source text. For instance, in a book published in 2010, Sadoff states that “film adaptations of classic literary texts cannot be interpreted apart from their source narratives” (xiii). She argues that, however far from the original a film adaptation may seem to float, the interpretation of the adaptation needs an understanding of the “historical, industrial, and cultural moment” of the adaptation’s source text (xiii).

1.3: Adaptations and Motivation

Still, nowadays, critics are more and more inclined to highlight the issue of “motivation”, in their viewing of adaptations. For instance, when pointing out various reasons to make a screen adaptation of classical novels, Sinyard, in his recent book on filming literature, states that “many adaptations of remarkable novels have led to illumination...” However, he adds, “one should not discount the commercial reason”, and he names Robert Z. Leonard’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1940) as one of the “sincere and thoughtful attempts to make classic literature more accessible to a large audience” (ix). Thus, Sinyard considers

adaptations that remake Austen's passages into film scenes closely representing those passages, either set in modern times or in the novel's time, especially worthwhile.

Wiltshire, in *Recreating Jane Austen*, implicitly takes "motivation" as a vantage point, when he discusses Langton's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (BBC Film, 1995). He quotes the producer of this film saying that the driving motives of the plot – apart from the possible mention of love, marriage, and class- are "about sex , and about money"(99). At the same time, Wiltshire himself argues that the novel (*P&P*) must be read in terms of epistemology and love, in order "to give both 'recognition' and 'love' enhanced, richer meanings" (100). Accordingly, he compliments the film producer for his representation of Darcy writing his explanatory letter to Elisabeth (*P&P*, 191-97), since "the film's visual representation of him, dishevelled, shirt collar loosened,..., is appropriate,..."(113). So, on the one hand he asserts that an adaptation chooses from Austen's (putative) motives, and on the other hand he reads/reviews the adaptation for its 'proper' representation of one of those motives.

So, although fidelity may not be a must anymore, critics and audiences are still allowed to or inclined to make comparisons, in the sense that they proceed from the assumption that the interest in what has been changed or why this has been done has not diminished. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, it can be argued that underlying motives for making changes may well be connected with issues of "topical interest". At the same time, precisely because of these developments, current terms to read/view an adaptation may have become insufficient. In other words, given the reality of an unimaginable variation in adaptations, it may be more useful to examine whether a specific adaptation still does or does not result in a better insight into an aspect of the original. And, if the answer to this question is confirmative, it will be interesting to establish how the adaptation results in this.

1.4: Waiting Women in Austen

An example of a “topical interest” is the notion of “the waiting women” in Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Interestingly, Nina Auerbach can be said to examine this as a topical interest from a feminist point of view, since she is not seeing mobility in the society Austen writes about. Of course, the notion of women waiting for men, probably also due to the fact of a country at war, represents a topical interest that can be attributed to Austen’s day and age. However, in my opinion, an adaptation like *Lost in Austen* uses a topical interest like mobility to highlight a notion already existing in Austen, but less commonly accepted as something belonging to that the 18th or 19th century. In other words, Auerbach takes a topical interest from Austen’s culture, whereas *Lost in Austen* highlights a topical interest from modern culture, that can be seen in Austen’s work. Auerbach - in her book *Communities of Women*- dedicates a full chapter to the topic of communities of waiting women in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. She starts with the assumption that *Pride and Prejudice* is “the English novel’s paradigmatic courtship romance”, through which readers can “believe in marriage as an emblem of adulthood achieved” (35). Moreover, Auerbach seems to say, marriage is not only the result aimed at, but also the substitute for an education for girls, who consequently cannot do anything else than passively wait for the right suitor to arrive. Until that happens, only the mother teaches the girls, and this “matriarchy, then, is a school for wives, and ...is the only school allowed” (37). True, *Pride and Prejudice* at first sight portrays the Bennet girls as doing not much more than waiting for men to relieve them of their ‘passively waiting’ predicament.

According to Auerbach, the fact that Lady Catherine de Bourgh is “horrified that the Bennet girls have had no governess, only undirected access to their father’s books” supports the view that waiting around is the only occupation described in *Pride and Prejudice* (37).

Indeed, in *Pride and Prejudice* Lady Catherine does state that “without a governess you must have been neglected” (*P&P*, 161). However, Elizabeth’s answer can also be read as an indication to the contrary. As Elizabeth puts it “such of us who wished to learn, never wanted the means” (*P&P*, 161). Explaining that the library of their father was there for those of the girls who wanted to read, Elizabeth actually might be pointing out that the Bennet girls did not passively listen to a governess, but could actively take the initiative to read and learn whatever and whenever they wanted to. In fact, it could be argued that this is exactly what she herself has been doing, consequently resulting in an attitude that may seem to be impertinent to Lady Catherine, but in reality may be enriched with enough education to be able to intelligently respond to any questions or opinions. However, to Auerbach, a reading of passively waiting women prevails as “Elizabeth Bennet has passed her life in a world of waiting women” (38).

The fact that in one of the passages women waiting in the library for men to come, are not only waiting for those men, but also refrain from any real conversation amongst themselves, only adds to Auerbach’s conviction. She finds proof in *Pride and Prejudice* in a passage in which the women do not talk but only watch each other: “Elizabeth soon saw she herself was closely watched by Miss Bingley, and that she could not speak a word, especially to Miss Darcy, without calling her attention...” (38). Auerbach’s conclusion is that “the unexpressed intensity of this collective waiting for the door to open and a Pygmalion to bring life into limbo defines the female world of *Pride and Prejudice*” (39). Furthermore, Auerbach states that *Pride and Prejudice* deals with “the vacuum that is the lives of ‘superfluous’ women” (49). Moreover, she asserts that the women in Austen’s novel cannot do more than wait for a man for this vacuum to end, since a marriage is the only respectable way to leave their family. Thus, the waiting for a man begins. Furthermore, it could be remarked that the assumption that a family needs to be left, indirectly points to a notion of mobility as well.

However, according to Auerbach, women cannot do so independently, but need a man to liberate them from their family. In this respect, the choices Elizabeth in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* makes offer interesting perspectives.

CHAPTER 2: ELIZABETH IN *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* BY JANE AUSTEN

2.1: Introduction

As mentioned above, Auerbach is a proponent of the view that in *Pride and Prejudice* women are merely waiting for things to happen. To support this, for instance, she quotes the passage in Austen's novel in which Elizabeth Bennet waits for the men to relieve her of the dull company of women in the drawing room (*P&P*, 322). Auerbach argues that only then things happen as "The story, the glow, will begin with the opening of the door" ("Austen and Alcott on Matriarchy", 7). Not only Auerbach emphasises that women in Austen were mainly waiting, and therefore literally confined to a relatively restricted place, condemned to passivity. Pidduck, too, agrees with this notion and mentions windows and doors in Austen's novels (and adaptations) as tools to enhance images of "... feminine stillness, constraint, and longing..." (116).

Still, Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, although at first sight a perfect example of this as well, can also be seen as a character that shows initiative in order to rebel against compliance with societal rules that seem to force women to passively wait. Moreover, in various passages, she is described by Austen as a person who deliberately and certainly not thoughtlessly, acts on her own account. It is debatable why, in one of her letters, Austen professes to admire Elizabeth: "I must confess that *I* think her as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print...."(*Jane Austen's Letters*, 201). Still, it could be argued that my focus on Elizabeth's character is not randomly chosen since Austen's own preference for 'this delightful creature', may well, at least partly, refer to Elizabeth's independent and proactive character as well.

Interestingly, Elizabeth, although just as restricted by the rules of her society as any of the other female characters, seems to be described by Austen in a unique way compared to the other women in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth is the only character who is able to rebel against the rules without being punished for it. On the one hand, she is pictured as a woman who defies the expected acquiescence by showing initiative and grabbing every opportunity for mobility by undertaking short walks and longer journeys, both in the approved way (for instance accompanied by her aunt and uncle) and in a less approved way, entirely on her own. On the other hand, at the end of the novel, she is also the only woman who is depicted as being really happy. Apparently, the quintessence of her character that collides with the ‘prescribed’ waiting attitude, is positively highlighted by Austen. For instance, in various instances, Elizabeth intelligently seems to consider her options, and is shown as a woman who chooses mobility and initiative over waiting and passivity. It can be argued that the very passages in *Pride and Prejudice* that most critics refer to in order to substantiate their focus on ‘the waiting women in Austen’, also show that Elizabeth, despite of or because of her annoyance with all this waiting, steadfastly chooses to do things her own way, even up to the point that she says no to a ‘suitable’ husband.

2.2: Waiting and Compliance to Society

Consider, for instance, the drawing room scene Auerbach refers to. Even though Elizabeth’s level of irritation is as high as it can be, so much so that it “almost made her uncivil”, and she is indeed apparently waiting for Darcy (“if he does not come to me..”), she nevertheless, and while ‘waiting’ almost abhors her, decides that she “shall give him up forever” if he does not approach her (*P&P*, 322). So, first of all, she is horribly irritated by the waiting, and not resignedly undergoing it with acquiescence. Secondly, after having

refused both Darcy and Collins, for lack of love earlier in the story, she still has enough stamina -even now, when she starts to like Darcy- to take matters into her own hands.

Although she cannot be too forward and has to wait for Darcy to approach her, she does what she can; no one can force her to say yes. Surely, the rules of society cannot be entirely bent by her, but they can not entirely rule her life either.

On the other hand, several women in *Pride and Prejudice*, though they try to or pretend to take great pride in complying with assumed expectations, are neither described positively nor as really benefitting from their efforts to adhere to these societal prescriptions. Apart from the fact that they all in their own way defy restrictions, and do not all wait in the way Auerbach asserts, as a reader one does not get the impression that these women are just as happily rewarded by Austen for their defiance as is Elizabeth. Take for instance Lady Catherine. Although she appears to be the representation of what 'Society' stands for, the reader ironically mostly learns about her from Mr. Collins, the very person who is, according to Mr. Bennet, "as absurd as he had hoped" (*P&P*, 67). Finally, when she does speak herself, her haughty appeal, based on what 'should be done', to arrange a marriage between her daughter and Mr. Darcy miserably fails (*P&P*, 335). Clearly, Elizabeth is not impressed by her assertions about what should be done (*P&P*, 338), and marries Darcy herself. Moreover, Elizabeth is depicted in these passages as the winning person. Her impertinence seems to pay off. However, Lady Catherine's long journey, undertaken on her own, followed by a rude start of a conversation with Elizabeth, does not have the outcome she had clearly hoped for. To the contrary, Elizabeth says with disdain: "I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far" (*P&P*, 334), and ends the conversation with: "*You* may ask questions, which *I* shall not choose to answer" (*P&P*, 335). So, mobility on Lady Catherine's part is not as successful as it is on Elizabeth's.

Likewise, but in a different way, Bingley's sister Caroline tries to use the imposed 'rules of society' to her own avail, but she does not seem to make any real progress. Whether she waits or not, she is depicted as unsuccessful. On the one hand, when she does wait and simply observes Darcy, while pretending to read a book, "Miss Bingley's attention was quite as much engaged in watching Mr. Darcy", but "she could not win him, however, to any conversation" (*P&P*, 54). On the other hand, when she refrains from waiting, choosing the attack, trying to belittle Elizabeth by stressing her lack of adjustment, pretending to be better adjusted to society herself, she rather accomplishes the opposite. Endeavouring to stress Elizabeth's lessened (as she hopes) appeal for having walked to Netherfield arriving dirty and muddy, saying to Darcy "I am afraid,....that this adventure has rather affected your admiration of her fine eyes", she only finds herself rebuked by Darcy's answer: "not at all,....they were brightened by the experience" (*P&P*, 36). So, since Miss Bingley does not realise that Elizabeth's initiative - of which physical movement is the symbol - makes her more admirable in Darcy's eyes, her attempt to belittle Elizabeth only results in a conversation in which she is treated almost disparagingly by Darcy herself. Moreover, when Miss Bingley herself is associated with a walk and thus mobility, she gains nothing, though she does so in a way society approves of, in taking "a turn about the room" (*P&P*, 55). Surely, she does so to alert Darcy to her moving figure as she knows that "her figure was elegant, and she walked well" (*P&P*, 55). Interestingly, in this passage she is juxtaposed with Elizabeth whom she has invited to walk with her, and, although she does succeed in getting Darcy to put down his book, she fails to realise that Darcy only looks up when Elizabeth walks as well. Most importantly, in the conversation that follows, Miss Bingley's attempt to flirt a bit - "Oh! Shocking!.... How shall we punish him for such a speech?" (*P&P*, 55) - , is clearly less successful than Elizabeth's, since Darcy is slowly captivated by the latter as, at the end of the conversation, "he began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention" (*P&P*, 57).

2.3: Walks and Journeys

As Page states in *The Language of Jane Austen*, “it is only through an unremitting alertness to [Austen’s] language in action that her meaning can be fully understood” (2). Throughout the novel, Elizabeth’s impatience with waiting coordinates with a description of a walk or journey she not only often instigates herself, but that also, in most instances, results in a positive outcome. For instance, Elizabeth almost runs to Netherfield, when Jane is sick and has to stay there. She walks there “alone, crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity....” (*P&P*, 33). Whereas Bingley’s sister and Mrs. Hurst seem to stress the dirty rims of her skirt -“Elizabeth was convinced they held her in contempt”- Austen gives the impression that Darcy’s reaction is favourable towards her, as he sees her “face glowing with the warmth of exercise” ,and admires “ the brilliance which exercise had given her complexion” (*P&P*, 33). Clearly, Elizabeth thrives on these walks. As Greenfield also notes, she “happily glows despite Jane’s illness” (342). Since she seems to be the only one who adores these kinds of walks, it sets Elizabeth apart from the other female characters. At least, while Darcy likes her for it, those women who try to conform to society disapprove. Of importance here is the opinion of the genteel women in *Pride and Prejudice*, who are (or pretend to be) abhorred by her walks. Miss Bingley exclaims “To walk three miles, or four miles.....and alone, quite alone!.....an abominable sort of conceited independence..” (*P&P*, 36).

Similarly to Auerbach, Beth Lau argues that Austen’s heroines experience “a sense of home as claustrophobic, stifling confinement and a longing for travel and expanded horizons” (96). She uses Elizabeth’s elation at being able to journey to the Lake District to support this view (*P&P*, 229). Although the sense of longing suggests waiting again, Elizabeth’s travels are favourably described. It is noteworthy that Austen allows Elizabeth to see a journey “as

the object of her happiest thoughts”, and a “pursuit of novelty and amusement” (*P&P*, 229,231). More importantly, Elizabeth longs to go. Although she has not taken the initiative for this journey, it may be significant that the invitation is sent to her instead of to one of her sisters. Maybe a reader might infer that this could suggest that her aunt and uncle understand that she is impatient with just staying at home. Anyway, Elizabeth is on her way again. Moreover, this journey particularly evokes the notion of endless possibilities and freedom. It is supposed to be “a tour of pleasure” that can lead them anywhere, for Mrs. Gardiner says “we have not quite determined how far it shall carry us, but perhaps to the Lakes” (*P&P*, 152). Additionally, the journey has a positive outcome. In a sense, only when Elizabeth herself has travelled a significant distance, is she able to see Darcy in a more favourable light. As she walks across Pemberley’s grounds, it is she who turns back to look again at the house, and sees Darcy approaching. At this significantly romantic encounter, where “their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush” it is Darcy who is described as “immoveable” (*P&P*, 241).

Also, when the reader is not seeing things through Elizabeth’s eyes, but Elizabeth herself is the object or subject of a sentence, Austen often refers to her walking. For instance, when visiting Charlotte, “she - Elizabeth - was in her room getting ready for a walk” (*P&P*, 155). Also, she puts a gossiping Miss Bingley in an awkward position, while walking into her, and Miss Bingley only says “I did not know you intended to walk” (*P&P*, 51). With more irony, Mrs. Hurst declares “She has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker...” (*P&P*, 36). As mentioned earlier, her walk on Pemberley’s grounds bears significance (*P&P*, 240). Moreover, she uses more than words to end her conversation with Wickham, for “she had walked fast to get rid of him” (*P&P*, 311). Furthermore, when she feels the need to refrain from questioning Lydia, she “was forced to put it out of her power, by running away” (*P&P*, 302). Just as noticeably, she quickly decides to walk to Netherfield to

accompany Jane, when the carriage is not available. Although we do not know if she actually prefers the walk over the carriage, this may be inferred from her own statement “I do not wish to avoid the walk” (*P&P*, 32). Austen mentions “her love of solitary walks” (*P&P*, 178). Indeed, Elizabeth seems to feel the need to take a walk when she wants to make up her mind. For instance, after having read Mr. Darcy’s letter, in which he explains his relation to Wickham, she clearly needs to think things over. So we read “after wandering along the lane for two hours, giving way to every variety of thought; reconsidering events... made her at length return home” (*P&P*, 203). It is most noticeable, however, that Elizabeth herself professes that “the distance is nothing when one has a motive” (*P&P*, 32).

2.4: Elizabeth’s Character

Clearly, Elizabeth’s character is an important factor when considering the many passages that are infused with her refusal to accept the idea that the only alternative option in life is to wait. Indeed, mobility does not *just* suggest actual movement or travelling. Much of the momentum, when defined as pace or a turning-point in a plot, in *Pride and Prejudice* is generated by Elizabeth’s efforts to defy a waiting -in the sense of an acquiescent- attitude.

In a way, the scenes at the neighbourhood ball, or an ensuing evening at Netherfield where Elizabeth stays to keep Jane company when she has fallen ill, engage closely with the depiction of the waiting women in the library, mentioned earlier. So, contemplating Elizabeth at this ball, Kaplan establishes that since men ask women to dance “... Elizabeth has no option but to wait...”, whereas Darcy “relishes his power by freely walking around” (187). Furthermore, Kaplan concludes that inequalities induce Elizabeth to talk: “her recourse is ...to talk” (187). However, more important, I would argue, is Elizabeth’s tendency to take the initiative. She may be depicted as a woman who takes walks or talks back, but the psychology

behind this can be traced back to her inclination to choose initiative over passive acquiescence.

Initially, at the Meryton neighbourhood ball, Austen at first sight shows Elizabeth to be no different than any of the other women, in writing that “Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances” (*P&P* 13). However, Elizabeth stands out by her reaction to Darcy calling her “tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt *me*”, by turning this snub into a gaily told story afterwards (*P&P*, 14). Later, at one of the first evenings at Netherfield, she pays him back by refusing to dance a reel with him. She does so to affront him, but “Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her” (*P&P* 51). Another evening, she decides not to play cards, but walks towards a book table. Although Bingley kindly follows her, she does not really appear to seek company to divert herself. Only when it suits her, “she drew near the card-table” (*P&P*, 38). What follows is a significant passage on Darcy’s views of an accomplished woman. Significant, not so much because his views could well be in accordance with the prevailing sentiments of Austen’s society, but since he is the only one to grasp the irony in Elizabeth’s answers. More importantly, he seems to like her for them. Where Miss Bingley is ironically described as “his faithful assistant”, Darcy answers her disapproving remarks about Elizabeth so evasively that he seems to like Elizabeth’s way of talking to him. Even Miss Bingley grasps this, since “she was not so entirely satisfied with his reply as to continue the subject “(*P&P*, 39, 40).

This becomes even more apparent another night, when Darcy and Elizabeth vehemently discuss ‘humility’ to the extent that Bingley asks them to stop since their “arguments are too much like disputes” (*P&P*, 50). Afterwards, Elizabeth notices that “Mr. Darcy’s eyes were fixed on her” (*P&P*, 50). Apparently, this induces him to ask her to dance a reel, which, as mentioned above, she refuses, endearing herself even more to Darcy. Interestingly, this chapter ends with Elizabeth not only walking but running off, after another

failed attempt of Miss Bingley to spite her. Again, Elizabeth gets the upper hand, this time retreating from their company. Thus, she cannot be left, she leaves herself. Almost to stress the implied point made, Elizabeth “then ran gaily off, rejoicing as she rambled about...” (*P&P*, 52). As Lauren Nixon puts it when discussing the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth “it is her independent nature and lively mind that catches his attention “(39).

So, it is too easy to say that Elizabeth is just a rebelling individual, who defies the rules of society. She strives for initiative and relies on her own judgement. Morgan shares this view, and emphasises Elizabeth’s need for personal freedom. However, Morgan goes on, “what we are to understand by that freedom is not the right to do and say whatever she wants in defiance of social conventions”. Rather, “for Elizabeth it means to be apart from events” (57). Actually, Morgan argues that Elizabeth uses laughter and impertinence to disengage herself from the common stupidity of her surroundings. Literally interpreted, disengagement implies putting some distance between things. Thus, Morgan highlights Elizabeth’s evolving intelligence to disengage herself, to show that “the study of the links between intelligence and freedom is cast as a love story” (56). Although Morgan initially introduces the notion of Elizabeth’s personal freedom, she elaborates on this by discussing where Elizabeth’s intelligence errs. Of course, many instances of this, induced by pride or prejudice, can be seen in Austen’s novel. Building upon this, I would stress that the fact that Elizabeth is so many times associated with walking stresses a mobility that indeed correlates with a need for personal freedom.

However, I differ from Morgan, in that I do not think that all the mistakes and misjudgements due to ‘pride and prejudice’ need to be juxtaposed with Elizabeth’s wit and intelligence. Of course, they can, but to me, the quintessential point here is not where Elizabeth’s intelligence errs, but the fact that she needs distance, mobility in order to achieve the amount of intelligence that allows her to deal with life. Thus, she answers a haughtily

speaking Lady Catherine: “I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, regardless of you.....” (*P&P*, 338). Giles uses exactly this passage in an article on Eighteenth -Century courtship novels. After establishing the many echoes of the word “resolve” in for instance Austen’s novels, she explains that especially Elizabeth can be seen as one of the heroines who “ ‘determine’ to marry but simultaneously maintain a certain degree of ‘disintegration’, of unique self or identity, within that marriage” (77). Though it is less immediately apparent, this feature of Elizabeth’s character can also be seen as instrumental in shaping Darcy’s attraction to her. Likewise, it is not just her impertinence that endears her to Darcy. He says he first admired her “For the liveliness of her mind....” (*P&P*, 359). Clearly, liveliness cannot be attributed to a waiting woman, who has nothing to say. So, notwithstanding the obvious instances in which she misjudges people or situations, she strives for a certain distance to form her own opinion. This aspect of distance, either mental or literal, is reinforced, I would suggest, by the emphasis of her (however short) walks in the novel.

Contrarily, Elizabeth either feels better for having responded unconventionally, or gets rewarded by Austen by a favourable turn of events in the story’s plot. Either way, she is the only character that gets away with, and actually gains by, an unruly or impertinent attitude. Indeed, she is finally happy with Darcy, whereas, for instance Lydia’s rebelling does not result in something good. To start with, Elisabeth’s independent mind gets the approval of her father. Moreover, Elisabeth seems to be the only woman in the Bennet family that is being taken seriously by Mr. Bennet. They understand each other. Consequently, her father does not push her into accepting Mr. Collins’ marriage proposal. On the contrary, he seems to agree with her refusal. At least, he needs no elaborately formulated explanation from her but immediately says: “Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*” (*P&P*, 110). Furthermore, only Elizabeth grasps the

irony of his words: “Elizabeth could not but smile at such a conclusion of such a beginning” (*P&P*, 110).

2.5: Sisters

Arguably, the fact that it is mainly Elizabeth who gains by mobility and independence becomes even clearer when set against the descriptions and journeys of some of Elizabeth’s sisters. Moreover, although these are not Elizabeth’s travels, even here she is pictured as someone who refrains from waiting and dislikes to conform just for the sake of ‘good manners’.

For instance, right at the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Bennet singles Elizabeth out by stating she “has something more of quickness than her sisters” (*P&P*, 7). Elizabeth herself asserts that Jane has less discernment saying to her “all the world is good and agreeable in your eyes” (*P&P*, 16). Jane, typified this way as an accommodating woman, needs Elizabeth to set things in motion. Significantly, the invitation from their aunt Mrs. Gardiner to Jane to come to London for a while to either recover from or maybe even get reacquainted with Bingley, is the result of a conversation with Elizabeth: “when alone with Elizabeth, [the aunt] spoke more on the subject” (*P&P*, 138). Where Jane’s acceptance is described as “ready acquiescence”, Elizabeth is said to be “exceedingly pleased” (*P&P*, 139). Unfortunately for Jane, but interesting to note, Jane does not succeed and returns home without having achieved her goal. As Elizabeth ponders, at least Jane now understands the true disposition of Bingley’s sister, though sadly “all expectation from the brother was now absolutely over” (*P&P*, 146). Even their aunt ponders that to be disappointed in love is harder for Jane “with her disposition”, whereas she says to Elizabeth: “you would have laughed yourself out of it sooner” (*P&P*, 139). Moreover, even when she finally does marry Bingley,

Jane's happiness can be seen as somehow lacking. Unhesitatingly, Elizabeth remarks "I am happier even than Jane, she only smiles, I laugh" (*P&P*, 361).

Although Lydia appears not accommodating or passive at all, her travels cannot be seen as rewarding either, and again Elizabeth shows no aloofness towards them. First of all, Lydia is depicted as "stout", so her liveliness is described with a word that evokes a negative connotation (*P&P*, 10). Also, her eagerness to walk into the village of Meryton exudes an air of silliness. She and her sister Catherine are said to go there frequently while "their minds were more vacant than their sisters'" and "when nothing better offered, a walk to Meryton was necessaryto furnish conversation for the evening" (*P&P*, 29). When Lydia finally elopes with Wickham, everyone's "distress..is very great" (*P&P*, 262). Moreover, when things turn out for the better and the elopement results in a marriage, only Mrs. Bennet openly rejoices, but Mr. Bennet initially even refuses to receive his daughter and her husband at Longbourn. More tellingly, since clothes must be important to a superficial girl, he "would not advance a guinea to buy clothes for his daughter" (*P&P*, 294). Regrettably, even when Lydia seems happy enough, her marriage is not depicted positively as "Wickham's affection for Lydia, was.....not equal to Lydia's for him" (*P&P*, 301). As to Elizabeth's involvement, almost involuntarily she instigates the not entirely happy, but at least tolerable, turn of events, by telling Darcy about the elopement (*P&P*, 263,264). Unfortunately, at the end of the novel, when the war has apparently ended, and "the restoration of peace dismissed them to a home" their manner of living is even more unsettled (*P&P*, 366). In the end, Wickham's affection is not only unequal to Lydia's but "his affection for her soon sunk into indifference", while "her's lasted a little longer" (*P&P*, 366). Thus, being accommodating or not, more or less patiently waiting [Jane], or eloping [Lydia], neither of the sisters' attitude or travels bring them as much undeniable happiness as Elizabeth's almost impertinent ways and walks and journeys bring to her.

CHAPTER 3: ELIZABETH AND AMANDA IN *LOST IN AUSTEN*

3.1: *Lost in Austen*: an Adaptation

In *Lost in Austen*, writer Guy Andrew has chosen the vehicle of time-travel in order to time warp a 21st - century character, Amanda Price, to the 18th - century world of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Clearly, the introduction of a completely new character like this reveals something about the makers' view on liberties allowed to be taken with originals in adaptations. Moreover, by taking a direction that comes with a choice for time-travelling protagonists this adaptation does not seem to be mainly motivated by giving as good a representation of the novel as possible. At least, not in the sense that for instance a film like *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) seems to aim at by following the chronology of Austen's novel and interpreting how life at Longbourn could have been meant to be seen. Indeed, as to this, Kaplan asserts that the cross-cultural juxtapositions in *Lost in Austen* evoke an absurdist and witty atmosphere, and -she goes on- the adaptation "radically veers away from the film adaptations that are purportedly 'true' to Austen's text" (Kaplan, *Persuasions on Line*, n.p.). Still, it is possible to examine this adaptation as an attempt to enlighten a modern audience about the essentials of Austen's work.

As mentioned in chapter 1 Hutcheon distinguishes among others 'a process of reception' as a vantage point from which to view an adaptation. Indeed, the 21st - century characters that are juxtaposed with or compared to or 'literally' (by time-travel) introduced to not only the characters of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, but also to her actual 18th - century time period, give rise to a conclusion that modern audience reception could be a major motivation behind this adaptation.

At first sight, this would result in a viewing of how modern characters see or are influenced by or differ or resemble their 18th - century "counterparts". Moreover, the fact that

a modern character like Amanda dominatingly figures in absolutely most of the scenes, supports the notion that this adaptation shows us Austen through ,and in that way to, a 21st - century – arguably also young- audience. Indeed, *Lost in Austen* offers an abundance of linguistic discontinuities, puns, jokes, juxtapositions and witty exchanges that, even for those who are not able to recognize how well the writer has examined the original novel in order to be able to cleverly make these changes, result in an entertaining production. However, notwithstanding the impact of and focus on Amanda’s journey, her ‘heroine’ Elizabeth Bennet might be of just as much significance, certainly when considering the possible motivation of this adaptation. Does *Lost in Austen*, next to the twists and confusions and focus on 21st - century characters, only humour a modern audience by freely changing everything imaginable, or does this adaptation also choose to do something else in order to highlight a quintessential element of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* in its own way? Moreover, in doing so, could this be said to be a deliberate and thus important point made, in respect of and adding to the ongoing viewing/reading of adaptations? Especially with this in mind, it is particularly interesting to examine how the character of Elizabeth functions in *Lost in Austen*, although she is neither given many things to say, nor appears frequently in the various scenes. Arguably, this is significant in itself.

3.2: *Lost in Austen*: the Story and Amanda Price

Lost in Austen starts with the introduction of Amanda Price, shown to the viewer as a modern young woman, who nevertheless longs for the world and manners of Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice*, especially where courtship and marriage are concerned. With a variation of *Pride and Prejudice*’s opening sentence, the adaptation opens with Amanda, thinking “it is a truth generally acknowledged that we are all longing to escape”. Thus,

immediately a question presents itself: escape from what and how? Is this a reference to Austen's characters that, as women bound by the rules of their society, had to passively wait for men in order to fully experience life? However, the character pondering this now is a 21st - century modern woman, who consequently is not really bound by these restrictions in the same way. To the contrary, she has a boyfriend, a well-paid job, an apartment and choices enough to gaily go out with friends. Though not explicitly mentioned, considering all this, she must also be a woman who is able to travel when she chooses to do so.

Apparently, these achievements are not enough to satisfy her. Quite the contrary, Amanda seems to imply that, to her, modern life lacks many things that Austen's heroines were lucky to be surrounded with. Apparently, Amanda cannot do much more than "try to take her life on the chins, patching herself up with Austen". As she sighs to her mother, almost defending herself for her love for Austen's novel: "I love Elizabeth [Bennet], the manners, the language, the courtesy. It's become part of who I am. They have standards...". So, regardless of the position of women in whatever society they live in, life can be dreary for many other reasons than the fact that women can do nothing but passively wait behind window and doorframes for men to release them. Obviously, modern life just as much presents women with situations from which they "are all longing to escape".

Added to that, since she is also stressing the manners and the perfect courtships in the novel, it could have been plausible that she would have said "I love Jane Bennet.....", since Jane and Bingley might be considered a slightly better example of a nice and orderly romantic courtship than can be said of the development of the relationship between Elizabeth and Darcy, with all its misunderstandings due to pride and/or prejudice. For, in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, despite their early separation due to Darcy's interference, both Bingley and Jane never really do anything that goes against good manners or courtesy, whereas Darcy in Austen's novel can be said to be absolutely rude in refusing to dance at a ball where the

women outnumber the men and Elizabeth's arguing with Darcy may not be categorized as courteous and infused with good manners either (*P&P*, 13, 27).

Still, Amanda loves Elizabeth, deliberately putting her own life on hold, while dreaming away with the original novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, it can be argued that Amanda emphasizes the specific importance of Elizabeth in Austen's own novel in another way as well. She seems to imply this when she says to her mother, that she is not simply pining away over Colin Firth. Clearly, she has also watched the serialized version of *Pride and Prejudice* in which the actor Collin Firth stars as a handsome and attractive Mr. Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*, 1995). However, she stresses that she has not fallen for the image of a nice Mr. Darcy, but that she is motivated by her love for Elizabeth in Austen's book.

Maybe the focus should be less on the issues women might want to escape from, in favour of the manner in which they choose to do so. Obviously, Amanda Price, living in an emancipated era, cannot be bothered to do more than passively retreat to her couch, in order to immerse herself in the world of *Pride and Prejudice* by Austen. Implicitly, she thus, in an acquiescent manner, refrains from taking much action in favour of losing herself in the same book over and over again. Her getting 'lost in Austen' evokes a notion of waiting, although she, in theory, has no societal impediments that keep her from taking any initiative to alter whatever she might want to escape from. This way, her solution to the treadmill of life echoes the idea of the 'waiting women' in Austen's novels.

For instance, Amanda says no to the invitation of a girlfriend to go out for the night, and apparently has already refused her boyfriend to come over, since the only thing she wants to do is to get lost in Austen for the night. Moreover, she teeth-grindingly but still resignedly gives in to the fact that her boyfriend nevertheless shows up. Furthermore, she does nothing to stand up for herself, and lets him watch television while she makes him a drink. In fact, at the

start of the series nothing indicates that Amanda herself has any inclination to make any active changes to a reality she might want to escape from.

Actually, it is Elizabeth who forces her to do something by suddenly arriving in Amanda's bathroom, right after Amanda has had a most unromantic marriage proposal from her drunken boyfriend. Elizabeth, in her nightgown, explains that she has found a door in the attic of her home, where only servants come and (of course, as a not waiting, but walking, and exploring person) she herself. Though she initially implies it is Amanda who has given her this option: "it is you who are the key", Elizabeth takes the initiative. Indeed, the next night, at the moment Amanda is reading Elizabeth's thoughts in *Pride and Prejudice*: "I who have valued myself on my abilities, I who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister.....", Amanda is again shocked into reality and out of her book by the appearance of Elizabeth. Just moments ago Amanda's mother has tried to reason her out of her flight into a novel, and apparently Amanda's friend Perona does this regularly as well, since Amanda sighs to her mother: "I have this conversation with Perona on a regular basis and she never gets it". Furthermore, it may be significant this second time that Elizabeth is dressed for a walk and clearly intends to do so. When a confused Amanda tentatively enters through the door into the Bennet's house, Elizabeth is seen smiling knowingly and putting on her bonnet, clearly ready to go for an exploring walk. The door closes and however much Amanda wants it to open again, she cannot open it. According to Mr. Bennet, one of the first persons she encounters, she has to "cross the wasteland that is the servants 'stairs' " in order to arrive at the moment in the novel that Mr. Bennet has just met Mr. Bingley but has not informed Mrs. Bennet of this. What follows is an entertaining account of a 21st century character who finds herself in the middle of Austen's plot. A plot, by the way, that goes terribly wrong, in every way imaginable, obviously due to the fact that Amanda is there instead of Elizabeth. The story ends with Amanda staying in the 18th century, in love with Darcy, and Elizabeth, after a brief

return to her home in Longbourn, staying in the 21st century, because she has tasted modern life and cannot be happy in the 18th century anymore. The wrong person marrying Darcy? End of story? Lost in Austen in the sense that Austen is lost here, due to the choices and motivations behind this adaptation? Can this be the conclusion, following Amanda Price, as the main character in this production?

Indeed, most critics have focussed on the meta-fictional figure of Amanda in the 18th century plot, discussing the many twists and linguistic discontinuities that result from this addition of a character that does not figure in Jane Austen's novel. For instance, Kaplan - in her article "Completely without sense: *Lost in Austen*" - discusses Amanda as a "new main character- *not* created by Austen- who creates cultural and meta-fictional chaos" (243). In line with- at first sight- *Lost in Austen* itself, Kaplan pays no particular attention to the character of Elizabeth. She does note that it is Elizabeth who "time-warps herself through a magical door", and also that "the next night Elizabeth returns to Hammersmith", but these remarks are merely made in order to give an abstract of the series' plot (241,242). In line with the amount of time Amanda gets in *Lost in Austen*, Kaplan follows the series and mainly discusses what happens after the switch between Elizabeth and Amanda has taken place. Her review of the subsequent unravelling of a twisted plot, its puns and intertextualities, resultantly focuses on the effects of this new character, Amanda, without taking much of Elizabeth into account.

However, I would argue that Elizabeth's actual role in this adaptation does not necessarily correlate with the amount of time she appears on screen. In a way, Raitt seems to point to the importance of Elizabeth as well, when he asserts that "'*Lost in Austen* 'appears to reproduce the world view of Austen's novel and the nature and quality of the choice made by Austen's Elizabeth". However, Raitt - like Kaplan- focuses mostly on Amanda although he does remark that "through the device of time travel, Amanda becomes an 'Elizabeth Bennet' figure". Moreover, Raitt's point of view is that *Lost in Austen* "portrays a post-feminist

heroine making a choice to change the direction of her life, to voluntarily enter a fantasy world that limits her role of a woman” (n.p.).

However, to my opinion, it is not Amanda who is depicted in *Lost in Austen* as a woman who makes her own choices to change the direction of her life. As mentioned above, instead of this, right from the start, Amanda seems to be a modern woman who , despite of all the choices she can make, not restricted by societal rules that explicitly limit women, is shown as a person who passively re-reads a book. Thus, without any action, showing no inclination to either movement (she literally sits on the couch with her book), or initiative, Amanda actually more or less seems to wait for something or someone to make any change- involving choices for her, since nothing or nobody in her current life can convince her to take any real action.

Still, both Kaplan and Raitt proceed from the assumption that Amanda conveys the most important message in *Lost in Austen*. However, in my opinion, the scenes in which the time-swap between the two women takes place- both at the beginning and at the end of the series- are not just a vehicle to compare or mingle the past with the present, but to reveal something essential about Elizabeth. Thus, an examination of *Lost in Austen* cannot be done by only focussing on Amanda, but it needs to incorporate Elizabeth as well.

3.3: *Lost in Austen* and Elizabeth Bennet

So, although I do agree with Raitt that *Lost in Austen* can be viewed as an adaptation that gives insight to the world view of Austen’s novel, particularly concerning Austen’s Elizabeth, I disagree with his ensuing focus on Amanda. As I see it, the one person who triggers Amanda out of her demure, languid, passive attitude is Elizabeth Bennet, who has

made the decision to show up in the 21st - century town of Hammersmith in the bathroom of a modern woman.

Clearly, it is Elizabeth who decides to set things in motion. She has at some point decided to look for an adventure, for which she needs neither companions nor permission. In later scenes Mr. Bennet simply says that Elizabeth has told him she would go to Hammersmith. Apparently, it is her strong will that allows her to travel on her own in the most extreme way thinkable: a 200 years' time gap. Her first encounter with a very strange, and therefore possible frightening, world, does not scare her. On the contrary, she returns, the next evening. Moreover, as mentioned above, she has done some thinking and is wearing her walking-clothes. So, Elizabeth is prepared to explore a very strange world, having travelled very far on her own. Moreover, she fully intends to do this by walking.

Her character is not only revealed by her decision to undertake this journey. She is also immediately and indisputably depicted as a clever, sharp- minded woman. She is more intrigued by the modern way to light a lamp, pulling the cord over and over again, than that she seems to be intimidated by her second encounter with Amanda. Moreover, she more or less forces Amanda through the 'door' in her bathroom, in order to visit 18th - century Longbourn. Amanda does not show enough resistance to avoid this, and accordingly finds herself in Longbourn House. Furthermore, Elizabeth's attitude gives her a certain amount of power. As the following scenes show, she is in charge. Amanda fruitlessly bounces on the door twice, shouting for Elizabeth to open it again. So she relies on Elizabeth to do this, as she- with her passive, waiting attitude- clearly cannot do so herself. Actually, the only moment in this series where Elizabeth seems to be hesitating is when she cannot open the door to return to Longbourn later on. But even then, she understands what accounts for this. Her need to see her father conflicts with her reluctance to return to her former life.

The final allusions to Charlotte's life are meaningful as well. Elizabeth ponders: "What have I done", when she hears that Charlotte has left for Africa. Elizabeth blames herself for this, since she has left and remembers that she and Charlotte, when children used to say: "when irreparably miserable and lonely one can always go to Africa". So, she intimates that she has purposefully undertaken her journey to 21st - century Hammersmith, leaving Charlotte alone and affecting her life in the process.

Obviously, she has quickly incorporated modern life. Working as a nanny, with an ongoing focus on the modern appliances (she puts emphasis on the importance to switch them off before leaving for Longbourn again), she seems fully at ease with her modern clothes and hairdo. Modern life clearly suits her character.

3.4: Elizabeth and Amanda and the Time-Swap

With Elizabeth gone, Amanda thinks she is now going to be part of the plot of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* that she knows so well. However, what she is witnessing is a totally wrong turn of events. Without elaborating on the many intertextualities, linguistic discontinuities, funny twists, and - to Amanda and the viewer who intends to follow Austen's storyline- ensuing chaos, it is interesting to note that only when Amanda no longer only watches events, but finally does what Elizabeth has done at the beginning of the series do lives and relations start to fall into place.

Although Amanda has been despairing over the chaos in the plot, exclaiming at some point "No, this is all wrong! ", she has not really changed her waiting attitude. The only change made is that she is not reading fiction, but experiencing it. When Bingley first meets her and appears to like her over Jane, she does think "No, this is wrong, you are supposed to

marry Jane”, and she does return to the door at night, hoping it will open or be opened by Elizabeth, but apparently she has not changed her ways, since the door is and stays closed.

As it seems, it takes many scenes and an almost dying Mr. Bennet to snap Amanda out of her state of watching, waiting, accepting attitude and state of immobility. Only now, at the moment that she is really freaking out, does she seem to internalize Elizabeth’s intrinsic character traits, and realise she needs the character of Elizabeth. Apparently, the plot going wrong juxtaposed to a life being ended, finally makes her understand that she really needs to do something. Only now, when she not half-heartedly, but truly decides she needs to be pro – active, is she successful. As she hurls herself to the door, she is able to open it and finds herself back in the 21st century in London/Hammersmith, on a journey to find Elizabeth. If one might interpret this as that she has simply exercised enough physical power to open the door, the following scenes make clear that this is not true. Having found Elizabeth, being followed by Darcy, the three of them want to return to Longbourn. When her 21st- century boyfriend Michael takes a stand in order to prevent Amanda from leaving, Amanda does not listen to him. Though Elizabeth wants to be at her supposedly dying father’s bedside, she is not her normal self and cannot open the door. As implied above, her need, though she wants to see her father, is not to return to her former life. Now it is Amanda, having understood the quintessence of Elizabeth Bennet’s character, who, without any force needed, shoves the door open. As Elizabeth says “it is your need that opens it”. Elizabeth understands this. Amanda has finally lost her waiting, immobile attitude, and in this process is gradually seen as becoming less ‘lost in Austen’, and less ‘lost in life’. As Amanda thinks out loud “what are you holding on to?” she seems to say goodbye to a life of waiting.

Elizabeth, though still herself essentially, has also learned from the swap. So, it does not come as a surprise when she, once back, cannot forget her journey to the future. She has not forgotten, as Darcy is said to have done, what she has encountered there. Elizabeth says:

“I am altered by what I have seen there”, when she walks (a walk is still an important medium) with Darcy in her garden at Longbourn. But maybe she is not so much altered but represented as more fitting in with modern possibilities. Elizabeth, though outwardly and inwardly changed, has intrinsically remained the same. She may have altered her hairstyle and changed into modern and 18th - century clothing, she still cannot comply with something she does not want to. Elizabeth, with her characteristic insight, realises this herself and acts accordingly in proposing to her father that she is going to return to London/Hammersmith. Elizabeth’s typical character traits have led her to open a door at the beginning and at the end.

Although, finally, Elizabeth returns to modern life in Hammersmith, and Amanda stays in the 18th century to marry Darcy, this outcome need not be interpreted as wrong or upside down. Elizabeth is a woman who does not quietly wait in a situation that shuts out mobility, giving in to the assumed rules of society. Moreover, once Amanda has understood this essence of Elizabeth as well, her life turns out happily. Despite having swapped places after a time travel adventure covering 200 years back and forth, Amanda is happy, from the moment and as long as she internalizes the essence of Austen’s Elizabeth.

CONCLUSION

Although it is not contested that almost anything can be seen as an adaptation, when referring to works of art, vantage points concerning criteria to view these adaptations have shifted. A major change seems to be that the 'fidelity discourse' no longer counts as the most important issue. Naturally, critics have been discussing other criteria to look at adaptations, since comparisons will always be made. Equally, their focus differs. For instance, some point to an interest in the differences between and motivations behind adaptations, whereas others compare the culture of the original work of art with the culture of the adaptation. Furthermore, reception theory could be a vantage point, when critics foremost view an adaptation with its modern audience in mind.

Theoretically, this development could result in a general acceptance that anything, though with the exception of a mere allusion, could count as an adaptation. Maybe partly as a result of this, a new way of interest in the original work of art can be noticed. Notwithstanding the acceptance that an adaptation can draw upon a work of art as freely as it chooses to do, the interest in the original work of art remains. It may be interesting to see if an adaptation, especially when it is a very free version of the original, focuses on a topical interest, highlighting elements that can also be noticed in the original work of art it is based on.

Looking at the TV series *Lost in Austen*, based on Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*, it can be argued that this development, focus on a topical interest, can be noticed. At first sight, the vehicle of time travel, the introduction of a meta-fictional character to the original plot, the confusion and chaos that follow, and a 21st - century voice-over narration that enables the modern audience to identify with the modern protagonist in Jane Austen's world are choices that might suggest an interpretation that this adaptation is mainly motivated by realising an entertaining production for a young modern audience. Moreover, the fact that the

21st - century main character, Amanda, figures prominently in most of the episodes, gives rise to this conclusion as well. However, it is interesting to see that the way the producers of this TV series have pictured their Elizabeth Bennet, highlights those character traits that are also visible in Elizabeth Bennet in Austen's original novel. More specifically, the adaptation highlights an attitude in Elizabeth that differs from for instance Auerbach's notion that in Austen all women were merely waiting behind window or door frames for men to come and life to start. On the contrary, in *Lost in Austen* it is Elizabeth who sets the example to Amanda that a woman must make her own choices in order to be happy. In *Pride and Prejudice* Elizabeth is shown to rebel against the restrictions of 18th - century society, in *Lost in Austen* Elizabeth shows a 21st - century woman that resignation is not the answer to a woman's problems by instigating a time swap. Finally, it is Elizabeth who thrives in the 21st century with all its opportunities for women. *Lost in Austen* presents its modern audience with a version of Austen's Elizabeth that is closer to Austen's character than one would assume at first sight. So, fidelity to a topical aspect of the original work of art may be an interesting issue to take into account when viewing or maybe even producing an adaptation.

WORKS CITED

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Penguin Group, 2003.
- Auerbach, Nina. *Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Auerbach, N. “Austen and Alcott on Matriarchy: New Women or New Wives?” *A Forum on Fiction* 10 (Autumn 1976): 6-26.
- Despotopoulou, A. “Girls on Film: Postmodern Renderings of Jane Austen and Henry James”. *The Yearbook of English Studies* 36.1 (2006): 115-30.
- Fischlin, Daniel and Mark Fortier. *Adaptations of Shakespeare*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Giles, H. “Resolving the Institution of Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Courtship Novels”. *Rocky Mountain Review* 66. 1 (Spring 2012): 76-82.
- Greenfield, S.C. “The Absent-Minded Heroine: Or, Elizabeth Bennet has a Thought”. *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3.3 (Spring 2006): 337-50.
- Harman, Claire. *Jane’s Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2009.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Lost in Austen*. TV Mini-Series. Writ. Guy Andrews. Dir. Dan Zeff. ITV, 2008.
- Kaplan, Deborah. *Jane Austen Among Women*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Kaplan, L. “‘Completely without Sense’: *Lost in Austen*”. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 30 (2008): 221-34.
- Kaplan, L. “*Lost in Austen* and Generation –Y Janeites”. *Persuasions On –Line* 30.2 (Spring 2010).
- Lau, B. “Home, Exile, and Wanderlust in Austen and the Romantic Poets”. *Pacific Coast Philology* 41 (2006): 91-107.
- Le Faye, Deirdre. *Jane Austen, The World of her Novel*. London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2003.
- Neckles, C. “Spatial Anxiety: Adapting the Social Space of *Pride and Prejudice*”. *Literature/Film Quarterly* 1.1 (January 2012).
- Nixon, Lauren. *The Jane Austen Miscellany*. New York: The History Press, 2012.
- Page, Norman. *The Language of Jane Austen*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

- Raitt, G. "Lost in Austen: Screen Adaptation in a Post-Feminist World". *Literature/Film Quarterly* 40.2 (April 2012).
- Sinyard, Neil. *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptations*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Wells, Juliette. *Everybody's Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.
- Wells, J. "From Schlockspeare to Austenpop". *Shakespeare* 6. 4 (December 2010): 446-62.
- Wells, J. "New Approaches to Austen and the Popular Reader". *Uses of Austen : Jane 's Afterlives*. (Edited by G. Dow and C. Hanson). Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Wiltshire, John. *Recreating Jane Austen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Wright, A. "Jane Austen Adapted". *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 30.3 (December 1975): 421-53.
- Sadoff, Dianne F. *Victorian Vogue: British Novels on Screen*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.