

THE ADAPTATION OF A NOVEL TO SCREEN WITH REFERENCE TO JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

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Abstract:

*The paper is an attempt to study Jane Austen's Novel *Pride and Prejudice* in an adapted work. In adaptation, the story has been reoriented to tell a different narrative as it is adapted into a feature film named *Bridget Jones's Diary* based on same title novel. The film was directed by Sharon Maguire. It was released on 13th April 2001. The modern adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* is *Bridget Jones's Diary*, written by Helen Fielding. It has become a large franchise and capitalises on Austen's romantic-genre fan base. *Bridget Jones's* romance with Mark Darcy mirrors Elizabeth Bennet's romance with Fitzwilliam Darcy.*

Key-words: *Adaptating, Franchise, Capitalises, Romantic-genre.*

Jane Austen has set her Novel *Pride and Prejudice* in her own social and cultural life-time. It was a time of full humour and wit. While a novel has been adapted into a work of Screen, like visual medium the choice in scenes were limited and the form of adaptation as well. Its story is also reoriented. As a critic Yvonne Griggs writes in her article, "Adapting Jane Eyre and analytical approach", published in *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Adaptation Studies*, that in adaptation, there is faithfulness to the theme and even then stories may be reoriented to tell a different narrative.

Next critic Linda Hutcheon in her article, "Beginning to theorize adaptation: What? Who? Why? How? Where? When?" published in *A Theory of Adaptation* states that the adaptation has three tiered theory. The adaptation is process. It is flexible in allowing for even the greatest changes to be classified as an adaptation of a source text as the focus is on the process.

The most screen plays and television dramas which are produced on the novel. They have attempted to adapt this novel. The first screen adaptation was a TV movie, which was released in 1938, written by Michael Barry. He was starring Curigwen Lewis as Miss Elizabeth Bennet and Andrew Osborn as Mr. Darcy. The first feature film adaptation was released in 1940, starring Greer Garson and Laurence Olivier. The modern adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* is *Bridget Jones's Diary*, written by Helen Fielding. The same title movie as *Bridget Jones's Diary* was released on 13 April, 2001.

Bridget Jones' romance with Mark Darcy mirrors Elizabeth Bennet's romance with Fitzwilliam Darcy. The people who worked on the movie have connections to *Pride and Prejudice*. The screen writer Andrew Davies wrote the 1995 Austen miniseries and also contributed to the screen play for the 2001, *Bridget Jones's Diary* movie. The casting of Bridget Jones' is enough to make any Austen fan squeal in delight since Fitzwilliam Darcy, actor Colin Firth played the role of Mark Darcy. Crispin Bonham-Carter as Mr. Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* makes a brief appearance in *Bridget Jones's Diary* as an employee of Pemberley.

The movie was based on Fielding's novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*, adapted from *Pride and Prejudice*. The story of the adapted work has been retold, as the two stories that were written nearly 200 years apart. While Lizzy will never be as wacky as Bridget, so there is the parallels between the both stories. The modern adaptation is seen through the plot, characters, context, value, language and film technique. The first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* is, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (Austen 5) while in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Bridget

riffs on this line when she goes to meet her mom by telling, "It is the truth universally acknowledged that the moment one area of your life starts going OK, another part of it falls spectacularly to pieces" (Fielding 1).

This direct appropriation has revealed the similarities between the texts and allowed reproduction of *Pride and Prejudice* through *Bridget Jones' Diary* that is to be noticeable. *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *Pride and Prejudice* have endured a similar plot. The Protagonist is female. She is looking for love; she is under pressure to find love particularly by her mother. Elizabeth Bennet meets Fitzwilliam Darcy but man's pride and her prejudice keep them apart. She has realized that the man is dishonest and involved in some inexcusable past behaviour. Yet Darcy learns to love her as she is. While Elizabeth learns the truth about his past behaviour, it is seen that Darcy's pride and Elizabeth's prejudice go off and they ironically fall in love. So this plot outlines the resemblance between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones' Diary*. In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, there is a plot which is interwoven Bridget Jones' romance with Mark Darcy. Another resemblance between two texts is alike characters. *Bridget Jones' Diary* reproduces numerous characters who are modern day creations of characters from *Pride and Prejudice*. Darcy's character in both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones' Diary* is similar.

Elizabeth and Darcy first met at a ball where Elizabeth overhears Darcy, saying about her, "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me." (Austen 11). While Mark and Bridget had met as children when she played in his paddling pool naked, here Bridget overheard Mark by saying he didn't need a blind date with some verbally incontinent spinster who smokes like a chimney and drinks like a fish and dresses like her mother.

There is alike earlier couple, Bridget is also told slanderous news about Mark, having stolen away Daniel Cleaver. Of course, this leads her to think worse of him. It embarrasses Bridget. When, she meets Mark, she feels embarrassing. However, Mark and Bridget meet at couple dinner. Mark tells Bridget that he likes her just as she is. Then Bridget slowly starts to warm up to him, she grows to really care about him. There is after sudden physical confrontation between Mark and Daniel Cleaver, Bridget does not know whom to support. Later, Bridget comes to know that Mark is never wrong; it was Daniel who stole away Mark's wife. Finally the couple get their happy ending.

Speaking of Bridget's mom, both Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Jones are pretty insufferable. Elizabeth has a great relationship with her father and Bridget clearly gets along better with her father than her mom. Lizzy and Bridget both become utterly confounded when halfway through their stories Darcy tells them that he really likes them, besides this he has treated them in the past. Fitzwilliam Darcy told Lizzy how he loved her when she was visiting Charlotte and Collins. Mark Darcy told Bridget after a dinner party full of smug married couples. Both female characters were not fallen to see Darcy's change of heart since in true Darcy form, he had managed to insult both characters while expressing his love, among other transgressions.

It is being seen a similarity between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones' Diary* in keeping the context, values, language and film technique. While the movie, *Bridget Jones' Diary* was screened, it had analogous features based on these tropes. Context is a co-incidence between the novel and movie. Values are cast in the movie as possessed in the novel. In which one was found in context to Darcy's refusal to dance with lower strata people at Meryton. There is use of the clunky language which serves Elizabeth's specific purpose. She allows herself to accept her love that has supplanted her long-standing prejudice. Now her control over language breaks down. It leaves the reader to imagine with some delight. Elizabeth's fumbling for words expresses her irrepressible happiness, as Bridget Jones' love for Darcy is noticed in *Bridget Jones' Diary*.

The use of costume, music, dances, architecture and transportation created for the adaptation a novel to movie. They were based on the historical regency period. There was maintaining a historical setting true to Jane Austen's own time, 1813. It was faithfulness of each adaptation due to the end-product,

as Sarah Cardwell accepted an approach over the end-product on adaptation. As in visual medium of the novel, there is a choice of scenes so that some scenes have been limited. The scenes have visualized the novel as a work of screen. The scenes have brought a very significant parallel to this novel *Bridget Jones' Diary* like movie as from the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.

The movie *Bridget Jones' Diary* has been directed by Sharon Maguire who is able to maintain the main idea of *Pride and Prejudice*, by using characters with similar qualities and lives as those in the novel. The audience has been introduced to Bridget, Daniel, and Mark. All of whom share evident resemblance to Lizzy, Wickham, and Darcy, consequently. There is parallel plot to the movie. Colin Firth has played the same role in name as Mr. Darcy in the movie. We have Daniel Cleaver who stands in. It is not to mention a clever repetition of scene and script that mimic the original. It is except here, in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth Bennet who is possessing lower social standing but she is worth fighting over. Like Firth, when Mr. Darcy comes to see her, he wants her nonetheless. It is found in the movie also, as the director captures it in Bridget Jones. Her life style seems accurate.

There is a mind line expression between *Pride and Prejudice* and the movie *Bridget Jones' Diary* as Firth tells Lizzy Bennet that he must tell her how ardently he admires and loves her. There is the infamous dinner toast on her birthday where he admires her to say just as she is. Even for Bridget, he says just as she is. She reveals her desire for Firth, but she is having coyness. In fact, she is attracted to Firth.

So, Mark Darcy, meanwhile Colin Firth in the movie *Bridget Jones' Diary* has got to even more directly riff on what is then his most iconic role. It is a modern day version of *Pride and Prejudice's* Mr. Darcy. Firth puts his focus on Mark's awkwardness more so than his broodiness. It makes his gradual transformation into the man of Bridget's dreams. In the film's best scene, Mark finally reveals his love for Bridget. A Film critic James Berardinelli states that Firth plays this part like Mark Darcy exactly as he had played the earlier role. By making it evident that the two Darcys are essentially the same.

Renee Zellweger was shot in character as Bridget Jones. Bridget's casting brings a parallel to Lizzy Bennet in the movie. It was seen that Firth spent his time in meeting with Lizzy Bennet. It is being cast in relation to Mark Darcy and Bridget in the movie. Bridget can't seem to get her career, most importantly her love life in order. So, there was an embarrassing start in her life. She butts her heads with awkward barrister Mark Darcy (Colin Firth). She decides to turn her life around, she falls into bed with her boss Daniel Cleaver (Hugh Grant). But, eventually, she comes to know that she may have misjudged Mark after all.

These impressions sound familiar in *Pride and Prejudice*, with Bridget as Lizzy Bennet, Daniel as George Wickham and Mark as a literal Mr. Darcy. In Jane Austen's work, the story remains over once the two love interests get together. Once Elizabeth consents to get married Darcy, it reflects that she is going to live happily and financially stable. Wherever Bridget's story keeps on her relationship with Mark reveals several taboos of ups and down. But almost the general premise remains the same. Therefore, by adapting a novel to screen, it is analyzed and things are found between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones' Diary*, as it is a modernization of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Bridget Jones faces great societal pressure to find the right guy. Both the stories are resembled. They are compelling to their complex and independent heroines who ignore society's rules and they try to find their own way. In place of putting the year ahead the story takes place, the movie effectively creates analogies between the characters, setting and events which are to retell Austen's story in a contemporary manner. Some scenes underline the liberties which are taken in order to re-imagine the story in a modern setting. Bridget is established as an anti-hero which makes the movie to generate a female protagonist who is fitting for present day while maintaining Elizabeth's likeability. There were drastic changes to the plot and characters, but despite these changes the movie remained easily identifiable based on Austen's text. Mark Darcy's name, as well as the actor Colin Firth who played Darcy's role in the movie, is the most identifiable signals of the story's original text. *Bridget Jones Diary* takes many transformations from the fundamental text to the movie and it becomes an effective analogous adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

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