

## A CULTURAL READING OF THE FILM AND FICTION VERSIONS OF JANE AUSTEN'S *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The term 'culture' has undergone a characteristic paradigm shift. To define it in a few words would mean to limit its scope and extent. Pramod Nayar has stated in An Introduction to Cultural Studies that "culture is produced through everyday living: the food people eat, the fashions they adopt, the entertainment they prefer or the festivals they celebrate"(29). Any work of art is a reflection of the culture of that particular milieu because the author is not just a product of his times but also a conscious observer of his times. His creative outpourings are indeed slices of life he observed directly or indirectly. The paper entitled "A Cultural Reading of the Film and Fiction Versions of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice" aims at analyzing and identifying the cultural aspects in the novel and its film version.*

*The researcher's investigation primarily constitutes dual modes of action: firstly, the cultural features in the fictional piece are examined and secondly, it is compared with the film counterpart. Culture is basically associated with human beings because man is a social being and mingling with other fellow beings leads to the generation of common practices or rituals. Literature focuses on the life and its myriad forms. Novels present the real world of the authors. The reader is bound to detect the political, social and economic elements inherent in the works of the writers. The writers are actually presenting a cultural overview of their times. The text chosen for study has been penned by a woman writer Jane Austen Since culture deals with everyday activities, there has been a spectacular interest in the study of cultures. The two texts (the novel and the film) are of specific interest chiefly because this is an age of intermingling of genres and cultures. A cross -study and examination will undoubtedly open up new vistas for cultural exchange and enhancement.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Intermingling of Genres and Cultures, Presenting a Cultural Overview*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cultural Studies can be seen as an endeavor to link literature with the wider cultural base of society. By examining the cultural aspects in the texts under study, certain common cultural codes or symbols have been identified. These realms reflect the cultural landscape of the texts and help decode the cultural workings of their respective periods. Austen is regarded to be a conscientious women writer whose subjective narratives have unfurled the wondrous world of her times, from a women's perspective. The charm of the text resulted in its visual reproduction-film. In the introduction to his book *Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader*, Timothy Corrigan has cited that:

The History of the relationship between film and literature is a history of ambivalence, confrontation, and mutual dependence. From the late nineteenth century to the present, these two ways of seeing and describing the world have at different times despised each other, redeemed each other, learned from each other, and distorted each other's self-proclaimed integrity.(1)

This statement establishes that film and literature when coupled can open up multiple interpretations. Literature employs words, hence, it is verbal but the film is an aural –visual semblance. Reading a novel and watching its movie adaptation, obviously involves varied intellectual activities, but a close examination of the two will open up different meanings. Film and literature are regarded to be “the vehicles for cultural identities and their myths throughout the twentieth century...”(25)The main objective of this study is to identify the cultural similarities and distinctions in the texts selected for the purpose. The project also proposes to outline where the two, that is, the film and the novel converge and diverge in their cultural mappings.

Jane Austen (1775-1817) was the seventh child of her parents. Austen had a literary bend right from her early teenage and has to her credit about six novels. *Pride and Prejudice*, her second novel, is declared to be her most popular novel. The work was initially titled *First Impressions*. When published under the altered title in 1813, it sold up to more than thousand copies and came out in three consecutive editions. Austen was born into a moderately wealthy family and lived for most of her lifetime in the small village of Hampshire. She had very little formal education and relied wholly on her father's library for literary acumen. The popularity of this artist is evident from the widespread admirers- which include legendary figures and political leaders like Macaulay and Winston Churchill -she has to this day, in many parts of the world.

Two centuries have passed since its publication and yet the charm of this classic novel has not waned. Austen's work focuses on the life activities of the gentry folk of eighteenth-century provincial England. Her world was replete with ball -room dancing, elaborate meals among the elite, marriage fixing, and matchmaking gatherings and gossips. A remarkable fact to be mentioned is that Austen was an unmarried woman who lived a cloistered life in a rural setup but the primary concern in her novels was about the role of women, their anxieties regarding marriage, financial security, mobility, education and so on. “Jane Austen's life as a writer was a long assimilation of the social and moral climate in which she grew.”(Chawdry18)

Joe Wright, the director, was born in London in 1972. He started his career creating a few short films and television series for the British Broadcasting Corporation. Wright's feature film debut was the adaptation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The film, titled like the novel, is an Anglo-American production released in 2005 starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen. It is deemed to be a fairly truthful presentation of the novelist's verbal world. The film's running time is approximately 121 minutes. The film won him the award of the best newcomer director

“Literature is a treasury embodying all that is to be valued in human experience.’(Storey 27) Each novel holds within it cultural jewels of the lived experience of the author. Cultural Studies aims at ‘scrutinizing the cultural phenomenon of a text...’(Guerin et.al.277) The researcher has identified certain vantage points from whence the cultural aspects of the texts can be perceived. These vantage points provide a platform to simultaneously study the cultural aspects of both the texts.

Jane Austen's writings are fabulously scented with the culture she experienced. In other words, she used word power to subtly critique her social setups. The ladies drew their storyline from their personal experiences and hence their narratives are realistic accounts. Austen wrote at a time when women wrote anonymously, Austen, says Chawdhry, "belonged to a period when a major shift in terms of social change was increasingly becoming evident in various spheres of life and thought"(53). *Pride and Prejudice*, a finely wrought novel of manners, illustrates her signature themes of courtship, marriage, and happiness. Austen's novel focuses on the gentry folks' lifestyle during the eighteenth century. Her "novels are memorable and relevant as they can be transposed to any culture or society."(184) Six basic cultural signs/characteristics identified in the texts are: Characters( name, physical features),Food (eating habits and patterns),Clothing ( dress code ),Material Goods (house, carriage, land, wealth etc. ),Language( English gentry folk speech ) and Common practices(letter writing, housekeeping, etc)

In *The Pursuit of Signs*, Jonathan Culler has remarked that each "literary work" has a meaning or signification for its readers and semiotics attempts to make "explicit the implicit knowledge which enables signs to have meaning..."(43)A cultural analysis of a novel should obviously begin with a close examination of the characters who serve as signifiers. The novel parades a spectacular array of characters. Their names are suggestive of the naming trends of the writer's cultural ambience. Elizabeth, Jane, Mr, and Mrs Bennet, Bingley, Darcy, Lydia, Rev Collins, Charlotte, Lady Catherine de borough etc. are typical and common English names prevalent during Jane Austen's days. Maggie Lane, a well known Austen scholar has observed in her book *Jane Austen and Names* that Austen's naming fashions were indicative of the character's social position and political scenario. The names allotted to each character spoke volumes of their character. In her paper titled "How Celebrity Name-Dropping Leads to Another Model for Pemberley", Janine Barchas has said that Austen's names reveal the life and times of the Regency period and she "boldly engages her contemporary culture..."(web) During Austen's time "the renowned northern names of Bingley, Darcy, and Fitzwilliam ...would have tantalized any educated reader with their obvious catchet."(78)Thus we see Austen's names are indicative of her times.

Food serves as a key tool for cultural analysis as it can be deemed as a metaphor for the cultural environment inherent in the text. "Whatever is eaten, wherever it is eaten and whoever it is eaten with says something about the diners."(Longhurst. et al.128) Austen's novel focuses on the Regency era of England. Her novels reveal only scanty details of what the participants had for their meals. Mealtime, however, was when the family met together to comment on the upcoming balls and neighbors. The events in the novel are timed between breakfast, tea time and dinner. We have no elaborate descriptions of what they have for their meals but we do realize that Elizabeth happens to dine with the Bingleys', the Collins', the Gardiners and at the Rosings with Lady Catherine and even at Pemberley estate where she was served with "cold meat, cake, and a variety of all the finest fruits in season". Moreover, the table was adorned with "beautiful pyramids of grapes, nectarines, and peaches"(Austen258)Dining with the different people reveal the social differences that exist between Elizabeth and her dining partners. Dining was always regarded as a status symbol (159), or as a means to revive dull spirits (205) and as a means for lovers to meet together (338).When Lady Catherine calls upon Elizabeth's house she "declines eating anything"(341)because it was below her social status. Drinking tea and coffee was also another valued activity. Guests waited till tea time and were entertained with "coffee and muffin"(73).

Clothes are objects of everyday use. Examining the clothes of a particular period will provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural conditions of the individual and his community. Sociologists have argued that clothes have multiple functions. They serve as cultural markers. Roland Barthes has written in his *The Language of Fashion* that “every social condition has its garment...” He then adds that “to change clothes was to change both one’s being and one’s social class since they were part and parcel of the same thing”. (60) Clothes, therefore, when studied contextually and characteristically, will convey multiple meanings. Each outfit can be regarded as a code that indicates not just the socio-cultural elements but it is also indicative of the psychological state of mind of the person wearing the garment.

Austen lived at a time when clothes determined the class of the person who wore them. Aristocracy wore coats and gowns of fine material. Women wore long skirts and there were different proportions for different parts of the garment. Garments were worn and woven to highlight the form and features of the young ladies. Young ladies in Austen’s days wore large gowns indoors and when they went out they were sure to take along with them their hats or parasols to keep the sun from marring their complexion. Propriety in dress was required of women who went outdoors. Elizabeth’s mother warns her not to go walk to Netherfield Park as the weather would spoil her clothes and she would thus not “be fit to be seen” by the ladies (Austen 29). Austen does not give any elaborate details of the garments worn by the ladies. Her descriptions are limited to a mere mention of their stockings, petticoats, and gowns. Her men are lucky to be presented as wearing colored garments be it blue coats (7) or red military coats (85).

The Bingley ladies are referred to as “fine women with an air of decided fashion” (8). Lady Catherine loved “the distinction of rank preserved” in the clothes worn by people who belonged outside her social circle (157). When Mrs. Bennet hears about Lydia’s marriage being fixed with Wickham, she gets excited thinking about what clothes she ought to buy. She makes an elaborate list of the “calico”, “muslin” and “cambric” needed to complete Lydia’s trousseau (296). Later on, when Elizabeth discloses to her father about being in love with Darcy, Mr. Bennet couldn’t help remarking that she would have “more fine clothes and fine carriages than Jane” (366). A point to be noted here is that *Pride and Prejudice* offers only minutes dabs of color here and there (25) One may thus conclude by alluding to Barthes’ statement in his *The Language of Fashion* that “The wearing of an item of clothing is fundamentally an act of meaning that goes beyond modesty, ornamentation, and protection. It is an act of signification and therefore a profoundly social act right at the very heart of the dialectic of society” (90-91).

Any individual’s social identity is marked not just by the name he has but also by the material wealth he possesses. The cultural landscape of an era is particularly characterized by material artifacts like landed property, vehicles, ornaments, furniture, houses and income of the social group. An examination of the material sources will help us gain knowledge about the sociocultural environment prevalent in that period. Cultural Studies deliberates upon objects that are part of everyday life and everyday life surely includes the material assets. Jane Austen lived at a time when social rank determined the affluence of the individual. The society was divided into different ranks and people of the upper ranks were more privileged with all sorts of luxuries and positions of esteem. Bingley is “the single man in possession of a good fortune” mentioned in the opening lines of the novel. His being a young man of considerable wealth, makes him the eligible bachelor of the neighborhood (Austen 2) till the arrival of his friend Darcy who happened to have an income of “ten thousand a year” (8) The large estate owned by both the gentlemen make them all the more appealing to the people at Longbourn. The little village of Longbourn housed a number of families but Jane Austen specifically mentions the Bennets’ household and the Lucas’ abode, referred to as Lucas Lodge (15).

The grandeur of the Pemberley Estate(236) and the Rosings(237) reveals the high social rank to which Darcy and Lady Catherine belonged.

In the eighteenth century, all “wealth was seen to come from the land.”(Longhurst et.al.114).It was the basis for power and position hence landed gentry were respected. Thus materials help create an identity. Ladies of fortune were sought by men who had little or no money. As per the property laws of that century, the property of a lady would pass onto the husband after marriage (Austen116). The Bingley sisters “had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds”(13) Lady Catherine’s daughter was “the heiress of Rosings and of extensive property”(64) and marriage with her cousin Darcy would unite the property on both sides and make them all the wealthier (80). Miss Darcy’s wealth of “thirty thousand pounds” was the chief objective of Wickham when he planned to elope with the young girl (197).

Since Austen concentrated on etching a novel of manners, she does not give elaborate descriptions of opulent houses. The size of one’s home signified wealth and power. In addition to this, owning a house and land indicated a secure state of affairs. Mr. Collins decides to marry soon after he acquires “a good house and very sufficient income...”(67)Large houses were adorned with gorgeous gardens (244).Gardens signified the grandeur and extent of land owned by the house owner(236). Gardens were spots for rambling(165), for lovers to keep away from interferences(340) and also as a remote place to peruse letters ( 178-9) Mr. Collins compares his parsonage garden with that of his patroness’ garden(152). Lady Catherine refers to Elizabeth’s shrubbery as a “little wilderness”(341). Lady Catherine, a lady of the refined society looks upon the Bennet household with utmost disgust (341),because Elizabeth, according to her was “a young woman without family, connections or fortune”(345) She makes judgements about the rooms in Elizabeth’s house(341) The Pemberley house interiors were open for visitors. “The rooms were lofty and handsome, and their furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor...” (237) Admiring the beauty of the interiors of Darcy’s house she thinks that “to be the mistress of Pemberley might be something!”(236)

Wealth or fortune was an inevitable part of English society during Austen’s days. The younger sons of the upper nobility “could not marrying where they like” because they were financially lean and they looked forward to marry “women of fortune”(179). Young girls of small fortune looked forward to getting married decently. This is what prompted Charlotte Lucas to accept Collins’ proposal even though she had no affection for him (121).The system of entailments left the Bennet girls with a little fortune after their father’s death (25). Mrs. Bennet was eager to get her daughters married into wealthy families because that was the only option for women with less fortune. Wickham was known to be a man who would never marry a woman who had no money (273). The news of Lydia eloping with him vexes Elizabeth because she knew that money was deficient on both sides. By the end of the novel, Mrs. Bennet is delighted because three of her daughters were married off decently (368).

Carriages were also symbols of opulence. It was primarily a means of transportation but it also served as a power symbol. Carriages were the chief means of travel as it was the pre-industrial era and gossiping was the chief recreation while travelling. Owning carriages were indicative of the financial state of the people. Mrs. Bennet comments on the different carriages that Elizabeth would have after her marriage with Darcy (368). Her father remarks that she would be richer than Jane by the “fine carriages” she would possess (366) They were ridden by single, double or four horses. Ladies traveling alone would be accompanied by a male because it was regarded to be “highly improper” otherwise (206). Lady Catherine owned a chaise (341), a carriage (153) and a phaeton (154), all of which she used on different occasions and

different purposes. She measures Elizabeth's social rank by enquiring about "what carriage her father kept, and what had been her mother's maiden name" (215).

Libraries were another socio-cultural symbol. Men and women were expected to engage in reading. Reading provided relaxation (51) and discussions about and on books where means of engaging in a conversation between strangers who met for the first time (168). Mr. Bennet had a library in his house and it is to this place he retired in order to get relief from his wife's trying nature (289) or to take important decisions regarding the marriage of his daughters (108). Mary, Elizabeth's sister had a philosophic mind owing to her habit of reading. After Jane gets engaged to Mr Bingley, Mary "petitioned for the use of the library at Netherfield..." (338) A library with good books was a necessity in Jane Austen's days (51). Austen was known to have a collection of books by various authors at Steventon Rectory (Chawdhry 80) Miss Bingley asks her brother to set up a fine library when he buys a house of his own. Mr Darcy was known to possess "a delightful library at Pemberley" which he regularly improved with books (Austen 34-35)

Lifestyle was determined by the luxuries one possessed. Cultural Studies focuses on the values attributed to objects that constitute everyday life activities (Nayar 38). Fiction deals with everyday life and everyday life are made of materials or objects that convey a particular meaning. Material assets thus help in mapping the cultural scenario of the times and each object is regarded as a text that communicates meanings on different planes. Cultural Studies "engages with the every day as its field of inquiry..."(Nayar 235) and "everyday" includes specific products or objects that determine its the social and cultural contexts.

Culture determines language and language are shaped by culture. "An understanding of human language and communication presupposes an understanding of culture" (Everett 47). Written language is actually a symbolic representation of our thoughts. Literature uses written language or words to convey meanings. "The novelist has to convey exclusively in words what in ordinary conversation we convey by words, the tone of voice, hesitations, facial expression, gesture, bodily posture-and by other means"(Hawthorn 155) This magnificent tool called language enables us to verbally picture the socio-cultural settings in the text. The language of any particular community is distinguished by certain rules known as grammar. A novelist puts words into the mouth of his characters thereby presents to the readers a specific understanding of not just the character of the speaker but also his cultural background.

Chaudhry has commented that "Jane Austen's life as the writer was a long assimilation of the social and moral climate in which she grew"(18). Language is a major means of characterization in Jane Austen's novel. A precision of language is an indication of correct sensibility. The choice of words and sentence construction in Austen's novels reveal a lot about the personality of the character. Mr. Bennet, according to the writer "was an odd mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice..."(Austen 3) The words were spoken by the characters point at the prevalent issues of the period. For example, when Elizabeth rejects Collins' marriage proposal, her mother rebukes her (109) because women of little fortune needed marriage to climb the social ladder. Darcy spoke little and his reserved nature reflects his class distinction (14) Lady Catherine being extremely rich, spoke in an authoritative tone (159) and Elizabeth is the "first creature who had ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence"(162).

In Austen's novel "characters can be left to speak for themselves with no interruption from anyone. This certainly increases the *dramatic* effectiveness of scenes involving dialogue..."(Hawthorn 156). Characters speaking on their own are actually the spokespersons of the writer. Austen's world consists of a multitude of characters etched out in words.

The contrast between the words spoken about and by each character revealed their cultural disparity and social breeding. Collins spoke formally in long round about sentences which would be repeated often (Austen 71) Wickham “immediately fell into conversation” and had the power to charm people with his manners and speech(72) Lydia is presented as “untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy and fearless” (305) Jane’s sweet nature is praised not just by Elizabeth (13) and Mr. Bennet (337) but also by the Bingley sisters (18).

Elizabeth, the heroine, is presented as a vivacious young lady, quick in wit and repartee (48). Through Elizabeth, Austen presented the issues of entailment (25), marriage (109) and class distinctions (160) that affected the women of her days. Words become her weapons in vulnerable situations (54). Austen’s choice of words highlight the condition of women during her time. While at Netherfield, Darcy, Elizabeth, and Miss Bingley discuss the accomplishments of women as follows:

A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word accomplished; 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 (36).

The discussion surely throws light on how women were judged in Austen’s days. Mrs. Gardiner’s advice to her niece throws light on how women of little fortune had to be very cautious in the choice of their partners (140) Austen used language to mildly satirize the world she saw. Her dignified tone transports the readers into the calm, serene English countryside. About three fourths of a chapter is allotted to describe the idyllic grounds of Pemberley estate.

Austen’s characters do not make any references to the physical attributes. Lovers too when in love only blush and become radiant. Austen lived at a time when any overt expression of emotions was not tolerated. Language helps to discern the world inhabited by the characters and also adds a touch of genuineness to the day to day happenings. The novel uses the typical eighteenth-century standard gentry folk utterance. Each of these variants has their own nuances and specifications and these have been clearly transmitted into the text ad labium by the characters. Just as there are clear distinctions between individuals, the language of each person will have its own distinctiveness. Language communicates thoughts. When writers pen down their thoughts, they are actually communicating their ideas and in turn initiating a change in the existing world.

The social customs and practices of any period have mapped the cultural scenario of the times. Socialization refers to the mingling of individuals. Culture is produced and molded by socializing events and interactions. A text may reveal the social customs pertaining to a particular period, hence the reader will be able to view the cultural practices of the milieu. The reader gets an overview of the socialization patterns prevalent in Austen’s times by closely examining the customary socializing aspects mentioned in the texts. Jane Austen’s England of the late eighteenth century was comparatively drier than the present century. Entertainment during Austen’s time vested solely on social events like ballroom dancing, home visits and tour to the countryside. Dancing was central to the society because balls gave an opportunity for youngsters to meet their prospective partners. The young girls were formally introduced into society through these balls. Sixteen was the right age for young girls to come out.

“In Jane Austen’s period, private courtship was often carried out in public places particularly the ballroom” (Chawdhry 81). Match fixing and socialization were the chief objectives of these parties mainly because they were carried out under the supervision of elders. Ballroom parties gave the young girls an occasion to exhibit their accomplishments (Austen 21) while rich single men were made available for families of girls to choose (9). The days following the ball party were spent in discussing the next ball and commenting about the ball that had been over. These discussions were held at the houses of neighbors and relatives. The women would call upon their neighbors house most often (15). Walking was another social activity of those days. It was a means for receiving fresh air and exercise. Elizabeth and her sister love walking in their shrubbery. Walking to Meryton was something that pleased the younger Bennet girls (Austen 84). Walking was an exercise to revive broken spirits and to overcome boredom (52). Reading, singing, needlework (43) and card playing were some of the other common pastimes. Men had outdoor activities like fishing and hunting (Ross 46-55). A chief recreation of women and men of Austen’s days was writing letters. Letters were written to convey invitations, to indicate the arrival of guests, to profess affection for a particular person or even to communicate whereabouts of missing people. Letters were eagerly awaited as there were no other means of conveying urgent messages.

Dining was another major activity. Meal tables were discussion points. The Bennets had their meals together. This was indicative of the filial bond. Meal times were punctuated by discussions of matters of common concern like the ballroom party, the arrival of Collins or the formal invitations to other houses. Dining at large houses gave an opportunity for men and women to reveal their tastes and opinions on everything. There were precise seats allotted to the diners (Austen 159). A family’s social status was indicated by the number of families they dined with (40). Family and marriage were the principal agencies of socialization. To belong to a reputed family meant one was of the refined category. Marriage was essential for women’s survival chiefly because they were not financially independent. “In England, when Jane Austen was writing her novels, the upper middle-class women desirous of independence had few alternatives” (Chawdhry 72). They had to work as a governess, teacher or chaperone, all of which had its own limitations. A woman who eloped with a young man was regarded to be disrespectful for the refined society, hence they had to live in unknown places (Austen 295). Financial security was a prerequisite for happy marriages (1). Being married, gave women a privileged position in society. Lydia, the youngest of the Bennet girls, is the first one to be married. She prides in her higher place when she tells her eldest sister, “Ah, Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower because I am a married woman”. (306) Marriage was thus essential for women’s social up gradation and financial stability. Through her novels, Austen has “given an invaluable picture of the social constraints and matrimonial hopes of her generation”. (Chawdhry 54). Cultural studies describe how people’s “everyday lives are articulated by and with culture.” (Grossberg 8) The cultural codes elaborated above will widen the range of cultural discourses inherent in the text. Culture permeates through every facet of day to day life and cultural signifiers can help illustrate the social, political, economical and geographical contours of significant time zones.

Since the time of its inception films have been characteristically and categorically influenced by literature. Almost all great literary pieces of the world have had their film adaptations till date. It is estimated that about eighty percent of Hollywood movies have derived their lifeblood from classics and bestsellers that belong not just to the present but also to the bygone era. Literature and films are narratives, but there is a distinct way in which each presents a story— one is wholly verbal while the other is a visual and aural semblance. Joe Wright’s film *Pride and*



*Prejudice* was released in 2005. The film has been regarded to be an enchanting on screen adaptation of Jane Austen's novel by the same name.

The relationship between films and literature has mostly been symbiotic in the sense that each one relies on the other for its propagation. Cultural theorists have opined that films and literature can be seen as businesses and cultural vehicles that present figures of gender, race, fashion and class. Despite their similarities and connections, films and literature use materially different ways to describe the world. In both there is a reconstruction of images. When a novel is converted into a film there is a gradual shift from a "uniquely verbal medium" to a "multi-track medium" (Stam 74). A novel is produced by a single person but a film is the collaborative effort of many people. Amy Villarejo has opined that "film is structured like language" (27) In other words a film is made up of a number of units that require close study. Film analysis aims at describing the world on screen. Mise en scene is commonly known to aim towards identifying and isolating the elements of what is put on the screen. It is a French term that can be translated as "staging" or "putting into the screen" (Dix 11). Filmic mise en scene generally coincides with theatrical staging elements like setting, props, lighting, make-up, hair-style, and acting. A comprehensive mise en scene analysis will focus not just on the theatrical components but also on cinematography, the distinct visual attribute that makes the film an innovative medium of expression.

*Pride and Prejudice* was written by Jane Austen in 1813. Two centuries have passed since its publication and yet the charm of this classic novel has not waned. Joe Wright's film by the same name is an Anglo-American production. It is deemed to be a fairly truthful presentation of the novelist's verbal world. The novel runs up to more than three hundred pages and the film's running time is approximately one hour and twenty-one minutes. When a novel is transformed into a motion picture it naturally undergoes many modifications. The task before the director is to realistically portray what the novelist has imagined. Cinema, according to Robert Stam, "becomes a receptacle open to all kinds of literary and pictorial symbolism, to all types of collective representation...and to the infinite play of influences within cinema, within the other arts, and within culture generally."(79)The words in the novel have symbolic meanings. The film, a visual medium, provides little scope for the spectator's imagination. The director rearranges, compresses or adds episodes to present a mirror version of the novel. This is a challenging task specifically because while changes are made the director should be overtly conscious not to stream away from the primary text-the novel.

The paper proposes to substantiate how the cultural codes identified from within the novel have been re-presented within the camera frame. The researcher singled out six cultural codes from the novel. These have aided in delineating the cultural milieu of the texts. This section explores the same how the same facets have been appropriated in the film which are actually an adaptation of the novels. As mentioned above, adaptation has its own short comings. The world of literature and that of cinema are poles apart but the films have strived to bring out the charm of the novels through the charisma of celluloid. According to Robert Stam, the novel is the "source text" and it is "a dense informational network" that provides the "film text" with the "verbal cues" needed to "amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform"(83) from one genre to the other. Thus we notice that the director has the freedom to modify, mediate or mutate events within the primary text.

The movie runs for an hour and half a minutes. The whole story has been condensed to a few shots. The title of the novel is retained in the film versions. It is a clear cut indication that the film maker does not propose to distance his work from that of the novelist. The original significations of the title are maintained. It is also an impasse for the director because he is bound to be doubly conscious not to disturb or deviate from the original thread line of the author's viewpoint.

Thus elaborate characterization and descriptions have to be avoided. The novelistic character undergoes certain changes, chiefly because as Timothy Corrigan has said “a literary character’s appearance, which is originally grounded in words and a reader’s imaginative visualization of those words, is made concrete and visible in a movie”(428).The actors chosen in the film have revived their star value with the release of the film. Keira Knightley was nominated for the Oscar. The actors have striven to make the film memorable and a sure hit in the market. Andrew Dix has said in his *Beginning Film Studies*, that “what concerns star studies is not the flesh -and- blood performer as such but the array of meanings that she generates across platforms....”(199)

The films have an appropriate cast that enables to ‘generate meaning’. The film *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) was the second film version of Austen’s novel. The first one was released in 1940.The researcher has taken Joe Wright’s movie (2005 release) for study because Wright’s film received average reviews due to the presence of the young Knightley and Macfadyen in the lead role. The other memorable figures in the movie are Donald Sutherland, Judi Dench, Brenda Blethyn, Rosamund Pike and Tom Hollander. The prime focus of the film is the heroine, Keira Knightley, who dons the part of Elizabeth Bennet. When Knightley appears in the opening scene on screen, there is what is technically known as high key lighting which aids in noticing not just the beauty of the surroundings but also the captivating charm of the heroine, from whose perspective the film moves on. Austen’s description of Elizabeth’s beauty comes up only in the third chapter. Though Elizabeth is Austen’s chief protagonist, she(Austen) does not attribute undue attention to her. Austen is the omniscient narrator of her tales but the film does not require a narrator. The story unfurls automatically through the scenes on screen. The distinct characteristics of the performers are left to the viewers to decipher. What words elaborated in the text become enactments in the film and the lucidity of performance will help the spectators concretize the verbal images. We will undoubtedly agree with Robert Stam’s opinion that “...the cinematic character is an uncanny amalgam of photogenic, body movement, acting style, and grain of the voice, all amplified and molded by lighting, *mise-en-scene*, and music.”(79)

The food of any particular era provides the texture of the cultural scenario. To evoke the cultural background, the director has given careful attention to the food items eaten or served by or for the actors. In Wright’s movie, one can easily identify the sumptuous meal comprising of Victorian bread, butter, milk, eggs, roasted meat, tea, boiled potatoes and much more. The meals at Rosings are marked by the elaborate dishes served on the table. Food has an expressionistic power in the films. One may easily notice the pleasant, calm, refined manners and etiquettes of the Victorian era, categorically presented in Wright’s film. Food thus helps in conveying social and cultural meanings of the film.

Costume or clothing along with makeup and hairstyle help augment “the believability of a film’s world” (Villarejo 37). The costumes along with the props and settings of the movie help in transporting the viewers into the time period of the novelist. Austen’s eighteenth century gentry folks lifestyle is represented through the attire worn by the characters. Pale colors like white, grey, dull green and peach are worn by the ladies in the movie *Pride and Prejudice*. The costumes reflect the class distinctions vividly. Lady Catherine’s opulence is presented through the black taffeta and gemmed ornaments she has put on. The heroine is mostly presented wearing the loose gown of the Regency period. The white gowns are worn at the ballroom dance party. Women went out wearing hats. The film presents the younger Bennet girls going off to Meryton to buy ribbons for their hats. The director has limited the use of color to enhance the cultural background of Austen’s days. Meryton is represented by focusing on the red colored uniform of the militia. The hairstyles also supplement the visual effect. The hairdos give the film a realistic touch. The attire or the “dress”,

according to Davis et.al., “promotes two forms of the cinematic pleasure—the pleasure of observing the dress and the pleasure of analyzing the dress.”(422) By “analyzing the dress” we can read the meanings that the director articulates through them.

Cinematography includes everything that comes within the purview of the camera. The camera includes within its frame every element necessary to present the tale. This includes the settings and the characters. The settings help create the genuine atmosphere of the work. The locale of the movie has to generally concede with that of the novel. For this, the camera gathers within its focus select spots and things to ‘create’ the world. The production notes of the film have elaborates about the locations where particular scenes were shot. While the camera pans through each scene, one will obviously notice the materials or props that enhance the mood of the film. Andrew Dix has stated that “the chief value of showing a prop such as a cigarette or a parachute is to disclose it in all detailed peculiarity...(14)”The material artifacts identified in the previous section are concretized through the film. The sisterly affections, the monetary distinctions, the geographical differences and the social distinctions existing in the novel have been genuinely preserved in the film version. Through the camera’s lens we perceive the English society of Austen’s days with its ballroom parties, huge mansions, plain households, scenic countryside, carriages, noisy towns, and serene villages. The furniture, crockery and gardens in Wright’s film have the classic regency touch in them.

“In the novel, the line of dialogue stands naked and alone; in the film, the spoken word is attached to its spatial image.”(Bluestone 248) The written language in the novels are actually “read” by the readers while in their films we hear the “speech” of the characters. The audience identifies each voice with the character. Emotions are conveyed through dialogue delivery. The viewer can clearly distinguish the consciously refined speech of Collins, the haughtiness of Lady Catherine, the vivacity of Elizabeth, the aloofness of Darcy, the nervousness of Mrs Bennet, the sarcastic tone in Mr Bennets utterance, the immaturity of Lydia and the meekness of Jane through their dialogue delivery. Language in the film doesn’t generate meaning independently. The cultural setting is charted when dialogue delivery, sounds, silence and music are read simultaneously. The dialogue reflects the way of speaking in a specific historical time and space and thus provides a realistic portrayal of the time.

“Adaptations are like forgeries and translations: they always seem to bear traces of the cultures from which they have emerged” (Hawthorn 188).The films convey the cultural set up of the novels through a number of attributes. The social practices help recreate the world presented by the author. Speech, music and noise within the films, when closely studied, will reveal that they enhance the cultural atmosphere of the films. Film adaptations are primarily undertaken to retain the spirit inherent in the primary texts (novels).The music in Wright’s film was scored by Dario Marianette. There are seventeen sound tracks employed to signify different scenes or moods. Music is a key element as it supplements the settings. The jollity and liveliness of ball room parties are signified through the rhythmic background dance numbers heard on screen. The notes played on the pianoforte vary in tenor depending on the character (Mary, Elizabeth, Miss Darcy).Music conveys the inner most feelings of the characters. For example, Elizabeth’s uneasiness after being spotted by Darcy at his estate is heightened by the ascending violin notes played in the background.

The filmic version of *Pride and Prejudice* has done justice to the basic elements in the novel. The exclusions or inclusions have not disrupted the cultural scenario because they were supplemented by background music, suitable settings and talented performers. Wright's movie has in fact used the social practices to highlight the Victorian social settings. Regency England was marked by ball room dances, visiting neighborhoods and nearby towns, touring around the country, halting at inns, dining and playing card games. The major issues of marriage and entailment, prevalent in Jane Austen's time have been subtly voiced in the film. A film, however engages within its length and breadth the necessary material needed for conveying the storyline. The film, is undoubtedly a new product, hence revisions and additions are permissible.

Cultural life is replete with a number of significations. When a text is analyzed from a cultural perspective, it unveils multiple facets and thereby creates an understanding of the latent activities or processes that are what is commonly known as culture. Culture is constructed by the community as a means to establish power. Power refers to elevated stature. Cultural practices are carried on from generation to generation. Cultural mingling leads to transformation or elimination of certain aspects of culture. Literature helps to revive the cultural attributes of a particular age because they are written in words and words convey meanings. Literature and films when coupled can become a deadly combination of composite cultural attributes. Both focus on life practices and both are strong vehicles of cultural production.

The researcher has identified six cultural points to describe the times of the novelist. Her novel, when read in the twentieth century, does carry within it, the cultural signature of the creator. When remade into films, the daunting task before the director is to retain the essence of the original work. The researcher infers that each cultural vantage point chosen for analysis, conduces ample understanding about the age with all its determining and detrimental aspects. Films primarily focus on the world around us. In other words, everyday activities are mirrored in celluloid. The broad canvas of films has been beneficial in concretizing the novelists' imaginary world. The filmic representation of the novel has enhanced readership and viewership. George Bluestone has argued that "the moment the film went from the animation of stills to telling a story, it was inevitable that fiction would become the ore to be minted by story departments"(240)

To offer a totally comprehensive study of the cultural scenario in the filmic and fiction versions, is practically not possible as it abounds in multiple significations that can be delineated into vivid streams. The paper thereby offers wider scope for researching and retracing the cultural aspects that have been left unsaid. The textual analysis examines how literature and films, both inevitable parts of popular culture, have created subject positions. Drawing from different disciplines, this field of analysis opens up diverse aspects of culture and makes the research all the more interesting. "Transgressing of boundaries among disciplines high and low can make cultural studies just plain fun"(Guerin et.al 278) In this age of multiculturalism, the cultural analysis will surely help in dealing with cultural differences constructively and will also encourage acknowledgement of differences. Culture analysis looks beneath the surface to make explicit the social connotations.

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