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DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

*“Pride and Prejudice vs. Spank Me, Mr. Darcy:
Analysing Variations in Narrative Structure”*

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 190 344 299

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch
UF Psychologie und Philosophie

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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STATUTORY DECLARATION

I declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources / resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Univ.-Prof. i.R. Dr. Ewald Mengel for sparking my interest in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its narrative structure in the first place. His feedback has motivated me to write this thesis to the best of my ability and his comments have helped me to become a more critical analyst.

Secondly, I want to thank my boyfriend Alexander who has supported me not only in the final phase of my studies but since the very beginning. If it were not for him, I am not sure if I would have made it this far. Thus, even though he is not a fan of *Pride and Prejudice*, he comes pretty close to the ideal represented by Mr Darcy.

List of Abbreviations

PP: *Pride and Prejudice*

SMD: *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*

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INTRODUCTION

It is a truth universally acknowledged that everyone writing about *Pride and Prejudice* is tempted to start their work with their own version of the famous opening line.

Approximately since the middle of the 20th century, there has been an increased interest in the 19th-century novel (cf. Southam xiii), with a particular focus on “technical aspects – the form and structure of the novel, its narrative devices, its texture of dialogue and so on” (ibid.). This emphasis also dates back to the 19th century, a period in which “writers began to pay far closer attention to the organisation of their novels” (Milligan 56). The area of research concerned with *how* a novel is told (cf. Verdonk 40) – narratology – seeks to understand the connection between the ‘mechanics’ of a narrative (i.e. how certain components affect the overall structure) and to discover what effects different narrative techniques may have on the functioning of the text as such.

A novel that has been particularly interesting in this context is *Pride and Prejudice* which is often described as “the most brilliant of the six novels” (Bailey 35) written by Austen. According to Königsberg, Austen’s main achievement was to bring into being “a kind of novel that was to become classic in its technique and structure, a work which went beyond its predecessors and became a model against which to measure future novels” (244). Not only is Austen’s place in the literary canon ‘indisputable’ (cf. Birk 8; see also Southam xi), her novels also belong to the most famous literary classics. During the 1990s, Austen’s novels have gained further popularity through the various film and TV adaptations which turned Austen into a “very successful marketable commodity” (Pereira 117). Especially since the 2000s, Austen fans – or ‘Janeites’ – have set up innumerable websites or blogs dedicated to the author herself and her novels (cf. Pereira 117). Several of them are fanfiction forums where people can publish their own stories related to *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, etc.

However, adaptations of her works – *Pride and Prejudice* being the most popular one – are not restricted to the online world because there are countless texts based on her novels which have been published in traditional book-format (though e-books are also quite common). To date, there has been done little research on fanfiction texts or adaptations – especially in the context of narratology (cf. Thomas 10f.) – partly because it is a rather recent development, but also because in general “this literary sub-genre has been widely ignored by literary

criticism” (Mengel 1). Therefore, what I aim to do in this thesis is to procure a “meeting of two worlds, the fannish and the academic” (Hellekson & Busse 1) by comparing Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Trevor’s *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, an erotic adaptation based closely on the original.

Following a narratological approach, my main interest is the narrative structure of the two novels. Thus, I want to answer the following questions: What elements constitute a novel’s narrative structure? Which of those aspects are particularly relevant for *Pride and Prejudice*? Does the narrative structure of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* possess many features present in *Pride and Prejudice*? Considering that adaptations have had a problematic reputation in earlier times and erotic fiction still may be seen as a taboo genre, I regard it as my duty to take on an inclusive stance on adaptations and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* in particular (cf. Mengel 3). For this reason, I want to state clearly that, even though the analysis is based on my personal observations and interpretations, it is not my intention to assess the ‘quality’ of the text or to bash Trevor’s work. Also, given that Austen’s novels have long been in the public domain, “nobody is in a position to control the way in which Austen is interpreted and appropriated” (Rahn 61).

Overall, this thesis is divided into two main parts; the first half (chapters one and two) are more theoretically oriented, the second half (chapters three and four) is intended as a practical application of these theoretical principles. Below, I will provide a closer overview of the contents of the following chapters:

To provide my thesis with a solid base, the first chapter forms the first theoretical frame which focuses on the narrative structure in general and presents its various components, e.g. constituents of the plot structure and narrative strands. Since this is a rather general survey, it will introduce several variations of these aspects, for instance the different types of narrators as well as ways of representing narrative speed.

The topic of the next chapter is the analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* which incorporates both observations by scholars and myself. It is based on the components of narrative structure discussed in the first chapter, although the greatest emphasis lies on the analysis of the plot structure (basic points, narrative strands, narrative devices as well as themes and motifs). I will further analyse the narrative technique applied in *Pride and Prejudice* (type of narrator, voice, perspective and reliability), provide brief characters vignettes and examine how time

is portrayed. Lastly, a number of historical conditions which may have had an impact on both Austen and her writing will be taken into account.

In order to ensure an appropriate treatment of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, the second theoretical frame (chapter three) provides introductions to the three areas with which the novel can be associated: (literary) adaptation, erotica and fanfiction. As a result of the vast amount of fanfiction centred on *Pride and Prejudice*, I have decided to dedicate an extra section to this topic. It gives an overview of elements of Austen's novel which seem to be particularly attractive for fanfic writers, presents the different approaches to fanfiction (prequels, sequels, etc.) and places *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* in the context of 'hybrid' texts which intentionally add 'foreign' elements (sex, paranormal activities) to Austen's storyworlds.

In chapter four, I will conduct a thorough analysis of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. For the sake of clarity and reader-friendliness, it follows the same pattern as the discussion of *Pride and Prejudice*. Since Trevor's adaptation was published under entirely different circumstances, the last section of this chapter will deal with issues addressed in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* which are not included in or relevant for *Pride and Prejudice*. In the final conclusion, the main results of the analysis will be summarised and it will be discussed how Trevor's adaptation affects Austen's material and whether it makes sense (from my perspective) to incorporate open sexuality into a novel based on *Pride and Prejudice*.

Due to the limited scope of this work, it would be an impossible task to cover all the details regarding the similarities and differences between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. Not only that, it would be quite presumptuous to claim that one has *all* the answers. Thus, I have focused my analysis on the narrative elements (including plot structure, narrative technique and temporal structure) of the two novels and their respective historical backgrounds (e.g. publishing conditions in the 18th/19th century and literary adaptation). Given the current popularity of female erotica, it would have also been possible to compare several such rewritings of *Pride and Prejudice* with the early 19th-century traditions of dealing with sexuality. Ultimately, I believe that Austen's novels will continue to excite readers of future generations as well as inspire them to write their own (fan-) fiction.

1. THEORETICAL FRAME I: NARRATIVE STRUCTURE & NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

While it is clear that any form of literary analysis is influenced by a certain theory (structuralism, feminism, etc.) or views a text in the light of a certain issue (e.g. gender, race), it appears that narratology has drowned in the pool of potential theoretical models (see e.g. Cohn 775); Prince & Noble even call it an “explicit lack of interest on the part of classical narratology” (545). Even though it might not be the most popular approach, its goals coincide perfectly with those of this thesis, i.e. “to discover, describe and explain the mechanics of narrative, the elements responsible for its form and functioning” (Prince 1982: 163). As Bamberg puts it, “narrative analysis attempts to systematically relate the narrative means deployed for the function of laying out and making sense of particular kinds of, if not totally unique, experiences” (4). Thus, analysts have to bear in mind two aspects: the narrative means used and the effect achieved by the adoption of a certain narrative technique or device (cf. Bamberg 5). In addition,

[...] the way the components are arranged is to be viewed as a function of the whole. Consequently, the analysis within this analytic frame proceeds from the whole to its parts. The general theme of a narrative is established through the examination of this part-whole relationship typically through multiple readings of the narrative [...]. Through this process the components of a narrative can be divided and undergo their individual analytic scrutiny in addition to relating them to a larger whole. (Bamberg 14f.)

Since it is impossible to cover all narrative means in-depth in one work, the focus will lie on a narrative’s structural elements. Firstly, the general framework of a novel will be discussed; this includes a closer look at elements like titles, beginnings and endings. Secondly, narrative technique will be discussed (i.e. types of narrators, voice and perspective). The third main part is an examination of the portrayal of time in novels. Lastly, I will draw attention to the impact a certain historical context may have on an author’s choices. Generally, the survey follows a top-down approach, starting with general aspects and moving to more specific features. Surely, it only presents a selection of narrative means but should nevertheless yield a solid base for the literary analyses carried out in later chapters. Furthermore, the limitation of aspects provides more possibilities to examine specific features in greater detail which, ultimately, “allows for a better understanding not only of its domain but of its impact on other narrative traits and of the problems and solutions its use brings forth” (Prince 2001: 231).

1.1. Plot structure

The starting point and *condicio sine qua non* of any novel is its plot, making the plot structure the most global aspect of this narrative analysis. Thus, in this context, crucial features like the imitation of real life, multiple narratives and narrative devices will be discussed. In addition, several characteristics of a well-structured plot shall be presented.

At the core of every novel lies the act of storytelling which, for Herman, includes “the representation of particular kinds of temporal sequences and the use of cues that evoke narrative worlds, or storyworlds, marked by the occurrence of disruption-causing or noncanonical events” (16f.). Generally speaking, a “narrative traces paths taken by particularized individuals faced with decision points at one or more temporal junctures in a storyworld; those paths lead to consequences that take shape against a larger backdrop in which other possible paths might have been pursued, but were not” (Herman 19). While Herman seems to put more emphasis on the storyworld and its inhabitants, Hawthorn highlights the imitation of ‘real life’ in literature: “a novel is ‘a fictitious prose narrative or tale of considerable length [...] in which characters and actions representative of the real life of past or present times are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity’” (3; see also Leech 125 & 188). Hawthorn further states that a crucial feature of novels is the “investigation of an issue of human significance in such a manner as allows for complexity of treatment” (3f.).

In order to fulfil this task, one main strand of action may not suffice. Therefore, it may well be that a narrative has one or several sub-plots or narrative strands. How the author deals with them and intertwines them, however, varies immensely. For example, there may be several interconnected narratives or a single narrative that is told by different narrators (cf. Prince 1982: 35). What distinguishes one from the other, though, is that “the one which ultimately introduces all of the others constitutes the main narration; the others are secondary narrations or tertiary ones, etc.” (ibid.).

Another way of structuring a plot – which also contributes to the uniqueness of a novel – is the use of narrative devices. Since there is such a great variety, it would not be productive to discuss each and every one at this point; instead, just a few shall be named here. One of the most popular devices, for example, is the introduction of letters (especially in the context of epistolary novels, cf. Leech 217). Furthermore, what is found in almost every fictional work is the play between the disclosure and concealment of information which is closely related

to the choice of narrator: “The novel presents us with stories, experiences that are new: whereas those who experienced the epic knew what was to occur, when we pick up a novel we hope that our curiosity will be aroused by our wanting to know ‘what happens’” (Hawthorn 9). According to Hawthorn, other typical elements include “*complicity, intrusion and intimacy* – all of which are normally instantly recognized by readers while remaining tricky to analyse” (99; original emphasis). Additionally, authors may introduce themes and motifs – as is the case with pride and prejudice in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Further elements which contribute to a novel’s structuredness have also been described by Leech as criteria for the quality of fiction in general: plausibility (124), consistency (126) and credibility (127).¹ The latter signifies for him “the likelihood, and hence believability, of the fiction as a ‘potential reality’, given that we apply our expectations and inferences about the real world to the fictional happenings” (ibid.). While it may not be a necessity for all kinds of novels, Leech argues that circumstantial detail (the pattern of a certain piece of fabric, the colour of the sky, whether a person has freckles or not, etc.) belongs to the most crucial features of prose fiction (126). This not only makes it easier to envision the storyworld, but also “give[s] us the sense of knowing places, people, times, occasions, etc. as if we were participants or observers ourselves” (ibid.).

Overall, the aspects covered so far apply to the plot as a whole. There are, however, typical framing elements which can be seen as cornerstones and, thus, essential components of any novel which provide it with its unique shape and set the path for the narrative development:

Title

Given that every published text has a title, it might not be the most obvious aspect to take into consideration for an analysis. Thus, there is only sparse literature with regard to this specific topic. In many cases, it almost seems as if the title of a novel were merely a means to refer to a book. However, as Rabinowitz points out: “Titles not only guide our reading process by telling us where to concentrate; they also provide a core around which to organize an interpretation. As a general rule, we approach a book with the expectation that we should formulate an interpretation to which the title is in fact appropriate” (302). Therefore, there will be a short section on each of the titles of the novels analysed in the second part of this paper.

¹ Milligan also adds coherence and unity of actions to this list of criteria (57).

Beginning

After having read the title and perhaps having taken a closer look at the cover page, the next thing the reader encounters are the first lines of the novel, i.e. its beginning. While it does seem like a straight-forward part – any novel has to start *somewhere* – it actually is a rather arbitrary concept since there are no set rules governing until which point the text is regarded as ‘the beginning’ of the novel; the first line, the first paragraph, the first page, the first chapter? Said acknowledges that one may be able to “isolate *a* beginning analytically” (256; original emphasis), but draws more attention to his understanding of beginning a novel which he defines as an author’s “intention to write a novel and not a play or a poem” (ibid.).

Regardless of one’s attitude towards the beginning of novels, it is undeniable that this particular part has gained a considerable amount of interest in the context of literary analysis. The most plausible explanation has been presented by Rabinowitz who attributes this interest to the general conventions of placement:

This is not because those passages are inherently more brilliant or polished or interesting than their companions. Rather, out of all the aphorisms and images that these novels contain, these gain special attention because of their placement. For among the rules that apply quite broadly among nineteenth- and twentieth-century European and American prose narratives are rules that privilege certain positions: titles, beginnings and endings (not only of whole texts, but of subsections as well – volumes, chapters, episodes), epigraphs, and descriptive subtitles. (300)²

Considering the analysis of this aspect, Milligan argues that “[w]e are not here concerned with the interesting psychological question of where, and in what form, the novelist’s material comes from. The student of the novel is more concerned with how he arranges it. At what point will the novel be deemed to begin?” (72) Thus, this question will also return in the second part.

Ending/conclusion

While the beginning of a novel might not be of greatest interest for the reader, the ending certainly is, considering that the whole story leads to this very moment, or what Ricoeur calls the “pole of attraction of the entire development” (40). Following Rabinowitz’ theory of placement introduced above, “readers *assume* that authors put their best thoughts last, and

² Rabinowitz also states that this might not necessarily be the case for *every* novel since “different genres stress different points to different degrees” (303). For example, in detective stories the beginning might be essential to set the scene and introduce a crime that has been committed, but the resolution of the crime (Who dunnit?) and the identification of the criminal/murderer is ultimately of greater importance for the genre.

thus *assign* a special value to the final pages of a text” (304; original emphasis). Additionally, they may give the readers a new perspective on the whole story and their interpretation of it (cf. Rabinowitz 303). This also seems to be one of the reasons why instead of ‘ending’ the term ‘conclusion’ is often used to signify the point where all narrative strands come together. Depending on the reader’s expectations, a conclusion may be satisfying or disappointing but it should never be predictable (cf. Ricoeur 40). Considering the widely spread genre conventions of e.g. romantic fiction, the ending may be foreseeable to some degree (the typical boy-gets-girl or girl-gets-boy plot), but the individual circumstances and turning points usually are not. Therefore, plausibility seems to be a more significant property than unpredictability: “Looking back from the conclusion to the episodes leading up to it, we have to be able to say that this ending required these sorts of events and this chain of actions” (ibid.). This does not only link back to the general qualities a novel should have (plausibility, consistency and credibility; see above), but will also be part of the analyses later on.

1.2. Narrative technique

In the previous chapter, the focus has mostly been on *what* is told; in this chapter, the focus will lie on the *how*. This element is called the narrative technique and “includes such matters as the choice of narrator and narrative situation, selection and variation of perspective and voice (or ‘point of view’), implied narrative *medium*, linguistic register (for example, the choice between colloquial or formal language), and techniques such as Free Indirect Discourse” (Hawthorn 86f.; original emphasis). Since the overall interest of this thesis is the narrative structure of a novel, this section will devote the most attention to the types of narrators as well as the difference between point of view and perspective. The representation of speech and thought will also be discussed, but will not be included in the later analyses because it falls more into the linguistic practice of stylistics which places greater emphasis on linguistic features and their effect on a piece of literature (cf. Verdonk 50-53).

Even though the adoption of a narrative technique may appear like a rather straight-forward issue, it also implies a certain “manipulative potential of perspective [...] to represent characters, events, and settings of a novel or short story” (Verdonk 30). In this sense, the author may use the narrator to influence e.g. the readers’ attitude towards a character or their interpretation of a situation and its consequences. Considering this degree of ‘influence’ on the overall perception of the novel, it is no surprise that “any change in the perspective or

point of view from which a fictional world is presented will result in a different story and give rise to a different interpretation” (ibid.). Hence, the choice of narrator in the selected novels will be of great interest for the analysis.

Before moving on to discuss the different types of narrators and a few aspects of narrative situation in more detail, a side note on the differentiation between author and narrator seems practical.

What distinguishes fiction the most from ‘regular’ non-literary texts is the presence of a narrator. Although the differentiation between author and narrator has become the standard view nowadays (cf. Leech 210 or Verdonk 31), the issue shall be touched upon in this short aside. As Leech points out, every fiction-writer “has to make decisions on such matters as how much information to give, what kind of information to give, and in what order to present the information” (124). The task of the actual ‘telling’ is then transferred onto the narrating persona (cf. Hawthorn 86) who can take on different types of ‘personalities’³; some may be more prominent (e.g. by making explicit remarks directed at the reader), some may refrain from these comments (cf. Leech 230). Still, it is the author him- or herself who makes the decisions – not the narrator (cf. Milligan 65f.). This makes it “complex and problematic to determine to what extent opinions expressed in a novel do or do not represent the view of its real-life author” (Hawthorn 9). For this reason, Milligan proposes that “it is well to remember that his [or her] appearance is carefully tailored to suit the particular purposes of the book” (66).

1.2.1. Types of narrators

In the context of the narrative technique, the choice of narrator certainly is one of the most important decisions as it has a significant impact on the novel as a whole. Hence, it is not surprising that there are several facets which constitute the ‘nature’ of the narrator as well as different views regarding the classification of different types of narrators. In order to form a basis for the analytic work to be done later, the various perspectives will be discussed first. Even though this topic is treated in many different ways, I will limit this survey to the three most common ways of categorising narrators: hetero- and homodiegetic narrators, first- and third-person narrators as well as reliable and unreliable narrators.

³ For more information of the discourse situation of narratives, see e.g. Leech 206-217.

The differentiation between hetero- and homodiegetic – or intra-fictional and extra-fictional (cf. Hawthorn 91) – narrators solely specifies whether the narrating personae are “alien (*hetero-*) to the world of the stories they tell” (Cohn 790; original emphasis) or live in the same world (*homo-*) as the other characters.

Perhaps the most common terminology in this context is the distinction between first- and third-person narrators. As is well known, in the case of first-person narration, the ‘I’ is the main character and can, thus, be classified as a homodiegetic or intra-fictional character. Consequently, this is a rather limited perspective since he or she “has no special access to the minds of the other characters involved” (Milligan 63) – given that the storyworld adheres to the principles of the real world. However, the most prominent effect of this style of narration is that “[t]he language draws us into the fictional world and we become, in a sense, participants in it” (Verdonk 34). Typically, this also “produces a personal relationship with the reader which inevitably tends to bias the reader in favour of the narrator/character” (Leech 213). As has been indicated with regard to the narrative technique in general, this closer relationship may be used to mislead or manipulate the reader to take on “views he [or she] would not normally hold for the duration of the story” (ibid.).

In contrast, there is no ‘I’ in a third-person narration; instead the story is “told from a source external to the world of the novel and generally unpersonified” (Hawthorn 88; see also Leech 213) even though intrusions by the narrator (e.g. remarks on a character or a situation) are possible – this depends on the author’s conception of the narrating persona. Since narrators of this kind are not immediately involved in the action, they are often accredited with omniscience, a term which “is often used in a loose way to indicate any work in which the narrative has access to that which – like a character’s secret thoughts – is normally concealed to observers in the real world” (Hawthorn 88). As Leech puts it, omniscience “means merely that there is no detail which he [the narrator] is not at liberty to specify if he so wishes, whether or not it would be available to the mind of a particular participant or onlooker” (128). Usually, though, the omniscient narrator will not share all of his/her knowledge since this would remove all suspense from the novel and obliterate the purpose of reading it in the first place.⁴ Rather, a third-person narrator will “‘appear to disappear’” (Leech 215) which

⁴ Considering that omniscient narrators do not always make use of their unlimited knowledge, Ferguson feels “obliged to refer to them as ‘limited’ omniscient narrators, in an oxymoron both logically invalid and critically unworkable” (233).

may well be the reason why, for a long time, author and narrator were thought to be the same (cf. Leech 213f.).

In addition, it is possible to distinguish narrators on the basis of their reliability – irrespectively of the type of the narrator. Usually, third-person or heterodiegetic narrators are reckoned to be the most reliable due to their non-engagement in the action. In a similar fashion, first-person or homodiegetic narrators may be considered less reliable since they are recounting their own story or are – at least – involved in it (cf. Verdonk 41). Authors may, however, choose to use the knowledge of these conventions ‘against’ the reader (cf. Prince 1982: 52). Whether a given narrator is trustworthy or not, he/she should be so throughout the novel *consistently*: “An inconsistent narrator cannot, logically, be wholly reliable, although we may recognize in fiction as in life that inconsistency may be the result of a continued and painful attempt to be truthful and accurate” (Hawthorn 98). Hence, it is not advisable to put blind trust in everything narrated.

1.2.2. Point of view or voice and perspective?

While the different types of narrators are firmly established, it appears that ‘point of view’ (POV), ‘voice’ and ‘perspective’ are rather ambiguous terms. Verdonk, for example, states that “the most important formal aspect is the author’s choice of perspective” (40). For this reason, this chapter will focus on what research has been done with regard to this aspect of narrative technique.

The point of view, as argued by Milligan, is related to a novel’s unity and stands for ““the angle from which a fictional work is narrated”” (57f.), which can be *internal*, *external* or *unrestricted*. Again, these are extremely similar to the already established categories discussed above. One main difference may be that the point of view from which a novel is told is variable (cf. Hawthorn 106). Thus, Prince proposes to use these categories only when talking about parts of a narrative and not the narrative as a whole (1982: 52; see also Verdonk 43).

First-person narrators necessarily tell their story from an internal POV; thus, “everything is presented strictly in terms of the knowledge, feelings and perceptions of one or several characters” (Prince 1982: 51). Prince adds that the internal point of view may be fixed to a single character, variable between several characters in turn or multiple in the sense that “the same events or series of events, is narrated more than once, each time in terms of a different

perspective” (Prince 1982: 52). External and unrestricted point of view both apply to third-person narrators and provide information about how much knowledge the narrative persona possesses. A narrator with an external – or objective – POV “presents everything strictly from the outside; thus, he would describe a given character’s actions or physical appearance, for instance, but he would not describe the character’s feelings or thoughts. Obviously, the narrator then tells less about certain situations than one or several characters (could) know and tell” (Prince 1982: 52; see also Verdonk 41). An omniscient narrator with an unrestricted POV “tells more than any and all the characters (could) know and tell at the time of the situation described” (Prince 1982: 51). In most cases, however, the scope of the narrator will be restricted in the sense that the thoughts and experiences of only one or two characters (focal characters) are disclosed (cf. Milligan 58).

Over time, the terms ‘voice’ and ‘perspective’ have been introduced with the intention of replacing the already existing ‘point of view’ as it was considered too obscure (cf. Hawthorn 103). According to Hawthorn, voice signifies who ‘speaks’ and perspective who ‘sees’ (ibid.). In a first-person narration, voice and perspective might coincide as it is the narrator who both sees and speaks.⁵ Therefore, the distinction will be of greater use in the context of third-person narratives where it is the narrator who speaks, but who may do so from the perspective of one (or more) selected character(s).

Overall, the angle from which a novel is told does not only determine what is recounted and in which manner but also how we as readers process and interpret this information (cf. Prince 1982: 54). Moreover, as Hawthorn points out, “different narrators, different narrative media *change* a story; they affect not just how we are told something but what we are told, and what attitude we take towards what we are told” (95; original emphasis). To illustrate the impact the choice of perspective may have on a given novel, Hawthorn proposes to perform a transposition test, i.e. “transposing a novel (in one’s imagination) from one ‘camera angle’ to another” (104). Shifting the narration from an internal to an external perspective – or vice versa – may in all possibility lead to interesting discoveries as well as offer valuable clues to the author’s intentions concerning the narrative structure.

⁵ According to Verdonk, this instantly implies that the narrator “adopts a subjective perspective on events” (41) which could be argued to be a potential disadvantage with regard to the narrator’s credibility.

1.2.3. Representation of speech and thought

The choice of narrator does not only affect how a story is told but also how speech and thought are mediated. Since the readers are not participants in the novel and, thus, cannot access the characters' minds – like an omniscient narrator might – they are reliant on the narrator's recounting of spoken words and representation of (hidden) thoughts.

With regard to the representation of speech, there are two main methods to be applied. On the one hand, the narrator may use direct speech and let the characters speak for themselves (cf. Verdonk 45f.). While this puts the narrator a little more in the background, Verdonk argues that he or she "is still there pulling the strings" (46). On the other hand, it is also possible for the narrator to "[report] only the content of what the character has said, but not its exact wording" (Verdonk 47) using indirect speech. This allows the narrator to exert more control over the characters' 'speaking time' so to say and how they are received by the reader (e.g. as active or rather passive).

Similarly to the representation of speech, there are two popular ways a narrator can decide to pass on a character's thoughts. Firstly, he or she might do so in a direct way. In a first-person narrative, this would mean that the protagonist openly shares his or her immediate thoughts, either in a certain moment or in retrospect. In a third-person narrative, this becomes somewhat tricky as this "presuppose[s] a privileged omniscience on the part of the narrator" (Verdonk 46). Verdonk further argues that the representation of indirect thought "presupposes an even greater degree of narrator initiative" (47) since he/she would need to be in a position to not only have access to a character's thoughts but also have the ability to 'edit' them before sharing them with the readers.

Overall, this goes to show that the representation of thought is a significantly more complex undertaking than the representation of speech. The major reason for this seems to lie in the inward and individual nature of thoughts and thought processes. Thus, in any novel written from an external perspective the narrator will "describe things which it is quite impossible to observe" (Verdonk 41). Verdonk describes this practice as a "convergence of what would conventionally be distinct perspectives: a third-person expression of third-person experience" (42).

A method which essentially works with this merging of voice and perspective is Free Indirect Discourse (FID). While the other two ways of thought representation may also be used in other contexts, Free Indirect Discourse is used in literary writing only (cf. Verdonk 48).

FID brings into convergence the perspectives which would conventionally be kept distinct: that of the narrator looking on and that of the inner experience of the character. So on the one hand we can sense the presence of an intruding narrator who mediates between character and reader, whereas on the other hand we can also detect vestiges of the character's original speech or thought. Obviously, this double-edged reading experience may cause ambiguity as to whose voice we are hearing. In other words, can we attribute what we read to the narrator or to the character, or to both? This ambiguity may occur particularly when sentences or clauses with FID features are interspersed with what looks like straightforward third-person narrative. This gives FID a rich potential for literary effects such as irony. It is not surprising, therefore, that since the time of Jane Austen (who actually developed it) this technique has become particularly prominent in modern fiction. (ibid.)

Following Verdonk's argument, Free Indirect Discourse is not only the most popular of the three ways of representing speech and thought but also the most complex one. Reading a novel written in this particular style certainly demands more attention to details and/or contextual information from readers when it is not clearly indicated *who* is speaking or *whose* thoughts are reported (cf. Verdonk 50). Therefore, similarly to the choice of narrator, applying one method of speech or thought representation or another ultimately links back to the author's style and the kind of effect he/she intends to achieve.

1.3. Time

Perhaps the least commonly discussed aspect of narrative structure is time. Even though "narrativity and temporality are closely related" (Ricoeur 35), it is not often treated explicitly in the typical literary analysis, but can, nonetheless, provide valuable insights into the structure and organisation of a novel. The governing principle concerning the order of events is "chronological sequencing which says that textual time imitates real time: that if A comes before B in the model of reality, then A comes before B in the text." (Leech 188) In most cases, the events are presented on a linear time-scale (cf. Milligan 73). However, this linear movement from beginning to ending may be interrupted by analepses (flashbacks), leaps in time or prolepses (flashforwards). Thus, for the purpose of the analysis of time it is important to pay close attention to the use of time deictics (e.g. words like now, then, tomorrow, yesterday, etc.; cf. Verdonk 35). Another aspect that should not be neglected is the actual time frame that is covered in a novel; this can vary from one day (e.g. Joyce's *Ulysses* or Hailey's *Airport*) to several days (e.g. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*) to a few years (e.g. McEwan's *Atonement*) up to even two billion years (e.g. Stapledon's *Last and First Men*).

In addition, time may be expressed through the speed of narration which can be described as the “relationship between the duration of the narrated – the (approximate) time the events recounted go on or are thought to go on – and the length of the narrative (in words, lines, or pages, for instances)” (Prince 1982: 55).⁶ Milligan, for example, proposes guiding questions for the analysis of how the author handles time:

When will the novelist choose to linger over the scenes he is creating; when will it be sufficient to summarise the events which have brought his characters to the point from which the novel begins; will the action be reported as it is known in hindsight and in its completeness; will it be recounted step-by-step in a linear fashion, or will there be foreshadowings, or even revelations of the outcome? (72)

Generally speaking, there are three main ways of portraying time in fiction: *Ellipsis* means that “no part of the narrative corresponds to a particular event that took time” (Prince 1982: 55) and is the ‘fastest’ way to portray time since the narration of several events is omitted completely. *Scene* implies “(some sort of) an equivalence between a narrative segment and the narrated it represents” (Prince 1982: 56), e.g. providing a full conversation between two or more characters in ‘real’ time. This technique is particularly common in dramas. If “some part of the narrative corresponds to no elapsing of narrated time” (Prince 1982: 55), this is called a *pause* and may, for example, come to use when the narrator makes a comment regarding the outside of the storyworld or provides an extended description of a character or a setting. Prince also states two more techniques which cover the in-between of the three main ways:

we may speak of *summary* to cover the many cases situated between ellipsis and scene and we may speak of *stretch* to cover the many cases situated between scene and pause. Specifically, a relatively short segment of narrative may correspond to a relatively long narrated time (or to a narrated action that is usually completed slowly) and a relatively long segment of narrative may correspond to a relatively short narrated time (or to a narrated action that is usually completed quickly). (1982: 56; my emphasis)

These are, however, not absolute categories but rather reflect “the relation between this segment and what it could have or should have been” (Prince & Noble 544). Since travels usually take longer (especially in earlier centuries), they are usually summarised because – in most cases – the time spent on the airplane or in the carriage is not particularly relevant for the development of the plot. In contrast, a stretch may be used to ‘linger’ over a scene (cf. Milligan 72) or to draw attention to a particular event, e.g. staring out the window or

⁶ What narrative speed does not refer to, though, is the time taken to write or to read the novel (cf. Prince 1982: 54).

admiring the appearance of a loved one. Ultimately, these two methods do not only provide the author with more nuanced ways of conveying time but especially the alternation of scene and summary is a characteristic of narrative fiction (cf. Prince 1982: 58). To further illustrate the connection between the techniques mentioned, I have created the graphic below.



Fig. 1: Visualisation of narrative speed

Overall, how the reader experiences time in a novel is highly individual (cf. Prince 1982: 57). Furthermore, “[t]he speed at which the narrated unfolds clearly has implications for our processing and evaluating that narrated and for our response to the narrative as a whole. Thus, the more detailed the account of an event seems, the more foregrounded that event is and the more importance it takes” (Prince 1982: 59). This convention may as well, however, be exploited by the author to manipulate the reader’s initial impression by passing quickly over important aspects and/or extending scenes that are not directly relevant (cf. *ibid.*). Thus, as has been shown in this chapter, time is an essential part of any narrative and will, therefore, return as an object of study in the analyses.

1.4. Historical context

On the whole, the elements of the narrative structure remain the same. However, this does not mean that single aspects are not subject to change - quite the contrary is true. For example, when Henry Fielding started to work on *Joseph Andrews*, the novel was not a genre like it is today (see e.g. Jones 5). Moreover, “[t]he rise of the epistolary novel in the eighteenth century cannot be understood apart from the much greater importance of letter-writing at that time, and the emergence of the stream of consciousness novel in the twentieth century has to be related to the development of modern psychology and the increasing interest in mental operations that accompanies it” (Hawthorn 107). Thus, it is not only important but essential to “see narrative techniques in their historical context and development, as well as appreciating the ‘internal’, technical reasons for developments in narrative technique” (*ibid.*). Hawthorn also discusses four factors for assessing the significance of a particular narrative technique: “[c]hanges in the dominant modes of human communication”, “[t]he effect of different world-views, philosophies, and ideologies”,

“[c]hanges in readership patterns and habits” and “[l]arger changes in human life and modes of consciousness” (ibid.)

In addition to the aspects of narrative technique, the interpretations thereof may change as well. As Verdonk points out, “we make sense of a text by relating it to the context of our knowledge, emotions, and experience” (30). Thus, understandings will vary greatly between individuals since everyone approaches a novel with a different background knowledge, attitude, etc. However, interpretations may differ even more if the publication of the novel in question dates back several decades or even centuries. Contemporaries will perhaps be more adept at picking up subtle hints to current events the author may have included, while ‘later’ readers may have to rely on forewords or introductory books. Ultimately, though, “there can be no single, final, true, authorized response to a complex novel” (Hawthorn 7). Hence, in the following analyses, all claims will be based either on textual evidence from the novels themselves or on interpretations by scholars in the field of literature.

2. NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*

Usually, when asked about *Pride and Prejudice*, most people will describe it as the love story between the proud Mr Darcy and the free-spirited Elizabeth Bennet (cf. Teachman 1). More advanced readers may also mention Elizabeth's sisters and the precarious situation of her family. Similarly, "[i]f you ask someone familiar with *Pride and Prejudice* to quote a line from the novel, the odds are that you will get the opening sentence" (Rabinowitz 300; original emphasis). Thus, what I intend to show in this chapter is that there is not only *so much* more to the novel than the 'prototypical' love story, but also the ways "Jane Austen arranges her material into the unique and distinctive form of *Pride and Prejudice*" (Milligan 74; original emphasis).

Overall, the aim of this chapter is to determine the most important aspects of the narrative structure of *Pride and Prejudice* and how Austen's choices with regard to these aspects affect the novel as a whole. Furthermore, I want to draw attention to the general structuredness of the novel and how the different facets are interrelated. In view of the analyses to follow, this chapter also serves as a basis for my interpretation of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* and the comparison of narrative structures.

Following the sequence of the previous chapter, I will start with a discussion of the plot structure, including the basic points of the novel (e.g. the famous first line, turning points), main and additional storylines, narrative devices (e.g. handling of information, importance of letters) as well as recurring themes and motifs (obviously pride and prejudice, but also the entail). The next section will deal with the narrative technique, especially with the narrative persona, Elizabeth as a focal character and the question of the narrator's reliability. In the third section, I will provide a short portrayal of a few characters who seem particularly important for the functioning of the plot. This will be followed by an examination of narrative time, i.e. the time frame of the novel and the speed of narration. The last element of this chapter consists of an investigation of the historical context of *Pride and Prejudice*. The purpose of this survey is to highlight how, e.g. literary conventions, the publishing market of the 18th/19th century or the perception of marriage had a considerable impact on Austen's writing and the composition of *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.1. Plot structure

With regard to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, there are several different layers to its structure. The base layer, so to say, would be the material Jane Austen worked with. As is well known, the storyworld of the novel is a rather small one which basically consists of a few families in a few towns. According to Milligan, “Austen made a famous remark to the effect that five families in a village was just the kind of material she like to work on. But even such a small group could provide material for many volumes” (57). As Wright sees it, Austen wrote about things she knew and was well acquainted with: “Working with materials extremely limited in themselves, she develops themes of the broadest significance” (1). Opinions on this ‘deliberate limitation’ vary, though, and depend on the individual’s perspective; those in favour of Austen find the material quite sufficient while those not in favour “complain that the country gentry cannot possibly yield anything of surpassing value” (Wright 10).

Regardless of the amount of selected material, however, the plot follows a ‘principle of composition’ (cf. Milligan 78) which spurs on the action. In *Pride and Prejudice*, this is “the author’s interest in discovering how hero and heroine come to know one another” (Milligan 86) or, in other words, “the movement [...] from separation to unity, from instability to stability” (Konigsberg 218f.). Here, this movement is divided into three volumes and, in total, 61 chapters. Milligan interprets this arrangement as follows:

The method of publication of *Pride and Prejudice* in three volumes has influenced the way the novelist has shaped it in three consecutive and cumulative sections. The first of these ends with Elizabeth’s refusal to marry Mr Collins, the acceptance of him by Charlotte Lucas and the uncertainty about Bingley’s interest in Jane. The second volume of the novel consists of journeys: Jane visits London; Elizabeth visits the new Mrs Collins. It reaches a climax in Elizabeth’s refusal of Mr Darcy and ends with her preparing to visit Derbyshire with her aunt and uncle. The final volume is one of interruptions, of surprise, of confusion and suspense. Elizabeth’s visit to Pemberley, which brings her again into the company of Darcy, is interrupted by news of Lydia’s elopement with Wickham. Darcy’s help in resolving this affair leads Elizabeth to reappraise his conduct, and despite an unhelpful intervention by Lady Catherine de Bourgh, they are reconciled and engaged. The novel ends happily with Jane’s engagement to Bingley. (88f.; original emphasis)

In addition, Konigsberg argues that the first half focuses more on the characters and their personalities and that earlier chapters are more devoted to single events (248). As soon as Elizabeth sees the ‘real’ Darcy, “the novel’s design moves to completion” (Konigsberg 249). Consequently, there are no witty conversations between Elizabeth and Darcy anymore.

A further structuring effect is the introduction of ‘separate spheres’, an 18th-century concept of gender (cf. Jones 14). In the traditional view, women were associated with a domestic context while men conquered the external ‘world’. Austen, however, created her own version of it. First and foremost, the plots “of Jane Austen novels are driven by female wants and needs” (Gill & Gregory 137). Thus, the main protagonists are women and the male characters are only auxiliary. Moreover, there is not a single narrated event with only male characters in *Pride and Prejudice* (cf. Wright 18); there are conversations between men (e.g. Darcy and Bingley) – but only when women are present as well (cf. Wright 56).⁷

In addition to these aspects which apply to the plot in general, there are three main elements of the plot structure which will be discussed in the following: the novel’s basic points (title, beginning, turning points and conclusion), the main narrative and the sub-plots as well as Austen’s use of narrative devices.

2.1.1. Basic points

2.1.1.1. Title

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, titles have two main functions: raising expectations and focusing the reader’s attention on certain facets (cf. Rabinowitz 302). Thus, when approaching a novel called *Pride and Prejudice* it seems likely that the plot will deal with pride and prejudice in one form or another. Woloch, for example, emphasises the inherent juxtaposition (53f.) and the “process of interior character development” (55) which he defines as a search for the ‘happy medium’ between two extremes: “This process accommodates itself perfectly with an asymmetrical structure of characterization, as various minor characters exemplify certain traits or ways of thinking that the protagonist must learn to discard” (ibid.).

Had the novel been published with its first (working) title ‘First Impressions’, this would have produced quite a different effect. While Konigsberg argues that it “tells us as much about the larger issues of the work as its final title” (219), I find that it shifts the focus onto the first encounters between characters. Rabinowitz proposes a similar argument:

With the early title, we would have been more alert to the elements *common* to Darcy and Elizabeth than to their differences [...], and we would be more prepared on first reading to see Elizabeth’s reaction to Wickham as part of the same package as her

⁷ In her introduction to the 2003 Penguin edition of *Pride and Prejudice* – which I am using – Vivien Jones discusses whether this prioritising of women may be seen as a feminist tendency of Austen’s writing.

reaction to Darcy. In addition, the title *Pride and Prejudice* prompts us to concentrate on character, whereas *First Impressions* encourages us to concentrate on plot – more specifically, on change. Pride and prejudice are static qualities that may or may not be transformed, but first impressions imply the existence of second (and different) impressions. (Rabinowitz 301; original emphasis)

While first impressions do have a considerable impact on the story (e.g. Elizabeth and Darcy's first meeting at the Meryton assembly), the overcoming of the protagonists' 'weaknesses' appears to be of greater importance with regard to the overall plot.

2.1.1.2. Beginning

In the history of literature, *Pride and Prejudice* has probably one of the most well-known beginnings: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (PP 5). According to Teachman's interpretation, this single sentence introduces a variety of central issues which are crucial to *Pride and Prejudice*: "marriage, wealth, class, property, propriety, and a debate over the existence of universal truth" (1). Similarly, Woloch sees it as an "encapsulation of the marriage plot" (57) and even as an inherent reference to a 'happy ending'. Brownstein, however, advances a more critical view which I also support:

As critics have enjoyed pointing out, that sentence is full of logical holes: a truth universally *acknowledged* is probably less than true; and the real truth is not that single men want wives ('in want of' merely means they lack them) but that poor young women need husbands [...]. Far from describing the state of affairs even around Meryton, that sonorous first sentence, taken at face value, expresses the gossip's fantasy that women exchange or traffic in men; and not vice versa. The novel takes off, in other words, from Mrs. Bennet's notion (or is it only what Mrs. Bennet pretends to believe?): that rich men exist for people to marry. Its irony further suggests that the universal acceptance of this idea may make it operatively true – that what authorities say, and most people acknowledge, matters." (50; original emphasis)⁸

What is most often neglected, though, is that Jane Austen intended the first two sentences – both of which occupy their own paragraph – "as a pair, versicle and response" (Jenkyns 4). Thus, one could argue that the first sentence introduces the marriage plot and that the second adds a subplot which investigates "'Whom – among many different choices – will the single man marry?'" (Woloch 57). Interestingly enough, there are quite opposing interpretations of the novel's initial setting. Following Gill & Gregory, *Pride and Prejudice* "opens in a mood of expectation" (128) due to the arrival of a 'man in possession of a good fortune' (Bingley), who is then succeeded by a man of even greater fortune (Darcy). Milligan, in contrast, argues

⁸ Jones also attributes this notion to Mrs Bennet (95).

that it “begins by disrupting a settled pattern of family life and ends after establishing a quite new pattern of settled families” (89).

Even though the first two sentences are the most popular parts of the first chapter, the majority of it actually consists of a conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet – *of course* about the new man in town and Mrs Bennet’s schemes of Bingley marrying one of her daughters. The chapter ends with a character vignette (cf. Jenkins 3) of the pair: “Juxtaposed against the clipped conversation, this description announces the omniscient narrator’s analytic seriousness, showing us that the novel will not be concerned simply with presenting surface appearances but will scrutinize its characters’ essential qualities” (Woloch 50).⁹ Jenkins describes the narrator’s judgement as “beautifully unmanipulative because it crystallizes and clarifies what we suspect that we have already learnt from listening to them talking to each other” (3).

2.1.1.3. Turning points

As in all other novels, there are numerous crucial moments throughout *Pride and Prejudice*. The most important one seems to be Darcy’s (first) proposal which Elizabeth – to his surprise – refuses: “In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you” (PP 185). In most typical romantic novels, this would not only be the climax but also probably the gateway for the happy ending. Not in this case though; Darcy’s first proposal is situated exactly in the middle of the novel. Since Elizabeth’s mind is still controlled by her “deeply-rooted dislike” (PP 185) for Darcy at this point, there has to happen something which will not only change her mind but that will also bring them together.

Hence, not much time passes between the climax and the first major turning point: in the morning of the next day, Darcy hands Elizabeth his letter (PP 191-197) which prompts her to “[come] to realizations about her false perceptions, about her inadequate ‘discernment’ (p. 156); it is here that she must ‘see’ all the events and characters of the novel over again” (Königsberg 221); this moment determines the rest of the story (cf. Königsberg 233). Königsberg draws further attention to the skilful portrayal of Elizabeth during this scene: “An amazed but resolute Elizabeth stands apart in our mind’s eye, letter in hand, while at the same time we are inside her, identifying with her as her thoughts pass through our own minds, as we perceive with her an image of Darcy and, soon after, images of the events at

⁹ Woloch also provides an in-depth linguistic analysis of this paragraph (50).

Netherfield” (237). Still, even though we know that Elizabeth will end up with Darcy, she does not but certainly hopes so.

These hopes are, however, seriously threatened by another turning point and the most disconcerting event for the Bennet family (cf. Gill & Gregory 130) – Lydia’s elopement – which Elizabeth comes to know of by a letter from Jane (PP 260-262). Not only do Lydia’s actions compromise her own reputation but also that of her sisters. What is worse is that she does not even realise the amount of harm she has caused. As a result of her hopelessness, Elizabeth shares the ‘dreadful news’ (PP 263) with Darcy. Gill & Gregory indicate that “Darcy’s silent inwardness, in fact, forms one of the novel’s most important proleptic moments; it is only when Elizabeth has accepted him at the close of the novel that he reveals what was the actual subject of his mediation” (130).

A further and – fortunately – more favourable turning point is Darcy’s unexpected appearance at Pemberley while Elizabeth and the Gardiners visit the estate (cf. Gill & Gregory 137):

They were within twenty yards of each other, and so abrupt was his appearance, that it was impossible to avoid his sight. Their eyes instantly met, and the cheeks of each were overspread with the deepest blush. He absolutely started, and for a moment seemed immovable from surprise; but shortly recovering himself, advanced the party, and spoke to Elizabeth, if not in terms of perfect composure, at least of perfect civility. (PP 240f.)

While Elizabeth is “overpowered by shame and vexation” (PP 241), it is *the* opportunity for Darcy to show his real self and to change Elizabeth’s perception of him. Ultimately, all of these obstacles and crucial moments provoke the protagonists’ development and lead to their union at the ending.

2.1.1.4. Conclusion

Despite the novel’s strong focus on marriage, it does not end with Elizabeth and Darcy as the happy couple but their gratitude towards the Gardiners “who, by bringing her into Derbyshire, had been the means of uniting them” (PP 367; cf. Jones 23). With regard to the conclusion, Brown points out that “whatever elements of reward and punishment do arise in Jane Austen’s conclusions are presented as the logical outcome of the temperament as well as values, of the characters themselves, rather than as the externally applied artifices of poetic justice” (1584). Waldron, however, focuses on the consequences of the marriage between Lydia and Wickham as well as the impact of the families on Elizabeth and Darcy:

While foregrounding the happiness of the arrangements, Austen never quite allows us to forget the multiple problems which the alliances bring, especially for Darcy. Avoiding contact with Wickham, especially for his sister, while supporting Lydia ‘for Elizabeth’s sake’ would be a major headache; but keeping Lydia and Kitty apart, coping with Mr Bennet’s unheralded visits and reducing the meetings of Lady Catherine and Mrs Bennet to the unavoidable minimum must have made the Pemberley guest-list extremely complicated. It is significant that the novel ends with a reference to Darcy’s ease and intimacy with the Gardiners. [...] it appears that both Darcy and Elizabeth may find their only true refuge from the family tensions of Pemberley in the peace and dignity of Gracechurch Street. (60f.)

Kennard foregrounds the conventions of the novel which involve the subordination of the heroine’s values and personality to that of her husband which suggest the man’s superiority over the woman: “For this reason, although marriage as emblematic of the heroine’s adjustment to reality is aesthetically satisfying, it is hard for the reader to believe that she will live happily beyond the last page of the novel” (24). Kennard essentially criticises the tradition of authors “defining women’s experiences in terms of their relationships with men, [...] which was made popular with Jane Austen” (27) and is still part of many authors’ repertoire. While Kennard does have a point with her critique regarding the portrayal of female dependence, I do sympathise with Scheuermann’s view that “Darcy and Elizabeth [...] will live happily ever after” (9).

2.1.2. Narrative strands

While elements like the beginning and the conclusion are limited to a certain position in the text, establishing various narrative strands – or storylines – can add to the structure throughout the novel. In this context, Jenkyns describes *Pride and Prejudice* as “a masterpiece of complex plotting: its especial beauty lies in the craft with which the primary plot and the various subplots are woven together” (14). In the light of the initial setting, the novel apparently deals with the Bennet girls and their search for suitable husbands (see Milligan 74). The main narration is the story of Elizabeth and Darcy, which is interconnected with the subplots of her sisters’ relationships (Jane and Bingley, Lydia and Wickham) and her friend’s choice of husband (Charlotte and Mr Collins) (see Jenkyns 14 or Milligan 57).¹⁰ Jenkyns would also classify Darcy’s and Wickham’s history and their resulting antipathy as

¹⁰ I would even suggest that the main narrative itself could be divided into Elizabeth’s firm dislike of Darcy (especially due to his behaviour towards her at the Meryton assembly), her realizations of his real characters (due to the explanations in his letter) and their own happy ending which is, ultimately, promoted by Lady Catherine’s ‘intervention’.

a separate subplot (14). At the core of these five narrative strands lies the “admission of two coincidences: that Darcy and Wickham, for quite separate reasons, should turn up in the same part of the country at the same time; and that the heir on whom the Bennets’ property is entailed, Mr Collins, should happen to be the protégé of Darcy’s aunt” (Jenkyns 14f.). Hence, *Pride and Prejudice* can be seen as a multiple narrative in which each component plays an important role in the construction of the plot as a whole.

Another storyline which lies at the heart of *Pride and Prejudice* and, hence, forms the basis for the whole narrative is the marriage plot: the Bennet sisters’ “objective must be marriage, and marriage with someone *eligible*” (Wright 12; original emphasis). The reason for this is the entail upon Longbourn estate which dictates it being devolved to the nearest male relative (Mr Collins) after Mr Bennet’s death should none of the daughters be married at that point (PP 29). Thus, Jones states that the Bennet girls are essentially “consumer products on the marriage market” (16) and that “Mr Collins, sleazebag though he is, [...] is a marketable commodity” (ibid.) due to the ongoing war. Jones further argues that – against this background – it would be a mistake to approach the novel as a generic love story (17).

Browstein, however, proposes quite the opposite; she identifies *Pride and Prejudice* as “the most romantic of love stories, rivalled in Jane Austen’s *oeuvre* only by *Persuasion*” (51; original emphasis). She bases her claims on Elizabeth’s success in finding a suitable partner and leaving behind the chaos of Meryton:

As if to affirm the reality of romance, the plot moves from a dialogue between a long-married couple who cannot understand one another – the first scene – to a marriage that will ensure happiness, benevolence, and laughter, moving Elizabeth from the clamour of Meryton and the instability of her father’s entailed house through the vexing discordance between great house and parsonage at Rosings, in volume II, to end in the settled grandeur of Pemberley, with its park and woods and river, its library and picture gallery. (Brownstein 52)

Funnily enough, Jones indicates that despite the vital role of the marriage plot in Austen’s novels, they appear “profoundly uninterested in the marriages themselves” (22). Even though the readers yearn for Elizabeth and Darcy’s wedding, all of their romantic dreams are annihilated by the ‘cruel’ omission of the event. The narrator does not make a single remark on it aside from stating that Mrs Bennet’s mission has now been fulfilled: “Happy for all her maternal feelings was the day on which Mrs. Bennet got rid of her two most deserving daughters” (PP 364). When quickly reading the novel, many readers may also have failed to notice that even the proposals – apart from Mr Collins’ which is dreadfully drawn-out (PP 103-106) – are not presented directly: “In *Pride and Prejudice*, most of Mr.

Darcy's first proposal is presented by means of indirect discourse; the second is preceded by directly reported conversation but the mutual declarations themselves are simply narrated" (Wright 75f.; original emphasis). Nonetheless, readers may derive comfort from the fact that, in spite of all complications, Elizabeth has grown as a person and has found the right partner for her (cf. Teachman 2), "an astonishingly good match" as Jones (104) calls it.

2.1.3. Narrative devices

While the storylines present the general movement of the action, narrative devices are conducive to the plot structure by inciting the reader to "anticipate the movement of the story" (Gill & Gregory 129), creating a certain setting, providing an incentive to *not* lay aside the book, etc. Thus, the topics to be discussed in this section are the creation of suspense in relation to the revelation or withholding of information, the effects of impediments, letters as crucial element of *Pride and Prejudice* and, finally, the role of Pemberley as setting.

2.1.3.1. Suspense – Revelation of Information

A narrative device utilised by all authors – but in infinitely different ways – is the creation of suspense by retention of information. Especially in *Pride and Prejudice*, this practice is of vital importance for the functioning of the whole novel:

Part of her [Austen's] way of telling a story depends on the unveiling of what has remained hidden. To some extent it resembles the method of the writer of detective stories. In many of her novels there is an element of mystery: secrets of character or of relationships are revealed in the course of the novel. Jane Austen sows these seeds of mystery and allows them to develop into mature growths, as she does with Wickham's story that Darcy cheated him out of a legacy. But she does not do this simply to mystify the reader, as a writer of detective fiction might do. Her purpose is to exercise the powers of judgement of her own characters, and in doing so, to suggest more and less successful ways of forming judgement. (Milligan 79)

The first instance of this method can be detected at the very beginning of the novel in Mr Bennet's reluctant reaction to his wife's appeal to "go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood" (PP 6). While Mrs Bennet is busy airing her displeasure and despair, the narrator informs the reader that "Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it" (PP 8). That evening, he casually mentions Mr Bingley and upon Mrs Bennet's exclamation that she is sick of him answers: "I am so sorry to hear *that*; but why did not you tell me so before? If I had known as much this morning, I certainly would not have

called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now” (PP 9; original emphasis). As it seems, he really does ‘take delight in vexing’ his wife (PP 7).

With regard to the main narrative strand, the suspense “depends mostly on our waiting for Elizabeth to discover two things: that Darcy is in love with her; and that she is in love with Darcy” (Halliday 68). In other words, readers must be aware of these things before Elizabeth. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 2.2.3, it is imperative that the novel is *not* completely narrated from Elizabeth’s point of view to achieve this effect (cf. *ibid.*).¹¹ If, for example, she had suspected that Darcy already “began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention” (PP 57) during her and Jane’s stay at Netherfield, the whole story might have turned out completely different. Similarly, had she known about Darcy’s history with Wickham or his reasons for preventing Jane and Bingley’s relationship in the first place, there would have been no necessity for Darcy to write his explanatory letter. Without further dwelling on the ‘what ifs’ it should be clear that the concealment of information is one the most crucial features of the plot structure of *Pride and Prejudice*.

2.1.3.2. Impediments

Even though it might seem counterintuitive, impediments are also important elements of the narrative structure because, according to Gill & Gregory, plots advance by overcoming them (129). They further argue that, firstly, “*Pride and Prejudice* is inventive in the number and variety of its impediments” (*ibid.*; original emphasis) and, secondly, that events which have been perceived as impediments are, in reality, the means which lead to the conclusion as we know it. The two most decisive examples are Lydia’s elopement with Wickham and Lady Catherine de Bourgh’s (attempted) interference.

When Elizabeth learns of Lydia and Wickham’s elopement, it seems as if her whole world is about to collapse. Not only do their actions have disastrous consequences for the entire Bennet family but especially for Elizabeth’s hopes of ever being together with Darcy, who had already been apprehensive because of her family’s (in particular her mother’s) manners and behaviour when she informs him about her sister’s situation¹²:

¹¹ Gill & Gregory even call it the “art of the novel [...] that Elizabeth does not know this” (159).

¹² He even voices them in his first proposal, though reported indirectly: “His sense of her inferiority – of its being a degradation – of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit” (PP 185). Darcy further proclaims his objections in his letter to Elizabeth (PP 191-197; see also Brownstein 53f.).

Her power was sinking; every thing *must* sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace. She could neither wonder nor condemn, but the belief of his self-conquest brought nothing consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress. It was, on the contrary, exactly calculated to make her understand her own wishes; and never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him, as now, when all love must be vain. [...]

As he quitted the room, Elizabeth felt how improbable it was that they should ever see each other again on such terms of cordiality as had marked their several meetings in Derbyshire; and as she threw a retrospective glance over the whole of their acquaintance, so full of contradictions and varieties, sighed at the perverseness of those feelings which would now have promoted its continuance, and would formerly have rejoiced in its termination. (PP 264f.; original emphasis)

What Elizabeth does not know at this point is that Darcy was indeed ‘meditating’ about how he could help. In a way, one could argue that Austen intensified the scope of this impediment by concealing Darcy’s true thoughts and intentions (cf. previous section). Due to Darcy’s intervention, however, Lydia and Wickham’s wedding is procured and, thus, their reputation recovered.

A while after the couple has left Longbourn, Bingley returns to Netherfield and visits the Bennets a few times and, finally, proposes to Jane. Approximately a week later, Lady Catherine de Bourgh comes to Longbourn to talk to Elizabeth because of rumours about Elizabeth wanting to marry her nephew: “The encounter between Elizabeth and Lady Catherine is a celebrated scene, which well displays the outrageous egotism of the latter and the firm self-confidence of the former. But the scene between these two high-spirited ladies is not simply one of the comic highlights of the novel; it also helps to motivate Darcy” (Milligan 81). As Milligan points out, it is ultimately Lady Catherine – who was so convinced of her mission – who gives Darcy hope to propose a second time (see also Jenkyns 17):

She [Elizabeth] soon learnt that they were indebted for their present good understanding to the efforts of his aunt, who *did* call on him in her return through London, and there relate her journey to Longbourn, its motive, and the substance of her conversation with Elizabeth; dwelling emphatically on every expression of the latter, which, in her ladyship’s apprehension, peculiarly denoted her perverseness and assurance, in the belief that such a relation must assist her endeavours to obtain that promise from her nephew, which *she* had refused to give. But, unluckily for her ladyship, its effect had been exactly contrariwise. (PP 347; original emphasis)

Towards the end, Elizabeth even jokes that ““Lady Catherine has been of infinite use, which ought to make her happy, for she loves to be of use”” (PP 360).¹³

¹³ See Wright 72f. for an extended analysis of the conversation between Lady de Bourgh and Elizabeth.

2.1.3.3. Letters

Considering that *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1813, telephoning or sending a text message was not an option. Instead, “letter-writing assumes a major role in the development of relationships and the transmission of news, and material which would otherwise have been conveyed through dialogue is presented in letter-form. A letter can thus be seen as a form of ‘speech to the absent’” (Page 32). Hence, throughout the novel over 40 letters are written and/or received; some of them are available to the reader in full, some are summarised and some are just briefly mentioned without further information regarding the content. Most of them appear in the second half, especially towards the end, which Page calls “a burst of epistolary energy” (ibid.).¹⁴ Although most letters have a certain role in the development of the plot, it is Darcy’s letter in the middle of the novel which outmatches them all; it takes up most of chapter 35 (Volume II, chapter 12) and, unquestionably, is one of the most crucial narrative elements:

Darcy’s letter has the status of an autonomous and co-existent parallel text which effects a rewriting of much which has preceded it. As readers, in effect, Darcy’s letter causes us to read the first half of the novel *twice*. Darcy’s letter operates as a synoptic device within the text, a kind of narrative split-screen effect. The purpose of this is to allow for Elizabeth’s negotiation between two simultaneous stories, which now occupy the same narrative space, and its outcome is that Elizabeth effects a renegotiation of the terms of her own story, and concludes that ‘actions were capable of a very different construction’ (PP, 258). (Jones 101, original emphasis)

What Darcy, however, did not include in his letter is a repetition of his proposal. This implies that his main intention is to resolve the misunderstandings between them and to show Elizabeth that he actually is not ‘that bad’. Thus, Jones argues that “Darcy’s letter is pure meaning, signification unmediated by the narrative’s tendency towards ironic deflection or deferral. Without rupturing the narrative to interpose the story which it has not been allowing Darcy to tell, this ‘categorically happy novel’ might never have ended so evidently to the satisfaction of (almost!) all” (112). As Jones points out, this piece of writing does not only have consequences for the remaining story but also for Elizabeth as a person.

While Darcy’s first proposal rather supports Elizabeth’s initial conception of him, the letter manages to persuade her to reconsider her prejudices and understand his side of things (cf. Gill & Gregory 144; see also Brownstein 53f.). As Gill & Gregory put it, “[t]he proposal and the letter begin a process of re-education for both Darcy and Elizabeth” (144); in Elizabeth’s

¹⁴ Page further argues that “[i]t would seem that the happy outcome of the Elizabeth-Darcy relationship is incomplete until news of it has been transmitted to all absent but interested parties” (32).

case, it seems to begin with her exclaiming “‘Till this moment, I never knew myself” (PP 202). This process is also promoted by another letter: this time by Mrs Gardiner who informs Elizabeth about Darcy’s actions in London with regard to Wickham and Lydia (PP 304-308). Ultimately, both “reveal to Elizabeth and to the reader aspects of Darcy’s life and character which no direct present experience of him could have done” (Milligan 86f.).

2.1.3.4. Pemberley

Admittedly, places and estates are not typical examples of narrative devices, but Pemberley is indeed of considerable importance for the novel – and not only because it symbolises Darcy’s wealth (cf. Königsberg 224). Considering that Pemberley is only spoken of but always remains vague (until the actual visit), McCann proposes that it “serves as the basis of a suspense which amplifies, parallels, and resolves with, the Elizabeth-Darcy story” (66). Similarly, Jones argues that “Elizabeth’s visit, with the Gardiners, to Pemberley, provides, after Darcy’s letter to Elizabeth, the novel’s second narrative *peripeteia*” (99; original emphasis), i.e. a turning point. This might perhaps be even clearer in retrospect when Elizabeth looks back at her visit; for when Jane asks her how long she has been in love with Darcy, Elizabeth answers that “[i]t has been coming on so gradually, that I hardly know when it began. But I believe I must date it from my seeing his beautiful grounds at Pemberley” (PP 353).

As soon as Elizabeth and the Gardiners approach Pemberley “[t]hey were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!” (PP 235). As Gill & Gregory put it, Darcy’s home is his advocate – “[h]is grounds woo Elizabeth silently, as the man has often done himself” (144). They also ascribe her excitement at this point to her altered perception of Darcy, evoked by his letter: “She is curious to see his home, which suggests she now wants to learn more about him” (ibid.; see also Brownstein 53). In addition to the estate itself, the housekeeper Mrs. Reynolds also plays an important role in shaping Elizabeth’s new opinion of Darcy. During the tour she asks Elizabeth whether she “think[s] him a very handsome gentleman” (PP 237) and, of course, she answers in the affirmative. Upon his unexpected appearance, Elizabeth, the Gardiners and Darcy take a walk around the grounds, but Elizabeth seems unable to concentrate because she is “wholly engrossed by her own feelings” (PP 241):

She longed to know what at that moment was passing in his mind; in what manner he thought of her, and whether, in defiance of everything, she was still dear to him. Perhaps he had been civil, only because he felt himself at ease; yet there had been

that in his voice, which was not like ease. Whether he had felt more of pain or of pleasure in seeing her, she could not tell, but he certainly had not seen her with composure. (PP 242; original emphasis)

When taking into account the positive implications of the visit, Pemberley and the grounds themselves have a far-reaching impact on the main narrative. Furthermore, Darcy “can be his true self” (McCann 72) in the comfort of his own home, which allows Elizabeth to see how he acts around those he cares for (cf. *ibid.*).

2.1.4. Recurring themes and motifs

There are several themes and motifs which occur throughout *Pride and Prejudice*; they “emerge in and through its events” (Gill & Gregory 128). Therefore, they could be interpreted as a further means of structuring the novel. The three most prominent examples are, firstly, the imminence of the entail, secondly, everything to do with the general marriage plot (marriage choices, proposals and marriageability) and, thirdly, the role of pride and prejudice as the protagonist’s weaknesses.

Especially in the context of *Pride and Prejudice*, another often discussed element is Austen’s “playful and purposeful irony” (Brownstein 34; see also Konigsberg 244). It not only “causes us to laugh at and with her characters” (Teachman 2) but also is deeply rooted in Elizabeth’s character which sets her apart from the other women (cf. Moses 155f.). Since it rather calls for attention to linguistic matters, I will limit this analysis to the other three aspects.

2.1.4.1. Entail

As has already been mentioned, the entail of Mr Bennet’s estate and the ‘lack’ of sons to inherit it lies at the core of *Pride and Prejudice*. The issue is first introduced in the beginning of chapter seven by the narrator: “Mr. Bennet’s property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters was entailed in default of heirs male, on a distant relation; and their mother’s fortune, though ample for her situation in life, could but ill supply the deficiency of his” (PP 29). Therefore, all of Mr Bennet’s daughters are “entirely dependent on marrying into wealth” (Woloch 61).¹⁵ This ‘distant relation’ is introduced in chapter thirteen by Mr Bennet himself in a rather apprehensive

¹⁵ One of the main reasons for their situation is Mr and Mrs Bennet’s firm belief that “of course, they were to have a son” (PP 292) who would inherit the estate and provide for the family. When they realised that their plan would not work it was too late (see also Jones 96).

manner: “About a month ago I received this letter, and about a fortnight ago I answered it, for I thought it a case of some delicacy, and requiring early attention. It is from my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, when I am dead, may turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases” (PP 60). Hence, “[i]n purely financial terms, even marrying Mr Collins would [...] be a prudent move for Elizabeth” (Jones 104). When Mr Collins, however, marries Charlotte Lucas the situation of the Bennet family seems desperate; if no daughter finds a husband, they must “on Mr Bennet’s death, be beggars” (Milligan 75). Since *Pride and Prejudice* is, however, not a tragedy, at least two of the daughters manage to find a suitable husband and secure the family’s future.

2.1.4.2. Marriage choices, marriage proposal(s) and marriageability

Another crucial aspect – in connection with the entail – is the necessity of marriage (at least for the Bennet girls). This is not only reflected in the plot structure but also emphasised by the occurrence of issues related to the topic. Thus, Gill & Gregory assert that the quest for the most desirable declaration of love and kind of marriage is “conducted in narrative terms” (131). In consequence, Austen assigns contrasting views to the characters. This process is initiated “with a conversation in which Elizabeth and Charlotte Lucas exchange with frank good humour their very different ideas about how Jane should act with regard to Bingley and what can be expected from the married state” (ibid.). Charlotte exhibits a rather mature perspective when she says that “[h]appiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance” (PP 24). For her, “it is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman without a good fortune must acquire a husband, come what may!” (Gill & Gregory 133). Similarly, Milligan calls her choice of husband ‘wholly prudential’ because “[n]one of her reasons for choosing Mr Collins is intrinsic to the man himself” (76).

In a comparable manner, Mr Collins “approaches marriage as a business” (Teachman 6): “The reason for Mr. Collins’s visit to his cousins at Longbourn is, in fact, to find a wife. He determines, quite reasonably if one thinks of marriage as a business enterprise, that the daughters of the man who holds the estate he will one day inherit would be eminently suitable young women from whom to choose his bride” (ibid.). Via his conduct, however, “Mr Collins shows Elizabeth what she does *not* want” (Gill & Gregory 139; original emphasis):

Elizabeth has other views: for her, nothing is worth the sacrifice of the integrity of her own feelings, her own sense of the genuineness of the attachment that people feel for one another. The word ‘attachment’ carries a special weight of meaning: it signifies a conscious mutual sharing of interests and values. It does not suggest anything calculating, or coldly intellectual. There is spontaneity, a sense of mutual

recognition and trust, and an implicit commitment to life-long companionship. (Milligan 77f.)

Hence, throughout the novel, the reader is presented with various attitudes towards a 'successful marriage'. According to Milligan, "the stories of the other girls are contrasted with Elizabeth's to sketch out less successful marriages, or in the case of Jane Bennet and Bingley, success of a different kind, or in the case of Mary the total failure of the fully unmarriageable" (57). On the whole, it can be assumed that Austen prefers a 'meeting of the minds' (Konigsberg 255), i.e. a match between two like-minded people who share numerous interests. What is interesting, though, is that she does not force this view on the readers; she implies it indirectly, using the several weddings in the novel to demonstrate the consequences that each match brings about (cf. Milligan 57).

2.1.4.3. Pride and prejudice

In the context of *Pride and Prejudice*, a discussion of pride and prejudice seems to impose itself. Generally speaking, they are "terms of observation and judgement as well as moral discrimination" (Gill & Gregory 150) which are especially prevalent in the protagonists. Even though they might appear as separate entities, Wright maintains that "Pride leads to Prejudice and Prejudice invites Pride; and that both have their corresponding virtues bound up within them" (Wright 32). Consequently, it would be a mistake to equate one character with one feature:

Reading the novel, we may reasonably begin by attributing 'pride' to Darcy and 'prejudice', largely created by that same pride, to Elizabeth; but we quickly learn that each has a share of both qualities. Elizabeth's pride is not the same kind as Darcy's, though she is capable of reminding Lady Catherine de Bourgh that she is the daughter of a gentleman: she is an exceptional individual confident in the knowledge of her own powers of mind and personality, in contrast to the external sources of pride – rank, wealth, land, general esteem – associated with the owner of Pemberley. And the proud Darcy is also prejudiced: his objection to her family is one of the principal obstacles in the way of his love for her. (Page 24)

Early on, it transpires that Elizabeth enjoys reading the character of others and, in this respect, she is highly perceptive (cf. Gill & Gregory 151). Based on her first impression and "the general attitude toward Darcy, [Elizabeth] assumes that he is indeed proud beyond seemliness and that he is not worthy of her attention" (Teachman 19). During their encounters, it appears as if she were almost intentionally misunderstanding him and, thus, perpetuating her perception of him (cf. Konigsberg 227). While Konigsberg argues that, in this case, "prejudice is clearly leading to pride" (228), Gill & Gregory put it the other way around, stating that "Elizabeth's pride in her capacity to read character makes her prejudiced

against Darcy” (150). Regardless of the initial position, her actions create a vicious cycle which reaches its peak level during Darcy’s proposal when Elizabeth “realizes that it is Darcy, not Miss Bingley, who has been the cause of Bingley’s separation from Jane” (Gill & Gregory 143). Even though it is Darcy who causes this peak, it is also he who opens Elizabeth’s eyes to the truth with his letter: “Elizabeth’s pride in her discernment has, in fact, been prideful and vain prejudice. It is only when she comes to recognize this quality in herself and begins to take steps to eradicate it that she is able to mature into the strong young woman we see at the end of the novel” (Teachman 21). Although the process of accepting her misconception of Darcy’s character does take a while, it also shows the reader that Elizabeth is, indeed, not so proud that she cannot admit to her own mistakes.

Darcy, certainly, is known for his pride, “but Austen, through a number of techniques, makes us see that there are many redeeming aspects to him” (Konigsberg 228) which are, however, carefully ‘hidden’ from Elizabeth. Quite similarly to her, Darcy is also a judge of character:

He recognizes Bingley’s innate goodness and is attracted to it despite the fact that Bingley’s social position is substantially lower than his own; he recognizes Lady Catherine’s excessive pride and inordinate prejudice despite the ties of blood; he recognizes Wickham’s lack of integrity despite the obligations of his family toward Wickham’s father. (Teachman 18)

Teachman further argues that the “fact that some of Darcy’s prejudices [...] are retained as reasoned judgements should not blind us to the fact that they begin as unfounded, unexamined assumptions about people based on their social position, the restrictions of geography, and their financial circumstances” (17). Perhaps due to this disposition, his abilities of judging character correctly seem to be impaired when it comes to Elizabeth. This attitude is the most tangible when he makes his first proposal: it is Darcy’s pride that leads him to believe that – due to his position in society – Elizabeth *has* to accept him (Gill & Gregory 154). As a result, one could see the second half of *Pride and Prejudice* as both Elizabeth’s and Darcy’s ‘learning phase’. Given that their opinions of each other are heavily influenced by prejudice, Gill & Gregory assert that the novel “is more about prejudice than pride” (155).

2.2. Narrative technique

Regarding the topic of Austen's narrative technique there is plenty of information available, especially about *Pride and Prejudice* and its narrating persona. It is fairly well known that it is a third-person narrative with a distinct narrator, but the more subtle facets are often overlooked. Thus, this section will describe the type of narrator as well as question who 'speaks', from whose perspective the story is told and whether the narrator is reliable.

2.2.1. The narrator of *Pride and Prejudice*

At the beginning of the novel – in the first two paragraphs to be exact – “[t]he narrator seems to be standing outside the story, not yet observing the characters but gazing off into the middle distance for some reflections on life in general” (Halliday 65). This changes immediately, when the focus shifts to the conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet, he/she returns however at the end of the dialogue for the already discussed ‘character vignettes’. This is not only a prime example of the narrator's tendency “to closely link the description of an ‘intricate’ mind with a counterpoised description of a ‘simple’ one” (Woloch 52), but also of the narrator's ever-changing presence. Interestingly, every chapter starts with one or more introductory paragraphs by the narrator before the text returns to the Free Indirect Discourse which takes up most of the novel. This procedure seems to underline the narrator's control, which appears to be a technique typical for Jane Austen (cf. Konigsberg 236)

What is also characteristic of the narrator is his/her omniscience: “Occasionally, Jane Austen summarizes an incident or series of incidents in such a way as to disclose certain reactions which could be known only to the omniscient narrator” (Wright 50). These interior disclosures are, however, not restricted to the heroine but apply to a number of characters – even to those she does not sympathise with (cf. Wright 76, 81). A further practice of the narrator is the relation of mostly Elizabeth's thoughts in an ‘edited’ or summarised manner; “a light abridgement takes place, perhaps some clarification as well, so that the reader can grasp what the heroine does not” (ibid.). This is especially prominent when Elizabeth starts to ‘digest’ Darcy's letter mentally: “The sequence of thought here is evidently more obvious to the reader than to Elizabeth herself – from disdainful disbelief to somewhat reluctant acceptance. This is artistic objectivity” (Wright 80f.). Hence, the narrator does not show or reproduce a person's thoughts but *tells* the reader what someone is thinking (cf. Milligan 62f.).

Due to his/her omniscience, the narrator is also able to provide the reader with information that not all characters possess or have access to – or whose source is unclear. After the Meryton assembly, for example, the reader is provided with information about Bingley, but it remains unclear whether other characters know this too:

Mr. Bingley inherited property to the amount of nearly an hundred thousand pounds from his father, who had intended to purchase an estate, but did not live to do it. – Mr. Bingley intended it likewise, and sometimes made choice of his county; but as he was now provided with a good house and the liberty of a manor, it was doubtful to many of those who best knew the easiness of his temper, whether he might not spend the remainder of his days at Netherfield, and leave the next generation to purchase. (PP 17)

It is certain that this information is of interest for the Bennet girls, and particularly Mrs Bennet, but it seems questionable whether this kind of knowledge would be circulated at such an assembly.

During Jane and Elizabeth's stay at Netherfield, the narrator also uses his/her omniscience to, firstly, allow the readers to 'listen' to a conversation between Miss Bingley and Darcy, and secondly, to enable them to look behind the former's façade and discover her 'real' character: "Miss Bingley saw, or suspected enough to be jealous; and her great anxiety for the recovery of her dear friend Jane, received some assistance from her desire of getting rid of Elizabeth. She often tried to provoke Darcy into disliking her guest, by talking of their supposed marriage, and planning his happiness in such an alliance" (PP 51). Not only does this passage evoke a negative image of Miss Bingley, it also goes to show that she, too, is utterly clueless about Darcy's actual opinion of and feelings for Elizabeth. Moses considers this diffusion of voices as part of the conventions of omniscient narration (156).

2.2.2. Voice

According to Konigsberg, "Austen was the first novelist to employ a third-person narrative voice for creating in a sustained, convincing, and dramatic way the psychic dimension of character. *Pride and Prejudice* is the first of her novels in which this technique is fully developed and consistently employed" (234; original emphasis).¹⁶ She further delineates possible reasons for Austen's decision to write the novel as a third-person narration:

The advantages of this technique over first-person narration for the kind of novel she wished to write are obvious: third-person narration allowed her to insert her narrator's commentary, in a relatively unobtrusive way, so that the reader gives ear

¹⁶ For Prewitt Brown the narrative voice is of vital importance, for "without the narrative voice, the moral structure of the novel would crumble" (67).

to a more knowing intelligence; it allowed her to transcend the heroine's perspective in order to give a wider and more objective portrait of the social world; it allowed her to portray, and have her narrator comment upon, the heroine at times from a distance in order to have the reader see Elizabeth as she could not see herself; and, finally, it allowed her occasionally to move to other points of view, thus giving the reader a fuller awareness of the drama's complexity while also developing her themes about perception and understanding. (Konigsberg 235)¹⁷

With regard to direct comments by the narrator, there does not seem to be complete consensus. While Konigsberg enumerates several functions of the narrative voice, e.g. "giving a quick characterization, a summary of action, a transition of time, some information unknown to the heroine" (244), she denies the narrator's use of the first-person pronoun (*ibid.*). I have to disagree with her, however, because the narrator does refer to him-/ herself – albeit only once (or actually twice) in the last chapter:

I wish I could say, for the sake of her family, that the accomplishment of her earnest desire in the establishment of so many of her children, produced so happy an effect as to make her a sensible, amiable, well-informed woman for the rest of her life, though perhaps it was lucky for her husband, who might not have relished domestic felicity in so unusual a form, that she still was occasionally nervous and invariably silly. (PP 364)

If it had not been clear from the closing paragraph of the first chapter or the several other remarks on Mrs Bennet, at least now it should be clear that the narrator disapproves of her manners. Still, as Wright points out, this does not necessarily imply that Austen herself felt the same way (58, 63), though it seems likely in this case.

2.2.3. Perspective

Although *Pride and Prejudice* has a distinct narrative voice, it seems that the perspective has a greater impact on the structure of the novel – partly because of its complexity. It would do Austen's work no justice to simply call it 'a novel with an omniscient third-person narrator'. In my opinion, Wright provides the most condensed yet still highly elaborate description:

She is by turns omniscient and ignorant, humble and sententious, direct and oblique, the dramatist and the teller of tales. Unshackled by more modern theories, her point of view varies; it is sly, often intentionally misleading – or at least very delicately subtle: quite unobtrusive transitions carry the reader from one viewpoint to another, and only the closest attention will enable him to ferret out the real intention of the passage in question. (36)

¹⁷ This slightly resembles the process of a transposition test as proposed by Hawthorn (104; see chapter 1.2.2.).

The most prominent view seems to be that of the objective narrative (cf. Burrows 180), perhaps because the narrator, firstly, does not interrupt the narration through too many direct comments and, secondly, does not impose his/her interpretation of events on the reader; sometimes the narrator even completely withdraws into the background, reporting only what is happening at a given moment (cf. Wright 37f.). Still, according to Wright, the narrator does enter the story to “make some very sharp judgments” (47), which may well be the reason why Burrows also calls it a ‘coloured narrative’ (180).

When it comes to the amount of knowledge the narrator possesses, it becomes slightly more difficult. One of the main arguments for a narrator with limited knowledge is that the readers are just as wrong about Darcy as Elizabeth; this is, however, only true for those readers who either miss the hints by the narrator throughout the novel or who think that Elizabeth is the narrator. Thus, I would argue that *Pride and Prejudice* has an omniscient narrator who carefully deliberates which pieces of information to share and which ones to withhold (cf. Hawthorn 11). In a similar manner, Milligan suggests a “movement back and forward [...] from omniscient narrator to limited point of view” (59). In addition, Wright holds the view that these shifts of perspective are necessary to fully comprehend the objective of the novel (82).

Hence, what Austen does is “[moving] from an unrestricted omniscient point of view to a much more narrowly focused narrative which, without departing from the third person, selects Elizabeth Bennet as a centre from whose angle of vision the characters and actions are seen” (Milligan 58; see also Hawthorn 103). As Konigsberg puts it, Austen’s “basic narrative techniques function to create a rich perceptual experience by having the reader consistently and clearly see the world of the novel with Elizabeth” (220). This close link between the narrator and Elizabeth even applies to the majority of free indirect discourse (cf. Moses 159). On the whole, the reader is led to sympathise with Elizabeth and, in consequence, take on her views and opinions.

However, the imminent question is: If *Pride and Prejudice* is a third-person narrative, how do we know that Elizabeth is the protagonist? Halliday presents the following account:

Even a sleepy reader of this book must be well aware, before he has read very far, that it is Elizabeth Bennet’s story. But how does he know this? The title gives no clue, and Elizabeth is not the storyteller. The opening pages make it clear that the matrimonial prospects of the Bennet daughters will direct the action – but there are five daughters. True, three of them look far from promising [...]. But both Jane and Elizabeth are attractive and accomplished, and for several chapters it looks as if Jane’s chances with Bingley will bring the central action into focus, with Elizabeth

playing some subsidiary role. How is it, then, that by the time we are quarterway through the novel – say by the time Mr. Collins makes his celebrated proposal to Elizabeth – it has become perfectly clear that Elizabeth is the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*, and that Jane is only a secondary character? (65f.; original emphasis)

Even though Halliday discards the opening pages, Woloch considers Mr Bennet saying “I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy” (PP 6) as the earliest hint towards Elizabeth being the protagonist (58). Furthermore, in the introductory paragraph to chapter six, the narrator contrasts Jane’s views of their first visit to Netherfield with those of Elizabeth and seems to purposefully end it with “She mentioned this to her friend Miss Lucas” (PP 22).¹⁸

Nonetheless, the first major clues seem to be “the sheer amount of attention the storyteller pays to Elizabeth” (Halliday 66) and the limitation of the narrator’s reports “when the mechanics of the plot call [...] for attention to Jane” (ibid.). A prime example would be the scene where Jane is invited to dine at Netherfield and – to the joy of Mrs Bennet – catches a cold and has to stay there for a few days (PP 31-59):

But note that this is reported by letter; for when Jane leaves for Netherfield we do not go with her. The narrative perspective remains focused on the Bennet household, and particularly on Elizabeth; and it is not until Elizabeth decides to put sisterhood above gentility, and walks three miles across muddy fields, that we make our first entry into the Bingley household. Moreover, we see nothing of Jane until Elizabeth goes upstairs to nurse her; and even then we get a scanty glimpse, since Jane evidently is too sick to talk. (Halliday 66)¹⁹

From this point onwards (at the latest), Elizabeth *gradually* takes on her role as the protagonist and, consequently, her thoughts and emotions come to the fore (cf. Woloch 77-79 or Halliday 67): “The reader is allowed to share her hopes, her fears and, above all, her misjudgements” (Milligan 79). Brownstein further argues that “[t]ricks like the narrator’s echo of the very words Elizabeth has used [...] encourage the identification of the heroine with the novelist – and with the reader, also outside the frame of the fiction” (55).

Now that it has been established that Elizabeth is in fact the focal character of *Pride and Prejudice*, another question arises: Why would Austen choose to create Elizabeth ‘only’ as a focal character and not completely tell the story from her perspective? This is partly based

¹⁸ Woloch analyses this passage in depth and also includes a brief examination of the frequent use of italics in the novel (79).

¹⁹ Interestingly, the narrator proceeds in the same way when Jane travels to London with her aunt (PP 144f.). Elizabeth receives information from her sister only via letters – and the readers obtain only a summarised version of them by the narrator.

on the notion that “[m]uch of the time we are unaware that we are being manipulated and controlled, that our degree of involvement with Elizabeth is being altered, or that we are being given information and perspectives that allow us to understand her better than she does herself” (Konigsberg 220). It is certainly correct that “to allow the reader to perceive as only Elizabeth perceives would be to limit severely the possibilities of the form and the larger perceptions it can offer” (ibid.), but the key reason is that “our knowledge that Darcy is falling in love would have been impossible if Elizabeth had become the center of vision too soon” (Halliday 69). Hence, those early hints at Darcy’s developing feelings for Elizabeth certainly belong to the most crucial elements of the plot structure. If the readers were to see *everything* from her perspective, the narrator – or Elizabeth herself in the case of a first-person narration – could not possibly make those remarks:

As for Elizabeth’s falling in love with Darcy, it is something not accomplished until near the end of the book; but we must feel, surely, that there is something *begun* much earlier than Elizabeth herself realizes. To effect this, we must be able to see Darcy apart from Elizabeth’s conscious bias: we must see him, almost from the start, as at least potentially worthy of her love. No doubt we begin to take this view of Darcy early, despite his snobbish behaviour, partly because we know he is falling in love with Elizabeth. (Halliday 68; original emphasis)

As a result, “Elizabeth’s blindness to Darcy’s feelings and merits and many of his very frequent blushes engages the reader in the love story” (Brownstein 54) and the reader awaits with ‘delicious anxiety’ (cf. Halliday 70) the moment when Elizabeth sees Darcy for who he really is.

2.2.4. Narrator’s reliability

With regard to the reliability of the storyteller, there exist quite contrasting perspectives. Moses, for instance, accuses Austen of intentionally deluding the reader by creating Elizabeth’s voice so similar to that of the narrator that the reader is led to accredit her with the same reliability, although the narrator him-/herself is not reliable (156). According to her, “Austen attempts to deceive the reader into believing Elizabeth’s judgment of Darcy” (ibid.). While I would agree that the author’s intention could be to ‘trick’ the reader with regard to how Darcy is perceived, I do not see why this would make the narrator unreliable. As I have pointed out already, it is of utmost importance to pay close attention to all of the narrator’s remarks to understand *Pride and Prejudice*. With the help of the various perspectives, the narrator shows the reader what is happening in Elizabeth’s life and how she experiences it. Moreover, due to the narrator’s remarks, the readers are made privy to

some of Darcy's feelings which should suffice to demonstrate that Elizabeth's opinions are, in fact, nothing but prejudices based on first impressions. Thus, Konigsberg might be right to describe Austen as "one of the least confusing or conspiratorial of authors" (224).

Overall, it can be concluded that *Pride and Prejudice* has a very complex narrative structure, with a third-person narrator who is positioned outside the storyworld (heterodiegetic), tells the story from varying perspectives (though mostly Elizabeth's) in a reliable manner and sometimes likes to include direct remarks on a character's feelings or manners.

2.3. Characters

In the context of a narratological analysis, characters are not that obvious a choice. Still, I would argue that with regard to *Pride and Prejudice* the cast does bear some importance for the general structure. I have already pointed out that Austen deliberately limited the number of characters (see chapter 2.1)²⁰. While Konigsberg states that "Austen's plot is dependent upon her major character" (254), I would propose that – aside from the protagonist – minor or secondary characters also perform particular functions which make them indispensable for the plot structure. For instance, Austen tends to use her characters as a means of comparison:

To be a character in Austen is to get continually contrasted, juxtaposed, related to others, and, as such, to help build the thematic architecture that critics then discern. And if the weight of the narrative signification seems to rest on all of these characters' backs, it is minor characters, in particular, who bear the heaviest portion: unequal partners in a dialectic that could not take place if attention were limited to the protagonist herself. (Woloch 43)

One way of achieving this is by establishing narrative asymmetry (cf. Woloch 44). According to Woloch, "the balance between different kinds of characterization – and the asymmetrical space that different characters occupy within the novel – is relevant to the significance of the novel as a whole" (45). He emphasises that the Bennet sisters have to deal with the same issue (the entail of the Longbourn estate), while – at the same time – Elizabeth "transcends the social context in which she has been placed to become the center of the narrative in-and-of-herself" (ibid.). Thus, Mary, Lydia, Catherine and even Jane only function in relation to Elizabeth; their presence throughout the novel permits the juxtaposition of desirable and undesirable traits and manners. In a similar way, "Wickham

²⁰ See also Milligan 57 or Wright 1.

and Darcy are set against one another as examples of honesty and dishonesty, of candour and deceit, of reliability and untrustworthiness” (Milligan 78). Austen further reinforces the contrast between characters by creating links between them:

Mr Collins has an unattractive legal link with the Bennets; through his patron, Lady Catherine, he is linked with Mr Darcy. Darcy is linked to Wickham through boyhood friendship. Elizabeth’s aunt Gardiner’s happy memories of Pemberley suggest Derbyshire as a suitable place for her to bring her husband and her niece on holiday. (Milligan 89)

In the light of these arguments, I will briefly attend to some characters and their role in the narrative structure. This survey is not intended as a characterisation but may, nonetheless, be of use when comparing the characters of the rewritings (and their role within them) to those of the original.²¹

2.3.1. Elizabeth Bennet

In her role as protagonist and female lead, Elizabeth certainly is the most intriguing member of the Bennet family and – as Bailey puts it – “we know no one so delightful as Elizabeth; and as for those who do not like her, we do not tolerate them, and do not wish to” (36). Even though she is celebrated for her personality, strong will and wit, Elizabeth is not without flaws. While we applaud her for her verbal agility (especially in those banters with Darcy), they simultaneously are the reason for her ill judgement of Darcy (cf. Jones 109). During her and Jane’s stay at Netherfield, for example, when Mr and Mrs Hurst, Darcy, Bingley, Caroline Bingley and Elizabeth are in the drawing room and discuss Bingley’s character, Darcy points out her misapprehension: ““You expect me to account for opinions which you chuse to call mine, but which I have never acknowledged”” (PP 48). Later, she declines Darcy’s invitation to dance and challenges him to “despise me if you dare” (PP 50). In fact, however, Darcy does not ‘dare’ to despise Elizabeth but she is so convinced of her opinion of him that she does not see his cautious advances: “Thus, when Elizabeth tells Darcy that his ‘defect’ is a ‘propensity to hate every body’, he replies (‘with a smile’) that hers ‘is wilfully to misunderstand them’ (PP, 58)” (Jones 109).

In the storyworlds of Jane Austen, “[t]he growth of the heroine [...] is marked by her choice of the ‘right’ suitor over the ‘wrong’ suitor” (Kennard 24). Therefore, it is Elizabeth’s

²¹ Although many readers will find Jane to be very sympathetic, she is “[i]n formal terms, [...] a secondary heroine; we do not see into her mind” (Gill & Gregory 123). Since, her actions neither influence the general plot nor Elizabeth’s romance with Darcy, she will be excluded from this analysis.

challenge to uncover Wickham's foul play and discover Darcy's virtues (cf. *ibid.*): "In the process of judging Wickham, Elizabeth finds out something about herself: her approval of him was based on very little but the impression she had formed of his good looks and agreeable manners" (Milligan 80). This insight enables her to overcome her prejudices and misjudgements and allows her to develop into a more mature version of herself:

Elizabeth grows, in the course of the novel, from a young woman who prejudices most people and behaviors based on their most obvious outward appearances to a young wife who thinks before she speaks, who checks herself when tempted to laugh at a husband who 'had yet to learn to be laught at' (321), who recognizes both the virtues and the flaws of people around her, and who loves the people she loves for their innermost selves. She grows from a girl who is determinedly proud of the discernment she mistakenly believes she possesses (a discernment based on prejudice) into a thoughtful, caring woman of true discernment. (Teachman 21f.)

2.3.2. Fitzwilliam Darcy

"When the reader first meets Fitzwilliam Darcy, he is twenty-eight years old and far from home, where he offends all but his closest friends with what his new acquaintances consider to be excessive pride." (Teachman 14) – This is the first impression the reader and the characters, especially Elizabeth, form of him at the Meryton assembly. According to Teachman, Austen pursued two main goals with this portrayal of Darcy: "First, she provides circumstances that will more easily present his flaws than his virtues at the outset of the story; second, she prevents the reader (and the other characters in the novel [...]) from judging him on the basis of anything but his own superficial behaviour" (14f.).

As the story progresses, however, the narrator makes sure to comment on his slowly changing feelings for Elizabeth: "We are not given very much of the internal discourse of Darcy, but there is enough (*PP* 23-4 and 52) to show that he is thrown into terrible doubt and dismay when he realises that what he has regarded as social imperatives start to lose their force when he finds Elizabeth far more to his taste in every possible way than any woman in his previous experience" (Waldron 50; original emphasis). Comments like these also are the reason why "his apparent change is neither implausible nor unexpected" (McCann 73).

It is not until Elizabeth learns the truth about Darcy's and Wickham's past and his part in Lydia and Wickham's wedding, though, that she also considers him as a potential partner or husband. Similarly, McCann holds the view that "[s]tructured as the novel is, the reader cannot have a true picture of Darcy until he [or she] sees him at Pemberley. For if we are to

follow the logic of the novel we must see Darcy's setting before we truly see him" (73). This is because Pemberley is where he feels most comfortable and where he can be his true self (cf. Teachman 15f.).

Furthermore, it might be Darcy's reserve which sets him off from the typical romantic hero. He certainly can be described as "a romantic figure, but instead of his love being tempestuous and overflowing, it is silent and controlled" (Gill & Gregory 143). Also, considering his more traditional views, Brownstein argues that Darcy "admires her [Elizabeth] for defying convention" (51).²² Similarly, Milligan proposes that "[i]f we ask what it is in Elizabeth Bennet that Darcy finds so attractive, we are compelled to return to those chapters in the novel which describe Elizabeth's visit to Netherfield, when Jane is laid up in bed with her cold" (82), especially their "battles of wit" (Konigsberg 225).²³

Even though Darcy is a good man, it is not that easy for everyone to forgive him for his 'uninviting' manners in the beginning (cf. Teachman 15). Still, most readers will agree that he "stands out among the men of all the novels as the one most difficult to win and most worth winning" (Bailey 44).

2.3.3. Mr and Mrs Bennet

After Elizabeth and Darcy, Mr Bennet also ranks quite high in the list of interesting characters, "for through him the author exposes the pieties of cynicism" (Prewitt Brown 75). In addition, Woloch states that "[t]he description of Mr. Bennet is arguably a part of a 'new formation of character' in Austen, which is more psychological and analytic than that of previous British fiction" (51). Despite his and Elizabeth's similarity in character and good relationship, Gill & Gregory argue that "she has to distance herself from him" (148) to recognise his faults. Thus, after Lydia and Wickham's wedding, she reflects on her own family and particularly her father:

Elizabeth, however, had never been blind to the impropriety of her father's behaviour as a husband. She had always seen it with pain; but respecting his abilities, and grateful for his affectionate treatment of herself, she endeavoured to forget what she could not overlook, and to banish from her thoughts that continual breach of conjugal obligation and decorum which, in exposing his wife to the contempt of her own children, was so highly reprehensible. But she had never felt so strongly as now, the

²² Jones even ascribes slight feminist tendencies to Darcy's character (102).

²³ Think of Darcy's reaction to Elizabeth's appearance upon her arrival at Netherfield for example: He "was divided between admiration of the brilliancy which exercise had given to her complexion, and doubt as to the occasion's justifying her coming so far alone" (PP 33).

disadvantages which must attend the children of so unsuitable a marriage, nor ever been so fully aware of the evils arising from so ill-judged direction of talents; talent which rightly used, might at least have preserved the respectability of his daughters, even if incapable of enlarging the mind of his wife. (PP 228f.)

Perhaps the most serious ‘defect’ of Mr Bennet’s character is the negligence of his daughters’ education. Despite being a smart man, he is unable to ensure that his children will have a secure future (cf. Teachman 10): “Mr. Bennet’s impotence when Lydia elopes with Wickham is a direct result of his irresponsible behavior as the head of his family” (Teachman 11).

In comparison to his wife, though, Mr Bennet is harmless, for Mrs Bennet certainly has her place on the list of the most disagreeable characters of *Pride and Prejudice*. At the end of the first chapter, for instance, the narrator summarises her character as follows: “She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous” (PP 7). Still, despite all her faults and insufferableness, she does have *one* commendable trait: her “clear understanding of the importance of marriage for the futures of each of her five daughters” (Teachman 5). Seen from an outside perspective, however, this one good aspect does not outweigh her other ‘shortcomings’. From Darcy’s point of view, the fact that “Mrs. Bennet quite obviously throws her daughters at eligible gentlemen demonstrates a gross lack of propriety” (Teachman 6). Furthermore, as Prewitt Brown observes, “Darcy resists his attraction to Elizabeth in the beginning in part because he cannot tolerate her mother’s anarchic vulgarity” (76).

When taking into account that Jane Austen likes to work by contrast (cf. Milligan 78) and juxtaposition (see e.g. Woloch 43), it appears comprehensible why she would establish Mr and Mrs Bennet (and their marriage) as a negative example.²⁴ Firstly, their non-existent restrictions regarding Lydia’s pursuit of the officers at Meryton may, in all probability, have rendered possible her later elopement. Secondly, Mr and Mrs Bennet showcase exactly how a marriage should *not* look like. In the beginning of chapter 42 (Volume II, chapter XIX), the narrator verbalises Elizabeth’s thoughts on this issue:

Her father captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour, which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind, had very early in their marriage put an end to all

²⁴ Cf. Brownstein 52 quoted in the discussion of the marriage plot in chapter 2.1.2.

real affection for her. Respect, esteem, and confidence, had vanished for ever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown. (PP 228)

Hence, Elizabeth “is painfully aware that the mismatch between her parents has led to a less than cohesive family” (Gill & Gregory 148). In addition, Teachman accuses Mr Bennet of something more profound than a poor choice of partner: “Instead of making the best of the situation, perhaps by attempting to educate his wife and creating an environment of respect between them, he entertains himself with her ‘ignorance and folly’” (11). It is only at the end of the novel (when he gives Elizabeth and Darcy his consent to marry) that the reader is able to catch a short glimpse of Mr Bennet’s emotions: “My child, let me not have the grief of seeing *you* unable to respect your partner in life” (PP 356; original emphasis). In this scene, he “half drops the mask, and reveals the deadness of his marriage, the emotional emptiness of his life” (Jenkyns 12). Mr Bennet also acknowledges the “unspoken understanding between himself and his favourite daughter” (ibid.) that he is unhappy with his wife and that Elizabeth is well aware of it.

2.3.4. Lady Catherine de Bourgh and the Gardiners

Even though Lady Catherine and the Gardiners appear to have nothing in common, they are highly relevant characters for the plot. The Gardiners, Elizabeth’s aunt and uncle, are the ones who take her to Derbyshire and, thus, to visit Pemberley where they not only hear Mrs. Reynold’s praise of her master but also where – upon their unexpected meeting – Darcy starts to show his real character. Lady Catherine, however, not only serves as a negative example of pride based on social status, but also – though *most* unintentionally – secures the happy ending of Elizabeth and Darcy’s love story: “Lady Catherine’s unjust interference and her abuse of Elizabeth have been punished by the fact that they precipitated the very event that they were intended to forestall: it was the news of Elizabeth’s spirited reception of his aunt that inspired him to attempt a second proposal” (Brown 1584). Considering the roles of these characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, it will be interesting to see how Trevor has implemented them in her novel.

2.4. Time

By now, it should be clear that *Pride and Prejudice* is a highly structured novel, not only with regard to the plot but also the portrayal of time. Thus, Konigsberg calls it “a masterwork of temporal control, creating and fusing psychological and external time, lengthening and foreshortening both temporalities in a modulated and singular rhythmic flow” (262). While certain events and their consequences are easier to observe, analysing time seems to be a more difficult task. One possible explanation for the small role of time in literary analyses might be that most readers of fiction perhaps do not care how much time passes over the course of the novel or how the narrator deals with time. Moreover, looking for clues regarding a certain date or the passing of time and investigating the shift between narrative speeds is certainly a more demanding task.

Nonetheless, *Pride and Prejudice* lends itself to such an analysis due to Austen’s precise construction of the novel. In addition, time is also of importance for the plot structure because “the passage of time is the means by which important ideas are established” (Gill & Gregory 128; see also Prewitt Brown 76f.). Thus, I want to dedicate this chapter to two aspects of the novel’s structure: the time span and the speed of narration.

2.4.1. Time frame of the novel

When I first read *Pride and Prejudice* I believed that the plot covered the events of only a few months or, in other words, the most decisive weeks and months in the life of Elizabeth Bennet – “just long enough for the marriageable persons to court and marry” (Prewitt Brown 77). Upon my third or fourth time, I started to realise that it actually spans significantly more time – almost an entire year. For the purpose of this analysis, I have created a ‘calendar’ where I tracked as many time references as I could and tried to reconstruct dates based on those references.²⁵

The numerous indications of time (sometimes even exact dates), suggest that Austen worked with a calendar: “her regard for accuracy in those parts of her work which belonged to the real and not to an ideal world was quite unlike that of authors in general. It is easy to believe her incapable of giving dates which could not have coexisted in the same year” (Chapman 79). Chapman suggests that “*Pride and Prejudice* was constructed on the calendar of 1811-

²⁵ I have added my time table to the Appendix, p. 101.

12, and was not merely rewritten, but very largely recast, in the year preceding publication” (ibid.; original emphasis). Still, some incidents within the novel, e.g. the presence of the Brighton militia camps, point to an earlier setting (cf. Chapman 80). Furthermore, Milligan points out that Darcy and Wickham’s shared history “extend[s] the potential scope of the novel in space and time” (74).

2.4.2. Speed of narration

The speed of narration in *Pride and Prejudice* is subject to great variation and is entirely dependent on the narrator; it ranges from ellipses to pauses. As Halliday views it, “[m]uch of *Pride and Prejudice* moves at the pace of life itself [...]. But note how fast the storyteller can shift to drastic synopsis when it seems desirable to step up the action and move on to a scene essential to the plot” (70; original emphasis). Since the time structure is not the main focus of this thesis, it would be both unnecessary and disproportionate to provide an in-depth analysis of the whole novel with regard to this aspect. Instead, I want to draw attention to a number of interesting and skilful choices by the narrator.

As it appears, Austen seems to be quite fond of ellipses – especially as a means of skipping ‘irrelevant’ periods of time. For instance, when Mr Bennet reveals that he has indeed paid Mr Bingley a visit, the reader is informed that Elizabeth’s next ball is to be in two weeks’ time (PP 8). The events of this evening are succeeded by the narrator’s announcement that “[i]n a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet’s visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library” (PP 11) – it remains unknown what happening in the meantime. The Bennet’s invite Mr Bingley to dinner for the next day who, unfortunately, has some business in town (PP 11f.). In the same paragraph, the narrator summarises the news that spread about Mr Bingley’s company for the ball and jumps to “the day before the ball” (PP 12); the next one is already concerned with the Meryton assembly and Mr Bingley’s uncommonly proud friend.

Probably the longest time period which is *not* narrated covers two months: “With no greater events than these in the Longbourn family, and otherwise diversified by little beyond the walks to Meryton, [...] did January and February pass away. March was to take Elizabeth to Hunsford” (PP 149). Another omission which also emphasises the narrator’s focus on Elizabeth regards her anticipation of the trip with her aunt and uncle:

When Elizabeth is waiting at Longbourn for the Gardiners to come and take her on a tour of the Lake district, she is disappointed by a letter saying that they cannot start until two weeks later than planned, and consequently cannot go so far on their trip. Our shrewd narrator, however, has no intention of making us impatient without a purpose, and disposes of a whole month in two swift sentences: “Four weeks were to pass away before her uncle and aunt’s arrival. But they did pass away, and Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner with their four children did at length appear at Longbourn.” (Halliday 70f.)

Throughout the novel, there are many occasions where the narrator ‘accelerates’ the narration in this manner, with various motives in mind. Firstly, this brings a change of rhythm into the story. Secondly, and more importantly, reporting the characters’ every action would not only bore the readers but it would also add nothing relevant to the plot. Thus, this ‘fast forward’ movement is an essential part of *Pride and Prejudice*’s time structure.

Similarly to the ellipses, Austen also included innumerable summaries of days and events. In many cases, they appear in the introductory paragraphs of the chapters and serve as a means of ‘setting the scene’. At the beginning of chapter ten, for example, when Jane and Elizabeth are still at Netherfield, the narrator summarises the events of the day as a background for the ensuing action:

The day passed much as the day before had done. Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley had spent some hours of the morning with the invalid, who continued, though slowly, to mend; and in the evening Elizabeth joined their party in the drawing-room. The loo table, however, did not appear. Mr. Darcy was writing, and Miss Bingley, seated near him, was watching the progress of his letter, and repeatedly calling off his attention by messages to his sister. Mr. Hurst and Mr. Bingley were at piquet, and Mrs. Hurst was observing their game. (PP 46)

The rest of the chapter consists mostly of conversations, which, true to their nature, are portrayed as scenes. The extended back and forth between Elizabeth and Darcy (especially in this chapter) allows them to become acquainted with each other and have time to observe how the other acts in different situations, which is especially important for Darcy, because, “on a personal level, it is his duty to marry well. This means not to marry for money, but to choose a partner who will be a good match in morality and temperament” (Scheuermann 8). Thus, it is also on that occasion that Elizabeth “could not help observing [...] how frequently Mr. Darcy’s eyes were fixed on her” (PP 50).

This remark also initiates a stretch of time where the narrator describes Elizabeth’s thoughts and attempts to figure out Darcy’s intentions (cf. *ibid.*). On the whole, primarily thought processes induce a stretch of time. Thus, my suggestion would be that Austen intentionally ‘slows down’ the narrative speed when Elizabeth and Darcy are together (scene or stretch)

or to enter Elizabeth's consciousness (stretch or pause) to draw more attention to their developing feelings and to support the main narrative.

Lastly, the most prominent pauses of narrative speed seem to occur in the middle of *Pride and Prejudice*: Darcy's letter, which covers (almost) seven pages (PP 191-197), and Elizabeth's ensuing reflection on it (PP 198-203) – two of the most crucial events of the entire novel. These 'stops in time' symbolise the turning points of the story and, indeed, confirm the claims made in chapter 2.1.1.3.

Ultimately, the purpose of this rather short survey of narrative speed was to show that an investigation of presentation and manipulation of time may yield interesting insights into the overall structure of the plot. Without a doubt, an in-depth analysis of the temporal structure might be able to reveal even further connections between the organisation of the plot structure and the representation of time.

2.5. Historical context

While the main focus of this thesis lies on the narrative structure of *Pride and Prejudice*, it would seem naïve to disregard the circumstances of its creation: "we cannot neglect to understand the relationship between the text and its time, for the very techniques and reading responses we seek to understand from our contemporary perspectives can be further understood in light of the cultural and intellectual context of the period" (Konigsberg 260). Austen's time was the late 18th and early 19th century. To create a somewhat comprehensive picture of Austen's time and the background of the novel, I will briefly attend to various facets: 18th-century literature in general, (literary) influences on Austen's writing and specific issues of that era (the publishing market, views of marriage).

18th century literature

In the history of literature, the 18th century is seen as a period of fundamental innovations; most scholars will associate it with the 'rise' or 'origin' of the novel (see e.g. Jones 5). It also coincides with the period known as the Augustan Age (1660-1789), in which works were "written in classical traditions of learning and satire, with their displays of wit, elegance and erudition" (Simmons 4). Hence, the term 'Augustan' stands for a "standard and type of

writing, or indeed a specific cultural identity. This involves ideas of taste and wit, aspired to by essayists, dramatists and poets” (Simmons 4).²⁶

Even though Austen’s novels were published at the beginning of the 19th century, they exhibit an undeniable resemblance to Augustan ideals. According to Konigsberg, the “world in which Jane Austen lived and about which she wrote belonged more to the mainstream of eighteenth-century life and thought than to the final decades of the period and the coming century” (214). This shows once more that there are no clear-cut boundaries between epochs (cf. Simmons 12). Nonetheless, “*Pride and Prejudice* was a notable departure from the romantic fictions that were still popular and still expected of women novelists” (Brownstein 49; original emphasis).

Another deciding element of literary life was “the birth of the consumer society” (Simmons 7):

Books and periodicals helped to create and to satisfy the urge towards consumption, as market products in themselves, and by advertising and conveying news about the latest fashions and trends. As a result, the number of books published each year quadrupled during the course of the 18th century, even though their cost was high – a novel was priced between six and ten shillings. This, for much of the period, was roughly equivalent to a day’s wages for a skilled craftsman, or a week’s wages for a labourer. The prohibitive pricing was, however, circumvented by both the serialization of longer works and the establishment of circulating libraries [...]. (ibid.)

The rather high costs of buying books further imply that the intended audience of working- and middle-class authors were “readers from their own classes, as well as from the traditional upper-class readership” (Simmons 6). Thus, the “publishing legislation [...] effected a broadening of the reading public” (Jones 8).

Influences

Considering that “the 18th century was the first period in which literacy became really widespread, fuelling and feeding off the growing array of written material” (Simmons 6), it can be readily assumed that Austen herself read numerous books; Burney’s novels *Evelina* and *Cecilia* seem to have had a particular impact on her (cf. Konigsberg 213 & Jones 13).²⁷ Her style of writing is also indebted to novelists like Richardson and Fielding (cf. Konigsberg 214f.) as well as Johnsonian diction and syntax (Wright 173). Waldron also

²⁶ Further typical qualities include “order, strength, dignity, propriety, symmetry, balance, erudition, classical allusion [...], refinement, harmony, grace, polite manners, and spleen” (Simmons 4f.)

²⁷ Grundy points out that “Austen’s best-loved authors are those with Augustan affinities: apart from Crabbe, they are Richardson, Johnson, Cowper, and Burney” (197).

indicates a “strong structural and thematic connection with the novels of Fanny Burney, especially with *Cecilia* (1782), but also with *Camilla*, published in 1796 when Austen was reportedly engaged with the first draft of the novel, entitled ‘First Impressions’” (37; original emphasis).

What sets Austen apart from her predecessors, however, is her focus on “tracing the growth of her protagonist but also highlighting the character’s self-discovery and arranging the novel’s events around this realization” (Königsberg 215):

[...] it achieves its primary effect by focusing on a character’s perceptions of reality and by involving the reader in the very act of perceiving. But here again Austen outstrips her predecessors by creating a more convincing, interesting, and intelligent perceiving mind, and by dramatizing it in such a way that the reader achieves both a more compelling involvement and a more immediate understanding of what is happening with the character. (Königsberg 218)

Moreover, Austen belongs to the expanding circle of female writers of the 18th century (see e.g. Simmons 8). While this may be nothing outstanding for contemporary readers, in Austen’s time it was rather common for women to publish their work anonymously. For this reason “*Sense and Sensibility* is identified as a work by ‘A Lady’; *Pride and Prejudice*, published two years later, was signed ‘by the Author of ‘Sense and Sensibility’” (Brownstein 49; original emphasis).²⁸ The fact that all of her protagonists are women may underline that “during Jane Austen’s productive years as a writer, from the 1790s to the 1810s, the novel was a literary form written by, for and about women” (Jones 10).

Developments and issues of the 18th and 19th century

Over the course of the century, however, the literary market seemed to undergo drastic changes. In the 1820s, for instance, the number of male writers surpassed that of female writers (cf. Jones 10), causing women to seek “forms of expression which evaded conventional masculine ones in order to partake fully of literary life” (Simmons 8).

Even though the emerging popularity of novels and the expanding audience certainly had their advantages, being a novelist was no ‘easy job’ at that time; especially when considering that, in the beginning of the 18th century, “the British government passed repressive measurements that severely limited what could be published without danger of the author and the publisher or printer being accused and convicted of sedition” (Teachman x). Consequently, authors had to opt for ‘safe’ topics, e.g. the life of a few families in a small

²⁸ See also Jones 11f. and Teachman 4f.

village (cf. *ibid.*). This knowledge, then, enables the contemporary reader to understand that “Austen’s habitual reliance on the marriage plot is [...] to a very great extent determined by the constraints of the publishing market of her day” (Jones 14) and is not necessarily a result of her own preferences. Still, one could argue that Austen’s writing is situated near the line of completely ‘safe’ and slightly daring:

Her books do not make explicit statements about the political issues confronting England, but they do illustrate much of English life in those difficult times. Austen, by focusing on the activities of only a few country families, deflects attention from the overtly political, while in fact showing how social class, patronage, and privilege affected the average English person, male and female. Her novels, therefore, are enacted against the background of both physical revolution and major revolution of thought, but they do not directly express any particular argument. (Teachman x)

In addition to these restrictions with regard to the choice of topic, the literary market was “heavily under the influence of circulating libraries [...] – so much that when Austen was writing the majority [...] of copies of any given novel were sold to circulating libraries rather than to private consumers” (Jones 11). Thus, if she wanted her novels to be popular, she simply had to “meet the specific demands of the libraries” (*ibid.*), which certainly is another reason for Austen’s constant use of the marriage plot. Interestingly, it is also mentioned in *Pride and Prejudice* that the Bennets have books from a circulating library in their collection (PP 67).

Since Austen’s novels focus on rather ‘mainstream’ topics and do not contain any open political comments, there have been countless debates regarding the novelist’s actual views and quite contrasting interpretations of her novels:

Some literary and social critics have labelled her conservative, antifeminist, and supportive of the status quo; others have described her novels as subversive, and claimed that they support individualism, set out for ridicule the traditionally accepted views of the aristocratic, patriarchal structure of British society, and encourage to change to a more egalitarian society with equity of treatment under the law for all people, including women, servants, and children. (Teachman x)

While some may see this ‘smooth’ appearance of her novels as a weakness, Teachman considers it as a sign of their complexity” (cf. *xf.*). Furthermore, this particular style of writing may well have contributed to her popularity in the 19th century as well as in our time; had Austen written more (openly) critical or politically oriented novels, they might have never been published – and we would have no Mr Darcy to admire. Similarly, Jones argues that the reason for the popularity of *Pride and Prejudice* is its ‘inoffensiveness’ (104).

Militia and the war

There can be no doubt that the restrictions of the literary marketplace as well as gender roles had a considerable impact on Austen's writing. What is neglected in many analyses, however, is that Austen lived during a time of war:

From 1793 to 1815 (with a brief respite afforded by the treaty of Amien in 1803), Britain and France were at war: this is a period which covers virtually the whole of Austen's writing career. It would be, I think, an act of intellectual irresponsibility to consider novels written in, for example, the years 1914-18 or 1939-45 as though the wars then raging had no bearing at all on them; yet this is precisely the way in which many chose to read Austen's work, as if it existed solely in some decorous parallel universe of moral discrimination and formal dances. (Jones 28)

Even though *Pride and Prejudice* is known for its harmonious story world (cf. Jones 31), it also features elements of this part of Austen's reality. Quite early in the novel, for example, the reader is informed of the "recent arrival of a militia regiment in the neighbourhood; it was to remain the whole winter, and Meryton was the head quarters" (PP 29). As Gill & Gregory point out, the "militia regiments were established to prevent an invasion. They had no barracks but moved round the country as deemed necessary by the commanders" (126). For Lydia, however, it appears that those officers were only stationed in Meryton for her own personal excitement. During one of their walks to Meryton the narrator states: "The attention of the younger ones was then no longer to be gained by him [Mr Collins]. Their eyes were immediately wandering up in the street in quest of the officers, and nothing less than a very smart bonnet indeed, or a really new muslin in a shop window, could recall them" (PP 71) – or "Since the —shire were first quartered in Meryton, nothing but love, flirtation, and officers, have been in her head" (PP 269).²⁹ While the presence of the militia is noticeable throughout the novel, the reader receives no further information concerning the war. Thus, the world around Longbourn remains undisturbed and peaceful.

Historical context of marriage

What may, in contrast, be somewhat disturbing for current-day readers are the conventions of marriage in the 18th and 19th century. Firstly, the majority of female protagonists was very young. In Austen's time (partly due to potential malnutrition), girls did not start their period until 18 or even 20 years of age which implies that they "were physically and very probably psychologically adolescent" (Jones 19). However, "the average age of marriage for women

²⁹ Gill & Gregory indicate that '—shire militia' is used on purpose as "it was a literary convention not to give a name" (126).

in the landed classes across the eighteenth century was around 22-23” (Jones 20); men were usually older (e.g. because of their education or financial reasons). Taking into account the substantial changes marriage brought about (and the necessity of it in the Bennets’ case), particularly young women were educated to determine a suitable partner; many were further trained “[h]ow to attract, snare, and commit him to the lifelong contract of marriage” (Teachman 147).

Secondly, the marriage market seemed to advocate endogamy (i.e. marrying within the same community or social class) which explains why “so many of the period’s novels, including Austen’s, can present marriage symbolically in quasi-incestuous terms” (Jones 20). In *Pride and Prejudice*, for instance, Mr Collins sets out to marry one of his ‘fair’ cousins and Darcy’s aunt Lady de Bourgh intends Darcy to marry her daughter.

Thirdly, marriage was of completely different significance than it is today (although its perception underwent considerable changes throughout the century). While people of the 21st century will most likely only marry out of love, many saw it, in earlier times, as a means of joining families (as well as the corresponding fortunes) or strictly as a business (cf. Teachman 53).

At the same time, however, the political and social climate was encouraging the view of the individual *as* an individual. As a result, the preferences of individuals became more important than in the past, and marriage, while still a contract, started to gain acceptance as an affective relationship – one in which the feelings and emotions of the individuals involved were given more consideration than previously. The idea of marrying for love took hold of many in society at this time. (Teachman 53f.; original emphasis)

Moreover, the act of marriage was not regulated by law until Lord Hardwicke’s Marriage Act of 1753; “under this act, no marriage between persons under the age of 21 could be legally binding without the consent of parents or guardians” (Jones 15). Since this law was only valid in England, “it could be circumvented by an elopement across the border, most frequently to Gretna Green” (ibid.) – just as Lydia and Wickham did.

In summary, this survey has illustrated that paying attention to the historical context of a novel does not only help to understand details of the plot but also provides insights into *why* an author chose to write his/her novel in a certain way or which topics to focus on. All of the various circumstances discussed in this section did have serious effects on Austen’s novels. However, as Jones argues, they “have generally been viewed as high-order aesthetic artefacts, above or beyond such grubby concerns, rather than as material productions embedded in the literary marketplace of the time” (11). This may probably be due to *Pride*

and Prejudice's firm space among canonical works of British literature; thus, the focus may lie more on the plot and the style of writing than its actual context. It might also be Austen's avoidance of too many circumstantial details (particularly of the Napoleonic Wars) which have reinforced the perception of *Pride and Prejudice* as a timeless novel; as a result, readers "can relate to the situations she describes, even if the details have changed over time" (Teachman 144).

3. THEORETICAL FRAME II: ADAPTATION, EROTICA & FANFICTION

In the first half of this thesis, I have collected the aspects of narrative structure which are most relevant for my work. Consequently, they were used in the analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, together with insights from other academics. This serves as the foundation for the second half, where I will dive deeper into the subject matter. In the present chapter, I will discuss the context of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* which encompasses the fields of (literary) adaptation, (female) erotica as well as fanfiction. With this background information in mind, I will then proceed with the analysis of said novel in the next chapter.

3.1. (Literary) Adaptation

Adaptation studies covers a broad spectrum of possible approaches when it comes to the transformation of a text. Overall, there seem to be two main strands: On the one hand, it deals with transformations from one text type into another (e.g. drama into novel or vice versa) or from one genre into another (e.g. love story to drama). On the other hand, it “focuses on novels transferred to films, ‘text to cinema’ or ‘literature on screen’” (Bruhn et al. 6). The type I am concerned with, however, is the adaptation – or transposition (cf. Sanders 26) – of a literary text into another literary text. Given the endless possibilities of this practice, it is not surprising that it serves as a headline for a multitude of very different approaches: “variation, version, interpretation, imitation, proximation, supplement, increment, improvisation, prequel, sequel, continuation, afterlife, addition, paratext, hypertext, palimpsest, graft, rewriting, reworking, refashioning, re-vision, re-evaluation” (Sanders 15).³⁰ Regardless of the type of adaptation, it always is “a process of literary creation” (Blood 25) where the “relationship with an informing source text [is signalled most often] either through its title or through more embedded references” (Sanders 34). Even though adaptations might only be regarded in the context of literature, it is important to realise that “[l]iterature, society, culture and history are inextricably intertwined in the creation of literary adaptations because each adaptation necessarily and overtly reacts to, or interacts with, earlier versions of the story, earlier representations of the character and the

³⁰ Sanders mentions even more forms of adaptations at a later point (25). Blood refers to the writing of literary adaptations in the 18th century as literary recycling (iii).

authority of earlier authors” (Blood vi; see also Bruhn et al. 8). Historically speaking, literary adaptation is not a new thing; it was

[...] a common practice in the 18th century, well-engrained in the tradition of the production of literary texts – stemming back as far as the cyclical literature of the Middle ages, endowed with a heavy dose of the Renaissance tradition of imitating ancient Greek and Latin authors, and influenced by the 18th-century practice of translating the popular works of contemporary foreign authors. (Blood 2)

One reason for the popularity of adaptations seems to have been the non-existence of copyright laws, for they were only established in the 18th century: “The first loosely written and loosely interpreted copyright laws were enacted in the beginning of the century in England with the 1710 Statute of Anne, though the laws concerning copyright were being constantly revised, modified, and overturned throughout the century” (Blood 10). As Blood points out, “‘copyright’ did not extend to intellectual property but rather to the actual right to copy and sell a specific author’s version of a story” (ibid.).

In today’s context, one could argue that copyright laws are preventing – or at least complicating – literary adaptations of contemporary works (see e.g. Blood xviii). With regard to ‘older’ pieces of literature, there are considerably less problems because most of the classical works – including Austen’s – are in the public domain. This means that their copyright has expired and that “there is no legal authority which could raise objections to the adaptations of her novels in fanfiction and film” (Rahn 57). Still, adaptations are quite popular nowadays, especially in the form of ‘text to cinema’ (cf. Bruhn et al. 6) which allows the film industry to “take advantage of recycling well-known material as a marketing strategy” (Bruhn et al. 2).

Perhaps as a result of the different stance on copyright and plagiarism in the 18th century, originality was viewed quite differently than it is today: “While the idea of originality grew to become commonplace as an aesthetic term in the literary world of the 18th century, for the most part it was used to describe an originality of expression, rather than an originality of ideas or subject matter” (Blood 5). During the period of Romanticism, the conception shifted and originality came to be associated with an author’s own ideas or specific style of writing (cf. Blood 6). This resulted in the low appreciation of adaptations and the “prejudice that these texts are second-hand” (Mengel 1; see also Sanders 39), which ultimately affected the (academic) study of this practice.

In the context of adaptations, one of the most central issues is the question of fidelity or faithfulness to the original. As Bruhn et al. put it, it is crucial for the ‘dedicated audience’,

even though some of them may create fan texts that do not fulfil this criterion (cf. 2f.). However, it is also a problematic feature because it cannot be easily determined and, hence, interferes with normative evaluation (cf. Bruhn et al. 5):

Although fidelity discourse has been abandoned, the issue of similarities and differences is still very much present in contemporary research. Adaptation must necessarily incorporate some kind of comparative element – seeing one text in relation to another – and the strategic and almost universal move in the field has been to ‘translate’ fidelity into the more neutral, and thus useful, measure of similarity and difference on various levels of the compared texts. (ibid.)

In addition, Sanders points out that “[i]ntellectual or scholarly examinations of this kind are quite deliberately not aimed at identifying ‘good’ or ‘bad’ adaptations” (27), for it is more than unclear whereupon such judgement should be based.

3.2. Erotica

As can be expected from the title, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is not a typical romantic novel. Instead, it falls into the genre of erotica or erotic literature. Following Roach’s definition, “the term ‘erotica’ is used for forms of writing – novels, novellas, short stories – that take sexual activity as a central subject of their narratives” (107).

In erotica, sexuality and sexual activity are presented in stories that range from the mildly suggestive, through the sexually explicit, all the way to the kinkiest of hardcore, from amateur online short stories to professionally published bestselling novels; from the mainstream to the alternative; and from heterosexual to minority positions of sexual and gender expression across the LGBTQ+ spectrum. (ibid.)

It is also called ‘female erotica’ when the text is written by a female author for a female audience. Here, “the main focus lies on the relationship in which sexual encounters take place” (Meyer 266) and on the hero falling completely for his female partner (cf. ibid.). Regardless of the target audience, however, such stories are usually fictional in nature (cf. Roach 110).

Given its thematic focus on sex, erotica is often associated with pornography. While the former is “understood as sexually arousing representations which are neither visibly exploitative nor offensively explicit” (Driscoll 85), the latter is “defined by being consumed for the explicit purpose of arousal [...] or by being an illicit sexual representation” (ibid.). As Roach points out, however, there are also scholars and authors of such literature who believe that there is no difference between the terms and that they mean the same thing (108). Taking into consideration the wide varieties within this genre (see quote by Roach 107 above), I

would use these terms as a means of describing a continuum from the ‘mildly suggestive’ (erotica) to the more ‘hardcore’ (pornography).

In the introduction to this section, I have clearly distinguished *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* from romance novels. However, the distinction between erotica and classic ‘love stories’ is not always as clear:

Romance novels [...] fall on a spectrum from sweet (no on-page sex) to moderately spicy (a few scenes of lovemaking) to full-blown erotic romance (more frequent and kinkier sex). Erotica and romance fiction overlap in this category of erotic romance. In *erotica* the characters come together in couplings that don’t necessarily end with monogamous pair-bonding; in *erotic romance* or *romance erotica* such love-bonding does occur in at least a happy-for-now, if not a happily-ever-after, ending. (Roach 108; original emphasis)

The main difference between romance and pornography seems to be that “they are not consumed by the same sets of people or in the same ways” (Driscoll 92). According to Hellekson & Busse, “women want nurture and monogamy rather than sex, so that romance novels, rather than pornography, fulfill women’s erotic needs” (21). Roach further proposes that the separation of sex and love (or emotions) is a deciding factor (108). Moreover, while romance novels may be a source of lively discussions (e.g. about one’s OTP³¹), literature with pornographic traits is more likely to be consumed solitarily (cf. Driscoll 92).

Nonetheless, it appears that as our western culture “has undergone a ‘pornification’, erotica itself has gone mainstream” (Roach 109); after all, ‘sex sells’ is not a new motto. Perhaps the best example for the current trend of erotic literature featuring elements of BDSM³² is the success story of E.L. James’s *Shades of Grey* trilogy: “*Fifty Shades* has been a phenomenal commercial success. This series has sold more than 100 million copies” (Khan 59; original emphasis). Especially “the privacy and anonymity afforded by the meteoric rise of e-readers and digital books” (Roach 109) seem to have been major contributing factors. Since novels of this kind usually perpetuate the traditional gender roles of the male as superior and the female as inferior, one could interpret “BDSM eroticism [...] as simple normalisation of the male dominant/female submissive sexual dynamic that characterises traditional ‘bodice-ripper’ romances” (Khan 60). Still, the potential of erotica or BDSM-

³¹ OPT – one true pairing – is a term often used in fanfiction as well as popular culture and describe a person’s favourite couple. This is often linked to the “phenomenon of *shipping* (supporting certain pairings at the expense of others)” (Driscoll 84; original emphasis).

³² “Ideally, BDSM is about trust, power exchange and mutual pleasure in a relationship where partners negotiate consent and work out boundaries in advance. Consensual BDSM is not the same as non-consensual sex but with its scenes of force, physical restraint, punishment and master-slave language it is not entirely different, either.” (Roach 112)

stories should not be underestimated. While writing about sex and sexuality may be regarded as a taboo by some, “the new wave of mainstream erotica and of feminist and queer pornography proves that erotica *can* also be a radical imaginative space that works towards sexual justice for women, sexual minorities and heterosexual men too long confined to narrow masculine roles” (Roach 109f.; original emphasis). Thus, it can “challenge gendered double standards about sexuality that are oppressive to both men and women” (Roach 110).

3.3. Fanfiction

As the term already implies, fanfiction refers to fictional works produced by fans. Jenkins, for instance, defines it as “the practice where fans write stories based on the characters and storyworlds of a single source text or a “canon” of works” (371). This could include novels, films, TV series, games and even musicals (cf. *ibid*). As Thomas points out, fanfiction has its origins in the 1920s and 1930s, but only became popular due to the advent of the internet (cf. 1f.; see also Hellekson & Busse 13).³³ A quite considerable side effect of this development is the altered perception of consumers: “In this participatory culture, fans are no longer merely the consumers of texts. They are also its ‘prosumers’ (both producers and consumers)” (Jenkins 371). It has also caused a disruption of the (hitherto) clear boundary between author and reader – by writing their own stories, fans become authors themselves (cf. Thomas 8 and Sanders 14).

When recalling Herman’s statement about various paths taken by the characters, it seems that those “other possible paths [which] might have been pursued, but were not” (19; quoted in the first chapter) could be interpreted as the starting point of fanfiction, for although “the features are finite in number [...], they can be exploited and combined in infinitely many ways” (Prince 1982: 60). Similarly, it could be the result of ‘what would have happened if ...’-questions (see e.g. Hawthorn 6) or a form of paying tribute to the author (see e.g. Gymnich 26). Overall, it can be assumed that fanfiction foregrounds the readers’ motivations and desires (cf. Thomas 6).

In order to successfully approach fanfiction, Thomas argues that “it is important to start by looking at what fans are *doing*, rather than trying to impose terms and values on their activities” (5; original emphasis) and, hence, proposes to concentrate on distinctive elements

³³ FanFiction.Net is perhaps one of the most popular forums.

of fan-narratives (cf. 15).³⁴ Hellekson & Busse further emphasise the consideration of fan-texts’ “understandings of *canon*, the events presented in the media source that provide the universe, setting, and characters, and *fanon*, the events created by the fan community in a particular fandom and repeated pervasively throughout the fantext” (9; original emphasis). Just like adaptations (see 3.1.), they are usually judged based on the faithfulness to the original (cf. Hellekson & Busse 10).

3.3.1. *Pride and Prejudice* and (erotic) fanfiction

Especially since the development of an ‘Austen Mania’ in the late 20th century (cf. Gymnich 13 & Teachman 142), *Pride and Prejudice* is as popular as can be and readers apparently cannot get enough of Elizabeth and Darcy.³⁵ Teachman attributes Austen’s popularity in the 1980s and 1990s to the release of film adaptations and television series based on her novels (142). She further argues that Austen’s novels are so popular because they deal with issues that are still relevant today:

- the legal requirements and consequences of marriage;
- how to choose a marriage partner and what that choice will mean to a person’s life;
- teenage sexuality; along with its moral and practical ramifications;
- whether a woman can live single successfully in a society that puts such a high premium on a woman’s relationship to a man; and
- what kinds of education are best suited for helping children grow into the kinds of men and women our culture needs and wants. (Teachman 141)

With its emphasis on first impressions and misjudgements, *Pride and Prejudice* also manages to “remind us of the limitations of our knowledge of others” (Milligan 81f.), especially in a time when people build perfect representations of their lives on social media, etc. In addition, what draws many people to the novel is its resemblance to a fairy tale (cf. Jones 93).³⁶ Thus, *Pride and Prejudice* has not only “come to be seen as a prototype for chick lit as well as for romance plots in a wider sense” (Gymnich 13) but has also become a “true pop-cultural phenomenon” (Gymnich 11). Therefore, it is not surprising that a fanon –

³⁴ In this particular context, Thomas also mentions the term *hyperdiegesis* which “has been extensively employed in fanfiction studies to account for the ways in which continuity and coherence may exist across texts associated with particular fandoms, and to provide a means of encompassing the multifarious ways in which fans connect to various sectors and inhabitants of the narrative spaces to which they return” (11). The concept of hyperdiegesis has originally been introduced by Matt Hills (cf. *ibid.*).

³⁵ Even though Austen’s novels are celebrated all around the world by fans and critics alike, they actually were not that popular when they were published or when Austen died (cf. Gymnich 13); this only seemed to change slightly during the 1880s.

³⁶ For more information on the fairy-tale qualities of *Pride and Prejudice* see Jones 93-102.

a canon consisting purely of fan-created texts – has developed, particularly around *Pride and Prejudice* (see e.g. Burkhard & Fleischer 312).³⁷

The most popular topic is the romance between Elizabeth and Darcy (cf. Burkhard & Fleischer 315). The readers' interest – if not investment – in the protagonists' love life becomes particularly evident in the vast amount of sequels which focus on Elizabeth and Darcy's life as a married couple or imagine how Darcy would act as a father (cf. Gymnich 23, Thomas 10). Interestingly, "[t]he idea of continuing the story beyond the ending provided in the novel can be traced back to Austen herself" (Gymnich 22). While Austen certainly viewed Elizabeth's story as sufficiently narrated, "fanfic writers purposefully seek out possible sequels, prequels, and an infinite surplus of narrative gaps – all of which would ordinarily be deemed marginal and structurally unnecessary for the meaningful wholeness of the realist text" (Jenkins 377; see also Thomas 13). Further possible forms of fanfiction include "divergent plots, crossovers, alternate universes, and multiverses, derived from source texts and their characters and storyworlds, and produced across both old and new media" (Jenkins 371). Another method would be rewritings, where the novel is, for example, told from a different perspective or transferred into a contemporary setting (see e.g. Gymnich 24). Nonetheless, these categorisations are not overly strict because there may be overlaps between different types.³⁸

What all of these fan-narratives have in common is that they follow a certain set of rules, the most important one being "the true representation of the canon's source characters within their storyworld rather than the author's style" (Jenkins 372). Therefore, sequels that imagine the protagonists' future life or the birth of their child "would be deemed in character if, by the end of the sequel, Darcy and Elizabeth are still happily married, just as they were at the end of the source text" (Jenkins 373). This is not necessarily due to the writers' respect for Austen's legacy but rather to requests to write 'in character' and bear in mind the historical conditions in order to publish their works in a given forum. Consequently, 'faithful' fanfiction should refrain from openly dealing with violence and explicit sexual content (cf. Xu 94f.).³⁹

³⁷ In 2003, Jones reports that "the Bits of Ivory archives contain more stories based on *Pride and Prejudice* than on all the other Austen novels combined" (94; original emphasis) which more than surpassed his expectations of the novels popularity and cultural dominance.

³⁸ See also Hellekson & Busse 10-11 for a further discussion of terminology related to fanfiction.

³⁹ In other fandoms – if it agrees with the source text – including sex scenes may be no problem at all. For more information on sex in fanfiction, see e.g. Driscoll 85f.

A controversial type of fanfiction which *deliberately* violates this rule are so-called ‘hybrids’ (crossovers between two genres) or ‘Fuck with Canon’-stories as Rahn (cf. 85)⁴⁰ calls them. In recent times, it has become popular “to infiltrate Austen’s novels with – or, depending on your point of view, open them up to – sex and erotica, as well as horror and paranormal content that is equally out of place in her realistic fictional worlds” (Wells 177).⁴¹ Due to the violation of the ‘cardinal rule’ of fanfiction, some have demanded to exclude them from ‘generic’ fanfiction (see e.g. Wells 178 or Rahn 72). Wells even argues that they “may repel some who consider themselves devotees of Austen’s writings” (178). While I do understand that more traditional fans of Austen may find erotic stories around *Pride and Prejudice* abhorrent, I would rather regard them as part of the recent trend of female erotica, especially considering the hype around E. L. James’ *Shades of Grey* trilogy and the corresponding film versions. Furthermore, an explicit focus on sex does not automatically eliminate the possibility of a true romance (cf. Driscoll 90f.). Thus, if fans of *Pride and Prejudice* write such stories to express their genuine feelings (perhaps because they fantasise about their own Mr Darcy or they wish Austen had included more private scenes), I do not see why they should not be labelled as fanfiction.

As this survey has shown, one could analyse *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* in either of these contexts. In addition, it appears that the line between adaptations and fanfiction is considerably thin when regarding rewritings or stories set in an alternate universe. From my perspective, it is dependent on the author’s approach which term fits better. Moreover, the suggestions regarding the discussion of adaptations and fanfiction are extremely similar. In the following chapter, I will thus adopt an inclusive approach (cf. Mengel 3) in my analysis, seeing that it “can only be successful if it describes rather than prescribes, and if it tries to make the distance between source text and target text the starting point for an interpretation which elucidates the different structure and function of the target text” (Mengel 6). As proposed by Sanders (27) and Mengel (11), I will refrain from judgements regarding the aesthetic quality of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* and instead focus on the aspects of narrative structure and where it differs from *Pride and Prejudice*. Thereby, both texts will be treated as autonomous texts (cf. Mengel 18) and not as superior or inferior.

⁴⁰ In contrast to ‘regular’ fanfiction, authors of this particular type “aim to subvert the orthodox reading of Austen’s novels which forms the basis of the canon” (Rahn 85). Therefore, instead of writing ‘in character’, their main objective is to write ‘out of character’ (cf. *ibid.*).

⁴¹ According to Wells, Austen hybrids seem to be mostly an American phenomenon because US writers appear to have less qualms about introducing these topics into novels like *Pride and Prejudice* (178; see also Gymnich 15).

4. NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF *SPANK ME, MR. DARCY*

Considering that *Pride and Prejudice* was published around 200 years ago, it is not surprising that Austen's readership has changed significantly since then. Especially readers of the 20th and 21st century seem to be bothered by the "absence of physical passion in Austen's novels" (Wells 181) although one can almost feel the attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy. Meyer underlines "exactly this dichotomy of prudery versus (suppressed) passion that opens up an infinite space of performances of desire – of female erotic rewritings of *Pride and Prejudice*" (263; original emphasis). *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* exploits this dichotomy, thereby following the "recent vogue for adding anachronistic elements to Austen's novels in order to satisfy present-day popular audiences" (Wells 177). Trevor is, however, not the only one to see the potential of this genre; further examples of erotic rewritings include *Pride/Prejudice: A Novel of Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth, and Their Forbidden Lovers* by Herendeen as well as *Pride and Promiscuity* by Eckstut and Ashton.

In my analysis of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* I will proceed as in the chapter on *Pride and Prejudice*. Thus, my main focus will lie on the plot structure and structural deviations from Austen's novel in particular. In the context of the plot structure, I will address the basic points, the narrative strands within Trevor's alternate universe as well as narrative devices, themes and motifs. In the section on narrative technique, the type of narrator, voice and perspective as well as the reliability of its narrator will be discussed. The third section features a brief comparison of the characters in Trevor's adaptation. Thereafter, I will present my observations of the temporal structure and speed of narration. Lastly, I want to draw attention to historical conditions (like the role of virginity in the context of marriage and the prevalence of BDSM practices in the 18th and 19th century) which are present in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* but not in *Pride and Prejudice*.

As I have pointed out previously, the analysis of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is mostly based on my own observations. In the process of comparing the two novels, I will also comment on what effects certain alterations produce. While I have based my arguments on the text at hand, I do not presume that everyone will agree with my interpretation.

4.1. Plot structure

Considering that *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is a rewriting (or adaptation) of *Pride and Prejudice*, the material Trevor could work with is rather limited. Still, she invents a whole new storyworld, by merging Austen's classic with the genre of female erotica and, thus, creates an alternate universe in which Netherfield is known for its debauched parties where guests may sneak off to the dungeon to pursue their darkest sexual fantasies. As in the original, the story revolves around a small number of families. What is executed differently, however, is the pursuit of the underlying principle of composition (cf. Milligan 78).

In addition, there are further differences at the general level of the plot structure. Firstly, while *Pride and Prejudice* focuses on how Elizabeth and Darcy come to know and love each other, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* puts greater emphasis on Elizabeth's struggles with her feelings for Darcy and how he comes to terms with his feelings for her. Secondly, given the strong influence of erotic writing, the concept of 'separate spheres' is almost completely obliterated due to the numerous depictions of sexual encounters. Still, the plot mostly focuses on the fate of the Bennet girls. Lastly, Trevor's rewriting is divided into 32 chapters and was published as one volume.

To render the analysis as comprehensible as possible, I will maintain the same order as in the chapter on *Pride and Prejudice*. Thus, this chapter will focus on the basic points of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, the various narrative strands (in particular the introduction of the erotic parallel plot), narrative devices as well as recurring themes and motifs.

4.1.1. Basic points

In the following section, I will discuss how Trevor handled the main plot elements in her rewriting, to what extent she altered elements of the plot and how these changes affect the overall structure. Due to Trevor's approach, there are many similarities but also significant differences.

4.1.1.1. Title

One of the most obvious deviations from the original is Trevor's choice of title. *Pride and Prejudice* directs the readers to pay attention to these traits and, thus, the ways in which the protagonists handle (and overcome) them. In the case of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, however, it immediately evokes a sexual connotation. In contrast to Austen's title, it is quite catchy and

may, hence, have been chosen on purpose to stand out amongst the countless other erotic rewritings. Moreover, it draws attention to the romance between Elizabeth and Darcy and leads the reader to expect the occurrence of SM practices. In addition, it is a direct reference to the scene where Elizabeth accepts Darcy's second proposal (SMD 285).

4.1.1.2. Beginning

Spank Me, Mr. Darcy starts with the 'universally acknowledged truth' that "a dominant man in possession of a good set of cuffs, must be in want of a much younger, submissive wife" (SMD 1). While this sentence neglects some of the main topics of *Pride and Prejudice* (e.g. property, wealth or social class), it addresses the core elements of marriage and domination/subordination. Also, similarly to the original, this first line is followed by a second general observation: "However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters" (SMD 1) – which sounds exactly like something Mrs Bennet would say.

At this point, one would expect the conversation to proceed as in the original with some alterations regarding the 'qualities' of said man. Trevor, however, throws the reader into her storyworld without much preparation: Mr and Mrs Bennet are amidst a sexual act while talking about the new owner of Netherfield (SMD 1-5). While Mr Bennet teases his wife with a riding crop, she urges him to go see Mr Bingley. The chapter closes with a character vignette of them, which I will address at a later point (see chapter 4.3.3).

4.1.1.3. Turning points

Even though *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is, to a great extent, based on *Pride and Prejudice*, the plot is structured a little differently and, thus, gives rise to different turning points. As in the original, one of the most deciding moments for Elizabeth Bennet is the day at the Meryton assembly where she meets Darcy who is just as proud as in Austen's novel (SMD 14). A turning point which is certainly not comparable to *Pride and Prejudice* is Elizabeth's first encounter in the dungeon at Netherfield with Caroline Bingley and a mysterious masked man⁴² (SMD 66-72). Further crucial events are, of course, the Netherfield ball which ends quite differently than in Austen's novel (SMD 172-193) as well as Elizabeth's stay at Hunsford (in particular SMD 243-248).

⁴² At this point, Elizabeth does not know yet that this man is in fact Darcy.

As in *Pride and Prejudice*, one could view Darcy's (first) proposal as the climax of the story. While this occurs in the middle of Austen's novel, it is not until chapter 27 (out of 32) that Darcy tells Elizabeth "how ardently I admire and love you" (SMD 258). Darcy's words are even more 'degrading' for Elizabeth than in the original because of their shared moments: "She was 'perfect' when he was inside her and she was restrained, but here in the common room she was 'inferior'" (SMD 258). While Darcy hands Elizabeth his letter himself the next day in *Pride and Prejudice*, Trevor's Darcy asks Mr Collins to give her the letter (SMD 264; for a discussion of it see chapter 4.1.3.3.).

Again quite similar, the most aggravating turning point of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is Lydia's elopement with Wickham (SMD 271); the period until their wedding, however, has been shortened considerably. What is interesting about this incident is how Trevor has adapted the scene to fit into her version: Elizabeth comes to know of the elopement in both novels by a letter from Jane but receives them in different places. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is with the Gardiners at Lambton and finishes the letter just as Darcy is at the door. In her desperation, she tells him what Lydia has done (PP 260-263), which ultimately determines Darcy to persuade Wickham to marry Lydia. In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, however, Elizabeth is in Hunsford with Charlotte and Mr Collins and has to decline Lady Catherine's invitation to dinner in order to travel back home immediately (SMD 271). Since Darcy had already left Rosings the day before (when he had written the letter to Elizabeth; SMD 264), it is not clear how he learned of the elopement.⁴³

A crucial event which is (to my personal disappointment) omitted in Trevor's adaptation is Elizabeth's trip to Pemberley with her aunt and uncle and their unexpected meeting which is of crucial importance for Austen's plot structure. In the rewriting, Elizabeth does not travel at all with the Gardiners, which is why the plot moves directly from Darcy's letter (SMD 264-268) and Lydia's elopement (SMD 271) to her wedding day (SMD 271) and Mr Bingley's return to Netherfield a month later (SMD 275).

4.1.1.4. Conclusion

With the start of chapter 30 and Bingley's return to Netherfield, the events that lead to the conclusion of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* occur in rapid succession. On the "third morning after his arrival" (SMD 276), Bingley comes to visit Longbourn in the company of Darcy with the intention of proposing to Jane. To provide them with some privacy, Mrs Bennet takes

⁴³ I will draw further attention to differences within the temporal structure in chapter 4.4.

the younger sisters upstairs and asks Elizabeth to entertain Mr Darcy (SMD 277). They take a walk to the barn, where they have intercourse and Darcy renews his proposal (SMD 278-286), while Bingley and Jane supposedly do the same (SMD 288). After having asked Mr Bennet for his consent, the weddings take place:

Jane and Bingley were married first and spend [sic] a few months at Netherfield before deciding the close proximity to her mother was a detriment rather than an advantage. By the new year, they were ensconced near Pemberley.

Elizabeth and Darcy were married next, and Elizabeth was overjoyed to take his sister Georgina [sic] under her wing. By watching her beloved older brother and his new bride, Miss Darcy was able to see that a marriage should be more than money, but love and respect. (SMD 292)

The last few remaining pages give a summary of how the other characters and couples are getting along and close with Elizabeth and Darcy enjoying the pleasures of the newly-wed state (SMD 292-294). Given the strong focus on sexuality and the confinement of most of the weddings (with the exception of Charlotte's) to the last 25 pages of the book, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* seems to exhibit a plot structure typical for the genre of 'Naughty Bits'⁴⁴ which "begin with the sexuality, but [...] invariably conclude with the promise of a 'permanent, loving relationship'" (Rahn 119). As in the original, it can be assumed that Elizabeth and Darcy will live happily ever after (with the prospect of floggings, spankings and 'good sets of cuffs').

4.1.2. Narrative strands within Trevor's alternate universe

Since Trevor has based her rewriting quite closely on Austen's novel (at least concerning the plot structure), the narrative strands of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* exhibit several similarities in comparison to *Pride and Prejudice*. Thus, the main narration remains the developing relationship of Elizabeth and Darcy which is connected with the subplots concerning her sisters and her friend Charlotte. Especially with regard to the focus on the search for (and the necessity of) an eligible husband, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* adopts Austen's marriage plot. Also, exactly like in the original, none of the four weddings is narrated. It is only stated that "Thursday was to be Charlotte's wedding day" (SMD 232), Lydia's "wedding day arrived" (SMD 271), that "Jane and Bingley were married first" (SMD 292) and "Elizabeth and Darcy were married next" (ibid.).

⁴⁴ Usually short erotic texts, written for contests.

What obviously sets *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* apart from Austen's novel is the introduction of sex and erotica as a parallel plot element which affects the whole story. Following my definition of storylines as representative of the 'general movement of the action' (see 2.1.3.), I would locate the characteristics of Trevor's universe in this category. In this particular storyworld, BDSM practices are – so to say – a daily occurrence: "Everybody in this rewriting of Jane Austen is part of a submissive/dominant relationship: the Bennets, Wickham, Bingley, Charlotte, Jane, the real servants in the house ... and of course Elizabeth and Darcy" (Meyer 270).

According to Meyer, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* belongs to the genre of female erotica – and not pornographic literature – because "the main focus lies on the relationship in which sexual encounters take place. The hero finds full satisfaction in his female partner, his sexual faithfulness is assured – he even becomes addicted to his partner" (266). Considering the rather "heterodiegetic representations of the female's reaction to the male" (ibid.), the dominance of males over females (in most cases) and the countless descriptions of phalli as being 'thick and hard' (e.g. SMD 97), Trevor's novel does seem to have a few pornographic traits. Still, the majority of sexual encounters is narrated from the perspective of female characters.

Nonetheless, "Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship is still predominantly based on an unequal distribution of power" (Rahn 115) and, at the end of the novel, the gender roles have not changed whatsoever (cf. Burkhard & Fleischer 315). During the conversation in which her father consents to her wedding with Darcy, Mr Bennet advises Elizabeth that "you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior" (SMD 291). While Trevor's Darcy "wants Lizzy to be obedient and subordinate" (Burkhard & Fleischer 315), Austen's Darcy seems to appreciate Elizabeth because of her strong mind and because she does not subordinate herself to other people (e.g. in the conversation with Lady de Bourgh).

4.1.3. Narrative devices

Considering the similar narrative strands discussed above, it can be assumed that Trevor used narrative devices comparable to those in Austen's original. Thus, I will discuss how she creates suspense and deals with information, which obstacles the characters have to face and what role letters as well as sex scenes play in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. Due to the omission of Elizabeth's trip to Pemberley, it is not included.

4.1.3.1. Suspense – Revelation of information

Since Trevor has written her beginning quite like the one in *Pride and Prejudice*, the first piece of information to be withheld is Mr Bennet's visit at Netherfield. Thus, the narrator informs the reader that "[n]ot wanting to arouse her curiosity, he kept his sojourn a secret. And till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it" (SMD 7). In the evening, the same conversation as in Austen's novel takes place where Mr Bennet tells his family that he had indeed paid the visit (SMD 10). Further revelations of information that have a considerable impact on the development of the plot include Colonel Fitzwilliam's telling Elizabeth about Darcy's intervention regarding Bingley's attachment to Jane (SMD 251f.) and Lydia's unintentional revelation that Darcy was at her wedding (SMD 273).

Furthermore, during Elizabeth's encounters in the Netherfield dungeon, Miss Bingley hands her over to a mysterious man "with a black executioner's mask over his face" (SMD 66). During the first session, she has no clue who that man may be and (perhaps unconsciously) tries to convince herself that it is not Darcy. In their third session, however, "he abandoned his black mask" (SMD 119) which, at first, unsettled her: "'The mask, it covered you before. I could pretend it was all a fantasy. Seeing your face,' [...] 'And touching you thus, has made this reality'" (SMD 120). These encounters apparently also had quite an effect on Darcy, who, on the day before Elizabeth and Jane's departure from Netherfield, admits to himself that Elizabeth "attracted him more than he liked" (SMD 126). Because Darcy only wants her as his personal submissive and does not want to encourage any romantic feelings, he ...

wisely resolved to be particularly careful that no sign of admiration should now escape him, nothing that could elevate her with the hope of influencing his felicity; sensible that if such an idea had been suggested, his behaviour during the last day must have material weight in confirming or crushing it. Marriage between them was preposterous. She would be an excellent slave or submissive, maybe even his long term. But she seemed to want more. Wanted to rise above her situation and he couldn't give her the hope that she would achieve that with him. (SMD 126f.)

In some ways, this resembles the original where the suspense of the novel “depends mostly on our waiting for Elizabeth to discover two things: that Darcy is in love with her; and that she is in love with Darcy” (Halliday 68). In this regard, however, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* deviates extremely from Austen’s original because Elizabeth admits to herself that she is in love with Darcy around Christmas time – long before she visits Charlotte at Hunsford (SMD 231). Moreover, Darcy observes that “I desire you and you desire me” (SMD 105). As a result, the main suspense seems to rely on the reader’s worrying whether Elizabeth will get Darcy to marry her. The narrator does hint at Darcy’s (developing) feelings for Elizabeth, but they are by far not as intricate and charming; also, as I have briefly mentioned before, his regard for Elizabeth depends on the respective situation. When they are ‘playing’ in the dungeon, Darcy compliments her (body’s) responsiveness (SMD 96) or tells her she looks lovely (SMD 104) but otherwise foregrounds her lack of inheritance and unfavourable relations. Hence, when Darcy actually does propose, Elizabeth is all the more surprised:

Her astonishment, as she reflected on what had passed, was increased by every review of it. That she should receive an offer of marriage from Mr. Darcy! That he should have been in love with her for so many months! Such much in love as to wish to marry her in spite of all the objections which had made him prevent his friend’s marrying her sister, and which must appear at least with equal force in his own case – was almost incredible! (SMD 262)

Still, there are several instances which prevent their instant happy ending, which will be discussed in the following section.

4.1.3.2. Impediments

While *Pride and Prejudice* is known and praised for its impediments (cf. Gill & Gregory 129), the situation is somewhat different in Trevor’s adaptation. For instance, although Elizabeth is – at first – appalled by Darcy’s pride (especially at the Meryton assembly), she starts to take a sexual interest in him and quickly disregards his pride. Furthermore, one of the most crucial events of the original – Lydia’s elopement with Wickham – is reduced to a single page in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* (SMD 271); in Austen’s novel, this time of agony and distress for the whole Bennet family takes up around 40 pages. In addition, Trevor also omits Lady Catherine’s visit at Longbourn; instead it is a short letter from Elizabeth (SMD 274; discussed below) which gives Darcy hope for his second proposal.

Considering that two of the most crucial plot elements – and in fact impediments – have been eliminated in the rewriting, the question arises whether Trevor has replaced them with other incidents. It seems that she uses Elizabeth’s virtue for her advantage; in other words,

Elizabeth's refusal to have sex with Darcy and her unwillingness to become his sex slave (at least for the most part of the story) have kept the main narrative along the lines of the original.⁴⁵

4.1.3.3. Letters

Taking into account that Trevor set her novel in the same time as *Pride and Prejudice*, one would assume that letters play a similar role in both versions. As it turns out, however, there are considerably fewer letters in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* (13 compared to over 40) and only five of them are provided in full form.⁴⁶ As in the original, the majority of letters occurs in the second half of the novel and Darcy's letter seems to be the most important one. What is different is that it appears only a few chapters before the ending (and not in the centre of the novel as in *Pride and Prejudice*), the first page from Darcy's original letter (PP 191) is omitted entirely as well as a few sentences in between. Still, I would argue that it mostly has the same effect: it explains the intention behind his separation of Jane and Bingley, tells the truth about Wickham's history and compels Elizabeth to re-evaluate her conception of both Wickham and Darcy himself (SMD 264-268).

As I have briefly mentioned in the previous section, Elizabeth writes a letter to Darcy which ultimately determines the ending of the novel. Due to Lydia's slip of the tongue that Darcy attended their wedding and "gave us quite a wedding gift" (SMD 273), she realises that "[i]t wasn't her Uncle that paid a great sum for Lydia's dowry, but her own dear, Master" (ibid.) and feels obligated to thank him personally:

*My dear Mr. Darcy,
You parted in such haste that I was unable to give to you a small token of my gratitude for the lessons you imparted. Should our paths cross again, I would be most willing to accept whatever punishments you thought fit for my digression.
Sincerely and with great esteem of you character,
Miss Elizabeth Bennet* (SMD 274; original emphasis)

Upon their next meeting at Longbourn (when Bingley proposes to Jane), Darcy tells Elizabeth that it was indeed her letter which persuaded him to not give up on her (SMD 280). What is interesting, though, is that he uses almost the same words as the Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* when he reviews the effects of his aunt's interference: "I knew enough of your

⁴⁵ I will return to Elizabeth's insistence of remaining a virgin for her husband, in the chapters 4.1.3.4 and 4.5.

⁴⁶ I have compiled a list of all letters in the Appendix, see p. 107.

disposition to be certain that, had you been absolutely, irrevocably decided against me, you would never had [sic] written to me” (ibid.).⁴⁷

4.1.3.4. Sex scenes

Taking into account that *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is an erotic retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*, it seems obvious to include a short discussion of the sexual contents. Throughout the novel, 27 sex scenes are narrated – some in great detail, some only mentioned briefly. In Austen fanfiction, the norm seems to be “a canonical heterosexual courtship plot, which makes male-female pairings the ‘obvious’ choice for intimate scenes” (Rahn 83). In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, however, there are all kinds of pairings; in addition to heterosexual couples, there are also homosexual pairings (both female-female and male-male) as well threesomes (male-female-female)⁴⁸. In Trevor’s storyworld, there are no taboos regarding sex in general or specific erotic fantasies and preferences (including BDSM practices); Elizabeth for instance asks Jane rhetorically “‘Why not play with both sides?’” (SMD 25), or, when Miss Bingley seduces Elizabeth and takes her to the ‘forbidden room’, the former says “‘Come now, we’re all girls here. Surely you’ve heard about Netherfield’s notorious reputation’” (SMD 64).

Thus, I would see the novel in line with e.g. E. L. James’ *Shades of Grey* trilogy which has not only brought the topic of sexual domination and BDSM practices into the centre of society but has also effected a downright hype about it. In addition, I would agree with Meyer who argues that the “aim of Erotica is not primarily masturbation, as with porn, but further sexual pleasure and satisfaction in the real sex act with a real partner, but with an extended version of sexual fantasies to stimulate the reader” (267).

Also, it should be noted that it is not until chapter 25 that Elizabeth actually consents to penetrative sex. While the concept of BDSM is based on the domination of one person over the other (regardless of their respective gender identity), it should always be an act of consent on *both* sides. This principle is followed throughout *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, which in consequence, may set a positive example and help to destigmatise these practices. At least in our time, it is ultimately everyone’s personal choice with whom they have intercourse and in which form.

⁴⁷ Darcy’s words in *Pride and Prejudice*: “I knew enough of your disposition to be certain, that, had you been absolutely, irrevocably decided against me, you would have acknowledged it to Lady Catherine, frankly and openly” (PP 347).

⁴⁸ I do not count the ‘play’ between Darcy, Elizabeth and the male servant (SMD 94-101) as a threesome because there is no interaction between the latter two.

4.1.4. Recurring themes and motifs

In order to reinforce the resemblance to Austen's novel, Trevor has adopted similar themes in her rewriting. Thus, the entail of Longbourn estate, the importance of marriage as well as pride and prejudice are central elements in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*.

4.1.4.1. Entail

Just as in *Pride and Prejudice*, the entail and the necessity to marry into wealth form the basis of the novel which spurs on the plot until the very end. Therefore, the narrator informs the reader that "Mr. Bennet's property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters, was entailed, in default of heirs male, on a distant relation; and their mother's fortune, though ample for her situation in life, could but ill supply the deficiency of his. Her father had been an attorney in Meryton, and had left her four thousand pounds" (SMD 53). As could be expected from Mrs Bennet, she is not particularly fond of this situation and calls it a "grievous affair" (SMD 133) during Mr Collins' first visit. Aside from these instances, the entail as such is hardly mentioned but still present in the characters' minds; and, since both Elizabeth and Jane find wealthy husbands, they are in no danger of being turned out of the house (cf. SMD 130).

4.1.4.2. Marriage

Although *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is an erotic rewriting, the topic of marriage is by no means neglected. It is not only brought up by Mrs Bennet in the beginning, but also discussed between Elizabeth and Charlotte (SMD 42) – quite in the same fashion as in Austen's novel – and mentioned continuously throughout the novel. Thus, Trevor's Mr Collins also comes to Longbourn with the intention of making one of the Bennet girls his wife (SMD 140). 'Disinterested' as Mr Collins is, he has no problems deferring his attentions from Jane to Elizabeth (ibid.). In contrast to *Pride and Prejudice* however, there is a short moment in which Elizabeth actually considers marrying Mr Collins, but discards it a second later:

If she married Mr. Collins, she would be subservient not to her husband but to the grand dame of the ton herself. While the thought might have held titillation for her at one time, Elizabeth only wanted Darcy. But she wanted him proposing marriage instead of Mr. Collins. She tried to look at her cousin fondly. She tried to at least consider his request. But it was too ludicrous. He was too odd and the fact that he was more submissive than some of Netherfield's slaves left her cold inside. Theirs would never be a grand passion. (SMD 196)

What is interesting about this passage is that Trevor adds sexual (in-)compatibility to Elizabeth's criteria for her ideal partner, which actually seems to be more common in the

21st century rather than the 19th century in which the novel is set. It also highlights one of the main differences between the two versions: Trevor's Elizabeth is very much aware of her feelings for Darcy and indeed wants him to propose to her.

Overall, the reader is presented with the different types of marriages as portrayed by Austen, but it seems that the main focus of the novel is not on marriage as such but finding a partner who has the same sexual preferences. In the quote above, for instance, Elizabeth dislikes Mr Collins not only because of his odd personality but also because he is too submissive for her. Similarly, Wickham also cannot win her heart. Although she appreciates his character (at least before she learns the truth about him), "[t]here wasn't a coiling of dark desire and an even darker need to abase herself on her knees in front of him" (SMD 152). Thus, one could argue that Trevor has adapted Austen's ideal of a 'meeting of the minds' (cf. Konigsberg 255) to suit her storyworld.

4.1.4.3. Pride and prejudice

Even though Trevor's title does not allude to pride and prejudice, they are still present in the story. In the analysis of Austen's novel, I have pointed out that it would be wrong to say that Darcy represents pride and Elizabeth represents prejudice; this is also (mostly) true for *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. 'Faithful' to the original, Elizabeth meets Darcy at the Meryton assembly where he is found to be "the proudest, most disagreeable man world" (SMD 15). In her conversation with Charlotte a few days later, she admits that "I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine" (SMD 35). It is not only Charlotte, however, who believes that Darcy "has a right to be proud" (SMD 35), but even Darcy himself. During one of their banters at Netherfield Darcy says: "Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be under good regulation" (SMD 117f.).

Where the story deviates from *Pride and Prejudice* is when Jane suggests that Elizabeth may be using Darcy's pride as "an excuse to hate him" (SMD 167) because he wants her to be his submissive instead of his wife. This combination of emotions seems to drive Elizabeth deeper into her prejudice against him which results in her resolution for the Netherfield ball: "Elizabeth thought with pleasure of dancing a great deal with Mr. Wickham, and of seeing a confirmation of everything in Mr. Darcy's look and behaviour" (SMD 169). Her opinion of him is further strengthened when Darcy refuses to talk about his and Wickham's past at the ball (SMD 181) and almost reaches its peak when Colonel Fitzwilliam tells her that "Darcy congratulated himself on having lately saved his friend from the inconveniences of

a most imprudent marriage” (SMD 251). Thus, when Darcy actually does propose, Elizabeth sees only his pride and declines him, although she had wished for this moment so long:

It was gratifying to have inspired unconsciously so strong an affection. But his pride, his abominable pride – his shameless avowal of what he had done with respect to Jane – his unpardonable assurance in acknowledging, though he could not justify it, and the unfeeling manner in which he had mentioned Mr. Wickham, his cruelty towards whom he had not attempted to deny, soon overcame the pity which the consideration of his attachment had for a moment excited. (SMD 262f.)

As in *Pride and Prejudice*, it is Darcy’s letter which clears him of Elizabeth’s accusations and forces her to admit her own prejudices (SMD 268). In the end, both – of course – overcome their weaknesses so that nothing stands in the way of a happy relationship.

On the whole, it seems as if Trevor has decreased the prominence of these themes and motifs to make space for the other elements of her storyworld. While some aspects that were crucial for *Pride and Prejudice* have been drastically reduced, I would argue that there is still enough to trace similarities between Austen’s novel and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*.

4.2. Narrative technique

While the discussion of the plot structure seems to deal with the novel on the surface level, the analysis of the narrative technique goes beneath it. In an endeavour to reveal how Trevor adapted Austen’s narrative technique in her own writing, I will address four main aspects: the type of narrator, voice and perspective as well as the narrator’s reliability. Due to the structure of the novel, I will subsume voice and perspective in one section.

4.2.1. The narrator of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*

Considering Trevor’s approach elaborated so far, it is not surprising that she chose a similar narrator as Austen: a third-person omniscient narrative persona. As I have indicated in chapter 4.1.1.2., the first chapter features almost an identical structure. Thus, it starts with the two paragraphs (which set the general tone for the novel), moves on to the conversation between Mr and Mrs Bennet and ends with the ‘character vignettes’. This movement not only points at the novel’s tendency to contrast characters (cf. Woloch 52), but also shows that the “narrator is always in control” (Konigsberg 244). Most chapters also begin with introductory paragraphs but not all of them can be defined as a proper introduction.

Sometimes, they continue right where the previous chapter left off or provide a short summary of a morning or evening.

With regard to the omniscience of the narrator, Trevor seems to have made a few alterations. Not only is he/she able to disclose Elizabeth's thoughts, but also those of other characters. While this is also true for *Pride and Prejudice* (cf. Wright 76, 81), Trevor does this more often and provides greater insight into other characters' minds (I will discuss this aspect in more detail in the next section). Furthermore, the practice of 'editing' or summarising (predominantly) Elizabeth's thoughts to a condensed and intelligible version is continued in the rewriting.

4.2.2. Voice and perspective

What seems to be of greater interest, however, is how Trevor has implemented the narrative elements of voice and perspective in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. Even though the novel seems to begin analogously to *Pride and Prejudice*, considerable differences become obvious as the story progresses, especially with regard to the novel's perspective which – in turn – influences the voice.

Similarly to the original, it is not clear from the beginning who the main character is, but it starts to transpire throughout chapter three when the narrator observes that "Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to hear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley" (SMD 15). Darcy's infamous insult that follows not only confirms the previous observations of his character, but also evokes a certain sympathy for Elizabeth. Her status as female protagonist is further established when Jane receives a letter from Caroline Bingley to dine at Netherfield, but the focus remains on Elizabeth at Longbourn. Thus, it is again only when Elizabeth decides to walk there herself that the reader learns more about Jane's state of health and the particulars connected with Netherfield's reputation (cf. SMD 59-63).

Where the two novels differ significantly, however, is the degree of focalisation. While Elizabeth remains the primary interest of the novel, Trevor does not restrict the narration to her thoughts and emotions, but provides the reader with greater insight into other characters' minds than Austen has done. One of the most prominent examples would be the Meryton

assembly where the reader is made privy to Darcy's thoughts regarding the other women present:

Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Long who without a care for her husband whispered to Darcy that she wanted to leave the assembly and go out on the balcony for a quick tup, and once with Miss Long, who trembled like a frightened virgin in his arms – which Mr. Darcy deduced she probably was. A part of him was intrigued by both women. He wouldn't mind debauching Mrs. Long presumably while her husband watched, and he wouldn't mind deflowering the quivering maid, again with an audience. But Mr. Darcy thought that would be too much on his first introduction to the quaint bucolic citizens of Meryton. So he declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. (SMD 15)

Thus, Trevor's narrator seems to possess greater knowledge than Austen's – or at least is more willing to share his/her information. Furthermore, it creates a different image of Darcy and emphasises his sexual drive. At a later point, for instance, when Elizabeth and Darcy are already better acquainted, the narrator of *Pride and Prejudice* hints at Darcy's altered perception of her (cf. PP 24). In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, this passage is infused with sexual observations:

Darcy watched the sensuous sway of her hips. He had thought her untested and innocent, but when she lifted up her hand it bore a reddened rope mark. To this discovery succeeded some others equally mortifying. [...] Her mouth seemed made for kissing or swallowing him down; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness. The thought of ministering her, teaching her to obey him made him stalk her like a jungle cat. Of this she was perfectly unaware; to her he was only the man who made himself agreeable nowhere, and who had not thought her handsome enough to dance with. (SMD 43)

What is fascinating is that by adding those sexual elements to this observation and describing Darcy as a 'jungle cat', it not only changes the readers' view of Darcy but also makes it very clear that he desires her. The narrator also discloses his frustration when Elizabeth repeatedly refuses his suggestion to become his submissive (SMD 180). Overall, Trevor's portrayal of Darcy presents him not only in a more sensual way but also in a less composed manner; it seems impossible to imagine Austen's Darcy uttering something "in a shaking voice" (SMD 190).

However, as a consequence of the numerous sex scenes – most of which are not centred on Elizabeth and Darcy – the focus is further shifted away from the protagonists. Her parents alone, for instance, take up six of the 27 descriptions of intercourse, although they have no impact on the movement of the plot whatsoever. Thus, I would argue that Trevor pursued a

similar style of narrative technique, but decreased the focus on the two main characters to be able to pay more attention to the other characters and their sexuality.

4.2.3. Narrator's reliability

The subtlety of Austen's hints regarding Darcy's character has caused some people to interpret her style as a means of deceiving the reader (e.g. Moses 156; see chapter 2.2.4). In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, there is hardly a trace of subtlety. While the readers may be tempted to see Darcy as the proudest man on earth (at the beginning), they will quickly realise that he is, in fact, not. Certainly, the process of 'discovering' Darcy's true character takes a while (especially without the scenes at Pemberley), but he ultimately redeems himself through his letter and by securing Lydia and Wickham's wedding. Moreover, it is one of the main principles of *Pride and Prejudice* that Elizabeth and Darcy have to overcome their pride and prejudices to see the other for who he/she really is. In addition, when viewing the novel within the genre of female erotica, it would make no sense for Trevor to intentionally mislead the readers as this would rather alienate them.

4.3. Characters

As has been established in the analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen has a particular way of utilising her characters: first and foremost, as inhabitants of the storyworld and participants in the plot, but also as points of comparison for other characters. Especially minor characters appear to have the tendency to impact the lives of the protagonists significantly. While the main focus of this section lies on Elizabeth, Darcy as well as Mr and Mrs Bennet, I will also briefly attend to Lady de Bourgh and the Gardiners who are assigned drastically different roles in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*.

4.3.1. Elizabeth Bennet

Since Elizabeth Bennet is one of the most popular characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, one might wonder how authors of fanfiction deal with such an iconic character. According to Burkhard & Fleischer, Elizabeth is usually "very closely based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Most of the characteristics and attributes given to Elizabeth Bennet can be found in the fantexts as well – such as her connection to nature, the bond with her father and her

liveliness” (320; original emphasis). This also seems to be mostly true for Trevor’s rendition of her: She has no problems walking several miles through mud to Netherfield, definitely prefers her father’s company over her mother’s and manages to unconsciously steal Darcy’s heart. Still, our heroine has to overcome her prejudice and re-evaluate her opinion of Wickham and Darcy.

What distinguishes Trevor’s Elizabeth from Austen’s is not only her pronounced affinity for submission but also her inner struggle with her own virtue throughout the novel. Similarly to most readers, she is intrigued by Darcy’s personality and, especially in this novel, by his sex appeal. When he asks her to be his submissive at Netherfield, Elizabeth has to face a potentially life-changing decision: either, she holds on to her virginity in order to be ‘pure’ for her future husband, or she gives in to her desires and compromises her chances of finding an eligible husband: “One moment she was restless to leave this place and her own darker desires, and, yet, she kept coming back” (SMD 121). Perhaps as a result of her own needs, Elizabeth is determined to find a compromise between her lust and her rational side, even though Darcy had told her during one of their sessions that she ‘technically’ was not a virgin anymore despite not having had intercourse before (SMD 122). A few months later, while Elizabeth is staying at Hunsford, it seems that she is on the brink of giving in to Darcy’s proposition:

The fact that she [Lady Catherine] was Mr. Darcy’s aunt made her miss him. She had come to a decision. The next time, she saw Mr. Darcy she would take him up on his offer. She cared not a whit for her virginity, nor for finding a husband. She wanted him. These past few months she felt only half alive. She saw herself in Jane and swore she would not wither for lack of her true love. Elizabeth would fight for him and make him want her enough to overlook her lack for fortune. (SMD 234)

Already two days later, when Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam visit Mr and Mrs Collins, Elizabeth takes a walk with the former and before she gets a chance to address the subject, Darcy starts to kiss her passionately and says ““I must have you”” (SMD 243) to which she agrees. In a traditional 18th-century novel, this would result in the protagonist’s loss of reputation. In Trevor’s retelling, however, it could be one of the reasons for Darcy’s (first) proposal a few days later. Even though it would secure her reputation, she refuses to marry him and it is only several weeks later that she realises that Darcy is the love of her life.

In this context, the ideologies of Austen’s novel and erotica seem to clash. True to 18th-century morals, Elizabeth knows the ‘value’ of her virginity and seeks to protect it. On the other hand, she wants to enjoy the pleasures promised by her master. From a critical perspective, one might call Elizabeth extremely lucky when Darcy proposes a second time.

If he had not, it would have been quite problematic for her to find another man who would accept her. Furthermore, if Darcy had not encouraged Bingley to marry Jane, they might, in all probability, have to face the consequences of the entail. Thus, for the novel to end well – while still adopting Augustan morals – his second proposal is obligatory.

4.3.2. Fitzwilliam Darcy

In Trevor's rewriting, Darcy seems to embody what many readers of the 21st century miss in *Pride and Prejudice*. While a certain attraction between Elizabeth and Darcy is undeniable in Austen's novel, it is not of an erotic fashion. 18th-century readers of the novel may have fantasised about their married life, but contemporary audiences seem to want to dive into erotic versions of Austen's storyworld; otherwise, such an abundance of fanfiction focusing on Elizabeth and Darcy's sex life (particularly in sequels) would not exist.

In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, he is portrayed as a strong and dominant man who knows what he wants and how to get it. In my opinion, his affinity to BDSM practices seems to be the result of the current hype around it, rather than something that could be attributed to the character of the original Darcy. Interestingly, in their analysis of Austen's original, Gill & Gregory state that "[i]t has been hinted almost from the beginning of the novel that the deep and intricate Darcy, with his profound intelligence, dazzling wit and penchant for debate is the kind of man with whom Elizabeth will find intellectual, emotional and erotic fulfilment" (137f.). That Elizabeth's 'erotic fulfilment' lies within her submission to Darcy seems to be Trevor's interpretation though.

In addition to his dominant side, however, Trevor also shows Darcy's 'softer' side, partly through his utterances and partly in his thoughts (which are only available to the reader). Not only does he respect Elizabeth's wish to remain a virgin, but he is also shown to behave differently around Elizabeth than, say, Miss Bingley who practically throws herself at him: "Darcy kissed her [Elizabeth] sweetly, lovingly. 'There will be no other for me or you while I train you. You have captivated me so'" (SMD 123; see also SMD 160). Moreover, at the Netherfield Ball, after their 'unpleasant' conversation during the dance, the narrator informs the reader that "in Darcy's breast there was a tolerable powerful feeling towards her, which soon procured her pardon" (SMD 181). Thus, there seem to be similarities between Austen's and Trevor's Darcy. As in *Pride and Prejudice*, "he is an intelligent and sensitive individual, and both these qualities become clearly manifested in his growing admiration for Elizabeth"

(Konigsberg 227). It further appears that Darcy's affection for Elizabeth in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* developed as gradually as hers in *Pride and Prejudice* (cf. PP 353).

4.3.3. Mr and Mrs Bennet

In comparison to the protagonists, Mr and Mrs Bennet possess roughly the same characteristics as in *Pride and Prejudice*. The character vignette at the end of the first chapter, for instance, is written in the same manner but infused with attributes regarding their sexual life. Thus, Mr Bennet "liked to be bound and whipped, but in the end he was the dominant one in the relationship" (SMD 5). Mrs Bennet's mission in life "was to get her daughters happily married so she could enjoy her husband and their frolics without interruption" (SMD 6).

What I personally found disconcerting was the amount of attention on their sex life. Considering Trevor's storyworld, it seems likely that Mr and Mrs Bennet would also enjoy BDSM practices, but why narrate it on six different occasions? Not only does it have no impact on the development of the plot, it also seems rather unlikely that parents would discuss their children's fate in their private moments. In the beginning of the novel, for instance, when Mrs Bennet announces that "Netherfield Park is at last under new ownership" (SMD 1), they are in the midst of intercourse. It is only after she has urged him to visit Mr Bingley when her husband tells her "'I'd rather not [consider our daughters], while I am abed with you" (SMD 4). Furthermore, his desire for her takes away from the sarcasm prevalent in the original. Nonetheless, one might see it as a means of establishing continuity within the retelling and the particulars of Trevor's storyworld.

4.3.4. Lady Catherine de Bourgh and the Gardiners

Given their role in *Pride and Prejudice*, one might assume that Lady Catherine and the Gardiners would be employed in a similar manner. To my personal surprise, they only have minor roles in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* and hardly any influence on the plot.

In the rewriting, Lady Catherine is one of the most formidable dominatrices and demands complete obedience from her submissives – female or male. Due to his residence at Hunsford, Mr Collins is also one of her 'slaves' (and Charlotte, after their marriage, too). As a consequence of the letter informing Elizabeth of Lydia's elopement with Wickham, she

does not participate in one of their sessions, which Lady de Bourgh takes out on Mr and Mrs Collins (SMD 253-256). Aside from this circumstance, she is hardly mentioned and, as a result of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy's* different structure, there are no rumours regarding Elizabeth's feelings for Darcy which provoke her to intervene.

The Gardiners, Elizabeth's aunt and uncle, receive even less attention than Lady Catherine despite their importance in *Pride and Prejudice*. They spend Christmas at Longbourn (SMD 230), where Mrs Gardiner warns Elizabeth against Wickham (ibid.) and afterwards take Jane with them to London for three months (SMD 287-289). In the context of Lydia's elopement, it is only mentioned that "her uncle sent a letter saying they had been found and would be wed" (SMD 271) and that "Mr. Bennet was sure his brother-in-law had paid a dear sum for this event to take place" (ibid.). Due to the omission of their journey to Pemberley with Elizabeth, their influence is significantly smaller than in Austen's novel.

4.4. Time

So far, the analysis of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* has demonstrated numerous similarities between *Pride and Prejudice* and Trevor's retelling. With regard to the temporal structure of the novel, it will be interesting to see how Trevor adapted Austen's very particular temporal structure. In this section, I will be mainly concerned with two questions: Does *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* have the same time frame as *Pride and Prejudice*? Does Trevor narrate her novel in the same speed or has she altered it (and to what effect)?

4.4.1. Time frame

As has been pointed out in chapter 2.4.1., the time frame of *Pride and Prejudice* spans a bit more than a year, from September 1811 to sometime late in 1812. Austen has also included various clues, e.g. explicit dates (particularly in letters) or phrases like 'the next morning' or 'the next day', which leads to the assumption that she worked with a calendar. Given the close nature of Trevor's retelling, one would suspect that she adopted the same temporal structure. This is, however, not the case. There are similar hints as in *Pride and Prejudice* but significantly fewer, which has rendered the creation of an accurate calendar extremely

difficult.⁴⁹ While the time frame of *Pride and Prejudice* stretches over a year, the plot of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* covers approximately 8 months (from September 1811 to April 1812).

Similarly to the original, the beginning is narrated without clear information on what day or year it is, but Mrs Bennet tells her husband that Mr Bingley “is to take possession [of Netherfield] before Michaelmas” (SMD 2), i.e. 29 September. The second major clue is located in chapter 12 in a disclosure of Darcy’s thoughts: “he scarcely spoke ten words to her through the whole of Saturday” (SMD 127). With the help of this information and phrases like “Till the next morning” (SMD 59), “In the morning” (SMD 84), “the next day” (SMD 108), etc., it was possible to identify the days of the previous week retrospectively. After this point, it was fairly easy to track approximately the next ten days.

Overall, November seems to be the month that is described in most detail. Although it is not possible to assign exact dates, 12 separate days can be identified and allocated to a specific weekday. Interestingly, most of the action centred in Netherfield is set in this particular month: Jane follows Ms Bingley’s invitation, Elizabeth looks after her sister, Elizabeth has her first encounters in the Netherfield dungeon with Darcy and the Bennets attend the Netherfield ball (followed only by Mr Collins’ proposal near the end of the month). Furthermore, it is also during this time that the narrator pays the most attention to the time of day. After the session with Darcy and Ms Bingley, “[w]hen the clock struck three, Elizabeth felt that she must go” (SMD 72). The very next chapter starts with “At five o’clock the two ladies retired to dress, and at half-past six Elizabeth was summoned to dinner” (SMD 73).

In the second half of the novel, however, there is a multitude of ellipses and vague expressions like “A few days later” (SMD 210) or “A few months went by” (SMD 233). In addition, Trevor mentions hardly any exact dates (apart from Michaelmas and Christmas) which, ultimately, prohibited an exact reconstruction of the time frame of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*.

4.4.2. Speed of narration

Taking into account the speed of narration, the differences between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* seem to be most obvious in comparison to other aspects. On the most superficial level, this becomes apparent in the narrated time frame and the amount of pages

⁴⁹ I have added my time table of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* to the Appendix, p. 108.

(disregarding differences in layout and font size). While *Pride and Prejudice* narrates the events of over a year in 367 pages, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* encompasses the events of around eight months in 294 pages. On a deeper level, Trevor's retelling exhibits a practice similar to Austen's; the storyteller continually varies the speed of narration throughout the novel, incorporating all of the different modes presented in chapter 1.3.

The most apparent similarity between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* seems to be the use of ellipses. Given the sufficiently discussed resemblance of the beginning scenes in the two novels, it is not surprising that the events between Mr Bingley's visit at Longbourn and the Meryton assembly are also omitted – although it is not clear how much time passes in the meantime. In a similar fashion, the narrator states at the beginning of chapter six: “The ladies of Longbourn *soon* waited on those of Netherfield. The visit was *soon* returned in due form” (SMD 36; my emphasis). The most extensive ellipsis, however, is employed towards the end of the novel: the time period between the arrival of Jane's letter announcing Lydia's elopement and the wedding. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the action of trying to discover the couple (and Mrs Bennet being miserable) stretches from chapter 46 (Vol. III, ch. IV) to chapter 51 (Vol. III, ch. IX), i.e. almost 40 pages (PP 260- 298). In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, this time period is narrated in just a few *sentences*:

With the aid of one of Lady Catherine's carriages, Elizabeth made haste to her family and in agony they all waited for news of Lydia and Wickham. When her Uncle sent a letter saying they had been found and would be wed, it was met with mixed feelings. Mr. Bennet was sure his brother-in-law had paid a dear sum for this event to take place. But there was nothing else to do.
Their sister's wedding day arrived; and the family was assembled in the breakfast room to receive them. (SMD 271)

I would assume that Lydia's elopement is of different significance for Trevor than for Austen.⁵⁰ While Austen focuses on the implications of Lydia's decision and the effect on her sisters' fates, Trevor appears to disregard them entirely. It might also be possible that she saw in this element of Austen's plot a part which could ‘easily’ be omitted. Furthermore, since the elopement poses a major threat to Elizabeth's chances of being together with Darcy (in PP), many readers might be happy to spare themselves the drama around Lydia. In addition, it also helps to accelerate the narration significantly. After Lydia's return to Longbourn (SMD 273), the action sets in approximately a month later when Bingley returns to Netherfield (SMD 275).

⁵⁰ Considering that Austen wrote for a 19th-century audience, her readers might have been more aware of the consequences of Lydia's action (see chapter 2.5. for more information).

While Trevor employs ellipses to bridge a longer gap between two scenes, it appears that she uses summaries to quicken the narrative speed in order to brush over events that are inessential for the overall plot development. For instance, Lydia and Catherine's training in Meryton is narrated in the following manner:

Every day added something to their knowledge of the officer's names and connections. Their lodgings were not long a secret, and at length they began to know the officers themselves. Mr. Phillips visited them all, and this opened to his nieces a store of felicity unknown before. True to her word, their aunt let them explore the soldiers' bodies with their hands and mouths. When the time came for the officer to return the favor [sic], he was bound to the bed and instructed exactly what to do. (SMD 56)

Throughout *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, there are several summaries, but they do not seem as multitudinous as in *Pride and Prejudice*. Instead, the rewriting features significantly more periods of time with a scenic character. Unsurprisingly, most scenes narrated in this particular speed contain sexual content, presumably to reinforce the effect of immediacy. One of the most extensive depictions occurs in chapter 10 (SMD 66-72), where Darcy first dominates Elizabeth and a male servant and later tells her to take Inga (the maid) 'like a man' (SMD 103).

Taking into account the vast amount of sex scenes in the novel which all proceed in roughly the same speed, it is safe to say that the narrative speed of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is significantly lower than that of *Pride and Prejudice*. This might also explain why, firstly, the time frame of Trevor's novel is shorter and, secondly, ellipses appear quite frequently. Moreover, the disclosure of the characters' thoughts (in particular Elizabeth's) as well as Darcy's letter and Elizabeth's ensuing reflections further add to the deceleration. Lastly, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* also features a flashback: Jane's memory of Mr Bingley who "stole into her bedchamber" (SMD 213) during her stay at Netherfield. While it does provide additional information for the reader, it mainly serves as a fantasy for Jane's masturbation, which is why the narration of the present is interspersed with parts of the memory.

4.5. Historical context

To complete the analysis of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, I want to contemplate aspects of it in their historical context. Since the novel's place within the contemporary trend of female erotica has already been discussed in chapter 3.2, I will focus on elements which are related to 18th- and 19th-century traditions but portrayed differently than in *Pride and Prejudice*. Thus, this survey will address the importance of virginity in the context of marriage, illustrate innuendoes based on money and clarify whether BDSM was practiced in Austen's time.

18th-century conditions for marriage

Trevor's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* as an erotic novel has two main implications: there is no taboo around sex and all inhabitants of the storyworld are either more on the dominant or submissive side. As a consequence, the subject of virginity becomes one of the most central topics of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. In other contemporary novels of this genre, this is hardly relevant but due to its setting in Austen's time, i.e. the early 19th century, it is of vital importance. While it is almost the standard practice in many societies today to have sex *before* marriage, in Austen's time a woman's virginity was a prerequisite for finding an eligible husband:

In the marriage market, an unbroken hymen was a woman's only genuine marketable commodity. Chastity acted as a guarantor of the smooth transfer of inheritance and property down the generations: while a husband could not, in the eighteenth century, prove that his children were his own, he could at least *prove* that his wife had not had pre-marital sexual relations, thus at least diminishing the likelihood of illegitimate children contesting and dissipating the inheritance of property. This brutal *economic* fact was translated into a strictly female *moral* lexicon – 'virtue', 'shame', 'ruin', the 'fallen woman' – which a tradition of writing for women in novels and conduct-books served to enforce and to naturalise, presenting them as inherent (and inherently desirable) qualities rather than ideological configurations. (Jones 20; original emphasis)

Furthermore, the perception of women was drastically different from that of today. As Teachman points out, "women tended to be identified primarily in terms of their relationship to men" (150). In the 20th century, they have started to define themselves by their own ideas and standards – and not on the basis of a relationship to a man. Especially in our present time, there also seem to be increasingly more women who openly talk about sex and campaign for the dissociation of a woman's reputation or respectability and her sexual activity.

Sexual overtones of wealth and power

In *Pride and Prejudice*, money is an important issue for several reasons. However, at no point is it associated with supremacy, let alone sexual predominance. Still, this connotation seems to be rather common in fictional literature of Austen's time:

Money is a significant symbol of power in all fiction, but in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels it often had strong sexual overtones in that it could be used by its normal possessors – men – as a displaced form of seduction. A girl in hock to a man might be regarded as having as good as lost her virginity. A common cliché was for a young woman inadvertently to become indebted to a man, and thus be obliged to marry him if that is what he wants. (Waldron 59)

Considering that Darcy pays quite a sum to procure Lydia and Wickham's wedding, Elizabeth and her family are highly indebted to him. Perhaps as a result of these overtones, Austen (at first) presents it as if it was their uncle (Mr Gardiner) and for Mr Bennet "there are two things that I want very much to know:— one is, how much money your uncle has laid down, to bring it about; and the other, how I am ever to pay him" (PP 287). When the truth does come out, Waldron argues that "[i]n another novel, Elizabeth would have to refuse him again out of 'delicacy' (59) to avoid the cliché image described above. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen seems to relieve this situation with Mrs Gardiner's hint that Darcy may have acted out of love for Elizabeth (PP 307).

In *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, Trevor handles this situation very differently. Again, Lydia cannot keep a secret, but Elizabeth does not write to her aunt, demanding more details about Darcy's involvement. Instead, she writes a short letter to him, informing him that she is "most willing to accept whatever punishments you thought fit for my digression" (SMD 271). Thus, while Austen seems to evade this literary convention, Trevor seems to be well aware of it and uses it to her advantage. Firstly, it harmonises well with her storyworld since Elizabeth is already in a submissive position. Secondly, by admitting her obligations to him and actually asking him to dominate her again (or, in a more blunt interpretation, to have sex with her), Elizabeth ultimately encourages Darcy to propose a second time. Thus, when they meet again and take a walk to the barn, Elizabeth (after expressing her deepest gratitude) "fell to her knees and began to unfasten his trousers" (SMD 278) to show Darcy – whom she now acknowledges as her master – how thankful she is.

BDSM in the 18th and early 19th century

Considering that sexuality is as old as humankind, it is not surprising that even people of the fifth century BC have engaged in what is frequently termed ‘deviant sexual practices’ (cf. BDSM: History and Background n.p.).⁵¹ Furthermore, “[d]epictions of BDSM activities are carved into the walls of Egyptian pyramids, painted onto Greek urns, tiled into Roman mosaics, and illuminated in medieval manuscripts” (Frantz 159).

While it can be assumed that such practices were known in the 18th century, the vocabulary surrounding them (including the acronym ‘BDSM’ itself) was not yet known⁵² or only starting to be categorised (cf. BDSM: History and Background n.p.), for instance by authors like de Sade or Sacher-Masoch (cf. Mitdasein n.p.). Thus, one could say that the beginning of the novel goes hand in hand with the emergence of fiction containing ‘sexual adventures’: “Right in the middle of this flourishing of the British novel, John Cleland published the first pornographic novel in English, *Memoirs of Woman of Pleasure* (1748), much more famously known as *Fanny Hill*” (Frantz 160; original emphasis).⁵³ Later, in the early 19th century, the first permanent BDSM clubs were established in cities like London and Paris (cf. Mitdasein n.p.). Still, “the majority of the subculture’s development and growth happened in secrecy” (BDSM: History and Background n.p.).

Even though it seems likely that Austen would have heard of BDSM practices, her orientation towards Augustan ideals and aesthetics may potentially explain why she did not include them in her works. Furthermore, due to publishing conditions (see e.g. chapter 2.5) as well as “rigid gender roles and moral codes of Austen’s times, it would not have been appropriate to describe physical aspects of love in a novel like *Pride and Prejudice*” (Burkhard & Fleischer 315; original emphasis). In contrast, *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* completely destroys these conventions and makes sexuality one of its main themes, partly because today’s authors do not have to face limitations regarding their choice of topic and as a result of “the rather modern notion of the female right to express sexual desires in their texts” (Burkhard & Fleischer 315).

⁵¹ Jozifkova traces BDSM back to evolutionary biology and views (consensual) BDSM “as a strengthened adaptive behavior based on natural patterns of reproduction” (6).

⁵² The term itself dates back ‘only’ to the early 1990s (cf. Frantz 159).

⁵³ Cale further states that “[n]o dirty, sexy history would be complete without the story of the extraordinary Theresa Berkley, who as a brothel madam and splendid businesswoman to boot, amassed a fortune and compiled a list of London’s finest and their sexual predilections during her long career which spanned both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (n.p.).

5. CONCLUSION

As this thesis has shown, “*Pride and Prejudice* continues to be seen as the prototypical romance” (Gymnich 26; original emphasis) – Driscoll even talks of a ‘*Pride and Prejudice* plot’ which is distinguishable in contemporary romance films or TV series (80). What I personally find intriguing is the novel’s “demand upon the reader for participation and involvement through imaginative perception” (Konigsberg 256). For me, the beauty of the novel is that although we know early on that Darcy develops feelings for Elizabeth, we are just as excited when she finally realises it herself. It also provides us with the opportunity to observe Darcy’s behaviour (towards her) and, thus, consider him as a worthy partner for our beloved heroine. This is also the reason for my initial choice to focus on the narrative structure of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Throughout my analysis of *Pride and Prejudice*, I have discussed several features of its narrative structure which are particularly relevant for the ‘mechanics’ of the text. What amazes me every time I read the novel is the way Austen manages to link the narrative strands. Even though most readers will focus on the main narration, the subplots also deserve recognition because without them the novel would not work. Although I am not the greatest fan of Lydia and Wickham, their elopement turns out to be one of Darcy’s best chances to show (though indirectly) how much he cares for Elizabeth. Similarly, the withholding of information and concealment of emotions are further crucial elements, for they ensure that the protagonists encounter obstacles which they overcome in order to grow as a person. This is particularly important for Elizabeth who views herself as an excellent reader of character but forms such a wrong opinion of both Darcy and Wickham. Naturally, her convictions stem from her pride in her abilities and her prejudice against Darcy. As this perfectly highlights, all aspects of the narrative structure are interrelated and, thus, form the whole of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Considering *Pride and Prejudice*’s continuing popularity, it is no exaggeration when Teachman states that Austen’s “works transcend time and place” (xi). Viewed in the context of adaptation and fanfiction, they even inspire others to write their own fiction and, as it turns out, Austen’s fan base is quite creative (cf. Van Steenhuyse 1): There are prequels, sequels, narrative gap explorations of all kinds as well as rewritings and stories set in alternate universes. Thus, *Pride and Prejudice* appears to be quite a flexible text, for it has enchanted such a wide and varied audience (cf. Gymnich 28). Within the Austen fandom, I

would locate two main groups of people: those with a more traditional view on her novels (who value faithful fanfic versions/adaptations) and those who might have a more modern or ‘flexible’ stance (who have no problems with adding zombies or sex into the storyworlds). These different attitudes might also explain the mixed reception of books like *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. On amazon.com⁵⁴, for instance, Trevor’s novel received 2.8 out of 5 stars, with ratings ranging from 1 to 5 stars. In 5-star reviews, the novel is described as a ‘faithful retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*’ or as well-written. More critical users, especially those who wrote 1-star reviews, called it terrible, a badly written book or even hypocritical because it goes against everything associated with Austen. As a result, I would assume that *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* is targeted at Trevor’s existing audience and fans of (female) erotica rather than traditional ‘devotees of Austen’ who might not like it that much. Readers of (female) erotica, however, might like such an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* because of its more modern appeal.

Regardless of one’s personal opinion of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*, the analysis of its narrative structure has yielded interesting results. Especially with regard to the plot structure, the rewriting exhibits various deviations from the original which, ultimately, constitute its specific character (cf. Mengel 18). Not only is the introduction presented in a different setting, the novel also features different turning points and omits a number of scenes which were quite important in Austen’s novel. Nonetheless, Trevor’s adaptation ends in a similar manner as *Pride and Prejudice* – the protagonists are happily married, Mrs Bennet’s purpose in life is fulfilled and the entail no longer poses a threat – and, thus, maintains the marriage plot which is one of the most crucial elements of an Austen novel. By incorporating a great number of narrative devices from *Pride and Prejudice*, Trevor increases the similarity between the original and the rewriting. Since the language of the adaptation resembles Austen’s style (sometimes even verbatim), it presents itself like a novel written in the early 19th century.

Where *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* deviates immensely from *Pride and Prejudice* – apart from the significantly smaller time frame and attention to dates – is the introduction of sex to the story and explicit description of intercourse. As I have pointed out, there are 27 sex scenes in Trevor’s novel, most of which do not involve Elizabeth and Darcy. Considering that BDSM was indeed known and practiced in Austen’s time – though mostly in secret – there are

⁵⁴ Full link to the ‘Customer Review’ page: https://www.amazon.com/product-reviews/1626010226/ref=acr_dpproductdetail_text?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1 [accessed 11 Apr. 18].

reasons both for and against such an adaptation. As I have mentioned previously, the introduction of BDSM as a common practice in the context of a society that regards virginity as a prerequisite for marriage is – at least in my opinion – not without difficulty: If every citizen engages in dominant/submissive relations and participates in practices involving BDSM, why put such an emphasis on virginity when it clearly penalises *only* women? As a result of this dissonance, I find it problematic to regard *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* as what Wells calls an “arguably more realistic, depiction of human life” (181). If the novel were set in the 21st century and told the story of female characters whose main priority is not the retention of their virginity, I would agree with this description. Since it plays in the early 19th century and, thus, adopts the societal standards of that period, it appears to me as a fictional exploration of a sexual fantasy rather than a ‘realistic description’.

What *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* does achieve, however, is the presentation of the main characters in a more ‘modern’ light. By accepting their sexuality and openly acknowledging their desires, Trevor’s characters may indeed be more relatable for a present-day audience. Still, I am not fully persuaded whether this also makes them more complex characters because of that. In both novels, Elizabeth is well aware of the importance of finding a suitable husband. While Austen’s Elizabeth remains true to her ethics, Trevor’s Elizabeth jeopardises her fate by surrendering to Darcy’s seduction and, thus, is actually no better than Lydia who threatens the future of the entire family by eloping with Wickham. On the whole, this notion seems to be a ‘catch-22’ situation: By adhering to societal standards of the time, the implementation of BDSM practices conflicts with the value attributed to virginity. However, if Trevor altered this societal ‘rule’, it would not be a ‘faithful’ representation of 18th-/19th-century values and would also tremendously impact the novel as such: If Elizabeth would not have to ‘protect’ her virginity, she could not use this as a reason for resisting Darcy’s offer, and if Elizabeth’s status (as well as her prospects of finding a husband) would not be put at risk by having premarital sex, she might as well become Darcy’s submissive. This scenario, though, would bear even fewer similarities to *Pride and Prejudice* (and its original structure) than Trevor’s version.

Thus, it becomes apparent – once again – that rewritings or adaptations “owe their specific character to their distance from rather than their closeness to the source texts” (Mengel 18). Or, in other words, the more I attempt to delineate similarities (especially details), the more obvious it becomes that they should be treated as two individual texts: a canonical piece of early 19th-century literature and a 21st-century erotic adaptation. As I have stated before, this

does not mean that any of them has an inherently higher or lower value than the other – they are just *different*. What I would argue, though, is that they serve different purposes. To me, *Pride and Prejudice* is a classical piece of literature I can read over and over again, and still discover new details. As a result of Austen’s deliberate selection of topics, the novel is universal, for the plot pattern and themes apply to situations of today while still illustrating life in the early 19th century (cf. Wright 16, see also Konigsberg 244). *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* (and other erotic adaptations), on the other hand, may be seen as working against the previous repression of femininity and female sexuality in patriarchal systems by “disrupt[ing] the notion of women as either prudish and decent or passionate and fallen” (Meyer 271) in a ‘safe’ imaginative space (cf. Roach 112).

On the whole, it could be shown that an analysis of (literary) adaptations consists of two main levels: firstly, the consideration and comparison of distinct narrative elements (narrative structure, representation of speech and/or thought, characterisation, etc.) and, secondly, the discussion of how the modified aspects of the adaptation impact the material of the source text. Depending on one’s personal research interest, one might put a greater emphasis on one of the levels – as I have done with regard to the narrative structure. Thus, there is undoubtedly more to be said on the topics of how the introduction of sex affects the story of *Pride and Prejudice* or how integrating such a canonical narrative into erotica may impact the perception of the characters. On a wider scope, it would also be interesting to study the impact of the current popularity of female erotica on the representation of female sexuality.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ One of the most recent research interests is the concept of ‘cliteracy’, the “literacy about the clitoris or knowledge about female sexuality” (Roach 114). For more information, see e.g. Stiritz, S.E. “Cultural Cliteracy: Exposing the Contexts of Women’s not Coming.” *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice* 23 (2008), 242-266 or www.sophiawallace.com/cliteracy-100-natural-laws [accessed 14 April 2018].

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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Time frame of *Pride and Prejudice*

- Dates based on the chronology from The Republic of Pemberley⁵⁶ are marked with *
- Page numbers to the passages containing the information are given in parentheses.

Volume I	
September 1811	
Mon 23 Sept.	Bingley visits Netherfield and agrees to take possession of it before Michaelmas (Sept. 29) (5)
Not dated	Mr Bennet's visit at Netherfield (8)
Next day (30 Sept.?)	Mr Bennet informs his family of his visit there (9); the next ball is "To-morrow fortnight." (8)
A few days later	Mr Bingley returns Mr Bennet's visit (11)
Next day	Bingley is supposed to dine with the Bennets but cannot come (11f.)
October	
15 Oct.*	Mr Bennet receives Mr Collins' letter (60)
Not dated	Meryton assembly (12-14)
The morning after	The Lucases visit Longbourn (19-21)
Not dated	"The ladies of Longbourn soon waited on those of Netherfield" (22)
Not dated	conversation between Charlotte and Elizabeth (22-24)
"She [Jane] has known him [Mr Bingley] only a fortnight." (23) → Meryton assembly	
Not dated	At Sir William Lucas' (24-28)
Not dated	Arrival of the militia, Catherine and Lydia visiting Mrs. Philips (29)
November	
Tues 12 Nov.*	Catherine and Lydia talking about officers (30); invitation from Ms Bingley (31); Jane sets off to Netherfield (31)
Wed 13 Nov.	note from Jane that she is unwell (32); Elizabeth walks to Netherfield (34) and stays the night (34)
Thurs 14 Nov.	Elizabeth sends for her mother (41), Lydia reminds Bingley of his promise to give a ball at Netherfield (45); evening spent in the drawing-room (46-51)

⁵⁶ <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/ppchron.html> (accessed 4 April, 2018)

Fri 15 Nov.	Darcy and Miss Bingley in the shrubbery (51); meet Elizabeth and Mrs Hurst (51); Elizabeth and Jane join the others in the drawing-room in the evening (53-57)
Sat 16 Nov.	Elizabeth writes to her mother to send the carriage (58); Darcy “scarcely spoke ten words to her through the whole of Saturday” (59)
Sun 17 Nov.	Elizabeth and Jane return to Longbourn (59)
Mon 18 Nov.	Bennet family at breakfast (60); arrival of Mr Collins (62f.)
Tuesday 19 Nov.	Walk to Meryton with Mr Collins (70); appearance of Mr Wickham (71)
Wed 20 Nov.	Dinner at Meryton (74), conversation between Elizabeth and Wickham (76-82)
Mr Darcy has been at Netherfield “About a month” (76)	
Thursday 21 Nov	Elizabeth talks to Jane about Wickham, Netherfield and Darcy (84); Invitation to Netherfield ball, “which was fixed for the following Tuesday” (85)
Tues 26 Nov.	Netherfield ball (88-101); Darcy and Elizabeth dancing (89-92), Mr Collins introduces himself to Darcy (95f.)
Wed 27 Nov.	Mr Collins’ proposal (103-106); Charlotte comes to Longbourn (110); Mr Bingley leaves Netherfield (115)
Thurs 28 Nov.	Walk to Meryton (113); letter from Caroline that the Bingleys have left Netherfield (114); dinner at Lucas Lodge (119)
Friday 29 Nov.	Mr Collins sneaks off to propose to Charlotte (119)
Sat 30 Nov	Mr Collins leaves Longbourn (121); Charlotte comes to Longbourn to tell Elizabeth about her engagement (122); Sir Lucas visits Longbourn to announce the engagement (124)
December	
Tues 2 Dec.	Letter of thank from Mr Collins (126), “he hoped to be able to return on Monday fortnight” (126)
Mon 16 Dec.	Return of Mr Collins (127)
Volume II	
Not dated	Letter from Ms Bingley that they are not coming back (131)
Not dated	“A day or two passed before Jane had courage to speak of her feelings to Elizabeth;” (132)
Sat 21 Dec.	Mr Collins has to return to Hunsford (137)
Mon 23 Dec.	The Gardiners arrive to spend Christmas at Longbourn (137), stay a week (140)
not dated	Mrs Gardiner warns Elizabeth against Wickham (142f.)
Mon 30 Dec.	Gardiners leave and take Jane with them to London (140 & 143)

Tues 31 Dec. (?)	Mr Collins returns for Hertfordshire, but stays with the Lucases (143)
January 1812	
Wed 1 Jan.	Charlotte's farewell visit to Elizabeth (143)
Thurs 2 Jan.	Charlotte's wedding day (143f.)
Not dated	Jane calls on Miss Bingley in Grosvenor-street (145)
"Four weeks passed away, and Jane saw nothing of him [Bingley]. [...] After waiting at home every morning for a fortnight [...] the visitor did at last appear;" (145)	
"With no greater events than these in the Longbourn family, and otherwise diversified by little beyond the walks to Meryton, sometimes dirty and sometimes cold, did January and February pass away. March was to take Elizabeth to Hunsford." (149)	
March	
Not dated (Thurs?)	Elizabeth travels together with Sir William and his second daughter (150), arrival in London at noon (150); Mrs Gardiner invites Elizabeth to take a trip in summer (152)
Next day (Fri?)	Arrival at Hunsford (153)
Next day (Sat?)	Elizabeth is told by Mr Collins that she would be meeting Lady de Bourgh on Sunday at church (155); Elizabeth sees Miss de Bourgh at Mr Collins' (156), invitation to dine at Rosings the next day (156)
Sunday (?)	Tea & dinner at Rosings (157)
"In this quiet way, the first fortnight of her [Elizabeth's] visit soon passed away. Easter was approaching, and the week preceding it, was to bring an addition to the family at Rosings [i.e. Darcy]" (165f.)	
March 23/34 (?)	A few weeks later: Darcy arrives at Rosings, brings Colonel Fitzwilliam with him (166)
Next day	Mr Collins pays his respects at Rosings and returns with Mr Darcy (166)
Sun 29 March	On "Easter-day, almost a week after the gentlemen's arrival": invitation to come to Rosings in the evening (168)
Mon 30 March	Mr Darcy comes to visit but finds Elizabeth is alone (173)
April	
Not dated	Elizabeth meets Mr Darcy several times during her walks through the park (178)
Thurs 9 April*	Elizabeth meets Colonel Fitzwilliam → hint that Darcy separated Bingley from Jane (181); Elizabeth does not accompany the other to Rosings in the evening (182); Darcy

	calls on Elizabeth to enquire after her health → 1 st proposal (185-189) Darcy refers back to this time when he makes his second proposal: “last april” (246)
Fri 10 April*	Darcy gives Elizabeth his letter (191-197); Elizabeth’s reflections (198-203)
Elizabeth has spent five weeks in Kent now (190).	
Sat 11 April*	Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam leave Rosings (204); dinner at Rosings (204); Elizabeth “must be in town next Saturday” (205)
“not a day went by without a solitary walk” (206)	
Fri 17 April	Evening spent at Rosings (207)
Sat 18 April	Elizabeth and Maria leave Hunsford to stay with the Gardiners for a few days (210)
May	
4 – 10 May	“It was the second week in May, in which the three young ladies set out together from Gracechurch-street, for the town of —— in Hertfordshire” (211); Jane & Elizabeth stop at the inn “where Mr. Bennet’s carriage was to meet them” (211); they eat with Kitty & Lydia and drive home (211f.); dinner at Longbourn (213f.)
Not dated	Elizabeth tells Jane what happened between her and Darcy (216)
“The first week of their return was soon gone. The second began.” (221)	
18 – 24 May	Dinner at Longbourn; the regiment (including) Wickham leave Meryton (221-226); Lydia travels with Mrs Forster to Brighton (226f.)
June	
“After the first fortnight or three weeks of her [Lydia’s] absence, health, good humour and cheerfulness began to re-appear at Longbourn.” (230)	
Not dated	Letter from Mrs Gardiner: the Northern tour is postponed to “a fortnight later in July” (230)
July	
“The period of expectation was now doubled. Four weeks were to pass away before her uncle and aunt’s arrival. But they did pass away, and Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, with their four children, did at length appear at Longbourn.” (231)	
August	
Sat 1 Aug.*	Lydia’s elopement
Sun 2 Aug.	Colonel Forster sends an express to Longbourn (cf. notes PP 433)

Mon 3 Aug.*	Jane sends her first letter to Elizabeth; Colonel Forster at Longbourn; the Gardiners and Elizabeth at Lambton
Not dated	Mrs Gardiner suggests to visit Pemberley (232)
Volume III	
Tues 4 Aug.*	Jane sends her second letter to Elizabeth; Mr Bennet travels to London (272); trip to Pemberley (235); Darcy appears (240)
Wed 5 Aug.*	Darcy and Georgiana visit Elizabeth and the Gardiners in Lambton (248); Mr Bingley also joins them (249) → Bingley mentions that “It is above eight months” (250) that he had seen Jane (26 Nov.); invitation to dine at Pemberley (251)
Thurs 6 Aug.*	Mrs Gardiner and Elizabeth wait on Georgiana for breakfast (253-255)
Fri 7 Aug.* (3 rd day at Lambton)	Elizabeth receives two letters by Jane: Lydia has eloped with Wickham four days ago (260) – “They were off Saturday night about twelve” (261); the Gardiners and Elizabeth instantly leave for Longbourn (267)
Sat 8 Aug.*	They “reached Longbourn by dinner-time the next day” (271)
Son 9 Aug.	“Mr. Gardiner left Longbourn on Sunday” (280)
Tues 11 Aug.	“on Tuesday his [Mr. Gardiner’s] wife received a letter from him” (280)
Fri 14 Aug.	Letter from Mr Gardiner (282); Darcy calls in Gracechurch-street
Sat 15 Aug.	Mr Bennet expected home (282); Mrs Gardiner & her children go back to London (283)
Sun 16 Aug.*	Darcy sees Mr and Mrs Gardiner
Mon 17 Aug.	Letter from Mr Gardiner (286; misdated August 2): Lydia and Wickham have been discovered, marriage agreements have been made
“It was a fortnight since Mrs. Bennet had been down stairs” (293)	
Not dated	Another letter from Mr Gardiner (296f.)
Mon 31 Aug.	Lydia’s wedding day (298); Lydia and Wickham come to Longbourn (298)
It has been three months since Lydia went away (299) The Bennet’s “visitors were not to remain above ten days with them” (300)	
September	
Not dated (Thurs 3 Sept.?)	“One morning, soon after their arrival” (301), Elizabeth learns that Darcy attended Lydia’s wedding; Elizabeth writes a short letter to her aunt “to request an explanation of what Lydia had dropt” (302)
Sun 6 Sept.	Mrs Gardiner replies to Elizabeth’s letter

Thurs 10 Sept. (?)	Lydia and Wickham leave Longbourn
Not dated	News of Bingley's return to Netherfield "in a day or two" (313): "He comes down on Thursday at the latest, very likely on Wednesday." (313) → 16 or 17 Sept.
Sat 19 Sept. (?)	"But on the third morning after his arrival in Hertfordshire, she [Mrs. Bennet] saw him [Bingley] from her dressing-room window, enter the paddock, and ride towards the house." (315); Darcy is with him
Tues 22 Sept.	On the following Tuesday, Darcy & Bingley dine at Longbourn (320)
A few days later (Thurs 24 Sept.*)	Bingley calls again, and alone (325); Darcy has gone to London, "but was to return home in ten days' time" (325)
Next day (Fri 25 Sept.*)	Bingley calls again (325)
Next day (Sat 26 Sept.*)	Bingley comes to Longbourn in the morning to shoot with Mr. Bennet (326); in the evening, Bingley proposes to Jane (327)
October	
A week later (Sat 3 Oct.*)	Lady Catherine comes to visit Elizabeth, they take a walk to discuss the rumours about Elizabeth wanting to marry Darcy (333-339)
Next day (Sun 4 Oct.*)	Mr Bennet receives a letter from Mr Collins, wants to talk about it with Elizabeth (341f.) Mr Collins presumably wrote the letter on Fri 2 Oct.
A few days later (Tues 6 Oct.*)	Bingley and Darcy come to Longbourn (345); they go on a walk; when Elizabeth and Darcy are alone, he renews his proposal (346); in the evening, Elizabeth tells Jane about being engaged to Darcy (352)
Next day (Wed 7 Oct.*)	Darcy and Bingley come to Longbourn (354); Mrs Bennet sends Elizabeth and Darcy on a walk to Oakham Mount; in the evening, Darcy asks Mr Bennet for his consent (355)
Next day (Thurs 8 Oct.*)	Darcy spends to morning at Longbourn; dinner in the evening
Three days after the engagement	Elizabeth & Darcy talking about their feelings (359f.); Elizabeth replies to Mrs Gardiner's letter (361), invites them "to come to Pemberley at Christmas" (362); Darcy writes to his aunt (362); Mr Bennet replies to Mr Collin's letter (362)
Not dated	Elizabeth's and Jane's wedding day (364)
A year later	Bingley and Jane leave Netherfield (364)

7.2. List of Letters in *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*

Nr.	Sender/ receiver	Content	Representation
1	Carline Bingley to Jane	invitation to dine at Netherfield	full letter (p. 58)
2	Jane to Elizabeth	Jane is unwell	full letter (p. 60)
3	Elizabeth to her mother	request to visit Jane	summary (p. 85)
4	Elizabeth to her mother	asking for the carriage	summary (p. 125)
5	Mr Collins to Mr Bennet	unclear, make amends?	mention (p. 131)
6	Miss Bingley to Jane	the whole party has left Netherfield	full letter (p. 211f.)
7	Miss Bingley to Jane	they are not coming back for Christmas	summary (p. 224)
8	Charlotte to Elizabeth	invitation to Hunsford	summary (p. 233)
9	Jane to Elizabeth	not given	mention (p. 249)
10	Mr Darcy to Elizabeth	clearing himself of Elizabeth's accusations	full letter (p. 264-268)
11	Jane to Elizabeth	Lydia has eloped with Wickham	summary (p. 271)
12	Mr Gardiner to Elizabeth	they have been found and will marry	summary (p. 271)
13	Elizabeth to Mr Darcy	expressing her gratitude and willingness to accept punishment for her 'digression'	full letter (p. 274)

7.3. Time frame of *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*

Assumed dates (partly based on the structure of P&P) are marked with *

September 1811	
Before Michaelmas (Sep 29)	Bingley takes possession of Netherfield (2)
Not dated	Mr Bennet's visit at Netherfield (7)
A day later	Mr Bennet informs his family of his visit there (7)
A few days later	Mr Bingley returns Mr Bennet's visit (13)
October	
Not dated	Mr Bennet receives Mr Collins' letter (131)
Not dated	Meryton assembly
The morning after	The Lucases visit Longbourn (31)
Not dated	"The ladies of Longbourn soon waited on those of Netherfield" (36)
Not dated	conversation between Charlotte and Elizabeth (37-43)
"She [Jane] has only known him [Mr Bingley] a fortnight." (41)	
Not dated	At Sir William Lucas' (44-52)
Not dated	Catherine and Lydia visit their aunt Mrs Phillips in Meryton (53-56); news of the arrival of the militia (54)
November*	
Tuesday	invitation from Ms Bingley (58); Jane sets off to Netherfield (59)
Wednesday	note from Jane that she is unwell (60); Elizabeth walks to Netherfield (61)
Thursday	Jane feels better (84); Mrs Bennet, Lydia and Kitty come to Netherfield (85-92); Elizabeth in the drawing room (106-108)
Friday	Darcy and Miss Bingley in the shrubbery (108); meet Elizabeth and Mrs Hurst (109); Elizabeth and Jane join the others in the drawing room (111); Elizabeth and Darcy in the dungeon (119-124)
Saturday	Elizabeth writes to her mother to send the carriage (125)
Sunday	Elizabeth and Jane leave Netherfield (127)
Monday	Bennet family at breakfast (129f.); arrival of Mr Collins (131)
Tuesday	Mr Collins informs Mrs Bennet of his plans (140); Mr Collins and the Bennet girls walk to Meryton (141); meeting Mr Wickham, Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy (142f.); visiting their aunt Phillips (144-146)

Wednesday	Dinner at Meryton (147-164), conversation between Elizabeth and Wickham (153-159)
Mr Darcy has been at Netherfield “About a month” (153)	
Thursday	Elizabeth talks to Jane about Wickham, Netherfield and Darcy (165-168); Invitation to Netherfield ball, “which was fixed for the following Tuesday” (168)
Tuesday	Netherfield ball (172-193); Darcy and Elizabeth dancing (175-181), Mr Collins introduces himself to Darcy (184f.), Elizabeth and Darcy in the library (189)
Wednesday	Mr Collins’ proposal (195-199); Charlotte comes to Longbourn (207)
Not dated	Letter from Caroline that the Bingleys have left Netherfield; retrospective information: “How very suddenly you all quitted Netherfield last November, Mr. Darcy!” (241)
Not dated	Dinner at Lucas Lodge (216)
Next day	Mr Collins sneaks off to see Charlotte (217); Charlotte comes to Longbourn to tell Elizabeth about her engagement (221f.)
“Bingley had now been gone a week” (222)	
December	
Not dated	Letter from Ms Bingley that they are not coming back (224); Lydia at Mrs Phillips’ with Mr Wickham (225)
Monday	The Gardiners arrive to spend Christmas at Longbourn (230); Elizabeth admits to herself that she is in love with Darcy (231)
Not dated	The Gardiners leave and take Jane with them to London (287-289); she will stay there for 3 months
January 1812	
Wednesday	Charlotte’s farewell visit to Elizabeth (232)
Thursday	Charlotte’s wedding day (232)
March*	
“A few months went by” (233)	
Not dated	Invitation to visit Charlotte at Hunsford (233)
Next day	Short visit at the Gardiner’s to see Jane (233)
Next day	Arrival at Hunsford (234); dinner at Rosings (235-239)
Next day	Darcy visits and brings Colonel Fitzwilliam with him (240-242); Elizabeth and Darcy take a walk (243-248)
Not dated	Elizabeth takes several walks through the park, where she meets Darcy (249)

Friday	Elizabeth on another walk, meets Colonel Fitzwilliam (249); they will be leaving on Saturday (249); in the evening, Elizabeth too agitated to dine at Rosings (253); Lady Catherine and the Collinses (253-256); meanwhile, Darcy calls on Elizabeth → 1 st proposal (257f.)
Saturday	Darcy had already “left by the time Elizabeth forced herself downstairs” (264); Darcy’s letter (264-268), Elizabeth’s reflections (268f.)
Sunday	Letter from Jane that Lydia had eloped with Wickham (271); Elizabeth travels back to Longbourn (271)
Not dated	Lydia’s wedding day (271); Lydia reveals that Darcy was at the wedding (273)
April*	
Not dated	“About a month later” (275): return of Mr Bingley
Three days later	Bingley and Darcy visit Longbourn; Elizabeth and Darcy in the barn (278-289) → 2 nd proposal (279f.); Bingley proposes to Jane (288)
?	“Jane and Bingley were married first and spend [sic] a few months at Netherfield” (292)
?	“Elizabeth and Darcy were married next” (292)

7.4. English Abstract

For over 100 years, Jane Austen's novels have enjoyed great popularity. Especially since the 1990s, fans have expressed their love for them in fanfiction and adaptations. One of the most fundamental principles of this genre is the faithful representation of characters. However, this does not deter authors from violating this 'rule', e.g. by introducing sex or paranormal activities into the storyworlds of works like *Pride and Prejudice*.

The main aim of this thesis is a narratological analysis and comparison of Austen's original and *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. Special emphasis will be put on the narrative structure of the texts, i.e. their plot structure, narrative technique as well as narrative time. To avoid superficial treatment, historical conditions of both works will be taken into account.

Overall, it could be shown that although *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* incorporates several elements of Austen's plot, it is the differences which constitute its specific character. Some of the most serious deviations from *Pride and Prejudice* include the omission of a number of plot elements and the resultant shorter time frame. The greatest alteration is of course the transformation of Austen's romance novel into female (hardcore) erotica which not only decelerates the narrative speed (due to the numerous sex scenes) but also raises the question of how it affects the source material. Nonetheless, it is not my intention to assess the quality of the texts, but instead to take an inclusive approach to both novels and treat them as individual pieces of literature.

7.5. Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Seit mehr als einhundert Jahren erfreuen sich Jane Austens Romane großer Beliebtheit. Im Besonderen seit den 1990er und 2000er Jahren drücken Fans ihre Liebe für sie in Form von Fanfiction beziehungsweise Adaptionen (sowohl literarische als auch filmische) aus. Eines der grundlegendsten Prinzipien dieses Genres ist die sinngemäße Darstellung der Charaktere. Dies hält AutorInnen jedoch nicht davon ab diese ‚Regel‘ zu brechen, zum Beispiel durch das Einbringen von Sex oder paranormalen Aktivitäten in die Erzählwelt kanonischer Werke wie *Pride and Prejudice*.

Das Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist eine narratologische Analyse sowie ein Vergleich von Austens Original und solch einer Neufassung – *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy*. Das Hauptaugenmerk liegt daher auf der Erzählstruktur der Texte, das heißt der Aufbau der Handlung, die Erzähltechnik sowie Erzählzeit. Um einer oberflächlichen Behandlung der Romane entgegenzuwirken werden auch die historischen Bedingungen der Veröffentlichung beider Werke in Betracht gezogen.

Insgesamt konnte gezeigt werden, dass, obwohl *Spank Me, Mr. Darcy* einige strukturelle Elemente von Austens Handlung enthält, es die Unterschiede vom Original sind, die seinen spezifischen Charakter ausmachen. Zu den gravierendsten Abweichungen von *Pride and Prejudice* zählen (unter anderem) das Weglassen einiger Handlungsmomente, die für Austens Roman von großer Bedeutung sind (wie z.B. der Besuch von Pemberley), und der daraus resultierende wesentlich kürzere Zeitrahmen. Die größte Veränderung ist sicherlich die Umwandlung von Austens Liebesroman in einen Erotikroman (von Frauen für Frauen), welche nicht nur die Erzählgeschwindigkeit verlangsamt sondern auch die Frage aufwirft, welche Auswirkung dies auf das Grundmaterial hat. Nichtsdestotrotz ist es nicht meine Absicht die ‚Qualität‘ der Texte zu beurteilen, sondern stattdessen einen inklusiven Zugang zu wählen und beide Romane als individuelle literarische Werke zu behandeln.