Joe Wright's Film Adaption of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice. The Romanticising of Marriage in Popular Culture

Jane Austen's novel Pride and Prejudice was first published in 1813, exactly two hundred years ago, but it still appeals to readers and filmmakers alike. The novel portrays the Bennet family, with its five unmarried daughters, and their mother's often desperate attempts to marry them off into financial safety, as the family estate is "entailed" to a distant male cousin. The main plot of the novel is Mr. Darcy's and Elizabeth Bennet's initial pride and prejudice turned into love, and the sub-plots of love and marriages that do not all fare well are numerous. In the novel Austen points out, that however uncertain of its capacity to ensure happiness, marriage was the best solution for young women without a fortune to escape poverty, as they had no other means of providing for themselves. The theme of the novel is marriage and the opening statement of Austen's novel is its thesis, although a tongue-in-cheek one, advocating the universal idea that single rich men must be in need of a wife, and not the other way around.

By addressing such gender issues, regardless of her humorous angle, Austen was certainly one of the earliest feminist writers. This idea of single men in want of marriage is true, for as contemporary studies have shown men stand to benefit much more from marrying than women. Joe Wright's 2005 film adaptation, Pride & Prejudice, deliberately eliminates this opening sentence, and on the apparent grounds of reaching greater popularity Wright's team modifies the novels story structure, setting and language to appeal to contemporary audiences. These intentional alterations, which leave out Austen's irony and wit, flatten out the characters and their dialogues and create an overall "Cinderella" perspective of the main plot, to better fit the tale which the Hollywood film is meant to convey.

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the romance between the main characters, Mr. Darcy and Ms. Bennet. It is argued, however, that the film shows a more realistic view on the novel because Wright’s intention is to avoid a more “picturesque tradition” exposed in previous ad... Other Jane Austen novels that have been adapted to film include Mansfield Park, with releases in 1999 and again in 2007. While both attempt to remain faithful to the source material, the general consensus is that neither got the main character of Fanny Price quite right. Jane Austen is by no means the only author to have works of literature continue to be relevant and be adapted into film for popular entertainment. After all, a great story can, and should, endure long after its author has left this Earth. Spencer Blohm is a freelance entertainment, lifestyle and culture blogger. He lives and works in Chicago where he can often be found at one of the many festivals and street fairs around the city. Image: Illustrations of scenes from Pride and Prejudice © 1885, C. E. Brock, public domain.