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1. Introduction

A man and a woman, who can easily be identified as a loving couple, look into each other's eyes and are showing their happiness openly and without any restraint. The man is smiling and the woman is even laughing as she grasps his jacket tightly in an attempt to pull him closer to her, while he is holding her around the hips. Change of scene: A woman looks smilingly at the observer. The reason for her content look and her smile may well be the man standing very close to her who is holding her hand. His eyes are closed and one does not have to look far to come to the conclusion that the two are lovers and that the man might be lost in a romantic daydream.



Fig. 1: *Shakespeare in Love* DVD cover

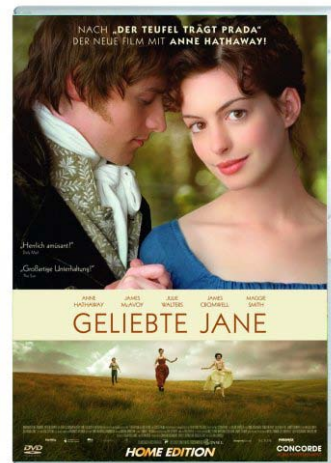


Fig. 2: *Becoming Jane* DVD cover¹

The lovers in these pictures are no one less than William Shakespeare (app. 1564 – 1616) and Jane Austen (1775 – 1817) with their (fictitious) partners Lady Viola De Lesseps and Tom Lefroy. Of course, these images do not have their origin in the authors' lifetimes. They appear on the 20th and 21st century DVD covers of the movies *Shakespeare in Love* (Fig. 1) and *Becoming Jane* (Fig. 2) that feature Joseph Fiennes in the role of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway as Jane Austen. *Shakespeare in Love* (dir. John Madden, 1998) is a biographical picture about William Shakespeare, which builds on the years between 1585 and 1592 that exist as a blank space on the map that is the playwright's life. In 1593 in London

¹ The DVDs of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* displayed here are the editions issued in the German language area. Therefore, the title of *Becoming Jane* reads *Geliebte Jane*, which literally translated means *Beloved Jane*. These German editions are depicted here for the simple reason that they are the editions that this paper works with.

William Shakespeare meets the beautiful Lady Viola De Lesseps and falls in love with her. With Shakespeare's development into a successful playwright as the coexisting subplot, their love story dominates as the major narrative thread in the film. Similarly, *Becoming Jane* (dir. Julian Jarrold, 2007) is a biographical picture about Jane Austen that is set in England in 1795, when the novelist was 20 years old. Apart from Jane Austen's development as a writer, the film's main focus is on her romantic love affair with the young Irishman and lawyer-to-be Tom Lefroy.

Watching the two movies is not a prerequisite to understanding that they are about William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's love lives. The synopses and the mental images instilled through the DVD covers provide enough information to let the viewer know that *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are essentially love stories. Since the films endow the authors with an actual physical body and, thereby, amplify the romantic love aspect of their lives, it can be claimed that they are both romanticized and (re)constructed in a romantic body. These romantic bodies may be the most recent incorporations of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen, as they have been and still are popular in the 20th and 21st century, however, they are not the first attempt to give the immaterial idea of the author a body. As early as a few decades after their deaths, when most of the people closest to them had died as well and could no longer produce any true-to-life account of the authors, speculations about their appearance and their personality began and could not have been more manifold: "We might all want [the authors] real in some way, but differ as to which way." (Lynch 117) The immaterial status that they have reached has never been accepted and is still not close to acceptance in the 21st century. Apart from enjoying the literary works they delivered for posterity, materializing them and endowing them with a 'body' have been among devotees' greatest concerns.

Taking into account the currency of this issue, it is this paper's task to discuss the embodiment of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in general and to analyze one such embodiment in detail that the authors have in common. This particular incorporation undergoing an analysis in this paper is the popular filmic representation of the romantic body in the two movies referred to above, i.e. the embodiment of the author in *Shakespeare in Love* in 1998 and in *Becoming Jane* in 2007. As this portrayal is influenced and organized by numerous diverse factors, the relationship between the concept of history and the film

medium, the nature of romantic love and the romantic film, and means of depicting romantic relationships and romantic love in romances require an examination as well.

As the embodiment of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen did not begin in the 20th or the 21st century, but has rather been going on for centuries, the preliminary section outlines the history of their representation and incorporation. Before the authors inhabited a romantic body in film, they passed through various appearances, be it in immaterial or material forms. The playwright and the novelist have been worshipped as figures of fame and saints, and have also been reconstructed as human beings, as reader's intimate friends or novel characters, with a distinguished physical appearance and a unique character. They have appeared in portraits, in literature, and, only recently, in film. By discussing these incorporations the forerunners of the romantic body are examined and it becomes obvious that the two authors' histories of embodiment are strikingly similar.

The succeeding section forms the basis for an understanding of the romantic body of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen and deals with the contrast between the real author and the romantic author. The subjectivity of the concept of history is outlined and the existence of a real author is relativized in the first subsection, which precludes allowance for the arbitrariness of the transformation of the author figure into different embodiments. The ground for the representation of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in the biographical pictures *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* is prepared by depicting film as history from a different perspective. The second subsection further prepares the way for the images of the authors found in the two movies by focusing on the aspect of romantic love. A general idea of the abstract concept of romantic love is delivered, and the authors and the film industry's involvement with this idea is presented.

The next section carries the discussion of an entanglement of the film industry and the notion of romantic love further, and introduces the romantic movie. Since both *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* have strong links to the romance film, it is essential for their understanding to present basic knowledge about the nature of this genre. What follows is a detailed list of the romance's characteristic elements or building stones and its ways of representing the notion of romantic love. Supported by the theory of the semiotics of film,

this list constitutes the semiotics of romance and provides a framework for the analysis of the authors' romantic bodies in the two movies.

In the final section *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are analyzed following the semiotic frameworks previously created. This analysis shall examine the romanticizing of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen and shall demonstrate the procedure of (romantic) embodiment. It shall be shown how the traditional building stones of romance and the concept of romantic love are applied to the author figures of Shakespeare and Austen in order to endow them with a romantic body. All of the theoretical approaches and discussions previously outlined flow into this practical demonstration of how a particular body is given to the polymorphous idea of an author.

2. Giving the Author a Body – The Development of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s Embodiment

“You know who’s having the biggest year – again?” (Lehmann, Starks 10) What could be the answer to this question asked by hostess Whoopi Goldberg at the 1999 Academy Awards within the scope of the research topic of this thesis? Of course, it is William Shakespeare and Jane Austen who were having the biggest year – again. However, it was not only 1999, the year when John Madden’s “semitragic, semicomical love story about Shakespeare’s rise from sexual impotence to poetic mastery” (Lehmann, Starks 10) was awarded 13 Oscars and won 7 of them². William Shakespeare and Jane Austen have sold well for centuries and still sell in the 21st century – year after year Shakespeare’s plays and Austen’s novels are bought and read anew by devotees and new interested parties, Shakespeare’s works are performed in theatres all over the world in either a traditional fashion, or modern productions, the authors’ works have been adapted for film, their material has inspired numerous screenplays among them many teenage romances such as *10 Things I Hate about You* (dir. Gil Junger, 1999) and a recently developed trend brought the authors themselves to the screen.

It seems obvious that “as Shakespeare is the king”, Jane Austen is “the literary queen of a dominant culture” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 8). The “king and queen of the English literary empire” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 59) are well known for being “English literature’s most masterful creators of character and dialogue” (Lynch 111)³ and their works have been “intricately woven into virtually every fabric of European and American culture” (Starks, Lehmann 10). It seems that we are so very much in love (Lehmann, Starks 9) with these two particular authors that they even “provoke outpourings of love” (Garber 203 quoted in Lynch 111). However, people are not only in love with the authors themselves, but also and particularly with the mysteries of their lives that allow the creative mind room for speculation and bring forth the (romantic) dreamer in them. So very little is known about the two authors who lived some centuries ago that what remains is rather the construct of an author figure – a construct manufactured from scarce factual knowledge, from personal and hence subjective accounts of people long dead themselves who once knew the authors, from their literary

² All information about various films, such as directors, prizes or production years, is taken from the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com), if no other source is listed.

³ That Jane Austen might have been influenced in her literary creations and especially in the style, the form and the content of her novels (Wiltshire 61) by William Shakespeare, since she read his works (Wiltshire 60), is an interesting fact, but of no concern to this paper’s topic.

works, but chiefly from assumptions and rumors surrounding their personality and from the power of imagination. The immaterial author is constantly being revived and reconstructed with the aim of creating someone material, tangible and understandable.

This phenomenon of love for or even an obsession with these two authors and their continuing (re-)construction is still very much alive in the 21st century, but had its starting point much earlier. William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's "status as a missing person from the scene of authorship" (Lehmann 125) had already inflamed speculation almost immediately after their respective deaths. "The quest to 'produce the body'" (Lehmann 125) has been undertaken by interested individuals and scholars for centuries, which, eventually, resulted in a "consequent construction as [...] figure[s] of fame" (Weber 186). And the authors' fame is still growing further worldwide almost 400 years in Shakespeare's case and almost 200 years after Jane Austen's death. (Harman 1)

Despite their construction as celebrities⁴, cultural icons⁵ or simply figures of fame, it is remarkable, in general, that as soon as the 'real' author vanished, it was attempted to 'reconstruct' William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's appearance as well as their personality. That their perception has altered as the world, its population, their cultures, values and attitudes remains uncontested and only "render[s] them accessible to postmodern audiences, bridging the gap that separates us from [a past] England" (Lehmann, Starks 12). So, as the times have been changing, the common picture of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen that was fixed in people's minds has changed with them and produced far more than just one version of the 'real' author. How the common picture of the two authors changed from an almost saintly figure to an all too human being is examined in the following two subsections.

⁴ The Latin origin of the word 'celebrity' *celebritas* means 'fame' or 'multitude' and the adjective *celeber* stands for 'frequented', 'populous', or 'famous' (Boorstin 66), which is also the basic element of this concept.

⁵ The secular meaning of the term 'icon' is "a 'star' of media, entertainment or sport, worshipped by fans and admirers for a combination of physical looks, talent and unobtainability" (Brooker 129). This definition describes both William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's perception in today's (Western) culture. Both authors are also frequently referred to as cultural icons (Lynch 111, Lehmann, Starks 12) due to their great significance to England as a cultural group and are called a "symbol and exemplar of British national identity" (Dobson 185).

2.1. All the World as Stage for William Shakespeare's Bodies

Is it not surprising that in an age in which new media year after year replaces the old ones and in which what is 'in' today might already be obsolete next week, a 16th century playwright has achieved a status and an omnipresence he did not even enjoy to such an extent in his own lifetime? Having outlived about four centuries, which is even more than novelist Jane Austen can adorn herself with, Shakespeare's plays are still performed, printed, widely read, especially in schools, and adapted for the newest formats. Even though he has had his "exits and his entrances" (Marder 7) and there have been doubts about the authorship of plays assigned to the Bard (Marder 8) his popularity has never faded. Both, William Shakespeare and Jane Austen, are paradigms of the same phenomenon: they have been selling for centuries despite their styles, attitudes and topics being 'out of date', and are likely to sell for a long time to come. They are "literary celebrit[ies]" (Greenblatt *Will* 17). Particularly since the 1990s their "supposed relevance, timelessness, and universalism" (Ay. Thompson 1052) has been recognized anew.

Apparently, "[n]ow more than ever, it seems as though we are hopelessly in love with Shakespeare" (Lehmann, Starks 9). 20th century "home theater" technology (Lehmann, Starks 9) such as the television, video and DVD technology allow him an omnipresence that reaches far beyond the boundaries of the theater. Film adaptations of his plays are numerous often featuring well-known (Hollywood) actors, and the trend of producing (teenage) romantic comedies loosely based on his plays is not likely to stop due to phenomenal success. Unusual items also carry his name, his face or his texts: letterheads, labels, title pages, fishing rods, seals of commercial firms, gasoline stations near Stratford-upon-Avon, cartoon books, or Falstaff and Shakespeare Ale. (Marder 40) In the 21st century, the author's name functions like a brand, i.e. "a sign that is instantly recognizable, distinctive, transferable (that is, capable of being attached to an array of products), and powerful and productive in its connotations" (Lanier 93). William Shakespeare has even been referred to as "the Coca-Cola of canonical culture" (Lanier 93). To sum up all of these points, William Shakespeare is said to have become "the most widely known writer in the world" and "[a]ll the world has become [his] stage" (Marder 7).

During and through all these diverse adaptations of William Shakespeare's work and of himself as "disembodied authorial presence" (Holderness, Loughrey 183), he has adopted different appearances, not to say 'bodies'. Starting off as a "young man from a small provincial town – a man without independent wealth, without powerful family connections, and without university education" (Greenblatt *Will* 11), William Shakespeare is now called the most famous playwright in the world. However, apart from 'the most well-known playwright' he has already been portrayed in a multitude of ways over the centuries.

What allows for such freedom in the representation of William Shakespeare and for the "clever manipulation of the mystique of Shakespearean authorship" (Lehmann, Starks 10) is his actual life, which continues to present itself as a mystery to everyone. So very little is known and biographers invent and speculate more than they actually know about the Bard. While Shakespeare's reputation has grown continually, scholars have been able to reveal only very little about the author's personal as well as his public life. (Marder 156) Up until the 21st century numerous biographical accounts and biographies, or rather "exercise[s] in speculation" (Greenblatt *Will* 18) have been published, of which Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World* (2005) is probably the most recent. Supposedly, it is exactly this absence of knowledge about Shakespeare's life that created such a 'turmoil' around the author's personality. When Marc Norman, one of the screenwriters of *Shakespeare in Love*, asked Stephen Greenblatt what about Shakespeare's life would make a good movie plot, the answer was simply "the lost years" (1585-1592) (Rothwell 248), the years between leaving Stratford and having already achieved a certain status in London's theater world. (Greenblatt "Sonnet" A15 in Ay. Thompson 1063) Especially but not exclusively, these years create a blank space on the map of William Shakespeare's life.

Long before Shakespeare's lost years were of any concern or were even turned into a film the body that was given to him by devotees and literary critics was that of a "National Poet" (Watson 199), into which he was catapulted above and beyond a mere literary celebrity. Many critics, among them Michael Dobson (1), Nicola Watson (199) and Frank Halliday (xi), ascribe this transformation to the Restoration and the 18th century, in which William Shakespeare was constructed anew and 'Bardolatry' came into being⁶. (Dobson 1) Even a

⁶ i.e. Shakespeare was canonized "as the paradigmatic figure of literary authority" (Dobson 1). He was turned "into 'the bard', a 'hero'" (Dobson 1).

momentary decline in the attention to Shakespeare and his works left no lasting detriment: Shakespeare criticism experienced another rise in the 1980s and 1990s. (Ay. Thompson 1067) Nevertheless, that William Shakespeare is and has for a long time been an English cultural icon and a famous, celebrated and widely discussed author has been established and is known to most. Another climax to his adoration exists, however, and is not as widely and publicly noted.

His plays as well as romantic and idealistic ideas about authorship and the theatre might have conjured up something critics already referred to as “religion or cult” in the 16th century (Dávidházi ix). With reference to the author, Péter Dávidházi, who regards William Shakespeare’s fame from an anthropological point of view, Shakespeare’s reception in certain European countries even resembles religious patterns (ix) that include, for example, pilgrimages or relic worship (3). ‘Bardolatry’ basically stands for the author-cult’s function as some sort of religion (Dobson 6 in Dávidházi x). Thus, the century after his death seems to have witnessed “the apotheosis of the Bard” (Dávidházi 1) and his embodiment as a saintly figure. Not only was he called ‘sacred’ by Samuel Sheppard in 1651, ‘divine’ by Pope in 1737, ‘immortal’ by Johnson in 1747, and a ‘God’ in Bell’s edition of 1774, his works were compared to the Bible, and his omniscience was likened to God’s. (Marder 18) Even though not everyone has agreed with this kind of worship of the author at all times, there is no doubt that idolatry and cultish worship of William Shakespeare and the impersonation of him as a ‘saint’, even if only scarcely, have existed.

Accompanying the phenomenon of an obsession with the author figure of William Shakespeare is his construction as a tourist attraction that has particularly affected actual sites linked to the playwright. As soon as the tourist industry realized that William Shakespeare was not only popular, but also lucrative (Ay. Thompson 1053) Stratford Upon Avon, his birthplace, was transformed into a tourist site. Devotees of the Bard even speak of pilgrimages when they visit his birthplace, which accentuates his saint-like reception. Apart from Stratford, the “literary shrine” (Watson 199), London’s Globe theater, a modern replica of a theater that Shakespeare worked in, officially opened in 1997 (Watson 219) and has not only impassioned academic commentary, but has also drawn a significant number of ‘fans’ and theater-goers to its ‘authentic’ display of William Shakespeare’s past. (Watson 218f.)

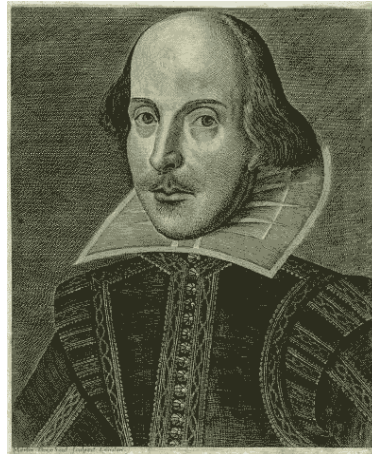


Figure 3: The Martin Droeshout Portrait

In brief, William Shakespeare's construction as a saint and as a tourist attraction has not ceased in the 21st century and has elevated him to an author figure that can neither be compared in fame nor in reputation to any other. Nevertheless, another trend has been rising for centuries as well and has grown quite popular: the reconstruction of the 'real' William Shakespeare, the restoration of the life of an actual human being. Other than the saintly figure or the tourist attraction that are still an immaterial idea of the author figure, the reconstruction of the tangible human being demands the quest for an actual body. This body is not only supposed to contain the personality and the genius of the celebrated writer, but is also intended to depict an accurate picture of the author's physical appearance. Ostensibly, the Bard's devotees have been speculating about his looks for more than two centuries (Marder 189). After the discovery of what was allegedly Shakespeare's death mask in 1849 (Marder 206), the arguments reached a climax in 1876 when J. Parker Norris', "an American bardolater", suggested exhuming the body. (Marder 189) Public protest and certain authorities' resentment to the proposal, eventually, settled the question – it remained in its grave.

The quest for a body has not stopped at this point however. Since the First Folio that bore the familiar Droeshout portrait (Fig. 3) (Lanier 93) was published in 1623, "the world has been literally swamped with 'authentic' and conjectural portraits of Shakespeare" (Marder 192). Prints, busts, sculptures, medals and, recently, beer mats, restaurant signs or playing cards (Holderness, Loughrey 186) and countless other items bear the image of "an Elizabethan subject with a high, domelike forehead" (Marder 192) that has been called Shakespeare for

centuries. Shakespeare's face in its many illustrations, which is supposed to depict the exact same person each time, appears like a "self-satisfied pork-butcher" (Wilson 6 in Holderness, Loughrey 193) like it did on Shakespeare's funeral bust and, at other times, resembles an intellectual and elegant playwright. This variation in images of the author can be attributed to the phenomenon of construction that haunts William Shakespeare. Not even his physical appearance is close to one universal truth, but rather changes with people's ideas of his physical appearance, "[c]ommercial considerations" (Holderness, Loughrey 190) and "tastes in art" (Marder 196). Moreover, the iconic image of the embodied Shakespeare itself has become the embodiment of a symbol, "a symbol [...] of British national culture" (Holderness, Loughrey 186) and of "traditionalism, learnedness, hand-crafted quality, and high art" (Lanier 95). Adding the face of William Shakespeare to a product almost equals adding value to it. (Lanier 94)

Consequently, it seems inevitable that the author's embodiment also conquered print and audiovisual media: William Shakespeare's fame that is no longer limited to the theater and the stage nor is his embodiment. In the 21st century the embodied Shakespeare appears on printed pages, on CDs, on cinema and television screens and on DVD. (Worthen 228) In novel and film the physical aspect of the author has found the ideal medium for endowing the playwright with new bodies. These bodies seem to represent a more human element of the 'idea' of William Shakespeare. Already in 20th century literature the Bard's personality and appearance became a subject to the authors' imagination and were freely and newly constructed. In Edward Bond's *Bingo* (1973) Shakespeare has a cameo appearance as a selfish capitalist who commits suicide, while Susan Cooper depicts him as one of the characters the hero of her children's novel *King of Shadows* (1999) meets in his time travels to Renaissance England. (Cano López, García-Periago) Al Pacino even allows the character of William Shakespeare a cameo appearance in his *Looking for Richard* (1996), a tribute to Shakespeare's *Richard III*. (Lanier 99) It seems evident that "pop versions" of the author "are typically concerned less with historical fidelity and more with adjusting (or fabricating) details of Shakespearean biography and reinflecting the mythic stature of Shakespeare the Author so that man and myth are in congruence" (Lanier 100).

This conformity between Shakespeare the man and Shakespeare the myth has also been reached in an apparently common embodiment of the playwright: "Shakespeare the lover"

(Lanier 101). The “poet of love in English” (Lanier 101) is one of Shakespeare’s ‘pop versions’ that has evidently conquered novel and film. William Shakespeare’s domestic life in Stratford-upon-Avon as an amorous hero has been romantically and idyllically portrayed in Emma Severn’s book *Anne Hathaway* (1845), in Sarah Sterling’s *Shakespeare’s Sweetheart* (1905), and in *Her Infinite Variety* (2001) by Pamela Berkman. Similarly, his construction as a dreamer of (theatrical) adventures has gone short neither: The 20th century has witnessed the publications of books like Anthony Burgess’s *Nothing Like the Sun* (1964), *A Cry of Players* (1968) by William Gibson, or Grace Tiffany’s *Will* (2004). (Lanier 102) William Shakespeare’s works and especially mysterious figures such as the Dark Lady of the sonnets (Lanier 102) have inspired many more fictions of Shakespeare the lover and of the romantic dreamer in novel as well as in film that even suggest liaisons with Queen Elizabeth (Lanier 103). Nevertheless, they are just too many in number to be all mentioned here.

However, the most famous material reconstruction of the Bard was probably undertaken in the “postmodern”⁷ (Anderegg 177) *Shakespeare in Love* directed by John Madden screened in cinemas all over the world in 1998. Will Shakespeare is shown to be a good-for-nothing womanizer until he, eventually, meets the love of his life and his muse who inspires him to write *Romeo and Juliet*. Coincidentally, the Bard is depicted as a character of his own play: He impersonates Romeo not only when he assumes this role on stage, but moments of togetherness with his beloved Viola resemble or allude to scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*. (Cano López, García-Periago) Also minor details such as the name of his former love (Rosaline) correspond to the play.

Another embodiment of William Shakespeare given credence in *Shakespeare in Love*, but never actually implemented is Shakespeare the homosexual lover. Despite “the homoerotic content of the sonnets and the gender-bending romances of Shakespeare’s cross-dressed heroines” (Lanier 103), he may let himself be kissed by Viola de Lesseps when she is disguised as a man, but, eventually, leaves no doubt about the nature of his passion being heterosexual. (Lanier 103) Not even Stephen Greenblatt’s advice to the screenwriter Marc Norman that the cinematic Shakespeare should have an affair with Christopher Marlowe – because for Greenblatt “a queer Shakespeare is a good Shakespeare, or at least, a good

⁷ Michael Anderegg (177) calls *Shakespeare in Love* ‘postmodern’, because, as for him, “[a] postmodern filmmaker combines periods, cultures, and locations, [and] puts everything in quotation marks [...]”.

cinematic one” (Menon 116) – was seriously considered. Apart from pornographic or erotic novels, such as *Shakespeare’s Boy* (1991) by Casimir Dukahz, other pop impersonations of William Shakespeare largely avoid a possible homoerotic tendency in the author. (Lanier 103)

William Shakespeare’s embodiment has even outlasted the millennium: Roland Emmerich’s *Anonymous*, a thriller about the myth that Edward de Vere was the true writer of the plays of William Shakespeare, with Rafe Spall in the role of William Shakespeare, will enter cinemas in fall 2011. (Brevet) It is said that “[l]ittle Willy”⁸ has become Hollywood’s biggest screenwriting sensation” (Lehmann, Starks 9). Not only this: The familiarity that is displayed in calling the ingenious ‘Master Shakespeare’ by the name ‘little Willy’ marks the transgression from the once saint-like adoration to the ‘ordinary’ human being. Not only his plays, but also the playwright himself are “render[ed] [...] accessible to postmodern audiences” (Lehmann, Starks 12) His bodies range from the lovesick handsome fool to the mysterious protagonist in an intrigue, which makes him almost indistinguishable from other human (movie) characters would he not bear the name of William Shakespeare.

In summary, William Shakespeare has been eclipsed, reformed, refined, restored, celebrated, fabricated, illustrated, eviscerated, incorporated, commemorated, disintegrated, unmasked, identified, and reintegrated since his death (Halliday in the Table of Contents). He is no longer the ‘property’ of academics or high culture, but has found his way (back) into popular culture and is accessible to the ‘common people’. However, no matter what his status at any given period was exactly, he has always been present, discussed and ‘kept alive’ by integration into the current culture. He has been embodied as a saint, a tourist attraction, a cultural icon, a selfish capitalist, his own Romeo, and a lovesick starving author. These diverse impersonations are the result of a quest for the body of the author that began only shortly after his death in 1616. While a general trend suggests a saint-like adoration of William Shakespeare, there exists another tendency towards a more human representation of the playwright and the reconstruction of an actual physical body that has grown particularly prominent in 20th century literature and film. It only remains to wonder what appearance the author will take on next.

⁸ William Shakespeare was called ‘little Willy’ during the presentation of the 71st Annual Academy Awards.

2.2. Everybody's Dear Jane's Bodies

Since the 1990s there can be no doubt that William Shakespeare has to share his throne on top of the world of literary adaptations, reworkings and (re)constructions of the author figure with a female writer living two centuries after his own: Jane Austen also known as the “Prose Shakespeare” (Southam 125 quoted in Wiltshire *Recreating* 59). Jane Austen’s (modern media) career seems to be similar to Shakespeare’s: A constant “[r]emaking, rewriting, ‘adaptation’, reworking, ‘appropriation’, conversion, and mimicking” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 2) of her work has taken place and the immaterial idea of the author has not undergone less transformation and reconstruction. The primary reason for the still strong salability and the widespread interest in Jane Austen may well be that her six completed novels are “among the best-known, best-loved, most-read works in the English language” (Harman 1) worldwide. She can be seen as “a commercial phenomenon and a cultural figure” (Johnson 211) – in brief, as a “truly global phenomenon” (Harman 2) and “a license to print money” (Margolis 39). She is present everywhere, in film adaptations, on the internet in fan-clubs (for example, the Republic of Pemberley), blogs and fan fiction, on T-shirts, coffee mugs, key chains and bumper stickers, in jewelry, Regency Barbie doll gowns, board games and Tarot decks, in pop art bags, action figures and underwear (Al. Thompson), or on book shelves of (former) influential fans, such as Queen Victoria. (Harman 2)

Another reason among many for the strong interest in the author Jane Austen may be the scarce knowledge about her life that allows scholars to reconstruct relations, acquaintances and locations of her life, but hides her innermost feelings and motives. Even though more private papers and correspondences may have existed, they no longer do as they were destroyed by Jane’s sister Cassandra Austen. (Sutherland 59) So, already the mid-Victorian years witnessed a “fading memory”, but, at the same time, a “growing fame” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 15) of the novelist. At the end of the nineteenth century her fame had grown to such a degree that her brother Henry would have never dared to imagine, when, in 1818, he wrote the first ‘Biographical Note’ for the posthumous publication of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. (Harman 1)

Due to this adoration and the accompanying obsession of ‘getting to know’ Jane Austen who has left so little information about herself behind, she has been constructed anew by fans and

scholars countless times. Thus, she has never been ‘the same Jane Austen’ in the centuries after her death. Just like William Shakespeare, the novelist has undergone continuous (re)construction in a quest to reveal who she ‘really’ was. She has lived many different lives and has inhabited many different bodies. This phenomenon is attributed to the publication of the first full-length biography of the author in 1870 by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, since it created an insight into a private personality that has not been accessible before (Lynch 112), and still left questions open and raised new ones. Answers to these questions have been sought tirelessly, because “of all writers in the canon, Jane Austen is the one around whom this fantasy of access, this dream of possession, weaves its most powerful spell” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 17). Numerous biographies have been published ever since, some that try to stick to the facts such as Deirdre Le Faye’s *Life and Letters of Jane Austen* and others that do not, for example, Jon Spence’s *Becoming Jane* that focuses on the novelist’s (fictitious) love life. However, the ‘real’ author lost her tangibility at the time of her death, at which she left a life full of speculation and anonymously (Jones 12) published novels behind. Thus, diverse bodies have been assigned to her ever since until well into the 20th and the 21st century endowing us with the thoughtful device of imagination.

Apart from Jane Austen’s impersonation as a figure of fame, the worship of the author has culminated in something much more extreme: Deidre Shauna Lynch does not only refer to Jane Austen as a celebrity, but also makes use of John Bailey’s term for the admiration of the author: the Jane Austen cult⁹ (Lynch 113), also known as ‘Janeitism’¹⁰. In 1924 E. M. Forster goes even further by describing “the Jane Austenite” as “possess[ing] little of the brightness” of the writer, but instead “[I]like all regular churchgoers...scarcely notices what is being said” (Forster 512 quoted in Lynch 114). Jane Austen was turned into “a passion and a creed, if not quite a religion” (Southam 227 quoted in Harman 162) and ‘Janeitism’ almost into a “sect” (Johnson 214). Jane became “the divine Jane” (Southam 202 quoted in Harman 162) and her admirers were sometimes called “the faithful” (Southam 233-4 quoted in Harman 162). So, Jane Austen has been elevated to a status that is equally familiar to William Shakespeare: She has been embodied as a ‘saint’. The late-Victorian cult of ‘Divine Jane’ is said to have been

⁹ The *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘cult’ as a word for worship, but attributes it with a development to a more derogatory meaning standing for “fashionable enthusiasm” or “transient fad of an in-group” (Lynch 113).

¹⁰ Janeitism is “the self-consciously idolatrous enthusiasm for ‘Jane’ and every detail relative to her [...]” (Johnson 211).

“the most camp and breathless literary phenomenon the world had known since ‘Bardolatry’” (Harman 7).

A parallel to a “cult of saints” (Lynch 115) cannot only be drawn due to the cultish admiration of the author, but also as to the significance of ‘Relics’: The Jane Austen Society of the UK (founded 1940), for example, keeps an eye on and records objects from the Austen family’s domestic life, such as needle cases, that are secured in Chawton Cottage¹¹ by the Jane Austen Memorial Trust. (Lynch 115) Moreover, literary tourists following the author’s footsteps and visiting, for instance, the birthplace Steventon as well as, more recently, movie sets, such as stately houses, from Austen’s novel adaptations (Al. Thompson) often call themselves ‘pilgrims’, which also suggests an elevation of the author to a saintly figure. (Lynch 116) A consequence of this elevation is literary pilgrimage, which strongly resembles religious pilgrimage. It is a secularized form allowing a substitution of the saint and the saint’s holy locations with an author and this author’s places. (Watson 200) So, like William Shakespeare, Jane Austen is at once an intangible saintly figure and a tourist attraction that fulfills literary tourists’ desire to “access the ‘real’ [author]” (Watson 200).

Despite Jane Austen’s embodiment as a saint and her role as an “object of idealizing and romantic fantasy” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 10), no satisfaction with these abstract, still immaterial bodies of the author arrived. Her symbolic status as “a canonical author whose life and work signify English national heritage and all that implies of the past as an idyll of village life in a pre-industrial society, of traditional class and gender hierarchies, sexual propriety and Christian values” (North 38 in Parrill 36) may be appreciated by “the public, especially the British public” that “has a nostalgic longing for the order and the beauty of the past” (Parrill 6). Nevertheless, impersonations of a more personal and intimate friend and of a more ‘human’ Jane Austen emerged in the 20th century. Apart from Henry James who commented on the rising appreciation for Jane Austen in 1905 (Lynch 111), John Bailey already speaks of a cult about her person in 1927 and notes that “[s]he has ceased to be the ‘Miss Austen’ of our parents” – she has become “our own ‘Jane Austen’ or even ‘Jane’ ” (Bailey 23, 30 quoted in Lynch 111). Bailey suggests that a certain intimate relationship between Jane Austen and her readers already existed in the late Victorian period (Lynch 112). They were searching for a “personal access” (Lynch 111) to the author, whom they met with

¹¹ Chawton Cottage was Jane Austen’s home from 1809 until 1817. (Lynch 115)

“personal love and strong feelings of proprietorship” (Harman 4). So, the 20th century personalized Miss Austen and gave her the body of an intimate friend, of everybody’s dear Jane.

This more human form of the author calls for a material body and a certainty about the physical appearance of this intimate friend in order to reach utmost familiarity with what the “secret friend” (Lynch 118) of the author wishes to know so well. Unfortunately for all those searching for the ‘real’ Jane Austen, there exists no such detailed (,however, also dubious) portrait as was drawn of William Shakespeare (the Droeshout portrait). Images of the author can be found in the memoir written by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh and in diverse biographies that utilize the probably most truthful picture of Jane Austen: the watercolor sketch done by her sister Cassandra, when Jane Austen was approximately 35 years old. (Sutherland 111) (Fig. 4) Even though this sketch may be authentic, it still depicts Cassandra’s subjective view of her sister. It is strongly dependent on Cassandra’s drawing skills, and remains, above all, unfinished. Moreover, the picture supports speculations about Jane Austen’s character, since it presents her as the “dry, homely spinster” (Spence x) she has sometimes been imagined as.

In contrast to Cassandra’s depiction of her sister, her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh offers a softer and gentler picture of his aunt (Fig. 5) in *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. More than 50 years after Jane Austen’s death Cassandra’s sketch was professionally reconstructed and ‘improved’ by James Andrews of Maidenhead for the *Memoir*. (Sutherland 111) Evidently, it was made to create a mental picture of the author in the readers’ mind that was ‘worth’ being associated with such an outstanding novelist. Whether she really was “very attractive”, “a clear brunette with a rich colour”, “had full round cheeks, with mouth and nose small and well formed, bright hazel eyes, and brown hair forming natural curls close around her face” (Austen-Leigh 106) as her nephew claims, will probably always remain a mystery. So, it encourages people dissatisfied with this depiction to create another body for Jane, maybe an idealized and romanticized body, but nonetheless, a material one.



Fig. 4: Watercolor sketch by Cassandra Austen Fig. 5: Portrait of Jane Austen in the *Memoir*

One of the popular bodies that arose in the late 20th century especially in print and visual media is the romantic Jane Austen. Since Austen novels are known to include the successful “formula of girl meets boy” (Harman 246), her association with romantic love, for example, has brought forth books such as Laura Henderson’s *Jane Austen’s Guide to Romance: The Regency Rules* that tells women how to behave in order to be regarded as attractive by men, or *Jane Austen’s Guide to Dating* by the same author. (Harman 253) Jane Austen adopts the role of the advisor in questions of romance; she is embodied as a (moral) authority in matters of love. However, another trend impersonates the novelist as a lover herself. Alexandra Potter’s novel *Me and Mr. Darcy* (2007), for example, transforms the author herself into a matchmaker in the 21st century in a rewriting of *Pride and Prejudice*. (Cano López, García-Periago) Moreover, numerous biographies, old and recent, are dedicated to Jane Austen’s romances engage in more speculation than one would deem appropriate of the genre. A prime example for such a biography is Jon Spence’s *Becoming Jane* (2003), on which the movie of the same name is based.

Nevertheless, Jane Austen’s best-known romantic embodiments are probably to be found in film. Jane Austen’s popularity as a ‘movie star’ started with the 1995 BBC mini-series *Pride and Prejudice*. (Harman 254) Colin firth as Mr. ‘wet T-Shirt’ Darcy convincingly proved the success of a “visual realisation of the erotic potential of the novels” (Harman 251). However, there has not only been filmic interest in Jane Austen’s novels, but also in the author herself. In the 21st century filmmakers and screenwriters felt the need to embody the author and created *Becoming Jane* (dir. Julian Jarrold, 2007) and *Miss Austen Regrets* (dir. Jeremy

Lovering, 2008). They took a step partly realized before by Patricia Rozema, whose *Mansfield Park* (1999) includes a Fanny Price that is modeled upon Jane Austen's letters and juvenilia. (Gevirtz) *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets* share a romantic view of the author figure and hence endow Jane Austen with the body of a lover. While in *Becoming Jane* the author experiences an actual love relationship, *Miss Austen Regrets* focuses on the chances of love and marriage she dismissed. Furthermore, in *Becoming Jane* the character of Jane Austen finds herself in a romance that she created herself: Jane Austen is, at times, embodied as the heroine of her own novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet. (Cano López, García-Periago) Particularly prominent are, for example, the similarities of the minor characters surrounding the female protagonist in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Becoming Jane*: The characters of Mr. Wisley, to whom Mrs. Austen desires to see Jane married, and Lady Gresham seem to be modeled on Mr. Collins and Mr. Darcy's aunt Lady Catherine De Bourgh.

Still fascinating to academic and popular audiences alike, Jane Austen has lost nothing of the fame that she has accrued since her death. Whether people love her or hate her, have read her novels or watched filmic adaptations of them, Jane Austen is constantly under debate. When the entire world is Shakespeare's stage, it might as well be a small country village where everyone chatters about a certain Jane Austen at tea-time. As it has been demonstrated above, this Jane Austen has never inhabited the same body for long in the centuries after her death. She has been reinvented and reconstructed numerous times and has been made suitable for current tastes, attitudes and ideas. She has been likened to a saint, transformed into a tourist attraction, has been an intimate friend to her readers, has taken on the form of Elizabeth Bennet and the body of a lover. She is a "composite Jane" (Wiltshire *Recreating* 15) - the combined product of "biographical information, interpretation of the letters, reading of the novels [and] [...] the still surviving geographical lineaments of the world she inhabited" (Wiltshire *Recreating* 15). Interestingly, Jane Austen's embodiment follows the same trend that William Shakespeare's pursues: She was once the abstract idea of an author and her immaterial existence was likened to intangible and adorable forms such as that of a saint. However, the tendency to endow her with an actual body that resembles a human physical appearance and contains a (human) character has been growing strong in recent decades. This trend has found its ideal medium of manifestation in literature and film and it can be assumed that the most recent romantic body is not the last one that Jane Austen will inhabit.

3. Fact Versus Fiction – The ‘Real’ Versus the Romantic Author

Considering the argument that was outlined in the previous section, who or what is the real author, when William Shakespeare as well as Jane Austen have so many bodies to choose from? In this paper the only author that is considered ‘real’ is the one that already died centuries ago. This real author left a bodiless and immaterial idea behind that has transformed into various appearances in the years after the authors’ death. Such a transformation is made possible when the concept of history and biography as well as the media or texts that mediate it are regarded as subjective and relative: There exists no ultimate truth in the representation of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen – diverse points of view lead to diverse representations and hence diverse biographies and images of one and the same person. The authors and their biographies are “transmitted and transformed through texts” (Sutherland v). The ‘text’ that is of primary concern in the analysis of the romantic author is film, since the authors appearances in the movies *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are to be discussed.

Even though the screen shows just one of several perspectives on a certain subject, many people succumb to a specific portrayal inadvertently. When did seeing become believing?” (2) is asked by Tony Barta on the first pages of his essay collection on reality in comparison to the ‘reality’ projected onto a cinema screen. His question is a central one in today’s world, in which we are constantly overrun by images and ideas presented to us by different media and reaching more and more people through technological advances. It is getting increasingly difficult to form an uninfluenced opinion and the boundaries between what is ‘real’ and what is presented to people in magazines or on screens is blurry. Media images are often taken as a reflection of reality and, thus, gradually become ‘real’. In other words, “[r]eality [becomes] surreality and that [becomes] commonsense” (Barta 3), especially when people were forced to adapt to a new and permanently changing media environment in the 19th century (Barta 3). Thus, it can be claimed that ‘reality’ is no more than “a fantasy that helps to satisfy a desire for certainty, but one that never carries the certitude of ‘reality’” (Ay. Thompson 1054).

With regard to the cinema, Barta regards it as problematic that “we want the screen to be a window” (2). What is shown on the screen is not a look through a window but rather a mediated and transformed picture of such a view through a window. Viewers are “lulled by

the apparent transparency of the screen, the solidity of what is depicted” (Barta 2). Such an alienation from what is common and tangible in our everyday lives can have significant consequences, for example, for our perception of what is beautiful and aesthetic, especially with regard to body images. Barta reminds the reader that the natural body is nowadays something almost remote (3) having been replaced in our minds by images on billboards and screens appearing mainly in the form of advertisements.

The phenomenon of verisimilitude through commercialization must not only be observed with regard to the formation of our present reality. The way the past is represented on television and cinema screens significantly shapes and determines our understanding of it and always has done so. “[T]he special property of cinema was to bring truth and artifice, action and acting, documentary and drama, on to one and the same screen with not even a split second to tell them apart.” (Barta 3) So, we readily believe what we see be it through a window or through a screen. Films set in Antiquity or the Middle Ages and especially heritage cinema covering England’s 17th and 18th century have shaped modern images of past centuries’ habits, costumes, lodgings, societies and day-to-day lives.

William Shakespeare and Jane Austen are ‘victims’ of this phenomenon as well. The scant biographical information available rather debauches to speculating than offering a complete life story. The modern filmic biographies or biopics¹² of the two authors within the scope of this paper *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* seem to be about “repetitions, gaps, silences, absences, patterns revealed over long periods of time [and] lives that don’t steadily progress but unfold at times slowly and at times in a rush” (Millard 231). This comment made by Kathryn Millard suggests that more gaps in knowledge are commonly filled when making a movie than actual knowledge is used, i.e. there is more fiction than fact. “[B]iography creates meaning out of nothing – the more gaps there are, the more the biographer finds to fill them”. (Sutherland 57) Thus, meaning is created endlessly, because the desire “to know fully and completely another person and to have access to their innermost thoughts” (Sutherland 58) is constantly pursued. In the present section the basis is provided for an understanding of how it is possible to endow the authors with a random body in the film medium, whereby this body may but not necessarily corresponds to historically verified

¹² Biopic is the short form for biographical picture and simply means “a biographical film [...] that depicts the life of a historical person, past or present” (Custen 5).

sources. It is discussed in how far ‘reality’ can actually be brought onto a screen by, at first, discussing the concept of history in general and then focusing on the depiction of history and biography in film. In the second subsection, the idea of romantic love is presented and the romantic author figure is examined by demonstrating William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s connection with romantic love. It shall be shown that a fictional account of their respective lives is no less interesting and no less worthy than a factual one, if only because it reveals modern society’s constitution and desires.

3.1. The ‘Real’ Author

3.1.1. The History Myth

Before embarking on a discussion about history on the (silver) screen, it is essential to discuss the term ‘history’. Does objective¹³ history, a story based entirely on facts, exist at all? In Tony Barta’s terminology such a ‘real’ history is called “evidentiary history” (1). By this kind of history – let us assume that there is more than one – Barta speaks of a history that is based on facts, on the so-called truth, or what is generally believed to be the truth. Nevertheless, every ‘evidentiary’ history passes a mediator, for example a historian, before it is presented to an audience, because a direct perception of history is impossible, since it is past. (Faber 12) Cannot a selection and the representation of facts alter them and present them in a different light? Barta answers this question with a description of the profession or the professing of history (1): The majority of work that is done by a historian “has to do with other missing elements, with finding data, turning it into evidence, and finding strategies to indicate (or not indicate) how much might still be absent” (Barta 1). Does this not suggest an impossibility of something called ‘objective or evidentiary history’? Following this train of thoughts, the answer would have to be ‘yes’, it renders the notion of evidentiary history almost impossible.

However, a full discussion about whether or not evidentiary history exists and in which ways it is different from, shall we say, another kind of history does not lie within the scope of this

¹³ ‘Objective’ here means contingent on the object, cognitively important for everyone and free from emotional interference and partiality. ‘Subjective’ here means the exact opposite, namely contingent on the subject, not holding cognitive value for everyone and involving emotional interference and partiality. (Schaff 35)

paper.¹⁴ What is more important is that other kinds of history have been thriving in the last century and that a mere concentration on facts is no longer the norm. Barta noticed “the accomplished historians around [him] moved beyond [their] rejection of positive faith in facts into positive acceptance of difference, subjectivity, and multiple perspectives” (Barta 1). In brief, history is “the business of interpreting the past” (Barta 9) and hence rather subjective than objective. Historians cannot escape this process of interpretation, because when writing about history one naturally writes a story from their own perspective. Sense has to be made out of facts in order to provide a comprehensive text for the reader, which implies selecting, explaining and synthesizing ‘real-life happenings’. Human beings’ motives, thoughts and interests that underlie their actions force the historian to deal with these immaterial concepts. (Faber 12) In consequence, an interaction between the historical subject (i.e. event, person etc.) and the historian as observer takes place, both consciously and unconsciously. (Loewenberg 12) Moreover, there is no “inherent meaning” (Loewenberg 12) in any historical occurrence. Meaning only develops when this occurrence is “assigned a frame of reference” (Loewenberg 12). Not only historians but people in general engage in a dialogue with historical sources, because they naturally pose questions and employ present theories and ideas on them. (R. Evans 218) Thus, “[h]istory is both what happened in the past and the historian’s account of it” (Loewenberg 11).

A historian’s research process is already “unconsciously self-relevant” (Loewenberg 12), even though the historian might appear distant from the material in a scholarly sense. (Loewenberg 12). This means that the interpretation process does not start with the combining and arranging of historical facts, but already with the selection of these facts. The historian may favor topics that s/he is interested in and leave out others that s/he regards as irrelevant or may judge about importance and relevance with regard to personal prejudices and partiality (Schaff 46) or current power discourses (Cartmell, Hunter 3). Consequently, what is referred to as facts is already the “historian’s construction”¹⁵ (Schaff 36). Nevertheless, this shall not be regarded as a negative development, but rather as a new insight into the process of recording history that has always existed. There is no authority that could provide external criteria of what is essential and what can unconcernedly be excluded. (Loewenberg 15)

¹⁴ This paper assumes the viewpoint that no history is objective in the way that Schaff (35) explains objectivity. Of course, also objectivity can be interpreted differently and more relatively, as it is done, for example, by R. Evans (*Fakten* 242) or by Nagl-Docekal (10), which then allows for an objective history.

¹⁵ In the German original it says “Konstruktion des Historikers” (Schaff 36).

In the past centuries many historians have ceased to believe that they have to faithfully stick to reality and came to understand their actual distance from it. The understanding of history has changed and a “transition to a postmodern consciousness in history practice” (Barta 2) has taken place. Historians have to manage the “absence as well as [the] presence” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 17) of historical facts. The doubt about history as an objective science is nowadays shared by many historians (Faber 9) and history and fictionality have closed ranks (Wiltshire *Recreating* 20). They have realized that their historical work includes as many “multiple perspectives, odd, accidental, and arbitrary angles” (Barta 12) as any work of fiction could comprise, especially when the “desire to express philosophical, personal, and metaphoric dimensions of history” (Sternburg 246) arises, which is inevitable from time to time. See that history is primarily about change and every historical event continually promotes such a change, it is not easy to pin it down to hard facts. Different models of understanding together with concepts that facilitate the organization of existing information have come into being. (Loewenberg 11) Together with these methods and processes of interpretation and creation the question arises whether history is really a science or actually shows traces of a branch of art. (Schaff 33)

Nevertheless, Barta welcomes the development in historians that allows them to see that they actually “paint” (15) a certain past and create a piece of art rather than a factual account of history. This ‘painted past’ is “a made-up one, a construct floated on the naturalizing passion of their readers” (Barta 15), because the actual power to decode and interpret what a historian coded resides with the reader (or viewer). (Barta 15) Consequently, the reader adds a personal meaning to a text or to history. Assuming that the historian him- or herself has once been a reader or viewer, it becomes clear how much influence and power the ‘audience’ has. Human beings are subject to a constant process of change and so are societies, habits, customs, passions, desires, attitudes and the like: “Each historian and each age redefines categories of evidence in the light of its needs, sensibilities, and perceptions” (Loewenberg 15). Historians would lie to themselves if they claimed that they were free from moral and political convictions, aesthetic ideas and unconscious desires, when they select and interpret historic material. (R. Evans 239) In consequence, the writer of history, who was once a reader, forms

it as much as the audience does that absorbs and interprets it according to his or her own and according to current worldly standards.¹⁶

The final step from interpretive history to a fictional filmic account of history¹⁷ is only a natural development frequently observed in novels and movies. Film inherits a larger interpretative scope and leaves much of its interpretive realm to the viewer. Nevertheless, distinctions have to be made within the medium of film. While a documentary would be the equivalent of a history book, the feature film is much closer to the novel. The so-called feature film has an entirely different approach to history than the documentary. General knowledge and common sense endow the audience with the understanding that, in contrast to a history book or a documentary, the feature film does not always claim to tell the ‘truth’. It certainly has the ability to mislead the viewers into believing that “something especially real has been put before them” (Gombrich in Brooke 9), but only at times does it proclaim to depict reality. Especially biographies and, in consequence, biopics are said to be “a hybrid form, a compromise formation between fact and make-believe” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 17). Historical facts, events and persons are solely used for its own purpose, which may range from making profit to amusing the audience.

All these considerations allow one to assume that there is not only one truth and not only one valid and objective history. There are more sides to a story than just one, so much more lies beyond a human action than solely its actual manifestation and there exists a multitude of historians with diverse interests, attitudes, ideologies and methods. Thus, other kinds of history exist as presented in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*. These (filmic) biographies demonstrate that history and hence biography are no factual record, but heavily depend on the creators’ imagination and “imaginative identification” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 17). And there is no scandalized outcry. People have learned to accept new kinds of history, which makes it possible in the first place to turn William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s life into a movie. So very little substantial facts are known that all the information combined would make no more than a short film, in which a voice-over would probably retell the most

¹⁶ This train of thoughts makes up part of Peter Loewenberg’s psychohistory that unites historical analysis and social science models, humanistic sensibility and psychodynamic theory. (Loewenberg 14)

¹⁷ *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* would be such fictional accounts of historical events and personalities.

significant events of their lives. Only a vivid interpretation of the gaps in their lives would probably make a profitable movie and amuse the audience.

3.1.2. “Film as another kind of history”¹⁸

As it was extensively discussed in the previous section, what is generally known as objective or evidentiary history has no longer the same value as it once might have had. Since a craving for profit and amusement dominates (particularly the capitalist Western) world, accounts of William Shakespeare or Jane Austen’s lives that present exclusively factual knowledge (or evidentiary history) would probably not be profitable and would amuse only a slight proportion of readers or viewers. Especially the movie industry that has given in to the trend of depicting popular historical figures would not exist long if it were not a mediator and an interpreter of history. Gaps are filled with fiction, makes sense of absences (Barta 1) and thereby casts a new and different light on historical events and personalities. To refer back to the previous section that already formed the basis for this assumption: there are multiple kinds of histories apart from evidentiary history, and film exists as such “another kind of history” (Barta 1). It even became the ‘storytelling, and history-telling, medium par excellence’ (Barta 7) as soon as it was widely available. The approach to history implemented by film is a postmodern one, “viewing it not as a dull chronicle but as a dynamic resource for exciting stories and poetic, morally uplifting untruths” (Cartmell, Hunter 2).

Before one even thinks of period or historical feature films, the documentary comes to mind, the genre where “real-life happenings [are] being documented on the screen” (Barta 4). However, these real-life happenings are again mediated by a documentary’s focus and, above all, its purpose. Various stylistic devices are added to form and alter the content in order to deliver the desired message. One needs only to mention the word ‘propaganda’ in this context and a variety of implications, probably mostly about the Nazi regime, are evoked. Such stylistic devices that Tony Barta calls “dramatization devices” in his terminology and that he attributes to David Wark Griffith¹⁹ and his new film language (4) are, for instance, “[p]oint of

¹⁸ Barta 1.

¹⁹ David Wark Griffith (1875-1948) is commonly referred to as the ‘father’ of film language. He revolutionized the motion picture and introduced new techniques to the art of film making. The innovations that he pioneered in concern primarily the camera technique and the editing process and include, for example, full shots, medium

view, framing of shot, length of take” (Barta 4), camera angle, the cutting process or montage, light, sound and many more. Devices like the aforementioned can, among other things, create a new filmic diegesis²⁰ of time and space that is only valid within the story that is told. (Barta 4) As a consequence of this new diegesis, and here Barta refers to the Soviet filmmaker and theoretician Vsevolod Pudovkin²¹, not only the view on characters, objects and action is altered, but also the perception of historical reality. (Barta 4) To put it in Pudovkin’s famous words: “To show something as everyone else sees it is to show nothing” (Pudovkin quoted in Barta 4 – No source is mentioned for this quote in Barta’s text.). It is a mere impossibility to show something as everyone sees it, because not all people agree on what they see. Diverse views and realities have to be combined to build the historical reality represented in a documentary.

While the documentary commonly alters only the view on history and mediates and interprets certain historical events, because it is committed to objectivity and facts, the feature film has made no such commitment. Thus, it has the liberty of using historical evidence as it likes without being blamed for distorting reality. “How film witnesses the past” (Barta 2) differs greatly from how a history book does. The feature film offers “an alternative understanding of historical narrative” (Sternburg 239) and finds new ways to picture the past that deviate from traditional modes of representation (Sternburg 239). Janet Sternburg draws a line between the representation of history in the documentary that “is structured from verifiable sources” (239) and in the feature film that creates “poetic associations” (239).

When John Wiltshire discusses filmic adaptations of Jane Austen’s novels he gets to the heart of the matter: “Texts (however we interpret that word) only partially belong to the original author: they are constantly being reworked, rearranged, recycled” (*Recreating* 3). Even though various histories have been written down numerous times, they are in their very

shots, close-ups or parallel and intercutting. The most popular of the 495 films he shot is *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). (Simmon 2ff.) His distancing from realism on the screen was, at first, viewed critically, when he, for instance, introduced the close-up and his producers were anxious that the audience might be bewildered when the rest of the actor was missing. (Rosenblum, Karen 37f. in Chandler 162)

²⁰ Tony Barta explains his use of the word ‘diegesis’ as follows (16): Originating from Greek and meaning ‘describe’ or ‘narrate’, this word that Balázs, Pudovkin and Eisenstein frequently used describes “all the means used to create the space, time, and action of a story that readers or viewers enter” (Barta 16).

²¹ Vsevolod Pudovkin (1893-1953) is known as one of the pioneers of the experimental period of soviet silent movie. Together with Sergej Eisenstein he belongs to the group of great film theoreticians who were the first to realize their ideas of dynamic montage. Outstanding works among his films are *Mother* (1926), *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927) and *Potomok Chingis-Khana* (1928). (Bergan 350)

nature not actual texts, which implies that they do not have an original author, no creative mind brought them into existence and hence they do not belong to anybody, not even partially. Does this not sound like an invitation to the movie industry to dispose of history as it likes? The same is true for a person's life or body, in this case William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's, since they are no more than a part of history, a story that belongs to nobody and is constantly retold and interpreted.

Thus, in the quotation above the word 'texts' can simply be substituted by the word 'lives': "[Lives] (however we interpret that word) only partially belong to the original [human being]: they are constantly being reworked, rearranged, recycled" (Wiltshire *Recreating* 3). This might already be true during a person's lifetime, but while a human being can still interfere with this external perception and modification when still alive, once (long) dead the creative mind is free to turn a life story into another story loosely based on someone's life: "Redesigning and plundering the creations of the past [...] is the central motor of artistic development" (Wiltshire *Recreating* 3). Various filmmakers know how to appreciate the fact that they deal with an author who is no longer alive: "I thought Austen would be a good collaborator [...] because [...] she's dead, which means, you know, there's none of that tiresome arguing over who gets the bigger bun at coffee time." (Purdum 11 in Parrill 3)

Moreover, apart from the advantage of the lack of an author able to claim profit and success for him- or herself, a dead author cannot interfere with an interpretation of his or her material and life. "Fidelity is obviously very desirable in marriage; but with film adaptations I suspect playing around is more effective" (McFarlane 165 in Parrill 8). Even though this comment by Brian McFarlane was made on adaptations of Jane Austen's novels, it also applies to an adaptation of her and William Shakespeare's lives. The word 'effective' in this quotation suggests that McFarlane has something else in mind as the purpose of such an adaptation than an exact replica of the original. 'Effective' here rather suggests successful in making money or in amusing an audience by maybe offering them to escape their everyday lives. Neil Sinyard utters a similar opinion (117 in Parrill 9): "[T]he best adaptations of books for film can often best be approached as an activity of literary criticism [...] a critical essay which stresses what it sees as the main theme. [...] [L]ike the best criticism, it can throw new light on the original". This main theme may vary from one filmmaker to the other, which leaves the viewer with manifold representations of one and the same person. What this paper

examines is just one such main theme that filmmakers saw in William Shakespeare and in Jane Austen's lives. In *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* another history is told, because the filmmakers interpret and comment on the authors' lives as they see them or want their audience to see them. John Madden and Julian Jarrod, the directors of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*, for example, see romance in the authors' lives where there are only hints of it and aim at enhancing these aspects.

So, how is this forming of and playing around with the original done? Again there are certain devices that have already been mentioned in the discussion about the documentary and that are used to represent something in a certain way. With reference to the documentary Barta calls them 'dramatization devices', however, they even are and incorporate the very making of a film. Film is said to "represent and again re-present the past and historical processes" (Barta 8), because it is "in its very mechanics analyzing and synthesizing" (Barta 8). Even if a film would be made in just one single shot, from one and the same perspective and with the same incidence of light, a choice has already been made with regard to these three stylistic devices. To film a person's face instead of the whole body often puts greater emphasis on emotions expressed through facial expressions. More light on one character than on another might stress this character's momentary importance in contrast to the other. In brief, as Barta (10) puts it: "Almost every detail is 'reconstructed' and therefore imaginatively portrayed." "[A]t the direction of the filmmaker" (Barta 11) the audience follows a story and is, often unconsciously, led to a certain perception or particular conclusion by the stylistic devices that the filmmaker employs. As a consequence, in the biopic "history [is seen] through the lense of the film biography" (Custen 2). What exactly these devices are in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* that lend them the air of a romance is discussed in a later section.

If the above considerations are regarded in the most radical way, one could almost talk about an "estrangement and [a] fragmentation of reality" (Barta 9) in the case of documentaries but even more so in the case of feature films. However, in order to stress what film is and to return to the headline of this section, estrangement is too hard a judgment, since from another point of view film just tells a story differently, whatever this story might be. And, even if history told by film and 'evidentiary' history use different narrative modes and, thus, differ in their representation of the past, is this in any way problematic? Even though (the feature) film may turn fact into fiction and may fill gaps of knowledge with fiction, the viewer must never

forget that what is shown on the screen is “a constructed space whose realities are those of the story – of history – not of any experience or as-it-happened reality” (Barta 13). This neither implies that *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are lying to their audience, nor that they entirely relate to facts. It simply expresses that film is what it is – another kind of history.

3.2. The Romantic Author

3.2.1. “The very truth and nature of love”²² – An Attempt to Define ‘Romantic Love’

Since the romantic bodies of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen are the main subject of this paper, the concept of romantic love appears continuously throughout the text as well. However, what is referred to as ‘romantic love’ is actually a highly ambiguous and not clearly defined subject – not just in this particular paper. Therefore, before plunging deeply into an analysis of the (cinematic) romantic author, an attempt is made to provide a definition of the aforementioned concept of romantic love. This attempt to define romantic love is not an attempt to create a universal and absolute definition of the term, and is nigh impossible. “The very truth and nature of love” (Norman, Stoppard 94) is hard to define, even though for Lady Viola de Lesseps in *Shakespeare in Love* it might seem a possible task performed by the power of the play. She feels so secure in her belief that the truth of love can be revealed in the theater that she makes a bet with the Queen, Elizabeth I. In her conviction Lady Viola seems to be blind to the fact that it is an impossible task to define something that we experience as a feeling, but that cannot be narrowed down to one or a set of particular physical or emotional sensations. Seldom do we come across topics that do not only concern and interest almost every human being on this planet, but that are also so hard to grasp. Because what is romantic love but an abstract concept, a set of ideas? Most importantly, notions and perceptions of romantic love vary not only from one society or cultural group to another, but already from one individual to the other.

It would facilitate the whole project and would serve the purpose of a non-speculative scientific paper to just ignore anything abstract and irritating, i.e. to analyze the romantic

²² Norman, Stoppard 94

bodies of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in film without dealing with romantic love. However, is not “the concept of [romantic] love itself [...] the ultimate *raison d’être* of the [romance] genre” (P. Evans, Deleyto 3)? And is it not essential to an understanding of the romantic film genres to have an idea of what they are actually based on? Being less than scientific, but still cogent in her assessments Lynn Pearce defines romantic love as “an emotional event with the power to change the lives of all those it touches” (Pearce, Wisker 1). How could the enormous impact of an idea so frequently discussed just be ignored here?

This idea really has been discussed excessively before: Numerous philosophers, scholars, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and people who simply wanted to write about love, starting with writers who lived as early as Plato or even further back, have already done so. At the same time, they have (re-)constructed the concept of romantic love continually through the ages. Not only do we find accounts of, praises of and also curses to love in fiction, manifold occupations with romantic love have been published in the form of scientific articles and books. Romantic love has a certain relevancy in most cultures around the globe and, thus, provides a potential for identification independent from someone’s belonging to any religious, ethnic or cultural group. No wonder it sells so well and no wonder a remarkable number of publications want to make their readers believe they have found an explanation for this phenomenon (*Why We Love* by Helen Fisher) or even a cure for it (*The Romance Trap* by Peg Grymes). So, it is evident that literature on this topic is manifold and hence cannot be presented in this paper in full. Only very few writers were selected to offer an overall impression of the existing views on and approaches to romantic love. Their approaches are briefly outlined to convey an idea of why romantic love is on everyone’s lips.

One such approach to or rather construction of romantic love was undertaken by the historian Lawrence Stone. His concept of romantic love is well known, not least because it was heavily criticized. In his book *Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 - 1800* published in 1977 Stone takes a look at romantic love in William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s times from a 20th century perspective. He defines romantic love as “a product [...] which became fashionable in the late eighteenth century thanks largely to the spread of novel-reading” (Stone 286). The key elements that he suspects behind the “romantic love complex” (282) and that constitute the idea of romantic love are the following:

- “the notion that there is only one person in the world with whom one can fully unite at all levels
- the personality of that person is so idealized that the normal faults and follies of human nature disappear from view
- love is often like a thunderbolt and strikes at first sight
- love is the most important thing in the world, to which all other considerations, particularly material ones, should be sacrificed
- the giving of full rein to personal emotions is admirable, no matter how exaggerated and absurd the resulting conduct may appear to others” (Stone 282)

These highly personal and subjective statements seem to have been plucked out of the air, because he neither mentions any sources nor refers to any research. So, Lawrence Stone might not try to give an objective description of romantic love – if this were possible at all -, but rather describes an idealized state of mind, a set of feelings that most people would probably buy into meaning both senses of the phrase. Assigning his idealized picture of romantic love the quality of “a purely artificial emotion invented by novelists and adopted by men as a cover for sexual desire” (284), his overall picture is “a very confused one” (288). Stone does not only inform the reader that romantic love already sold well in the 18th century. Moreover, he does not fail to depict the impact on societal structures that the concept of romantic love circulating in the past had: “[...] the growth of marriage for love in the eighteenth century was caused by the growing consumption of novels” (283). This means that “mercenary marriages” (Blecha 4) seem to have declined in the 18th century because of representations of romantic love in novels and the resulting longing for it. Be that as it may, Lawrence Stone comments on romantic love in eras long before his own and leaves many questions open. So, whether romantic love was back then what it was in the 1970s for Stone is anyone’s guess. In any case, Stone’s description of this “ridiculous passion which hath no being but in plays and romances” (Jonathan Swift quoted in Stone 283) offers ideas as to what it is that makes people want to experience, read about and watch romantic love by all means.

The same was done by anthropologist Helen Fisher who wrote *Why We Love*, a book on “The Nature and Chemistry of Romantic Love”, in which she includes data from 437 Americans and 402 Japanese in order to prove that the characteristics of romantic love she uses for her

book are universal (Fisher 4): “Being in love *is* universal to humanity; it is part of human nature.” (Fisher 6) However, neither Lawrence Stone nor Helen Fisher’s key characteristics of romantic love are universal: They belong to a particular construct of the idea of romantic love that the authors designed individually and subjectively. After having “canvassed the psychological literature on romantic love” (Fisher 3) and having questioned people from only few out of the world’s almost 200 countries, as for Fisher this “complex of many specific traits” (Fisher 4) is made out of the following: ‘special meaning’, focused attention, aggrandizing the beloved, ‘intrusive thinking’, emotional fire, intense energy, mood swings (from ecstasy to despair), yearning for emotional union, looking for signs of the adored one’s love, changing priorities, emotional dependence, empathy, passion heightened by adversity, hope, a sexual connection, sexual exclusivity, jealousy, uncontrollable love, and a transient state. (Fisher 6ff.)

The concept of romantic love presented in *Why We Love* is based on Fisher’s own selective and subjective readings and experiences and, even though it unites positive and negative characteristics, it is not universal, but rather a construct just like Lawrence Stone’s. As she claims to offer a scientific approach, Fisher’s construct is different from Stone’s. Her definition romantic love as “one of the primordial brain networks that evolved to direct mating and reproduction” (Fisher xiv) and hence includes brains scans in her analysis of this phenomenon. That these brain scans reveal the chemicals responsible for an ‘addiction’ to a certain person is an interesting result to be considered with the intangible concept of romantic love. Nevertheless, that the anthropologist was highly restricting in her choice of test subjects and that the manifestation of romantic love was only analyzed by means of criteria she herself selected only supports the constructability of romantic love.

Another frequently considered approach to romantic love is the psychological one. In the introduction to the essay collection *Fatal Attractions* Lynne Pearce and Gina Wisker offer “a brief review of the foundations of romantic love as ‘told’ by certain theorists” (Pearce, Wisker 3), by which they mainly refer to psychologists. The constructability of romantic love is particularly felt in Pearce and Wisker’s depiction of it as “the story” (Pearce, Wisker 3) implying an allusion to romantic love’s fairy tale quality. According to Freudian psychoanalytic and Lacanian structural theory human beings are feeling a lack (probably arising from “Oedipal attachments to parent figures” (Pearce, Wisker 4) if we believe Freud)

that they are desperately trying to fill with romantic love. According to Pearce and Wisker's explanation (4f.) people are missing something ideal and impalpable that they have last experienced in the early stages of the relationship with their parents. This "adult desire (the emotion that our culture(s) have dressed up as 'romantic love') [is] the *effect* of a loss produced in our early psychosexual development" (Pearce, Wisker 5). Thus, what they are lacking cannot be fulfilled by a real relationship with an actual person. Novels or movies, for example, might temporarily satisfy their craving by showing them the desired state and by providing possible identification and, in consequence, catharsis. In brief, not only is the psychoanalytic (or structural) approach to romantic love itself a construct of it, moreover, this approach describes romantic love as an abstract idea, a concept, that was designed to act as a replacement for an indefinite desire that cannot be fulfilled.

To sum up, as the three approaches presented above illustrate, constructions of romantic love and attempts to define it are manifold and diverse. This constant reconstruction of an abstract and yet apparently so essential concept seems necessary in order to make the world a little bit more comprehensible. Whether romantic love is really an emotion, whether it results from a lack human beings experience since the relationship with their parents lost its intimacy, whether poets invented it in Southern France in the 11th (P. Evans, Deleyto 4) or novelists in England in the 18th century, which chemicals in our brain trigger which particular feelings, in how far romantic love shapes our self in the eyes of psychologists, and whether it might be the most important thing in the world are still questionable issues and above all highly personal and individual matters. However, despite or maybe even because of this mystery that surrounds this "fairytale [...] for adults" (McDonald 14), it is an ageless topic that is constantly discussed in private circles as well as in academic and scientific contexts. Love is all around, even though no one is absolutely sure where it comes from and what it actually is. It might be possible that individuals share certain characteristics as to their romantic love experiences, but it will never be possible to offer one universal and 'true' definition of it.

3.2.2. William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in Love

It can be safely assumed that the 21st century knows all about William Shakespeare and Jane Austen that there is to know. Every single so-called fact of their probably relatively uneventful lives has been excavated from letters, biographies, diaries and a variety of other

historical documents and a “vast accumulation of assumed wisdom” (Brooke 1) surrounds them. In other words, “[t]he chance of finding something new to say is as slight as a large prize in the Lottery” (Brooke 1). The desire to find something new, though, is still great. Moreover, the fact that people know only little about the authors’ emotional lives and their feelings on certain occasions cannot be denied. (Wiltshire *Recreating* 30) Thus, as it was demonstrated in the first section, the stories of their lives are continually retold, reworked, reinterpreted and reinvented. This is done differently each time, as times change and with them people’s attitudes, interests and knowledge change. The same facts are interpreted differently in different times (Schaff 41), because each age, each generation and hence each storyteller views a story from another angle. This is partly because history often proves to be only a projection of present interests on the past, so that a change in the present means a change in the picture of the past. (Schaff 41) Moreover, technological advances have altered people’s relationship to Jane Austen and William Shakespeare as historical figures as well as to their works and will continue to do so in ways that the authors could never have pictured. (McDonald 9)

It seems to be true that [w]e might all want [the authors] real in some way, but differ as to which way” (Lynch 117) and that “the notion of the ‘real’” is constantly “rewrit[ten] and co-opt[ed]” (Ay. Thompson 1053). Particularly pop versions of the authors put less emphasis on historical exactness than on adapting and creating certain details (Lanier 100). Cultural taste seems to be moving away from authenticity towards more artificiality and sensationalism (Mikula 21) and biographical films’ view of history is largely “based in the cosmology of the movie industry” (Custen 4): significant historical figures are turned into stars and their lives are filtered through movie producers’ sieves of their personal attitudes, values and experiences. (Custen 4) Freedom in dealing with William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s lives is primarily possible, because their very lives are such a mystery, especially as far as their love relationships are concerned. A “clever manipulation of the mystique of [William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s] authorship” (Lehmann, Starks 10) is common in filling “the yawning gap between Shakespeare [and Austen] the Author[s] and Shakespeare [and Austen] the man [and woman]” (Lanier 100). So, what *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* do is creating a biopic not exclusively out of available information about the authors, but out of the information that is not available, i.e. the mysterious gaps in their lives. Since most biographies seem to be as much about “repetitions, gaps, silences [and] absences” (Millard

231) as about substantial and tangible information, this undertaking does not seem at all implausible. The “unfamiliar [...] territory of dreams, memories, imagined events, and conversations” (Millard 234) forms equally part of a biographer’s work as factual information such as birth dates or schools attended. All these traces of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s lives, substantial as well as intangible, are, finally, linked to create lived experiences (Millard 237) presented to the audience.

To come to the point, the gaps in Shakespeare and Austen’s filmic biographies are filled with “[r]omantic notions of literature and authorship, notions that have been naturalized through conventional depictions of the writer in Hollywood film” (Lehmann, Starks 11). The authors are endowed with a romantic body, probably because the 20th and the 21st century particularly like to view things in a romantic light, and, in addition, the discourse and situation of romance is a favored narrative strategy in biopics (Custen 148). The biopics *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are the two paradigms for such a romanticizing of the author that demonstrate (from its earliest day onwards) “the biopic [has] played a powerful part in creating and sustaining public history” (Custen 2), which in Shakespeare and Austen’s case might have led to the development of a trend to regard them as romantic writers and lovers (Wiltshire *Recreating* 37). This phenomenon demonstrates that there can be much overlapping between biography, criticism and romance (Wiltshire *Recreating* 14). In the 20th and the 21st century the authors’ lives are observed with “new lenses” (Loewenberg 15) and these lenses seem to be rose-colored. In consequence, the present section examines Shakespeare, Austen and the movie industry’s entanglement with romantic love in order to provide a basis for the development of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*.

One rather cynical fact within this romanticizing process is that William Shakespeare and Jane Austen have been used by the movie industry in an attempt to present a captivating romance to its audience. Since what is reflected in the movies is “twentieth-century America’s idea of love, nature, truth, and art” (Lehmann, Starks 11) and not a faithful picture of the authors and love in their times, which is no longer desired. (Wiltshire *Recreating* 3) The authors are adapted to the “needs of a modern audience” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 4). Hence, it is not only the movie industry’s capitalistic aim that turns William Shakespeare and Jane Austen into romantic heroes/heroines – readers and devotees enforce this romantic body

as well. They are “desperate to provide [them] with a satisfyingly consummated love connection” (Weber 187).

Moreover, it seems as if 20th and 21st century movies cannot escape the motto that preaches that “you have to take a little dramatic license to tell a good story” (Millard 232). Biographies, in print as well as in film, are after all a negotiation of “complex relationships between subject, author, and reader” (Millard 232). What the audience wants and what film provides are usually “stories with interesting characters, strong motivation, and plausible endings” (Parrill 3) and a “heroic linear narrative” (Millard 232), in which the life of the protagonist keeps moving forward continuously and conquers every obstacle only to, finally, reach the pursued destination (Millard 232). Since there seldom is a life that unfolds itself as a “well made stor[y], with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles and ends and a coherence that allows us to ‘see the end’ in the very beginning” (Hayden quoted in Millard 233), lives are adapted to common narratives. Modifications of and additions to a life story seem to be inevitable, when one is trying to create a biographical movie that pleases the majority of its audience. William Shakespeare and Jane Austen appear unable to evade this scenario in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*.

The reasons to make a connection between William Shakespeare or Jane Austen and romantic love also lie within the perception of the authors themselves, and do not just originate from movie making conventions. One very important influence on the perception of the authors is, of course, their works. Supported by the assumption that something of an author enters every text that he or she writes, authors’ lives are likely to be imagined as the lives and worlds that they create. Partly responsible for “the myth that is Jane Austen” (Weber 186) is, thus, that she writes about romantic relationships and uses “Boy meets Girl – Girl gets Boy” (Warner 250 quoted in Harman 4) plots, even though none such “historically verifiable amorous relationship” (Weber 186) can be assigned to her.²³ The strategy of taking “biography as a way of understanding literature” (Cartmell and Whelehan 8 referred to in

²³ There exist only guesses and assumptions about Thomas Lefroy, who plays a major role in *Becoming Jane*, the Reverend Brook Bridges, the married devotee of Jane Austen in *Miss Austen Regrets*, Harris Biggs-Wither, with whom Jane was engaged for one night in 1802 (Weber 191), and a mysterious Mr. Blackall – if that was his name at all – who, in relatives’ accounts, is referred to as a “[n]ameless and dateless” suitor who died unexpectedly (Chapman 66).

Gevirtz) seems to function the other way around as well: literature is taken as a way of understanding biography.

Furthermore, over centuries certain implications in connection with the authors have developed that already assign certain qualities to them in a pre-screening context. For example, people expect to see “propriety, decorum, romance [and] English ladies” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 8) in a movie, when it is linked to Jane Austen. Moreover, a “sassy, spunky, postcolonial, radical, transgressive, sexually complex and ambiguous” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 9) Austen has been aroused by today’s Austen criticism. Thus, in biopics she appears as “a beautiful, if often flirtatious and irreverent, young or middle-age woman, who experienced many of the romantic tensions described in the novels” (Weber 189). Many Austen readers and devotees especially fell for this romantic Jane Austen that is presented, for instance, in *Becoming Jane*, and for the romantic love it depicts that might, however, be no more than “a classic modern category mistake made by contemporary readers in approaching Austen’s novels” (Jones 17). It is hard to imagine that so little about love and human relationships in an author’s life can be found in surviving documents, when this author writes about precisely these issues. (Wiltshire *Recreating* 32) The same can be assumed to be applicable to William Shakespeare adjusted to the time he lived in. [F]ictions of Shakespeare the lover” (Lanier 101) have been encouraged by his reputation as “the preeminent poet of love in English” (Lanier 101). This reputation is probably in turn grounded upon some of his most famous works: the sonnets and *Romeo and Juliet*. (Lanier 101)

In brief, romantic occurrences in William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s writing, the idea of an idealized and romantic life of a writer, the mysteries of their lives and peoples’ wish to ‘know them better’ among many other reasons make many people envision an author who must have had some romantic involvements. However, does this romantic embodiment offend the ‘real’ author and does this in turn throw a negative light on the filmmaker who joins this process of altering the picture of either William Shakespeare or Jane Austen? Not even the paradox of Austen’s “critical romanticism” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 11), her “dislike of sensibility” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 11), as opposed to filmmakers’ opposite portrayal seems to stop them. Is a film with a romanticized Jane Austen as the protagonist not likely to be watched “and enjoyed by precisely the sort of people whom she disliked”? (Harding quoted in Johnson 213) Nevertheless, as already stated earlier, this is merely the working and the

methodology of representing history, i.e. representing the past, which involves a biased viewpoint and an individual access to a topic. Who knows who Shakespeare and Austen ‘really’ were, anyway? Richard Burt even claims that “it would be a mistake simply to conclude that academics, not mass culture (screen)writers and film directors, are in an authoritative position to judge what is and is not really Shakespeare” (Burt 206).

Moreover, one must not forget that “[c]inema took off not for its documenting virtues or dramatizing vices but as a business” (Barta 7). Especially today’s Hollywood cinema but also many other cinema cultures have success as their primary motive and “the measure of success is consumption” (Barta 8): “[A]ll cinemas are commercial; producers and financiers act from the same motives everywhere.” (Wollen 6) Thus, it is only natural that filmmakers choose the material for their movie that they know will be enjoyed and accepted by their audience. Before millions of dollars are invested in a product, the producers make decisions about this product with the audience’s wishes and demands in mind. (Wiltshire *Recreating* 4) While the ‘real’ historical and social backgrounds might have partly disappeared, more emphasis is put on what is popular and accessible to almost everyone. (Ay. Thompson 1056) Nevertheless, in the same way Jane Austen probably thought of her readers when she wrote a book, since she wanted to make money as well and was just as dependent on her readers’ amusement and acceptance as today’s filmmakers are. (Wiltshire *Recreating* 4) The “dehumanizing drive to produce” (Lehmann 129) and to produce with success is reflected in *Becoming Jane* as well as in *Shakespeare in Love*: While Jane Austen’s independence wholly depends on her success as a writer, William Shakespeare can neither live nor love without his writing.

In sum, that William Shakespeare and Jane Austen are continuously romanticized (in the filmic world), be it due to the audience’s expectations and the movie industry’s conventions with regard to the romance or the authors’ inherent association with romantic love, seems to be an inexorable process. As a last point it remains to be borne in mind that there is one question that no one will ever be able to answer, namely, whether the authors would have ever been loved as much if they had been represented differently at any point in history: “I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects [...]” (Eliot 251)

4. Signs of Romantic Love – How Romantic Love Is Conveyed on a Cinema Screen

4.1. Romantic Love in Film – A Brief Presentation of the Romantic Film Genre

Romantic love is “an emotion much celebrated, often mocked and criticized, desperately looked for and longed for [..]” (Solomon 15). It can make people feel on top of the world and only moments later shatter their lives. It is no wonder such a powerful ‘emotion’ affects human beings’ lives significantly and plays a major role in 21st century lifestyles. The search for a suitable partner occupies many people’s lives, dating homepages and social media are celebrating a triumph, people try to keep up with artificial ideals of beauty in order to be loved, and (romantic) love is marketed in every possible way. Especially the print and the film medium seem to have discovered that love is a big seller. Romantic novels and guidebooks sell millions of copies and a movie without any sort of love story, whether minor or major, is hardly imaginable: “[T]o make a film without romance or romance as a motivation for action [is] [...] almost an impossibility, for romance [is] one of the foundations upon which almost all films were constructed.” (Custen 159)

Thus, “most movies of whatever genre have a love story as one of their component strands, which can be highlighted or played down in the film’s marketing” (McDonald 8). Usually it is not played down, though, since it is known to be “a standard source of narrative pleasure” (Mortimer 3). Unequivocal statistics exist leaving no doubt that love stories are to be found among the best selling movies of all time. Aside from literary adaptations and young adult films, the Box Office Top 100 Films of All-Time (Dirks *All-Time Top 100 Box Office Films*) list as their top 10 only movies that are either built around or at least include a love story. The first place is given to *Avatar* (dir. James Cameron, 2009), which makes use of the Pocahontas-storyline, i.e. two beings from different ‘worlds’ falling in love with each other, and the second place is occupied by *Titanic* (dir. James Cameron, 1997), which uses a strikingly similar storyline. Taking a look at the United States domestic list of the Box Office Top 100 Films of All-Time, *Gone With the Wind* (dir. Victor Fleming, 1939), which is commonly known as one of the greatest romances of all time, occupies the number one. Moreover, in their book *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson present as a result of their research the finding that 95% of all feature films

up to 1960 contain a love story that is highlighted and hence dominant in 85% of the cases. (Kaufmann 7) Considering this high relevancy of the romance film genre in general and in the embodiment of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*, this section briefly explains what the film romance actually is.

Starting with filmmakers like Ernst Lubitsch and actors like Cary Grant (Harvey viif.), the romance in its various appearances, of which one of the most popular is probably the (Hollywood) romantic comedy, has lost none of its (commercial) success in the 20th and the 21st century. The romantic comedy has even been called “one of the most enduring of all Hollywood genres” (Rubinfeld xiv). It is “as strong, if not stronger, today as it was during the so-called golden era of Hollywood romantic comedies in the mid- to late 1930s and early 1940s” (Rubinfeld xiv), when it reached its climax with the screwball comedies²⁴ (Harvey xi). After the 1940s and a few ‘loveless’ decades the romance, including comedic as well as (melo)dramatic romances, experienced a revival in the 1980s and the 1990s in the Western world (Kaufmann 7) and has been flourishing ever since “by adapting to changing historical circumstances” (P. Evans, Deleyto 1). “[E]verybody, it seems, loves a love story.” (Rubinfeld xiv) Especially female audiences do, as it has often been claimed. (Kaufmann 7)

What exactly is the romance genre, be it romantic or melodramatic? While the French term ‘genre’ is easily explained as meaning ‘type’ or ‘kind’ (McDonald 7) “the romance genre is a difficult category to describe or define” (Preston 227 in Kaufmann 55). While this paper would like to desist from the common notion of genre “as anathema to creativity and artistry” (Mortimer 1) it has to be admitted that, like every other genre, the romance includes particular elements such as conventions, settings, narratives, characters and actors that recur and are associated with it. (Grant 2) Thus, once defined, these elements can be detected in an analysis of an individual film. The most prominent of these genre conventions is probably that “the development of love between the two main characters is the primary narrative thread, the main story line” (Preston 227 in Kaufmann 55). According to Deborah Thomas, a romance has to be either melodramatic or comedic in structure, which generates the categories romantic melodrama and romantic comedy. (Thomas 9) However, not every

²⁴ In the 1930s ‘screwball’ became a word that people used to describe any romantic comedy. However, actually they were what was described as “both swanky and slapstick, slangy, irreverent, and skeptical – and powerfully, glamorously ‘in love with love’” (Harvey 287). They were frequently imitated and gradually a mass of films with recurring cycles, characters and situations emerged. (Harvey 287)

romance can definitely be ascribed any of these two categories, since most of them include comedic as well as melodramatic elements. (Thomas 99)

From early screwball comedies to the 1970s nervous romances, which questioned faith in the stability of heterosexual relationships (P. Evans, Deleyto 2), the romance has assumed various forms in accordance with current social and cultural conventions. As notions of romantic love have undergone significant changes in Western culture, so has the romance. Nevertheless, despite its variations, all romances are part of an artistic tradition that has hardly changed its view on love, sexuality and marriage, even though it is adept in using cultural variations to keep up with historical change. (P. Evans, Deleyto 3) Shifting priorities, possibilities of intimate culture, and cultural, social and economic spheres have to be taken into account. (Krutnik 16) The status of romantic love had to be preserved despite the sexual revolution, homosexuality or the decreasing interest in marriage. So, it is important to take the social implications of the romance seriously, as “films do not just reflect reality, they help to create it too” (McDonald 14) and hence are “particularly effective vehicles for ideology” (King 56 in McDonald 15).

Certain ideological ideas conveyed by romances may have an influence that can hardly be denied. The basic ideological idea of the romance is “the primary importance of the couple” (McDonald 13). Even though people of varied ethnic backgrounds and/or sexual orientation have been included in romantic couples in film in recent years (McDonald 13) and the concept of the couple does imply “neither marriage nor heterosexuality” (Wexman 13) nowadays, the standard couple is still “the heterosexual white couple” (McDonald 13) that may not be married, but is, at least, in a monogamous relationship. “Western, capitalist society has traditionally relied on monogamy for its stability, as well as on procreation for its continuance” (McDonald 13), which may be the reason for enforcing the heterosexual couple on movie screens. The audience is presented with the role it is supposed to adopt in contemporary society. A guarantee for the stability of the social structure the audience tends to adhere to has been the construction of romantic love as “a complex spiritual and emotional force” (P. Evans, Deleyto 5) in literature as well as in film. Romantic love is not just lust; its origin is presented as being located in the mind (P. Evans. Deleyto 5) and hence it is of a valuable nature.

In brief, romance with all its diverse ideological implications is as powerful as ever and no end is in sight: “[I]t endures in part because it speaks to powerful needs to believe in the utopian possibilities condensed in the image of the couple [...]” (Rowe 212 in P. Evans, Deleyto 1) Thus, it seems that people crave in their relationships what could, eventually, pose a threat to these very love relations. They let themselves be fed with images of ideal love in romance movies and become increasingly disappointed in their ‘real’ relationship. Sooner or later they will face the paradox of the concept of romantic love described as “an intense, all-consuming passion” that is, however, short-lived and “its status in the modern world as the cornerstone of lifelong monogamous marriage” (Wexman 8). Nevertheless, “we are talking about propensities, not absolutes” (Rubinfeld 121). Most romances might be ideologically loaded, but “no text is ideologically absolute” (Rubinfeld 121). Traditional as well as modern romances can be seen from more than just one angle and all of them “have moments, points, passages that are open to all sorts of ideologically challenging interpretations” (Rubinfeld 121). “[T]orn between realism and idealism” (Solomon 16), romantic love’s representation in film appears like a ‘turbulent’ marriage between the idea of romantic love and the film medium with many ups and downs. Nevertheless, this marriage has proven to be a fruitful and long-lasting one that always finds new ways of expression, as it does in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*.

4.2. The Semiotics²⁵ of the Romantic Film

Much has been written about romantic love so far: a definition has been attempted and its appearance in film has been examined. Although it might be difficult to be specific when writing about love, it is not so hard to just write about it, which is proven by the countless times a person has already done it. However, if romantic love is not to be written about, but to be shown to an audience that is supposed to understand what it is all about, is the representation of romantic love on screen still such an easy task? After all, the film producers simply want to “get [their] message across” (Widdowson 6), which is done by entering into a discourse²⁶ with the viewers. Nevertheless, since discourse is understood here “to refer both

²⁵ While ‘semiology’ is frequently used to name the Saussurean tradition, the term ‘semiotics’ is applied to the Peircean model. However, nowadays ‘semiotics’ is used as an “umbrella term” covering the whole field (Nöth 14 in Chandler 6). Consequently, this paper confines itself to the use of the term ‘semiotics’.

²⁶ Discourse here is understood as H. G. Widdowson defines it, namely as the “complex of communicative purposes [...] that underlies the text and motivates its production in the first place” (6). These communicative

to what a text producer meant by a text and what a text means to the receiver” (Widdowson 7), and since film cannot explain details such as the written word can, it has to find ways ‘to show’ exactly what it wants to convey:

“[...] [F]ilms and television serials are predominantly visual media, [...] they must largely therefore signify emotion by symbol, by expression and action, [...] the interiority of their characters is represented through such signs rather than through language [...]” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 4)

This consideration is directly linked to the embodiment of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen as lovers in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*. It seems obvious that they are romanticized, but, at the same time, a complex construct of signs that signify romantic love unconsciously conveys this romanticizing. In order to clarify this process and to provide it with a name the theory of semiotics is employed here.²⁷

As for Daniel Chandler, “[s]emiotics involves the study not only of what we refer to as ‘signs’ in everyday speech, but of anything which ‘stands for’ something else” and semioticians “study how meanings are made and how reality is represented” (Chandler 2). Signs can have various appearances, for instance, “words, images, sounds, gestures and objects” (Chandler 2). In general, the semiotician tries to interpret these signs and to make meaning from a ‘text’, whereby this ‘text’ “can exist in any medium and may be verbal, non-verbal, or both” (Chandler 2). The text is commonly a message recorded, for instance, in writing, audio or video and is an accumulation of signs (Chandler 2) that has been created with regard to “the conventions associated with a genre and in a particular medium of communication” (Chandler 3).

The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure regarded semiotics as “a science which studies the role of signs as part of social life” and not simply as a “formal doctrine of signs” (Chandler 6). Thus, the employment of semiotics for an analysis of romantic elements in *Shakespeare in Love* and in *Becoming Jane* seems justified, bearing in mind that “[s]emiotics is the study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance, and other forms of expression”

purposes are, for instance, “to get a message across, to express ideas and beliefs, to explain something, to get other people to do certain things or to think in a certain way, and so on” (Widdowson 6).

²⁷ Since solely semiotics’ general notions of the sign and the code and their social implications are relevant for the practical part of this paper, no explanation of any complex semiotic approach is pursued here. It has also to be kept in mind that the literature on semiotics and especially on the semiotics of film is still highly contradictory and confusing. (Tomaselli 29; Hodge, Kress 1) So, only useful aspects are worked out, whereas others are neglected completely in order to avoid lengthy discussion and focus on the topic set in this paper.

(Tomaselli 29). The linguist structuralist Roman Jakobson claimed that this meaning can only be inherent in a text when certain codes or conventions for communication exist. A sign cannot be called such if it does not work within a code and only within the framework of a code does a sign make sense: “Codes organize signs into meaningful systems [...]” (Chandler 147) Moreover, codes constitute the social dimension in semiotics: “[A] code is a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework.” (Chandler 147-148) Nothing less than society in its entirety depends on such signifying systems, because only the understanding of these codes, their relationships and the contexts in which it is appropriate to use them, makes one a member of a particular culture. (Chandler 148) In this social context, signs would then be “any objects or actions which have meaning to members of the cultural group” (Chandler 148).

The range of divisions among codes is almost unlimited and instead of listing any particular classification of codes as a whole, only some codes that are relevant for the subsequent analysis are listed: verbal language, bodily codes (bodily contact, proximity, physical orientation, appearance, facial expressions, gazes, head-nods, gestures and posture), commodity codes (fashions, clothing, cars), behavioral codes (protocols, rituals, role-playing, games), genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes, mass media codes (photographic, televisual, filmic, radio, newspaper and magazine codes, both technical and conventional), and ideological codes. (Chandler 149)

With regard to film, one of the first scholars who officially applied semiotics to the analysis of film and thereby triggered an almost endless debate of pro and contra, was Christian Metz with his fundamental essay “Le cinema: langue ou langage?” that was published in 1964. (Kanzog 38) As for Metz, one has to be careful in applying the terminology of linguistics to the semiotics of cinema. However, he also asserts that semiotics can and has to rely on linguistics, but does not merge with it (Metz 150, 126, 63 in Kanzog 39) and hence can be applied to movie analysis. After all, the reason why we can understand and interpret movies at all, is that there exist certain (filmic) codes that carry meaning for members of a certain group familiar with these codes. Especially genre films are identified by the images used in them that recur and become icons (McDonald 11) that are in turn part of a generic code. Since the codes that exist in film were already internalized at a young age, their existence is

simply forgotten. The decoding process seems to be an automatic action and the code becomes invisible. (Chandler 167)

Filmic codes imply mainly techniques of shooting and editing, since the kind of ‘language’²⁸ that film uses is only “capable of signifying ideas and feelings”, because it makes use of and, at the same time, depends on “editing, the types of shot and their relationship, as much as on the objects represented in them” (Mitry ix). However, similarly, social, cultural or ideological codes can convey, for example, the romantic involvement of characters, and hence fulfill their purpose, but are largely invisible to a contemporary audience that grew up with these codes in film. Nevertheless, if attention is paid to these codes, whether they appear in romances or in film in general, it is possible to detect them in film images or shots. The film image can be a very complex signifier, but it is also important to keep in mind that a film’s meaning is not only inferred from the signs it is made of, but also from what is between these signs, from what is not shown. (Konrath 9) In brief, the semiotics of film is a means of understanding that supports the viewer to extract meaning from filmic impressions. The film is only actually ‘realized’ in the viewer’s mind and the material is subject to prejudices and conventions that are anchored in the collective consciousness. (Kanzog 18)

To summarize the most important points of this examination of semiotics applied to film analysis, it has to be noted that the viewer enters into a discourse with the film that is being watched. This film is constituted of various codes, be they verbal, technical, social or ideological, that the viewer has to decode in order to endow the movie with meaning and to understand its message. This process of decoding is enabled by certain signs that form part of the utilized codes and that the audience is presented with. These signs are (supposed to be) interpreted and understood. When the sign is understood, the code that this sign belongs to is usually understood as well, and, eventually, the film has been assigned a meaning in the viewer’s mind. While camera and editing or cutting devices might be equally interesting, the scope of this paper does not allow analyzing the two movies entirely in this manner, since the focus is on the romantic characteristics and a semiotic analysis of them as signs is sufficient here. Particular technical terms from the different areas of filmmaking may only be used at random when the analysis of the romantic elements requires it.

²⁸ The term ‘language’ in relation to film is, here, detached from its linguistic meaning. ‘Language’ is understood as a code, a system of codes and/or a system of signs. (Konrath 68)

In the same way in which film can be analyzed using the theory of semiotics, the romantic film is encoded by technical, social, cultural, behavioral, mass media, ideological and many more codes, and can hence be semiotically analyzed. That especially the film genre of romance, and particularly the romantic comedy, “is one of the most *generic* of genres” (McDonald 10) that employs frequently recurring elements and signs is not a secret:

On stage, on screen, in literature, romantic comedy has been around for an embarrassingly long time. Endlessly recirculating, remobilizing and rearticulating a stock repertoire of narrative and representational stratagems, the genre tells the same old story of heterosexual coupling. (Krutnik 15ff.)

Even though some variation in characters, setting or plot might be found in 21st century romances “only occasionally do we find texts/productions which rock the foundations of this most enduring of ‘grand narratives’” (Pearce, Wisker 1). Previous success determines that convention rather than originality and innovation forms the basis for most romances: “In the final analysis romance is, and will always remain, a discourse predicated upon ‘convention’ (in every sense of the word) [...]” (Pearce, Wisker 3)

So, practically nothing stands in the way of semiotics, when it is applied to the romance genre in film. The notion that a film is a romance has to be conveyed by certain signs or whole frameworks of signs - the codes. Especially important for a conveyance of romantic love are verbal language, bodily codes, commodity codes, behavioral codes, genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes, mass media codes, and ideological codes. While some signs marking the romance such as the plot or the standard situations belong to systems of meaning or codes established by the film industry, others like dress, gestures or glances have their origin in social codes, but have been adopted by the film industry to their framework of meaning. Therefore, intense eye contact between lovers does not only signify love in a social framework, but is also an indicator for a romantic plotline within a movie in a filmic context: In the course of its reutilization, a preexisting sign can transform and can become the signifier of a new signified without losing its primary meaning. The audience’s task is to verify the sign in its original cultural and social context as well as in its filmic function. (Kanzog 50) Since culture and society can be examined as a semiotic phenomenon, cultural and social codes can as well be detected and analyzed in a movie as technical codes of filmmaking (for example, shooting or editing) can. (Konrath 10) That these codes and the associated signs

“are all factors that have cultural and ideological implications” (Wiltshire *Recreating* 4) and that the romance in general is an ideologically loaded genre is already known from a previous section.

The following two subsections list certain characteristics or codes and signs of the romance movie in order to provide a framework for the succeeding analysis of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*. In these movies, William Shakespeare and Jane Austen’s bodies are romanticized and this romanticizing is achieved by employing exactly these characteristics or signs of the romance movie. By analyzing these signs it is revealed how the romanticizing of the authors was achieved. It has to be kept in mind, however, that the analysis is purely subjective and that this list is by no means complete, since the points were chosen according to their relevancy for the two movies. In her diploma thesis “Strukturen Romantischer Liebe und ihre Gestaltung in Gesellschaft und Medien” Maria Dorner also makes use of the idea of codes employed by filmmakers in order to specify the abstract concept of romantic love and make it comprehensible for the recipient. (Dorner 1) Nevertheless, Dorner does not focus on the semiotics of film as extensively as it is done in this paper, but rather ‘borrows’ the idea of the code. In the subdivision of (codes and) signs signaling romantic love, however, this paper resembles her organizing structure and locates them in either a macrostructure or a microstructure. (Dorner 97) The macrostructure encompasses codes that are responsible for the storyline on an overarching level (plot or heteronormativity), whereas the microstructure contains codes that work on a more obvious and less abstract level (the characters’ mimic or dress).

4.2.1. The Macrostructure of Romance

Every movie has to fulfill certain prerequisites in order to correspond to filmic conventions and, furthermore, to be accepted and enjoyed by its audience. Billy Mernit claims that particular components have to exist in good screenplays, because, otherwise, the “movie will be handicapped”. (3) The elements that he includes in his list are character, plot and structure, theme, imagery, dialogue, point of view, world, and last but not least fusing these elements into a cohesive whole (Mernit 3ff.). Like any other movie, romances pay attention to these criteria and, in addition, have their very own set of significant markers that help to identify the genre and to maintain a certain standard. Christian Metz calls these two sets of

components the general cinematographic codes (those that are common to all films) and particular cinematographic codes (characteristics that are assigned to particular classes of films, for instance, certain genres). (Nasta 12) In this section a closer is taken at the macrostructural elements or genre, mass media and ideological codes of the romance in order to provide a framework for the succeeding analysis of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*.

To begin with, one essential component of the romance is the **couple's duality**. Particularly romantic comedies take care to show both lovers to almost equal parts to the audience, because they want the audience to feel with both characters. This means that both parts of the couple are also shown at occasions, on which they are not with their lover. These moments in the film are often used to explain a character's emotions and motives and to offer an insight into the individual. Nevertheless, the male protagonist and the female protagonist are both involved in the love relationship and hence are most often depicted together, as a couple. (Neale, Krutnik 139 in Kaufmann 59) In contrast to the comedic romance, the melodramatic one often places the desires and sacrifices of a woman in the center. (Neale, Krutnik 139 in Kaufmann 59) The two protagonists that form the central couple are usually marked by a paradox: The movie creates them as objects of desire, having them incorporated by attractive actors and situating them within the story as others' love interests. On the other hand, they are shown as being incomplete and imperfect until the union with their lover. (Mortimer 6)

The constellation of the couple can be either harmonic, antagonistic or a triangle. (Kaufmann 56) Nevertheless, even the antagonistic couple, which is usually marked by "conflicting character traits" (Mortimer 6), mostly develops over the course of the movie into a harmonic couple. The then harmonic couple reacts as a unity against exterior resistance or opposition. (Kaufmann 60) Sometimes the harmonic couple constellation is disturbed by a third person, which transforms the whole constellation into a triangle. While in comedic romances this third person, often a 'wrong man or woman', is no serious rival, in melodramatic romances the third person is a major antagonistic threat to the relationship. The bond between the third man or woman and one part of the couple is portrayed as emotionally weaker than the couples' link, which does, however, not guarantee the maintenance of the couple. (Kaufmann 61)

As for **sexual orientation** within the romance, it is known for ‘preaching’ heteronormativity. “[T]he heterosexual white couple” (McDonald 13) is a standard feature of the romance and its monogamy is propagated, since it is responsible for the continued existence of the human race. (Kaufmann 11). Most romances seem to suggest that a play or a movie “can indeed show the nature of true love, but only when women play women’s parts and men play men’s” (Iyengar 123). Moreover, Judith Roof even argues that “traditional narratives are *heteronarrative*” (Roof referred to in Iyengar 125): Relationships between people of the same sex are “functionally and fundamentally necessary to narrative” (Roof referred to in Iyengar 125). Whether filmmakers respond to the audience’s demand or whether viewers have to be reminded of their duty to reproduce, “[i]n Hollywood, it seems, the course of true love ever did run straight!” (Iyengar 126)

With regard to the romance **plot**, commonality applies: “[...] the basic plot of all mainstream romantic comedies is boy meets, loses, regains girl” (Shumway referred to in McDonald 12). This may be particularly true for romantic comedies, but is no less applicable to romances in general. The central narrative thread in romantic movies focuses on the couple, its conflict that advances the story and often the final (re)union. Even if other narrative threads or subplots coexist with the love story, “the A story, or main focus of the movie, is the relationship between its romantic protagonists, and generally the B story’s goal won’t be obtained without the romance’s existence” (Mernit 12). Whatever else matters within the story, “the real subject matter is the power of love” (Mernit 17). What drives the central characters, what induces them to either grow or resist any growth is the effect of love. (Mernit 17)

To most romantic comedies the classic three-act structure can be applied:

Conflict: The hero takes on a problem. = Meet: Girl and boy have significant encounters.

Crisis: The hero can’t resolve the problem. = Lose: Girl and boy are separated.

Resolution: The hero solves the problem. = Get: Girl and boy reunite. (Mernit 13)

Melodramatic romances might end in the same way, more often, though, there is a variation in the ‘Resolution’ element and the ending is not happy. Even if the ending is supposed to be happy, the filmmakers face the challenge of raising doubt in the audience that the story will have a happy ending in order to create suspense and empathy. (Mernit 14) This device is

often introduced by producing an initial conflict in the ‘Meet’ part of the movie. Moreover, the protagonists probably have a lot to lose when they engage in a relationship with the other-half. The ‘lose’ is significant and is supposed to raise the audience’s doubt. For the purpose of “making that ‘lose’ as vital and extreme as it can be” (Mernit 15), internal and external conflicts are created. Viewing this three-act structure in the light of “[l]ove as a transforming power, as an instrument of growth and positive change” (Mernit 18), it can be reformulated:

Conflict: Love challenges the characters.

Crisis: The characters must accept or deny love.

Resolution: Love transforms the character. (Mernit 18)

As for Mark Rubinfeld, romantic comedies can be categorized by certain plot structures, and in turn the overarching genre of romance can be as well. He claims that there are four basic plots: the Pursuit Plot, the Redemption Plot, the Foil Plot, and the Permission Plot (Rubinfeld 4), of which the Permission Plot has the most relevance to the succeeding analysis. The Permission Plot “depicts a romantically involved hero and heroine encountering resistance from a parent and/or authority figure who vehemently disapproves of their courtship. [...] Faced with fierce resistance, the hero and/or the heroine [...] desperately try to get the parent and/or authority figure to approve of their romantic relationship” (Rubinfeld 63).

Rubinfeld further distinguishes between the Acceptance Permission Plot and the Separation Permission Plot. While in the acceptance version the authority figure, eventually, approves of the union, the separation version shows an unyielding authority figure, who causes the couple to either elope or to break up. (Rubinfeld 63) In Rubinfeld’s definition of the Separation Permission Plot the lovers then “choose each other over everything else” (63). Nevertheless, Permission Plots have become scarce these days, since “American moviegoers, today, view the permission plot as no longer in touch with the times” (Rubinfeld 65). While several societies all over the globe might still endow parents or other authorities (within an often patriarchal system) with this certain power over their children, the Western world has largely abandoned this procedure. If, however, the Permission Plot is set in the distant past, it is still accepted by a contemporary audience. (Rubinfeld 65)

Another approach to romance plots is suggested by Anette Kaufmann, in which she introduces various narrative formula or formula for plot structures that are characteristic for the romance. They are patterns that have developed over centuries of telling love stories.

(Kaufmann 61) While Mark Rubinfeld only differentiates between four romantic plot structures, Anette Kaufmann collected many suggestions on plot types (from Ronald B. Tobias' *20 Masterplots*, Mark D. Rubinfeld's *Bound to Bond* and Marcia Millman's *Wenn die Liebe Regie führt*) and united them to create her own set of romantic plot structures that is made up of 14 formula²⁹. (Kaufmann 63) The ones that are relevant for *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are the following: Forbidden Love, Sacrifice Plot, First Love, and Role Play.

One of the most favored plot structures in romances is the Forbidden Love that can take various forms, but is usually caused by significant exterior obstacles such as, for instance, family status, age, sex, physical or psychological handicaps, or social and ethnic background. (Kaufmann 63). One of the forms relevant for the two movies to be discussed is the obstacle of class differences. What poses the obstacle to the love relationship is the membership in different groups of society that is commonly connected to financial forces in the choice of a partner. For a very long time marriages out of love were not the norm. For the proprietary classes marriages were societal arrangements that considered wealth as well as position in society and reputation. Women were the particularly disadvantaged group in these arrangements. (Kaufmann 72) Since these situations were seldom the case in the 20th century and are hardly ever in the 21st century, their appearance in film is mostly limited to, what Kaufmann (72) calls the romantic costume film.

Another one of the plot structures Anette Kaufmann describes is the Sacrifice Plot. One of the lovers or both renounce the romantic love relationship because of noble or altruistic motives that usually have personal reasons encouraged by the characters' own moral attitudes. Moreover, the Sacrifice Plot is often combined with the Forbidden Love Plot, which suggests an affinity for the romantic costume film. (Kaufmann 88f.) Also the First Love Plot is a favorite one among the makers of romantic movies. Its essential characteristic is the innocence of the lovers, whose experiences with each other are all new and not influenced by previous bad experiences with other partners. (Kaufmann 92) William Shakespeare used the archetype of this plot structure with his *Romeo and Juliet* (Kaufmann 93). More recent romantic movies often show variations of this plot, in which not both, but often only one of

²⁹ These 14 plot structures are Forbidden Love, Cinderella Plot, Courage to Love, Obsessive Love, Sacrifice Plot, Rescue Plot, Pamela Plot, Cyrano Plot, Pygmalion Plot, The Taming of the Shrew, First Love, Reunion, The Bet, and Role Play. (Kaufmann 63)

the lovers is the innocent and inexperienced one. Again this plot is favored among romantic costume films. The final plot structure important for the succeeding analysis is the Role Play. The future couple meets (for the first time) in a situation, in which at least one of the prospective lovers – whether consciously or involuntary – plays a role and is probably even disguised. In its most common form this plot anticipates with great suspension the moment of truth, when the character, eventually, reveals his or her true identity. Often this revelation can take a long time, which complicates the relationship, but always happens sooner or later, because the film’s message is often supposed to be that a happy and functioning relationship can never be built on a lie. (Kaufmann 94)

When the plot structure is left behind and the analysis dives deeper into the construction that is the movie, a film’s scenes or situations that are the “scenic building blocks of the story” (Kaufmann 99) are on the next level of the construct. Anette Kaufmann argues that every genre has a certain repertory of **standard situations** at its disposal that recur again and again. (Kaufmann 99) Tamar McDonald calls these standard situations ‘tropes’, “occurrences which happen repeatedly within genres” (McDonald 12). By making use of certain tropes, key themes emerge that imply the underlying ideology of the people by whom or the society in which the film was produced. (McDonald 12). The audience, often unconsciously, recognizes these situations that the narrative is constituted of, as presumably they have seen them many times before. (Mortimer 5) As far as the romance is concerned, Kaufmann organizes the situations according to the stages of the ‘common’ course of a relationship: meeting, getting to know each other, intimacy, shared future or separation.³⁰ Since not all of these categories and not all of the subcategories within them are relevant for an analysis of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* only the ones necessary for the examination of the movies are discussed in detail.

Kaufmann subdivides the beginning into three stages: the meeting, the reencounter and the (first) date. The meeting includes three standard situations that recur in romances. The one and only obligatory standard situation among them is the ‘boy meets girl’. This ‘magical moment’, in which the two protagonists and lovers meet for the first time, already establishes an unmistakable link between the two characters. The audience that is familiar with the conventions of the love story can have no doubt about the common bond between the two.

³⁰ See Figure 6 for a detailed model of Kaufmann’s standard situations.

The 'boy meets girl' usually happens in public places, mostly at private or societal events or at work, since the two lovers are still strangers. (Kaufmann 103) The various appearances of this situation include, for instance, the "meet cute" (McDonald 12) where couples meet in "humorous, unlikely or suggestive manner" (McDonald 12), or the "masquerade, in which one or both of the central characters pretends to be someone else" (McDonald 13).

The boy meets girl situation can also take on two distinct and very well known forms: the love at first sight or the aversion at first sight. With the love at first sight, one of the Hollywood conventions, the falling in love that is actually an interior process is made visible for the audience with only few exterior signals. Filmic means or signs that convey such initial attraction are often staging and montage of glances or suggestive music. The idea of mutual attraction is then sustained by paralyzed behavior and the eye contact that is kept up. (Kaufmann 104) The ostensibly opposite situation is the aversion at first sight, in which a period of rejection follows the first meeting. This rejection is usually caused by misbehavior on one of the lovers' parts, contrasting interests or rivalry over the same aim. However, the aversion is never fundamental, but is only superimposed upon the actual attraction between the lovers. (Kaufmann 105) The first meeting is then followed by a reencounter that can either happen intentionally or by chance. A common situation in romances is a reencounter on a first date. Usually the woman is shown before the actual date is happening, while she is preparing for it, most often by choosing an outfit. The date then usually happens in a rather public place, such as a restaurant or a dancing event. (Kaufmann 106f.)

Standardsituationen				
Beginn	Begegnung			
	Wiedersehen			
	(Erstes) Date			
Kennenlernen	Ein schöner Tag			
	Beziehungs-Spiel			
Körperliche Intimität	Erste Berührung			
	Tanz			
	Verführung			
	Kuss	Erster Kuss		
		Küssen		
		Kuss-Rituale		
		Final Kiss		
	Liebesszene	»Davor«	Enthüllung	
			Vorspiel	
		Akt		
		Orgasmus		
	»Danach«			
Masturbation				
Irritation/ Zerwürfnis	Missverständnis			
	Meinungsverschiedenheit/Streit			
	Verfehlen			
	Zurückweisung			
	Trennung auf Zeit			
	Betrug	Heimlichkeiten/Verdacht		
		In flagranti		
	Demaskierung			
Ende	happy	Versöhnung		
		Liebeserklärung		
		Liebesbeweis		
		Heiratsantrag		
		Hochzeit Mr. & Mrs. Right		
	unhappy	Trennung		
		Verzicht		
		Tod	Unfalltod/Mord	
			nach Krankheit	
			Selbstmord	
	Beerdigung			
	Epilog		Happily-Ever-After-Epilog	
				Abgesang
Diverse	Hochzeit	mit Mr./Mrs. Wrong		
		von Dritten		
	Auf Partnersuche			
	Metamorphose			
	Beziehungsgespräch mit Dritten			
	Beicht-Versuch			
	Das falsche/richtige Geschenk			
	Film (Fernsehen) im Film			
	Erinnerung/Flashback			
	Kindheits-Prolog			
	Weihnachten und New Year's Eve			

Fig. 6: Standard Situations

The Beginning	Meeting
	Reencounter
	(First) Date
Getting to Know Each Other	A Beautiful Day
	Relationship Game
Physical Intimacy	First Physical Contact
	Dance
	Seduction
	Kiss (First Kiss, Kissing, Kiss-Rituals, Final Kiss)
	Love Scene ('Before' - Undressing, Foreplay-, Sexual Act, Orgasm, 'After')
	Masturbation
Irritation/ Disagreement	Misunderstanding
	Disagreement/Argument
	Missing the Target
	Rejection
	Temporary Separation
	Cheating (Secrets/Suspicion, Caught in the Act)
	Demasking
The Ending	happy (Reconciliation, Declaration of Love, Proof of Love, Marriage Proposal, Marriage with Mr. & Mrs. Right)
	unhappy (Separation, Sacrifice, Death - Death by Accident/Murder, Illness, Suicide, Funeral)
	Epilogue (Happily-Ever-After-Epilog, Farewell)
Other	Marriage (with Mr./Mrs. Wrong, of Third Parties)
	in Search of a Partner
	Metamorphosis
	Conversation about the Relationship with Third Parties
	Attempt to Confess
	The Wrong/Right Present
	Film (Television) in the Film
	Memories/Flashback
	Childhood-Prologue
	Happily-Ever-After-Epilogue
	Farewell
Christmas and New Year's Eve	

Fig. 7: Standard Situations (Translation of Fig. 6)

When the couple-to-be then starts to get to know each other, a variety of situations are used. This process of approaching and feeling closer to the other is often shown over a big part of the movie, in which the couple engages in shared activities, or it is reduced to only a fraction of the movie by summing the events up in one montage sequence. A situation frequently incorporated, when the lovers are supposed to get to know and like each other and discover shared interests, is 'the beautiful day' that is spent together and that is characterized by fun activities and harmony. At the end of this day the two parties are peaceful, content and even more attracted to the other, even if they first felt an aversion for each other. This day marks one of the highlights in their process of getting to know each other. (Kaufmann 107f.)

What follows is physical intimacy between the lovers. Since physical intimacy and sexual harmony between partners are commonly understood as one of the essentials of a happy relationship, they are indispensable in film to convey the idea of a satisfactory bond. (Kaufmann 109) Standard tropes that signify intimacy are the first physical contact, the dance, the kiss, and, finally, the sexual act. The first physical contact often happens unintentionally, however, when it has already been made clear for the characters that there is a certain attraction between them, they touch intentionally in situations like the closing of a button or when one helps the other to get out of a coat. (Kaufmann 110) These suggestive moments are often accentuated by filmic devices such as music.

One of the key situations with regard to physical intimacy is the dance. It can happen when the couple is alone, but usually takes place in public, especially in, what Kaufmann calls, the romantic costume film in historical settings, where it is one of the few legitimate possibilities for physical contact. No relationship has to exist at this point, but through this societal ritual the characters can still experience closeness. (Kaufmann 110) Dance is also ideal for the establishment of a triangle constellation, because it is the only situation (apart from medical measures), in which a partner 'has to' allow a third party to touch the loved one. (Kaufmann 111) Moreover, dance is often accompanied by music that can create moods ranging from joyful to melancholic. Also the harmony of the dance is an indicator, not for mood, but for harmony between characters. When they are moving smoothly it can be assumed that they are made for each other, while stepping on the partner's feet might imply a certain incompatibility. (Kaufmann 112)

While the dance functions as a means for the lovers' approach to each other and establishes a certain intimacy, the kiss is already understood as a symbol for and the sealing of love. Kisses assume diverse appearances and each characterizes a different stage in the relationship. (Kaufmann 113) Particular significance is often given to the first kiss. It is frequently used to signify the sexual awakening of a young woman, her transition into the world of adult sexuality (Montreynaud 139 in Kaufmann 113), that reminds the viewer of the awakening by kissing known from fairy tales such as the Sleeping Beauty. When this kiss does not happen within a First Love Plot, i.e. when the characters have already kissed someone else before, it usually just marks the first phase of an intimate relationship between the lovers. While a simple touch can still happen accidentally, a kiss is a targeted and definite action. Consequently, films often use kiss rituals such as the turn of the year or the mistletoe to overcome a physical barrier between two characters. While in the first few decades of film lustful and suggestive kissing was prohibited by the Production Code, most modern romances or 'New Romances' do not dread to show open mouths, tongues, or kisses on different body parts. (Kaufmann 113)

The next step into even more intimacy leads to the love scene that is a central standard situation in romance movies. However, the depiction of the actual sexual act is often limited to a Before and an After. Most of the time, the representation of the physical union is kept in the background or does not even appear in a romance at all. While modern romances with a contemporary setting might not show or offer only very little insight in 'sex scenes', romantic costume films endow them with a different meaning altogether. Independent from the historical truth, sexual contact is represented from a morally different point of view and hence has a special meaning and heavy consequences. When the sexual act is, finally taking place, no matter in which romantic sub-category, it is usually characterized by tenderness and harmony. It marks the (provisional) climax of the developing love relationship. In contrast to movies that show a careful depiction of 'sexual' contact, repeated sex in varying locations in films mostly is an indicator for a lack of romantic love and a doomed relationship. (Kaufmann 118) In the Forbidden Love Plot the sexual union of the lovers symbolizes the ultimate breaking of the rule. Eventually, the couple has crossed the line and part of the movie's suspense originates from the danger of being discovered. (Kaufmann 119)

An essential component of the Before is the exposure, during which the lovers undress each other. This sequence of undressing has multiple variations: clothes are torn down and ripped as a sign of passion or violence, the undressing happens carefully and in a desiring way, or seduction and provocation are exerted by a striptease. Most frequently depicted in conventional undressing sequences is the opening of blouses, shirts, dresses, belt buckles, trouser buttons and the removal of over garments. (Kaufmann 119) However, nudity that actually fulfills the function of arousing the sexual partner poses a visual problem to the filmmaker: Pictures of primary sexual characteristics are avoided in order to ensure the largest possible target audience. (Brauerhoch 44f. in Kaufmann 120) As much as the depiction of genitals is avoided, female breasts, even though rather rarely, and especially male torsos, rather frequently, count as willingly shown. It appears that certain situations are created intentionally only to allow the male protagonist to present his well-built torso to the (female) audience. The undressing sequence assumes a special meaning in the romantic costume film, since nudity is defined as less common and natural than in contemporary settings. The characters, and especially the female ones, do not only take off their clothes, but by doing so also free themselves from societal conventions of their time. (Kaufmann 120) The foreplay that succeeds the undressing is again mostly confined to the torsos. Male and female torsos, breasts, neck, stomach, navel, back, and bottom are kissed and caressed. (Kaufmann 121)

In romantic comedies and in the romantic costume film, the actual sexual act is usually designed in a subtle and reserved way. Not much is seen of the act except for a naked male bottom between spread female legs in most romances. Many movies make use of drops of sweat on naked skin to signify the action's intensity and ecstasy. While the display of intimate body details, at first, might suggest the film 'shows off', it actually disguises the artificiality of the staged act of love. From the assembled scenes of body images the love act is really happening in the audience's mind produced by their imagination. (Kaufmann 122)

The technical and ideological climax of the sexual act is the orgasm. To reach an orgasm simultaneously, is thought to be the ideal state in many modern views on sex and relationships, which is often incorporated and used by the film industry. The camera's focus during this lustful moment is most often on the (female) face. Expressions of lust are formulated on and by the face: mimic means and acoustic means (screams, moaning, sighing)

are acted as convincingly as possible to fake an orgasm. When the male body goes limp and rests on the woman, the audience is made to understand that the sexual act is over. (Kaufmann 122f.) The After is the same in most romances: The lovers lie in bed together, tenderly and intimately they talk, kiss or 'fool around'. The atmosphere shifts from a passionate interest in the other's body to intimacy and closeness between the lovers. (Kaufmann 123)

As perfect as their relationship might have been represented in the movie, the lovers' path cannot run so smoothly, because narratives need obstacles. The protagonists have to be given opportunities to grow with the overcoming of these obstacles and the audience has to be held in suspense. The Forbidden Love Plot is the ideal setting for irritation and disagreement, because societal and domestic resistance has existed from the very beginning. Not all standard situations listed by Anette Kaufmann under irritation and disagreement are relevant for *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*. The most important trope is probably the Disagreement or Argument that is hardly ever absent from a romance. It is an openly argued out quarrel, in which often contrary opinions collide. The argument can either immediately be concluded with a reconciliation or can lead to a temporary or a permanent separation. (Kaufmann 125) This temporary separation is another standard situation that frequently appears in romances. Usually one of the lovers withdraws after an argument – disappointed, upset or because of rational grounds. In this period of temporary separation the lovers realize how much they love their missing partner and how much they crave his or her company. Ordinarily, a reunion of the couple is the consequence of this situation that only strengthens their love for each other. (Kaufmann 126) Another obstacle, the Demasking, can appear at the beginning or the end of a temporary separation, but, most of the time, takes place in a film's last third. It can be brought about by either one of the protagonists, an antagonist or by mere chance and marks the final dramatic turning point. (Kaufmann 129)

The ending of a romance can either be dramatic or comedic and it is claimed that the ending identifies a romantic movie as a romantic comedy or a romantic drama. While the romantic comedy is thought to have a happy ending, the audience expects an unhappy (or a surprisingly happy) ending from a romantic drama. However, exceptions to the rule are not uncommon, as it is proven, for example, by *Shakespeare in Love*. (Kaufmann 130) Certain recurring tropes are again found in romance endings. Even though *Shakespeare in Love* and

Becoming Jane appear at some points to end happily, the eventual outcome is an unhappy one. The relevant tropes here are the Separation and the Sacrifice. The lovers part company, because they realize that a continuation of their relationship is impossible. Their life concepts are not compatible or their feelings for each other are not strong enough. (Kaufmann 133) However, a separation only seems to even strengthen a movie's perception as a romance: "Seven of AFI's top 10 greatest love stories feature couples that do not end up together in the end" (AFI in Kaufmann 130). One reason for such a separation might be that the protagonists have to sacrifice their love either out of altruistic motives or because of obedience to a higher power. The lovers abandon what is most important to them: fulfillment within their love relationships. Declarations of this abandonment are often found in parting sequences that might be the most emotional moments in a movie, since the lovers' feelings for each other are still intact. (Kaufmann 133)

Ranging from the beginning until the end of a film, there are many other standard situations or tropes that Anette Kaufmann did not place in a particular category. One of them that is essential for the two movies to be examined is the marriage to Mr. or Mrs. Wrong. Within the romance a race against the clock is taking place – the marriage has to be prevented. Nevertheless, this marriage is usually supposed to take place any time soon and preparations have already been made. The film makes it obvious that the marriage partner to be is the wrong one for the protagonist, which is often done by symbols, such as unsuitable rings or unsuitable wedding dresses. While in most comedic romances the aim of preventing the marriage is achieved, dramatic romances often actually end in a marriage with the wrong partner. (Kaufmann 135)

Another frequent trope and a way to represent a protagonist's thoughts and feelings about his or her love relationship is a conversation about the relationship with third parties. The characters have to verbalize their inner life in order to inform the audience about the status quo. This conversation, ordinarily, happens between the protagonist and a very close friend and serves more the character's reassurance and self-deceit than they are an accurate analysis of the relationship. (Kaufmann 137) Finally, there is the Farewell, which is designed as the opposite of the Happily-Ever-After-Epilogue. The Farewell is an epilogue that is not linked to a happy ending and hence does not show sequences or spoken reports of moments of

happiness, pregnancy or marriage. It rather emphasizes the irreversibility of the love story's unhappy ending. (Kaufmann 140)

All of these standard situations happen within a particular **local setting** that has also partly been standardized by the romantic movie. Actually, the settings of a romance are manifold and can basically be in any place on earth. Nevertheless, there is a certain preference for big cities, since many things are happening in public space and everyone is more or less anonymous, which creates an uncomplicated starting point for a romance. (Kaufmann 56) When small towns or villages are the place for the romance, one of the lovers is usually a stranger coming from the outside. (Kaufmann 57) Furthermore, devices such as flowers or candle light are used to trigger associations linked to romantic love. (Mortimer 9).

As well as the setting, **stock characters** belong to the romance's repertoire. These include other partners that are rejected as soon as the object of 'true love' appears. (Mortimer 7) They can also be called "the unsuitable partner" who emphasizes "the rightness of the central romance" (McDonald 11). Moreover, good friends are vitally important to romances and especially to romantic comedies – they comment on the relationship and offer advice. (Mortimer 7)

Finally, **music** plays a vital role in film and especially in the romance. Music in film functions in the background, where it often remains unperceived by the viewer, as well as in the foreground. While "music illustrates, accompanies, fills in screenplay gaps [and] situates the viewer in a spatio-temporal continuum" (Nasta 47) in the background, when it is foregrounded, it has the ability to endow film images with meaning. (Nasta 47) The romance is said to be an especially musical genre and music within a romantic film appears in various forms: The originally composed music, the score, often accompanies the action from off-stage³¹; source-music either comes from a technical source, such as a radio, within the filmic reality, or can also perform the function of the score; live performances often form part of the scenic action. These live performances are often used for standard situations such as the dance that require music to be enacted. (Kaufmann 142) Generally, music behaves 'supportive' in romances. (Kaufmann 143) It does not only describe and organize the action,

³¹ Off-stage here means an extra-diegetic narrative level: The music is not part of the diegesis, the filmic reality, it is not a natural component of the narrated world. (Kaufmann 141)

it also emphasizes the lovers' emotions and, thus, affects the audience's understanding of them and empathy with them. Moreover, it helps to transport the audience back in time, when a film is set in the past. This is particularly useful, when an era and hence its music are, in general, romantically connoted. Consequently, music does not only evoke memories on a diegetic level (Characters remember because of music linked to a past event.), but also on an extra-diegetic level. (The audience is either reminded of a past era due to particular music from this time or it is reminded of a past incident within the film because of recurring music.) (Kaufmann 142)

In conclusion, all of the elements listed above are responsible for making a romance romantic. When they are applied to a movie, the audience will unconsciously perceive this movie as a romance or will at least identify the romance as one of the movie's narrative strands. Thus, the succeeding analysis detects and analyzes these elements or signs in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane*. The character's duality, the gender relations, the plot, the standard situations, the setting, the stock characters, and the music contribute immensely to romanticizing William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's bodies.

4.2.2. The Microstructure of Romance

Not only the overarching elements of the macrostructure of a film can signal romantic love or induce the viewer to regard a certain movie as a romance. Other than such abstract categories as plot or gender relations, signs that signal romantic love can also be conveyed through bodily codes, commodity codes, or simply **verbal communication**. While actual speech produced by one lover and directed at the other is usually an obvious marker of romantic love - for example "I love you." - the mode of speaking reveals almost as much. Beyond the meaning of the words that we use, a voice can be loud or rather quiet and, consequently, signify different things. Especially the quiet voice that often finds its expression in whispering is useful in conveying romantic involvement, since it is associated with conspiratorial, intimate, secret or tender content. (Fast, Bernstein 40). The rhythm of speech can be equally meaningful. Moments of breathing, breaks and the pace of speaking color the message conveyed. (Fast, Bernstein 45) This includes silences which can be as meaningful as any spoken word.

Closely following verbal language in terms of important signifiers, **mimic**, **gestures**, and **movements** have to be mentioned: Since 55% of the information that is conveyed in a conversation comes from body language (Thiel 8 in Dorner 28), it is no surprise that it is an essential sign transmitting romantic love. However, it is important to keep in mind that, even though they are learned within a culture or society, all nonverbal signs are highly instable and not many of them are conventionalized – nodding one’s head would be an example for a conventionalized nonverbal sign. Mostly, one and the same nonverbal sign can have multiple meanings, because its meaning is not inferred from the sign itself, but from the context it is used in. (Lohmeier 233) Nevertheless, since the following signs are analyzed in the context of a dominant romantic plotline within a movie, they are regarded as having only one meaning and purpose, namely that of conveying romantic love between the two protagonists.

The characters can use mimic signs, proxemic signs and gestural signs. (Kanzog 174) Nonverbal communication, i.e. the sending of bodily signals is a result of physical attraction and, thus, is assigned special importance at the beginning of a romantic love relationship. (Dorner 30) As far as mimic signs are concerned, the face is the most important body part with regard to nonverbal communication. Marked by particular expressive power, the mouth and the eyes are very significant transmitters of nonverbal messages. (Argyle 201f. in Dorner 30) Initial attraction or ‘love at first sight’ does often happen when the lovers look into each other’s eyes. There is only this one brief moment of revelation and (ideally) both persons know that they have just met someone special. (Fast, Bernstein 24) As soon as the quick glance into each other eyes is extended, a message is sent, which is mostly that one is interested in the other. (Fast, Bernstein 25)

Apart from the eyes, the mouth plays a major role in the nonverbal approach. (Dorner 31) The lips can smile (flirtatiously), take on a form so as to signal a kiss, or can simply be painted and look tempting on a female’s face. As for gestures, they can be defined as “semiotic phenomena characterizable as non-conventional, non-vocal, nonverbal, non-alter contact communicative behavior produced by movements and/or configurations of the upper extremities of the body – i.e., the fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, and head” (Hirsch 475). This definition is a rather confining one and should not be understood as obligatory in this context. However, spoken communication, writing, kisses, facial expressions and gazes are excluded by this definition and also in the present discussion of gestures. (Hirsch 475) Hands,

in particular, do not only serve the reinforcement and the visualization of the spoken word, but also reveal, for instance, the arousal of a character, when the hands are shaking or when the behavior appears clumsy and objects are dropped. (Argyle 237 in Dorner 32) Finally, proxemic signs appear in a variety of versions: They can be body movements, they include the distance between two characters or their being close, depend on how the body is oriented in the room and on character posture (Lohmeier 243). As for the issue of distance between two characters, ‘intimate’ distance is spoken of, when two bodies are less than 15 centimeters apart. (Thiel 110 in Dorner 34) Such proximity usually indicates that an intimate love relationship between two figures is developing or has already been established.

Moreover, the protagonists’ **physical appearance** including their **dress and costume** is a powerful signifier in the romance. Attention is not only paid “to physical appearances” – “Hero and heroine should be both good-looking and sexy.” – “[c]lothes, too, are of interest, not only as a means of bringing attention to the bodies of the hero and the heroine but as objects of desire in their own right – another reminder of this highly commercial form” (Kaplan 178). That clothes are fundamental body markers that give some indication of wealth, profession, social standing and about the self-perception of the carrier is part of cultural social knowledge. They also indicate age, gender, membership in a group, situation, individuality, type of person, or the breaking of rules. (Lohmeier 269) In addition, clothes can function as a means of disguise or masquerade. When characters dress up as someone else, they are allowed to live an illusion that might otherwise have been rendered impossible by social or cultural norms. They become what they are not allowed to be in real life. Thereby the figures send messages and convey features of their personality. (Hoffmann 76 in Dorner 37)

As a last point, **symbols** cannot be ignored in the romance, since romantic love and in turn the romance are undoubtedly symbolically loaded. As far as semiotics is concerned, in the symbol or the symbolic sign the signifier does in no way resemble the signified. Their relationship is merely arbitrary or conventional, which means that the relationship that exists between the two must be learned. The most popular example is language in general, but also Morse codes, national flags and traffic lights can be described as symbols. (Chandler 36f.) Thus, in their form of a manifestation of meaning, all symbols are preexisting signs in the repertoire of our cultural knowledge. (Kanzog 59) Props that are especially used in romances

and are, thus, associated with romantic love, like flowers, candles (Mortimer 9), or beds (McDonald 11), become symbols for romantic love. Especially in heritage film candle light or “old or pre-industrial light” is essential to locate the film in a particular period, but this kind of light also has the effect of creating the “possibly ‘romantic’ atmosphere and nostalgic mood” (Wiltshire “Candlelight” 39).

In sum, the elements or signs in the microstructure of a romance work in the same way as the elements in its macrostructure: Since they are part of codes that are fixed in the minds of people familiar with the genre or with certain ‘romantic’ conventions, they signal the idea of romantic love to the film’s audience. Due to this often unconscious process that induces the viewer to perceive a movie as ‘romantic’, the addition of these and similar signs directs the viewer in the perception of the film. Hence, verbal communication, mimic signs, gestures, movements, physical appearance, dress or costumes, and symbols are equally responsible for the romanticizing of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* as the plot or the setting are.

5. William Shakespeare and Jane Austen as Lovers – An Analysis of the Authors’ Romantic Bodies in Film

If any conclusion can be drawn from the preceding chapters, it is that who and what William Shakespeare and Jane Austen ‘really’ were will always remain a mystery. Who and what they could have been, however, is an imaginative and creative exercise that has been undertaken by many: “[W]ith a man [and a woman] so famous, so idolized, so idealized, it is only natural that [their] universal audience should demand some concrete image to venerate.” (Marder 192) However, this image is by no means the same for every single admirer: In the cases of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* the body that is assigned to the authors is the body of a lover. This body is best situated and constructed in a romance. Therefore, the two movies have been constructed along the conventions of a romantic movie. Even though they display the phenomenon of “multiple address” or “hybridity” (McDonald 8) “a characteristic of recent films” (McDonald 8), the romantic strand is strong in both films. While *Shakespeare in Love*, according to the Internet Movie Database, is defined as a comedy, a drama and a romance, *Becoming Jane* is called a biography, a drama and a romance.

Be that as it may, *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* share this one essential feature in the depiction of the authors: Both movies romanticize the bodies of the authors and hence present their life stories as romances. In order to demonstrate what exactly has been done to romanticize the body of the author the romantic characteristics, i.e. standard features of the romantic movie and signs signaling romantic love, in the two movies are analyzed. So, the succeeding subchapters examine one of the many bodies given to the authors over the years: the romantic body or the body of the lover. Among the many different representations of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in a romantic body, for instance, in literature, their representation in the film medium is chosen here, of which *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are the prime examples.

5.1. *Shakespeare in Love* or William Shakespeare in Hetero-Love in the Romantic Comedy

5.1.1. An Analysis of the Macrostructure of *Shakespeare in Love*

One of the most essential components of the romance is, as explained earlier, the character's duality, which is accurately adopted in *Shakespeare in Love* and by the character of Will Shakespeare. The lovers, Will Shakespeare and Lady Viola, are not exclusively shown together as a couple, but are also given scenes on their own. These scenes allow the audience to understand their feelings, motives and motivations that are later acted out in the couple formation. Despite a plethora of joint scenes, the ones that offer the most insight are the protagonists' initial scenes alone. Ideally, they do not start at the beginning of the movie as a couple and can be introduced separately. Will Shakespeare, the actual protagonist and name giver to the movie, has his introduction at the beginning of the movie (min. 3). He is pictured while practicing his signature instead of writing the play he is supposed to hand in to Henslowe. The audience meets him in his biggest crisis: He suffers from a writer's block that he tries to cure with meeting various 'muses'. The viewer is invited to share the hero's vexation, before the love interest evolves. Will Shakespeare is depicted as incomplete and imperfect, just like the play he is trying to write, waiting for love in the form of a muse to solve his problem. Only the union with the lover can complete the imperfect man.

Similarly, an insight into the individual personality of Lady Viola De Lesseps is offered to the audience, when she is finally introduced (min. 11) during her favorite occupation: watching a play at court. There is no doubt she admires the theater, since she does not hide her joyous as well as sad feelings during the performance. When she is later shown in her room with her nurse (min. 13), she lets her thoughts and feelings flow freely: The viewer learns that she does not want to marry well, as her father wishes her to, but prefers "poetry in [her] life. And adventure. And love. Love above all." (Norman, Stoppard 26) She strives for "love that overthrows life. Unbiddable, ungovernable, like a riot in the heart, and nothing to be done, come ruin or rapture. Love like there has never been in a play." (Norman Stoppard 26) She despises being born rich and all the men at court who just pursue her because of her father's money, and would much rather join "a company of players" (Norman, Stoppard 27). While the audience has only just been introduced to the character of Viola, it already shares

her innermost thoughts, emotions and conflicts, and is offered an insight that would not have been available, had she been introduced in a couple. Moreover, Viola is incomplete and imperfect as well, when she is alone. What she craves for, this idealized version of love and a life as an actor, can only be (at least partly) realized in a romantic relationship with Will Shakespeare. Thus, she is presented as needing the union with a lover as much as Will does in order to feel whole.

As for the constellation of the couple, the lovers fit neatly into the categories provided by Anette Kaufmann for the romance. Will Shakespeare and Lady Viola begin as a harmonic couple and remain in this state until their involuntary separation. While Will does not recognize the disguised Viola at their first meeting in the playhouse (min. 21), he falls in love with her as soon as he sets his eyes on her at a ball at her house (min. 27). When he manages to join the dance and to dance with her, their harmonic duality is established. They constantly look into each other's eyes and the harmony and emotion of their dance can be seen.

However, the couple constellation in *Shakespeare in Love* is actually a triangle that evolves soon after the development of the harmonic relation between the lovers. Lord Wessex, Viola's suitor, who is accepted as such by her father, poses a serious antagonistic threat to the couple. Even though the emotional bond between Lord Wessex and Viola is weak and hence practically non-existent compared to her connections with Will, societal boundaries limit her options to a marriage with Lord Wessex. Viola's dilemma and the triangle between the Lady, the poet, whom she loves, and the suitor, whom she has to marry, is cinematically portrayed in a long shot during the dance. The mise-en-scene in this group shot makes the triangle constellation visible, when Will gives his dance partner Viola to Lord Wessex (min. 28) (Fig. 8). This triangle constellation as well as the characters' harmonic couple constellation and the characteristic construction and introduction of the romantic hero and the romantic heroine are essential features in the building of a romantic William Shakespeare.



Fig. 8: The Triangle Constellation

As far as the sexual orientation in *Shakespeare in Love* is concerned, the film corresponds to the common romance convention of ‘propagating’ heteronormativity. Will Shakespeare is designed as a man who experiences lust for and loves women: “[N]ormative heterosexuality” (Klett 37) is displayed and hence a conventional romance is created. Even though “the homoerotic content of the sonnets and the gender-bending romances of Shakespeare’s cross-dressed heroines” (Lanier 103) leave room for speculation with regard to the sexual preference of the playwright, it seems that “[...] American producers and audiences were not ready for a bisexual Shakespeare” (Iyengar 124). Stephen Greenblatt even suggested to the screenwriter Marc Norman to let Shakespeare have an affair with Christopher Marlow, which he, however, did not realize. (Menon 115) So, *Shakespeare in Love* “circumvents the need to solve the unsolvable mystery of the ‘real’ Shakespeare, and instead created a persona that will appeal to the widest possible audience” (Klett 37).

Nonetheless, the film does not fail to at least allude to Shakespeare’s ambiguous sexuality: When Viola, disguised as a boy, kisses the unknowing Shakespeare without any interference on his side (min. 43), or when Shakespeare demonstrates a kiss on stage with Viola disguised as Romeo (min. 48). However, heterosexuality is constantly and strongly reinforced in numerous scenes and in the ending (Iyengar 126): Will, who is married back in Stratford-upon-Avon, informs Henslowe that he is searching for his muse who is “always Aphrodite” (Norman, Stoppard 9), which suggests that he has sexual relations with more than one woman. He is then also shown at a ‘psychiatrist’ who lists the women he has been with (min.

7) and at the theater meeting his current muse, Rosaline. (min. 10) Furthermore, Will's writer's block and the impotence symbolized by this block can only be cured by a woman - Viola. Ideas spring from his mind again animated by love, in the same way, in which the biological act of love can produce children. (Iyengar 125) Moreover, from the start of their relationship onwards, monogamy is taken for granted. This is only true for the central couple, whose love is the only 'true' love. Nevertheless, even though other couples on the side, such as Burbage and Rosaline, may not be monogamous, their relationships are again limited to relations between a man and a woman. Thus, *Shakespeare in Love* adheres to the romance's conventional sexuality and in desisting from including any subversive content constructs the romantic body of William Shakespeare as a heterosexual one.

One of the central features in constructing a romantic William Shakespeare is that he has one or more romantic experiences in his life, i.e. that he lives a romantic story. Such a romantic story is designed along certain narrative threads in the romance that correspond to conventions common within the genre. *Shakespeare in Love* meets many of these conventions, when it creates romantic experiences for the playwright. First of all, the central narrative thread, or the A story, focuses in the central couple, Will Shakespeare and Viola De Lesseps. The existence and the power of their love stands above all and, in general, directs and dictates almost all of the events in the movie. Even though the B story, as another dominant narrative thread, namely the development of Shakespeare the writer, coexists with the A story, it is wholly dependent on it: Will Shakespeare is only able to write *Romeo and Juliet*, because Viola, whom he loves madly, inspires him. Also the origin of *Twelfth Night*, which is alluded to in the end, would not be possible, were it not for the pain Shakespeare experiences, when the beloved Viola has to leave him. So, Shakespeare the writer cannot exist without Shakespeare the lover.

Even though *Shakespeare in Love* can be classed as a romantic comedy, it does not correspond to the classic three-act structure of "boy meets, loses, regains girl" (McDonald 12), but rather inherits a feature of the melodramatic romance: the bad ending, i.e. boy does not regain girl. However, it follows the three-act structure in so far as it depicts a conflict, a crisis, and a resolution:

- Conflict: Love challenges the characters of both Will Shakespeare and Viola De Lesseps. They enter into a relationship, because they love each other, but this

relationship is actually forbidden and both have a lot to lose. Will runs into danger of losing his life through Lord Wessex, Viola's suitor, and Viola risks her reputation and her privileged lifestyle.

- Crisis: Their love for each other is challenged, because Viola learns that she has to marry Lord Wessex and her true identity is discovered at the playhouse. This leads to her banishment and renders it almost impossible to see Will again.
- Resolution: Viola marries Lord Wessex, which suggests a bad ending. However, Will and Viola's love for each other transformed their character: Viola turns into a strong woman and starts a new life in Virginia, and Will becomes the great playwright that we know today.

In the construction of Shakespeare's love life not only general narrative threads or act structures are used, but also specific plot structures that belong to the standard repertoire of the romance. *Shakespeare in Love*, primarily, features Rubinfeld's Separation Permission Plot that largely equals Kaufmann's Forbidden Love Plot: The hero and the heroine, Will and Viola, are romantically involved with each other, but meet resistance from Viola's father, a parent and authority figure. Even though Viola is never shown discussing her love for Will with her father, there is no doubt that he would disapprove of the match. Moreover, the highest authority that could possibly exist for Viola, the Queen, has consented to her marriage with Lord Wessex, which prohibits her to marry anyone else. Will and Viola's love is forbidden because of their class differences and their different social backgrounds. It seems unimaginable to marry out of love, because most marriages in the 16th century still had position and wealth as their primary motives. Viola, as a member of the proprietary class, has to consent to the marriage arranged by her father: Lord Wessex marries her for wealth and she is given to him in marriage due to his position in society. Consequently, the couple is given no other option than to break up. A future together is further hindered by the facts that Will is poor and that, above all, he is already married. Contrary to Rubinfeld's definition, the lovers do not choose each other over everything and remain confined within societal boundaries.

Often combined with the Forbidden Love Plot is the Sacrifice Plot: Viola renounces the romantic love relationship, because she feels obliged to follow her father's will. Moreover, Will Shakespeare's family situation seems to influence her conscience: She might have

chosen Will, had she not learned that he already has a family back in Stratford-upon-Avon. Her moral attitude appears to be one of the motives for her sacrifice. Another plot structure that renders Will Shakespeare's romantic experience even 'more romantic' is the First Love Plot. Simultaneously to the development of *Romeo and Juliet*, Will and Viola's love develops, which is the first love for the innocent and naïve Viola. Since she has not had any previous bad experiences with other partners, she can let herself go with Will and experiences the first kiss and the first intercourse, which she claims to be "better than a play" (Norman, Stoppard 69). Her innocence and joy in these new experiences of love play a vital role in the movie's romantic air.

Finally, *Shakespeare in Love* also includes the Role Play that was already used in Hollywood's earliest romances. Probably inspired by Shakespeare's cross-dressing heroines, the lovers first meet when Viola is disguised as a boy in order to audition for the role of Romeo. She remains in the role of Thomas Kent for their first meetings and the rehearsals, which is why Will, at first, believes that Thomas Kent actually exists (next to Lady Viola). The audience is left in anticipation for the final revelation that is inevitable in the development of Will and Viola's love relationship. Nevertheless, Will Shakespeare himself joins in a role play as well: Not only does he claim to be Christopher Marlowe in front of Lord Wessex, he also dresses up as a woman, Lady Viola's country cousin, (min. 57) to accompany her to Greenwich, where she is presented to the Queen as Lord Wessex's wife. In summation, William Shakespeare's life as a lover is decisively dictated by the romance's three-act structure and characteristic plots like the Separation Permission, the Forbidden Love, the Sacrifice, the First Love and the Role Play Plot.

The romance is not only constructed from plot structures that usually form the film as a whole, but is also made from smaller "scenic building blocks" (Kaufmann 99). These building blocks are a series of shots, or a sequence, that present standard situations common in the genre. The body of William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* experiences some of these standard situations inherent to the romance, which romanticizes his body. The first of these situations that is decisive for the rest of the film is the first meeting between Will and Viola, the 'boy meets girl'. Interestingly, as the film's structure at times resembles the author's own work(s), so does the dancing scene, in which they meet for the first time: When Will meets Viola at the ball this scene imitates the initial masquerade in *Romeo and Juliet*.

(Cano López, García-Periago) Will manages to enter the De Lesseps' house, disguised as a musician, and becomes part of a ball, at which he first meets the beautiful Viola De Lesseps. Both have already seen and admired the other without the observed one's being conscious of it – Viola saw Will at court during a play; Will observed Viola at the ball before their dance.

Nevertheless, their first actual meeting is still a magical moment (min. 28), which unmistakably conveys their common bond to the audience: Viola seems positively surprised, but also irritated when she realizes that she is dancing with 'Master Shakespeare', who reacts in the same way. The man who is normally skilled with words remains silent and Viola's body loses all the tension it showed before, while the music's volume decreases to make room for Viola's words. Both seem almost paralyzed or in a trance and keep up their eye contact throughout the rest of the dance. They continue dancing, which is depicted with two different kinds of shots: Profile-two shots (Fig. 9) effectively convey romantic emotions and intimacy by showing the character's profiles close to each other (Mikunda 56 in Athanasiadis 109) They quickly alternate with over-the-shoulder shots (Fig. 10). The audience is familiar with the cinematic as well as bodily codes to which these exterior signs signaling the protagonists interior feelings belong and can have no doubt that what they witness is the characters falling in love at first sight.



Fig.: 9: Viola and Will in a profile-two shot



Fig. 10: Viola and Will in an over-the-shoulder shot

Since Will Shakespeare and Viola's situation does not allow for a common reencounter, a first date, or a slow process of getting to know each other, these standard situations are skipped. Nevertheless, the romanticized body of Shakespeare is only reinforced the more, because the first meeting of the lovers is very soon followed by physical intimacy. Will Shakespeare is portrayed as a lustful and love-seeking character, for whom romantic love and physical intimacy are largely one and the same thing. Will and Viola's first physical contact happens during the dance described above. Since societal boundaries would not endorse any physical contact between the couple in public, the dance is a legitimate possibility to establish body contact. Moreover, it is accompanied by calm music that adds a little dramatic air when their meeting amongst the other dancing couples approaches and hence sets the mood for the first touch of the lovers.

While this first physical contact happens more or less unintentionally, since they are just following dancing conventions when touching the partner, the standard situation of the kiss is a targeted action and already a sign of their (romantic) love for each other. Their actual first kiss (min. 43) is not counted as such here, as Viola is disguised as Thomas Kent and Will cannot see through her role play. However, after Viola kisses him and runs away towards her house, his eyes are opened and he follows her. Several standard situations of physical intimacy follow in a row, which accentuates the passion in their relationship. It all starts with a passionate kiss (min. 44) that does not only signal the start of their intimate love relationship, but is also a symbol for Viola's sexual awakening, since she is "still a maid"

(Norman, Stoppard 67). In her First Love Plot, like in her own fairy tale, she is awakened by the kiss of someone, whom she truly and passionately loves. Many more kisses are to follow throughout the whole movie that range from lustful and suggestive kisses to a desperate and melodramatic kiss in the end.

Even though a love scene such as the one following the first kiss may be hardly imaginable in 16th century England, it seems essential for the construction of the romantic body of William Shakespeare. Bodily, behavioral and cinematic codes among others have accustomed the 20th and 21st century audience to the necessity of sexual contact as a central element in love relationships and romances. In *Shakespeare in Love* the lovers' sexual union further symbolizes the final crossing of the boundary of societal and moral rules, as it usually does in the Forbidden Love Plot. They now share a secret, which brings them even closer together. This secret, their sexual union, is a tender and harmonious act despite the passion that is displayed in their first kiss. However, the actual act is not even depicted, which is a convention commonly enacted in romances. It is limited to the standard situations of the Before and the After.

Will and Viola's Before corresponds exactly to that of traditional romances and hence still allows for a low age limit on the movie³²: Their first sexual union (min. 45) is preceded by an undressing sequence that ends in an exposure of the female and the male torso. Will undresses Viola in a particularly careful and desiring way, especially when he removes the bandage that is binding her breasts in her disguise as Thomas Kent. The removal of the bandage has a symbolical meaning here, as Will is not only undressing Viola, but also frees her from what is 'binding' her, i.e. from what applies pressure onto her: for example, societal conventions and the need to dress up as a man to be allowed into a playhouse as a player. So, a sequence of medium shots and close-ups reveal their bodies only from the waist upwards or solely show their faces. Mimic and acoustic means are utilized to accentuate the lover's lust: joyous and desiring glances, sighing, heavy breathing and the sound of kisses accompany the undressing sequence. When all their outer garments are removed, they move to the bed, where Will caresses Viola's naked torso.

³² The age limit on the German DVD edition from 2009 that is used here is 6 years.

The Before ends here and, after a scene that features the nurse who is watching the door, is immediately followed by a scene that pictures the After (min. 46). The lovers lie in bed together covered by a blanket, they talk, and, eventually, kiss again preceded by an utterance of Viola that suggests a continuance of the sexual act (“And that was only my first try.” (Norman, Stoppard 69)). What then follows is a switch to the next morning and another After (min. 46): The lovers kiss and fool around in bed, but again everything below their torsos is kept carefully hidden by a blanket. Even though several scenes of Before and After, and even scenes that suggest an actual sexual act follow, no climax is ever shown nor do these scenes last long enough to contribute to the present analysis.

Since the romantic Shakespeare and his life as a lover should seem authentic in the world of *Shakespeare in Love*, the narrative of Will and Viola needs obstacles. The Forbidden Love Plot, in which they are entangled, presents the perfect setting for such obstacles and problems that have to be overcome and solved. As their love is forbidden due to class differences and societal boundaries, they have been confronted with difficulties from the very beginning. Thus, the standard trope of the Argument, in which lovers separate because of a disagreement between them, does not concern them. They are forced to separate by the arranged marriage between Viola and Lord Wessex. Nonetheless, one standard situation causes their temporary separation that lasts until the performance of *Romeo and Juliet*: the Demasking. The demasking of Thomas Kent (min. 81) marks a dramatic turning point in the narrative. Viola’s true identity is revealed and she is no longer allowed to enter the playhouse let alone play the Romeo. Moreover, the Rose has to be closed and, for the time being, there seems to be no chance for a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*.

In addition, the construction of William Shakespeare’s body as a romantic one requires a romantic ending, one that will be identified by the audience as corresponding to the filmic code of romances. Even though *Shakespeare in Love* may have been perceived as a romantic comedy before the ending, since it includes comedic signs that are unusual for a melodramatic romance, it does not end well as it is expected from romantic comedies. This unhappy ending can easily be determined by the tropes of Separation and Sacrifice. Will and Viola actually separate in the end, which is the scenario that they have already discussed several times throughout the movie. The audience’s hope is finally shattered when the Queen answers Lord Wessex’s question about how this is to end with the following words: “As

stories must when love's denied – with tears and a journey.” (Norman, Stoppard 149) Will and Viola's temporary separation lengthens to become a permanent one – she leaves with Lord Wessex for Virginia and Will stays in London as a playwright.

The lovers sacrifice their love in obedience to tradition and higher powers. Will is married and hence cannot marry Viola and Viola is married to Lord Wessex, against which not even the Queen can act: “Those whom God has joined in marriage, not even I can put asunder.” (Norman, Stoppard 149) Furthermore, even if both were free to marry each other, their different positions in society would complicate the matter further. However, as it is a tradition in romances, the separation is preceded by an emotional parting sequence (min. 107) that is full of tears probably attempting to move the audience to tears as well. The melodramatic goodbye is ended by what reads in the screenplay as follows: “*She kisses him with finality. Then turns and runs from him. Will watches as she goes.*” (Norman, Stoppard 152)

Nonetheless, this ending is the only appropriate one, when an immortal bond of love between Will and Viola is presented to the audience, because romance and marriage “have opposing goals, which explains both real life endemic dissatisfaction with the married state and the need for romantic comedies to end before the couple embarks on married life” (Shumway 21 in McDonald 13). At the same time, the ending makes Viola herself immortal. “You will never age for me, nor fade, nor die.” (Norman, Stoppard 151) are Will's words when Viola leaves him. The succeeding cross-cutting sequence then demonstrates how Viola will neither age nor die: She is eternalized as a character in *Twelfth Night*. She becomes immortal, because she will forever be in William Shakespeare's play and verses, which reminds of the content of the famous Sonnet 18.

The construction of William Shakespeare's romantic body and life is further promoted by romantic tropes that are commonly inserted into a romance whenever there is room for them. The marriage to Mr. Wrong may not be prevalent in romantic comedies, nonetheless, it forms part of *Shakespeare in Love*. Anette Kaufmann even claims that *Shakespeare in Love* is the only romantic comedy, in which a consummated marriage with Mr. Wrong ends the love story. (135) While the actual marriage between Viola and Lord Wessex is not depicted, it is clear that they have just been married, when they leave a church together holding hands accompanied by the sound of wedding bells (min. 87). That Lord Wessex is an unsuitable

partner for Viola does not need any symbols to be conveyed to the audience. During the whole movie his harshness, his disinterest in poetry and the theater and his cold, businesslike manner clash with Viola's contrasting qualities.

A frequently used trope, which serves to inform the audience about a lover's innermost romantic feelings, is the conversation with a figure close to the lover about the love relationship. For Will there exists no such person apart from the 'psychiatrist' in the beginning, whereas Viola regularly confides in her nurse. The final standard situation that signals the romanticizing of the author to the audience is the Farewell. This epilogue that succeeds the dramatic ending is a cross-cutting sequence that features, on the one hand, Will writing *Twelfth Night* and, on the other hand, scenes from *Twelfth Night* such as the shipwreck and the surviving heroine walking on (new) land. From a distance this heroine resembles Viola, which is also the name given to *Twelfth Night*'s heroine by Will. So, even though the ending is a dramatic one, the audience is released with a positive feeling of hope for the actual Viola and the knowledge that a bad ending was inevitable for the sake of William Shakespeare's creations. In sum, in addition to the general plot structures these scenic building stones like the first meeting, the physical contact, the dance, the Demasking, the unhappy ending, the marriage to Mr. Wrong or the Farewell organize the life of William Shakespeare in a way that romanticizes the author figure.

Another part of the romanticizing of William Shakespeare is assumed by the setting, in which he is placed. Ideally, as unromantic as 16th century London may have been, there still seems to exist a general nostalgic idea in which it is idealized and romantically connoted, not least because it was the whereabouts of the "poet of love in English" (Lanier 101). With the city of London, a big city, which is, in general, a preferred setting in romances, the ideal place for a meeting between people from two different classes of society was designed. It is not as hard to remain anonymous as it is in the country, which facilitates their meeting and moving around relatively freely. For example, would Lady Viola have been better known, as it probably would have been the case in a village, she would never have made it to the playhouse – even when she was disguised as Thomas Kent. This uncomplicated starting point allows a romance to develop in the first place. Particular locations such as the Rose, introduced by an establishing shot at the beginning of the film, which moves through a large part of the theater, or the De Lesseps' house are not exclusively romantic settings, but rather

serve as room for the action as such. Nevertheless, these places can be romanticized by decorating them with romantic symbols that are examined closer under 5.1.11. All in all, the development of William Shakespeare the lover would be complicated, if the setting were not what it is.

The stock characters deserve to be mentioned in this analysis as well, as they form part of the romance complex and hence contribute to a romanticizing of William Shakespeare. *Shakespeare in Love* features two particular kinds of stock characters that the majority of the romance audience is probably familiar with: the unsuitable partner and the good friend. Since both characters have already been examined in a previous part of the analysis, they are only briefly mentioned here for completeness. The unsuitable partner is Lord Wessex, whose unsuitability is only stressed by the ideal(ized) love relationship between Will and Viola. Moreover, it does not go without notice that while Lord Wessex's primary interests are money, position and business, Viola as a romantic idealist prefers poetry, adventure and love.

Viola's nurse takes on the role of the good friend and confidante, whereas Will Shakespeare remains without such an advisor. As the nurse is only a side and stock characters, her true relationship to Viola apart from the role as her advisor and keeper of her secret is never fully revealed, but only indicated once when Viola expresses the feeling of love towards her: "As you love me and as I love you, you will bind my breast and buy me a boy's wig!" (Norman, Stoppard 44) Nevertheless, hers and the unsuitable partner's roles in the design of Shakespeare the lover may not be vital, but are definitely supporting.

The romantic body of this poet of love does not only require an ideal setting, but also an ideal musical accompaniment to be realized. First of all, elements and signs have to be added to the score, the original music and soundtrack (written by Stephen Warbeck). It establishes a link in the audience's mind to musical codes associated with this romantic period. Therefore, the music works on an extra-diegetic level, when predominantly strings and occasionally wooden flute and harpsichord contribute to the style of the period. (Clemmensen) These instruments are particularly audible during the dancing scene, in which Will and Viola meet for the first time (min. 28) and which is, above all, one of the most romantic scenes in the movie.

While the live performance that takes place during the dance is part of the filmic reality and, thus, foregrounds the music, the score functions in the background and not as a component of the narrated world. Nevertheless, this does not mean that its role as a propagator of a romantic atmosphere is undermined. Three different themes in manifold variations, of which one is the love theme for Will and Viola (Clemmensen), accompany the action from off-stage. Throughout the score Will and Viola's love theme supports romantic scenes by, for example, including an acoustic guitar and tapping percussion to render intimate moments warmer. (Clemmensen) Other than in *Becoming Jane*'s music, which is examined in a later section, *Shakespeare in Love*'s love theme is seldom distinct, but is rather "fleeting throughout the score" (Clemmensen). There are only allusions to it in the score "before its monumental ensemble performance" in the Farewell epilogue. (Clemmensen) Nonetheless, music is essential for accentuating as well as accompanying the (romantic) action in *Shakespeare in Love* and provides it with a romantic air.

5.1.2. An Analysis of the Microstructure of *Shakespeare in Love*

Rarely does anything convey the notion of romantic love as efficiently as verbal communication. When romantic love is expressed verbally in *Shakespeare in Love* there can be no doubt as to the content and intention of the speaker's message. While romances are commonly limited to a standard repertoire of phrases that express the romantic feelings of one character for the other, in the construction of a romantic Shakespeare nothing less than poetic vocabulary and elements of his play *Romeo and Juliet* are utilized. Until Will Shakespeare meets his muse Viola he is short of words: He is unable to write the play for Henslowe and none of the eloquent and poetic speeches that appear later in the film meet the audience's ear. The first outpouring of such 'beautiful' words happens after the first meeting with Lady Viola during the dance. When Lord Wessex has pulled him away and asks him if he is a poet, the words come out of his mouth quick as a shot: "I was a poet till now, but I have seen beauty that puts my poems at one with the talking ravens at the Tower." (Norman, Stoppard 47) After this eloquent comparison Will leaves. However, the meeting with Viola marks only the starting point of the poet's declarations of beauty and love to her. Not only does he write his famous Sonnet 18 for her, of which the viewer is allowed to hear the first lines when Viola is reading it to herself aloud (min. 36). Will Shakespeare also speaks highly and poetically of her to Viola while disguised as Thomas Kent when he, for instance,

describes her lips: “The early morning rose would wither on the branch, if it could feel envy!” (Norman, Stoppard 65)

Elements of *Romeo and Juliet* are not only featured in the action of *Shakespeare in Love*, but also construct romantic scenes and characters by appearing in verbal communication. These appearances can be subdivided into allusions and citations. The example given here for an allusion is the scene when Will and Viola wake up in the morning after they made love for the first time (min. 46): Will tries to leave when he realizes that it is morning, but Viola pulls him back down only to tell him that this light is moonlight and that he did not hear the rooster, but the owl. Reminiscence of Romeo and Juliet’s nightingale and lark scene in Act 3 Scene 5 grows only stronger when Will instead of Viola claims that he heard an owl by saying: “Believe me, love, it was the owl.” (Norman, Stoppard 71) By way of comparison, Juliet asserts the following: “Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.” (Shakespeare 106) The citations are more clearly marked as such and again occur in and structure romantic love scenes. For instance, during a cross-cutting sequence towards the middle of the movie, scenes of rehearsals at the playhouse alternate with scenes of Will and Viola in bed where they recite the lines of *Romeo and Juliet*. The different scenes correspond to the filmic reality when, for example, the nurse is knocking on Viola’s door and Sam as Juliet hears the nurse calling her name during the balcony scene. As a whole, the sequence appears like a sexual act with a ‘Before’, a climax and an ‘After’ that shows little of the physical act, but is largely enacted by words.

Modes of speaking and silences can convey romantic love just as well. The quiet voice or the whisper is a means often utilized by Will to speak to his beloved Viola. It is commonly understood as having a more intimate and tender air than the usual speaking volume. He speaks in a whispering voice after they made love for the first time, when they kiss secretly backstage, or during another physical love scene. However, he seems to express just as much romantic emotion when he remains silent. In one particular scene his silence says more than a thousand words: the dance that has already been referred to several times would be the perfect opportunity to speak to Lady Viola, but Will remains silent. While they dance, they simply look into each other’s eyes and Will does not even answer Viola when she says “I heard you are a poet.” and after a short silence concludes “But a poet of no words?” (Norman, Stoppard 47). The screenplay dictates that he “*has lost his tongue*”, is in “*trance*”

and “*dumb with adoration*” (Norman, Stoppard 47). The audience familiar with this sign realizes that Will just fell in love and is so struck with Viola’s physical appearance that he does not find words to express what he is feeling. So, words are not the sole carrier of (romantic) meaning in verbal communication in *Shakespeare in Love* – modes of talking and silences contribute just as much to the construction of a romantic William Shakespeare.

A body in (romantic) love does not only reveal its state by talking in a certain manner, it also sends bodily signals, be it mimic, gestural or proxemic signs, as a result of the physical attraction felt for the love interest. Thus, a romantic body of William Shakespeare is most authentically constructed when he displays such signals. Since *Shakespeare in Love* is a movie with a length of approximately two hours, countless nonverbal signals of romantic love are utilized that cannot all be listed here. On that account, one or two examples each are selected to represent the significance of mimic, gestural and proxemic signs in the film. Particular expressive power with regard to emotions is assigned to the face, for which again the dancing sequence is the ideal example. At its beginning Will is sitting with the musicians and his eyes wander aimlessly around the room. Then suddenly his eyes are fixed on something that appears to strike and paralyze him (min. 27): He has fallen in love at first sight. Because of preparatory work that includes an introduction of Viola as the female protagonist and the audience’s knowledge that she is at this moment among the dancers, there can be no doubt that Will just lay eyes in the beautiful Viola De Lesseps. His face loses all evidence of former expression or tension; it appears blank and the whole focus shifts to his eyes that remain in a state of fixation. (Fig. 11)



Fig. 11: Will falls in love at first sight with Viola

The importance of this glance is further augmented, because the audience is allowed to follow it and discover the cause for his sudden change. Will's point of view is assumed in a subjective shot, in which the camera becomes his eyes. This perspective promoted to present Viola is Will's vision of her and can be inferred from the shot that is displayed of her: No medium shot or close-up is used that depicts the admired object in a position arranged to display her beauty from a close distance. What is utilized is rather a group shot, in which, at first, Will's sight is even obstructed slightly by the dancers in the front. (Fig. 12) This shot simulates an authentic reproduction of the image Will's eyes capture. Nonetheless, Viola is placed in the middle of the shot to make her unmistakably the aim of Will's glance. He then approaches her and, finally, dances with her, but keeps his eyes fixed on her throughout the whole dancing sequence.



Fig. 12: Will's view on Viola

The other facial feature that can function as a decisive signal for attraction and romantic love between the lovers is the mouth. During the dancing sequence Viola's mouth assumes two different expressions that signal the viewer her reaction towards Will. At first, she is surprised to see the poet that she admires so much in her own house (Fig. 13). Her mouth is opened and her facial expression seems tense, which is understood as a sign for surprise within a bodily code. At the same time, this strong emotional reaction demonstrates the significance that the poet's appearance has for her.



Fig. 13: Viola is surprised at seeing Will

Viola's expression does not alter significantly throughout the dance. However, when the lovers-to-be stop and stand still, she regains her composure and lets her joyous feelings on seeing Will be captured on her face. In an over-the-shoulder shot, her lips form a smile (Fig. 14) and her evident joy about his appearance at the ball conveys the romantic feelings for Will Shakespeare she nourishes. These feelings expressed by her smile are not only perceived by the audience and hence do not only work on an extra-diegetic level. On a diegetic level, for Will they are an approval of his approach towards her and an encouragement to pursue her further. Would Viola's reaction have been different, it is doubtful if Will had appeared at her balcony after the ball.



Fig. 14: Viola smiles at Will

Within the scope of gestural signs, gestures that include the hands of the lovers are of primary importance in presenting a romantic Shakespeare to the audience. Hands are held and kissed by both lovers throughout *Shakespeare in Love*, which is a romantic convention not uncommon in the romance. Particular significance is assigned to the hands in the two balcony scenes enacted in the movie. In the first balcony scene (min. 30) Will Shakespeare surprises Lady Viola by appearing under her balcony after the ball during which they first met. When he addresses her with the words "Oh my lady, my love!" (Norman, Stoppard 49) he raises his hands upwards towards Viola on the balcony. (Fig. 15) This gesture signifies that he is trying to reach something that is at the present moment unobtainable. His empty hands stretch towards the beloved object as if he desired to touch or grab it. The movement of his hands (and arms) can be understood as a sign for his romantic feelings and the resulting longing for

Viola. The second balcony scene (min. 51) displays a similar gesture: Viola as Romeo recites lines from *Romeo and Juliet* and raises her hand to point towards Sam as Juliet on the balcony. (Fig. 16) With the words “See how she leans her cheek upon her hand.” (Norman, Stoppard 78) ‘Romeo’ presents the sighing ‘Juliet’ and, at the same time, expresses his admiration for the beloved. The hand is held in that same position that signals desire when ‘Romeo’ utters words that express this longing: “O that I were a glove upon that hand, / That I might touch that cheek.” (Norman, Stoppard 78) The gesture and the verbal expression complement each other and so enforce their meaning.



Fig. 15: Will raises his hands in the balcony scene



Fig. 16: Viola as Romeo raises her hand in the balcony scene

In another rehearsal scene (min. 47) the expressiveness of the touch of lovers' hands is particularly accentuated and can be interpreted as dictating the significance of hands in gestural signs for the expression of romantic love in general. Viola as Romeo and Sam as Juliet rehearse the scene in which Romeo and Juliet kiss for the first time (Act I Scene 5). However, before they kiss their hands touch with the words "let lips do what hands do" (Norman, Stoppard 72). The lovers' hands touching is emphasized by a close-up (Fig. 17). In the context of the play within the film this touch is presumably the first physical contact of the lovers, which highlights its importance. Hands are also the means of physical contact when Viola and Will touch for the first time during the ball at the De Lesseps' house. Thus, the touching of lovers' hands is treated as a sign for romantic attachment in the cinematic reality of *Shakespeare on Love*.



Fig. 17: 'Romeo's' and 'Juliet's' hands touch

With regard to proxemic signs for romantic love in *Shakespeare in Love*, they are constituted clearly so that even the viewer not familiar with the cinematic, but familiar with the bodily code of intimate distance, can grasp the meaning of the placement of the figures of the lovers in the film. Will and Viola have not established an intimate distance yet at their first meeting at the ball. While mimic signs display their romantic feelings, they keep the distance socially accepted for a man and a woman during a dance in public in 16th century England. However, as soon as their first intimate physical contact has taken place, the film largely desists from depicting the lovers in public places together apart from the rehearsal scenes at the playhouse. Consequently, the intimate proximity established by their first physical contact can be

maintained on an extra-diegetic level, i.e. in the eyes of the viewer, and hence constantly signals the romantic involvement of the characters. In brief, the characters' bodies or, to be more precise, their eyes, mouths, hands and the distance between them function as a significant means of romanticizing the body of William Shakespeare.

A popular convention in the romance affects the lovers' physical appearance: The central couple is designed in a way that outshines all other characters. Beauty and desirability seem to be characteristics that cannot be spared in the creation of the romantic hero and the romantic heroine. Therefore, they appear as an element in the construction of Shakespeare the lover in *Shakespeare in Love*. While physical appearance is a highly subjective matter, since beauty lies in the eye of the beholder, there is left no doubt that Will Shakespeare as well as Lady Viola are beautiful and desirable on a diegetic level. Within the film's reality Will is desired by many women: Even though he is married, he has sexual relations with "Black Sue, Fat Phoebe, Rosaline, Burbage's seamstress; Aphrodite" (Norman, Stoppard 14) and some more. Similarly, men's desire for the romantic heroine Viola is great, but is expressed differently. She does not have (sexual) relations with men, but her beauty is rather spoken of. Viola is described as "a beauty [...] as would take a king to church for a dowry of a nutmeg" (Norman, Stoppard 45). Moreover, what Will falls in love with at first sight cannot be anything else but her beautiful appearance.

As objects of desire Will as well as Viola are designed in a way that brings the most attention to their bodies. Viola appears to be the one of the few women with blonde hair and is, above all, the only female who is shown with loose hair (without any kind of hairstyle), which stresses her blonde mane that is one of the "most prominent filmic signifiers of gender" (Iyengar 123). Her cleavage and breasts as well as Will Shakespeare's naked torso are not uncommon images in the film. This artful display of parts of the human anatomy that catch the viewers' eyes is supported by either abandoning clothes at all or utilizing clothes in a way that enhances these parts.

Furthermore, clothes fulfill a symbolic function in *Shakespeare in Love*. Apart from signaling gender or class, their kind and their presence or absence are fundamental markers for romantic love scenes. When Will and Viola are together as lovers, both, but especially Viola, do not wear the kind of clothes appropriate for their rank, social class and gender in

Elizabethan times. Viola becomes what she is not allowed to be in public life when she is with Will. In most love scenes both are naked or wear little and loose clothing. Viola seems to be 'free' in love, whereas at other times she is forced to be dressed in the confining corset society expects Elizabethan women to wear. Another way to be with her lover is the disguise or the masquerade. She dresses up as a boy to see Will in public in the playhouse. Certain clothes allow Viola to live the illusion of ideal love that she desires so much. In brief, the way the characters are physically presented in the movie constructs the message that is sent to the viewer, be it their hair, faces, bodies or clothes that stand as a sign for an underlying (romantic) meaning.

What lends the romanticizing of William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* the finishing touch is the employment of symbols for romantic love. On an unconscious level these props, which have been endowed with their symbolic value due to continuous utilization in romances, construct a romantic environment. The two most noticeable symbols for romantic love in *Shakespeare in Love* are the candlelight and the bed. However, it is not only candlelight, but also torchlight and open fireplaces that determine the mood in most romantic scenes. While it may be argued that the Elizabethan times had no other means of lighting a room at night, the inclusion of candles in the mise-en-scene in love scenes is striking and appears intentional.

The romantic mood is particularly strongly emphasized by the candles in the sequence towards the middle of the film, in which love scenes alternate with rehearsal scenes. Every love scene features a candle: While the rehearsal scenes happen lighted by torchlight and candlelight, Will and Viola's love scenes include candles in the background and in the foreground when, for instance, Will blows out a candle or Viola reads by candlelight (Fig. 18). The second most striking symbol of romantic love is the bed, as it is the setting, where almost all of Will and Viola's love scenes take place. The bed is a fairly obvious symbol, since the connotation with physical intimacy seems natural. Nonetheless, in some scenes a red blanket intensifies its symbolic value even further. As the color 'red' is frequently associated with love, the bed is once again reinforced as a symbol of (romantic) love. So, symbols such as the bed or candlelight and torchlight that are romantically connoted set the ideal scene for a romanticizing of William Shakespeare.



Fig. 18: Viola reads by candlelight

5.1.3. Shakespeare the Lover in *Shakespeare in Love* – A Summary

As the preceding analysis demonstrates, *Shakespeare in Love* is filled with characteristic elements of the romance genre in film as defined by secondary literature on the subject. The movie is constructed from building stones such as the harmonic and the triangle couple constellation, heteronormativity, a three-act structure, the Separation Permission or the Forbidden Love plot, aspects from the Sacrifice and the First Love Plot, the Role Play, standard tropes like the ‘boy meets girl’ or the marriage to Mr. Wrong, the standard setting, the stock characters of the unsuitable partner and the good friend, and musical accompaniment. What also flows in significantly in the design of the action and the characters are the play of *Romeo and Juliet*, suggestive glances and smiles, meaningful gestures, the creation of the characters’ physical appearance, and the symbolic value of objects like candles or beds. These building stones that are characteristic to the romance or relate to the idea of romantic love function as signs that deliver a message to the viewer of *Shakespeare in Love*: Whether the viewer is familiar with William Shakespeare’s life and his works or not, the signs described above construct him as a romantic William Shakespeare. They belong to mass media and genre codes, and to bodily, commodity and behavioral codes in the viewer’s mind that induce him or her to perceive the author as a romantic figure. In brief, these romantic building stones that concern the course of his life as well as his actual physical body construct the romantic body of William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love*.

5.2. *Becoming Jane* or Proud and Prejudiced Jane Austen in the Melodramatic Romance

5.2.1. An Analysis of the Macrostructure of *Becoming Jane*

The couple's duality is an indispensable part of most romances and, therefore, forms part of the melodramatic romance *Becoming Jane*, in which the character of Jane Austen is placed. Jane Austen as well as Tom Lefroy's emotions and motives are largely conveyed to the audience when the lovers are alone or with their family and friends. Since their depiction as a couple only offers an insight into the couple dynamics, the individual's interior life is revealed best in scenes that focus on only one of the lovers. As it is essential for the movie's appeal to encourage the audience to feel empathy for the central characters Jane and Tom, they are already introduced separately like it is done in *Shakespeare in Love*. Naturally, Jane Austen, the film's protagonist is introduced first. This measure corresponds to a common trend in melodramatic romances that places the desires and the sacrifices of the female protagonist in the center. The viewer first meets Jane Austen (min. 0) and, hence, is induced to regard her as the center of the movie.

Jane Austen is not immediately introduced as a whole, but the focus is rather on her prevalent desire: writing. One of the first images shown of the author is a close-up of her hand holding a pen with a sheet of paper in the background. (Fig. 19) The importance of writing for the female protagonist is further accentuated when more of her person and the house she lives in is revealed. It is early in the morning and almost everyone is asleep. Nevertheless, she is already awake writing and demonstrates feelings of desperation and joy during her thinking and writing process. However, as much joy she may experience when she is writing, she is still presented as incomplete and imperfect, which can only be fixed through a union with a lover. In the introductory sequence her mother claims that "[t]hat girl needs a husband", which is only hindered by the fact that no one is good enough for her. (min. 3) In her mother's as well as probably 18th century society's eyes, she is incomplete, because she lacks a husband. Even her father, a clergyman, preaches in that morning's sermon that "[t]he utmost of a woman's character is expressed in the duties of daughter, sister, and, eventually, wife and mother" (min. 3). Another facet of her incompleteness concerns her writing: She is shown being completely dissatisfied with what she wrote on the occasion of her sister's

engagement after she heard Tom Lefroy's critique. She tears the sheets and burns them. (min. 18) Only the union with Tom Lefroy puts the finishing touch to her writing: Their love story provides experience and the authors suggested to her by Tom Lefroy refine her choice of models.



Fig. 19: Jane Austen's hand holding a pen

The question "What will buy you, cousin?" posed by Eliza De Feuillide to Jane Austen is answered by the introductory scenes of Tom Lefroy. (min. 7) His interests and desires construct him as the exact opposite of Jane Austen: Tom Lefroy is depicted on a night out, on which he is fighting, drinking, flirting with prostitutes and, eventually, also spending the night with a woman, which is implied by the kiss he gives her the next morning before running off to law school. He is the model of imperfection in the 18th century: Pleasure is placed above his education, he is unpunctual, poor and shows hardly any respect to the authority of his uncle, the judge. As it is revealed later, only the union with a lover, with Jane, has the power to change him and make him feel complete.

These insights into two individuals that could not be more different, but are to form a love relationship in the course of the movie, presents the ideal basis for an antagonistic couple constellation. In the construction of Jane Austen's romantic body, her placement in a traditional romantic couple constellation plays a major role in signaling to the audience that these two characters are to be together. As it has happened numerous times in romances, the lovers-to-be have an antagonistic relationship in the beginning, but develop into a harmonic

couple. Jane and Tom meet for the first time at the Austens' house during the celebration of Cassandra's engagement. (min. 14) While Jane is reading a text she wrote for her sister, Tom Lefroy offends her three times: He interrupts her speech by his unpunctual appearance, he falls asleep and, finally, criticizes her writing in a talk with John Warren, which she happens to overhear. Tom describes her text as "accomplished enough", but his "metropolitan mind may be less susceptible to extended juvenile self-regard" (min. 18). A parallel is obvious to the viewer who has read *Pride and Prejudice*: In the beginning Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy's relationship is an antagonistic one as well and features a similar scene. At the ball where they meet for the first time, Elizabeth overhears Mr. Darcy evaluating her: "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me [...]." (Austen *PP* 11)

Nevertheless, Jane and Tom do not take as long as Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy to become a harmonic couple. They meet several more times in slightly comic and suggestive situations that establish their harmony. Even though many persons (for example John Warren or Tom's uncle) pose major antagonistic threats to the couple, it reacts as a unity against exterior opposition, and their harmony lasts until the very end and is only interrupted by a brief separation. In sum, traditional introductory scenes and the antagonistic couple constellation inherent to the romantic movie provide an ideal basis for the construction of Jane Austen's romantic body.

Not only initial antagonistic relationships, but, in general, also heterosexual (and monogamous) relationships enjoy great popularity in romances, especially when they are set at the end of the 18th century, where homosexual relations were not intended for the public domain. The romantic Jane Austen in *Becoming Jane* is placed in such a heterosexual (and monogamous) relationship and, therefore, corresponds to the structure of the traditional romance. Assuming that "traditional narratives are heteronarrative" (Roof referred to in Iyengar 125), Jane Austen's life is designed in this traditional way like Jane Austen's own novels are.

The on-screen relationship between Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy is a heterosexual one and no other character is in any way subversive with regard to sexual preference either. Apart from her love for Tom Lefroy, Jane only experiences sisterly love for Cassandra, who is herself engaged to a man. Her suitors are obviously interested in women and also her parents

propagate a happy marriage between a man and a woman. Julian Jarrold, the film's director, and the screenwriters Kevin Hood and Sarah Williams would have had the possibility of situating the 21st century romantic Jane Austen in a homosexual relationship, but refrained from doing so. Seemingly, it was decided to desist from upsetting Jane Austen's world and place her in an environment and a love relationship that appears very much like a world she herself created and that she knows well: the world of *Pride and Prejudice*. Just like Elizabeth Bennet the 21st century Jane Austen is a heterosexual lover.

When Jane Austen's body is to be constructed as a romantic one, it is only natural that she is placed in a romantic love story, in which her life is littered with romantic incidences and experiences. In order to allow the audience to recognize a romantic love story as such, most romances follow prefabricated narrative structures and so does *Becoming Jane*. The central narrative thread that runs through the whole movie is the relationship between Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy and all the other action is subordinated to the couple. However, there exists one subplot that, at first, appears to be of equal importance: Jane Austen's development as a writer. Nevertheless, in the course of the movie it becomes clear that this coexisting narrative strand is really just another subplot. If this subplot is assumed to be the B story of the movie, the romantic relationship between the lovers is the A story and, consequently, the film's main focus. This structure can be justified by the observance that the aim of the B story cannot be achieved without the existence of the A story, the love story. Everything, but especially the characters' development, wholly depends on the central love relationship, which is why Jane Austen the writer cannot develop without the romantic Jane Austen.

In this context, *Becoming Jane* frequently discusses the necessity of experience in love for the ability to write about love. During a conversation in Mrs. Lefroy's library (min. 34), Tom speaks to Jane about her "ignorance" and her "lack of history" that condemn her to write to "the status of female accomplishment". In practicing the art of fiction, as for Tom "experience is vital" (min. 35) to be the equal of a masculine author. After his speech Tom hands Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* to Jane. So, Jane's situation is presented as such that she cannot write about love without having known love herself. Even though a conversation with Mrs. Radcliffe at a later point (min. 60) suggests that imagination is just as important as experience, the film lets Jane Austen write a *Pride and Prejudice* that is based on her experience with Tom Lefroy. Not only does Tom Lefroy seem to be a model for Mr. Darcy in

*First Impressions*³³. Certain scenes in Jane's life in *Becoming Jane* strongly resemble moments in *Pride and Prejudice*, which proposes that the romantic Jane's love experience contributed essentially to the novel's development. Thus, the romantic Jane is indispensable for Jane Austen the writer.

Another 'romance rule' applicable to the love story of Jane Austen's life is the classic three-act structure that is usually found in romantic comedies. In the romantic melodrama it appears with a slight change in the ending, since the boy and the girl are not reunited:

- Conflict: Love challenges both Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy and by entering into a love relationship they risk much. There is a lot to lose on both sides, but the lovers still choose their feelings for each other over everything else. Jane is without money and is not properly provided for, when she marries a poor man like Tom Lefroy. Tom will not inherit his uncle's fortune, when he marries a woman who does not correspond to the judge's wishes.
- Crisis: The couple travels to London to convince the judge, Tom's uncle, of Jane's merit. However, a letter from John Warren arrives that declares Jane as not worthy of being Tom's wife in his uncle's eyes. Therefore, all hope seems shattered.
- Resolution: Jane and Tom try to elope, but, eventually, Jane decides against it. Her character has been transformed. She sacrifices her love to Tom Lefroy for the sake of his poor family who depends on him as provider and dedicates her life to the writing of novels instead.

Just like the life of William Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love*, the life of Jane Austen in *Becoming Jane* is carefully laid out along standard plot structures. It largely corresponds to what Mark Rubinfeld defines as the Separation Permission Plot and what is called Forbidden Love Plot by Anette Kaumann. Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy fall in love despite the fact that a marriage between them is almost impossible or forbidden because of the exterior obstacle of their poverty. Their status in society condemns them to include financial considerations in their choice of a partner. At the end of the 18th century mercenary marriages were still common, which is evident in Jane Austen's novels. Societal arrangements that consider the wealth as well as the position of the partner are required from the lovers by their authority

³³ *First Impressions* was begun by Jane Austen in October 1796 and completed in August 1797. After years of revision it was published under the title *Pride and Prejudice* in January 1813. (Poplawski 147)

figures. While Jane's mother wants her to marry for money, since she married for love and now has to grow her own potatoes, Judge Langlois wishes a wife with a good reputation and an acceptable position in society for Tom.

Nonetheless, the romantically involved hero and heroine dare to consult the authority figure who could make their union possible by approving of it. However, this authority figure, Tom's uncle, rejects their request, which means that Tom would receive no money from him anymore if he married Jane – money that his family in Ireland desperately needs. Jane and Tom encounter resistance that it is not possible to break, which leaves elopement as their sole chance of happiness. So, at first, it seems as if the lovers “choose each other over everything else” (Rubinfeld 63). This plot structure only appears authentic to the audience, because it is set in the 18th century, from which the 21st century viewer naturally distances himself or herself.

In combination with these narrative structures the Sacrifice Plot occurs in *Becoming Jane*. In the end, Jane Austen's conscience celebrates a victory over her heart: Altruistic motives induce her to leave Tom Lefroy while they are about to elope. When Jane finds a letter in Tom's coat, in which his mother expresses her gratitude for the money he sent (min. 92), she realizes that more is at stake than just her and Tom's future together. Her moral attitudes do not allow her to continue her journey with Tom and she leaves him to enable him to follow the wishes of his uncle and, in consequence, to provide for his family.

Finally, tied in with all the plots described is the First Love Plot. As one of the favorite plot structures among makers of romances, it is recognized by the audience as a romantic narrative strand and, therefore, is an ideal device for romanticizing the body of Jane Austen. She is depicted as an innocent woman who has not had any previous experiences with men. Tom Lefroy is the first man who moves her so deeply that she falls in love with him and that she never again loves another man as much as him, which is indicated several times. For example, when she kisses him for the first time, she apparently thinks of it as her last kiss, as she says: “I wanted, just once, to do it well.” (min. 60) That this love relationship is not the first one in the case of the male part is not uncommon in recent romantic movies. However, even though Tom Lefroy is not innocent and inexperienced with regard to women, Jane seems to be the first woman he really loves. There is no allusion to any previous ‘important’

women in his life, in contrast to Will Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* who is already married. So, even if Tom may have had relations with women, his relationship with Jane is special, as he is willing to make sacrifices for her, and hence equals a first love. In sum, the classic three-act structure together with the Separation Permission Plot, the Forbidden Love Plot, the Sacrifice Plot and the First Love Plot organize the life of Jane Austen in *Becoming Jane* and thereby endow it with a romantic air.

In order to romanticize the body of Jane Austen not only her general life story dictated by the plot structure, but also particular occurrences and experiences inherent to the romance genre are of service in *Becoming Jane*. These romantic “building blocks” (Kaufmann 99) or tropes are repeatedly featured in romances and, therefore, recognized by the audience that then understands the life of Jane Austen in *Becoming Jane* as romantic. One of these tropes is the first meeting of the characters, the ‘boy meets girl’, that lays the foundation of the future relationship and hence is obligatory. The lovers meet at the Austens’ house during a private event: Cassandra’s engagement. The audience is already informed about the common bond between Jane Austen and Tom Lefroy from the DVD cover and the introductory sequences that introduce them as the protagonists and, therefore, the lovers. However, on a diegetic level the lovers themselves are unsuspecting of the emotions about to develop between them.

The ‘magical moment’ that is vital to the development of Will and Viola’s relationship in *Shakespeare in Love* is spared. The form that the first meeting of Jane and Tom assumes is the aversion at first sight. At the celebration of Cassandra’s engagement Tom interrupts her speech (min. 15) by coming late and without apologizing and an arrogant air takes a seat. Jane’s facial expression effectively displays her dislike of this presumptuous person, which later at the first ball, the Basingstoke Assembly, is expressed verbally. She speaks of his “preening, prancing, Irish-cum-Bond-Street airs” (min. 24) to her brother, when Tom suddenly appears behind her and seems to have overheard their conversation. So, in a playful way the scene in which Jane overhears Tom criticizing her writing that resembles Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy’s scene in *Pride and Prejudice* is reversed. Nevertheless, Jane’s aversion does not decline immediately, which is stressed by a letter she writes to her sister the next morning, in which she refers to Tom Lefroy “as the most disagreeable, insolent, arrogant, impudent, insufferable, impertinent of men” (min. 26). This aversion, however, normally

lasts only for a certain period, since it is not fundamental, but was simply caused by Tom's misbehavior and solely overshadows their actual attraction.

The developing interest in the other person is established and conveyed to the audience in a series of unintentional reencounters that correspond to the category of the 'meet cute'. The lovers-to-be meet in "humorous, unlikely or suggestive manner" (McDonald 12) in several situations. When they meet alone during a walk through Selbourne wood Tom embarrasses himself by falling down accompanied by comical musical elements (min. 21) and seemingly enjoys the following ironic conversation with Jane. At another time when they meet alone in the Lefroys' library Tom embarrasses Jane by reading to her about the mating ritual of swifts (min. 33). Jane even happens to see Tom naked when she and Eliza follow Tom and Henry to a river where they undress and run into the water (min. 31).

In the following sequences, in which Jane and Tom actually get to know each other, the interior process of their falling in love with each other is conveyed to the audience by exterior signals. During shared activities they gradually approach each other and start to feel closer. One of these shared activities is a game of cricket, at which the whole family and many friends are present. When Mr. Wisley is reluctant to play, Jane replaces him and demonstrates that she is actually good at cricket, by which Tom seems delighted and impressed (min. 30). They further discover a shared interest in literature and discuss Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* one day after church (min. 37). On a trip to the Laverton fair Jane and Tom are shown walking together, talking and occasionally smiling at each other. When Tom is knocked out in a fight, Jane caringly touches his face and is seemingly impressed by his sense of justice, since he stepped in for the weaker fighter (min. 40).

Following these careful approaches is the physical intimacy between the lovers that nullifies all doubt about their feelings for each other on a diegetic as well as on an extra-diegetic level. A standard trope that is placed at the beginning of a series of physically intimate moments is the first physical contact. Jane and Tom's first physical contact happens intentionally, but unconsciously on Jane's side. When Tom is knocked out during the fight at the Laverton fair and falls to the ground, Jane runs to him and touches his face (min. 40). She holds his face with both hands and even strokes him until he wakes up. His first words produce a realization in her with regard to what she is doing and she hastily withdraws her hands. This suggestive

moment is accentuated by an implied profile-two shot in the following conversation (Fig. 20). The type of shot indicates that this is a turning point in their relationship, since it implies more intimacy between the Jane and Tom than there has been before.



Fig. 20: Jane and Tom in a profile-two shot

Another key situation that helps to construct a romantic Jane Austen is the dance that is the only legitimate possibility for Jane and Tom to touch in public in the 18th century setting. The societal ritual of the dance allows them closeness and, like Jane Austen herself writes in *Pride and Prejudice*, “[t]o be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love” (Austen *PP* 9). However, over the first ball in *Becoming Jane*, which resembles the Meryton Assembly in *Pride and Prejudice*, where Elizabeth Bennet meets Mr. Darcy for the first time (Cano López, García-Periago), a shadow is cast by Jane’s aversion for Tom. It is the second ball (min. 51) during which Jane and Tom engage in a romantic and suggestive dance (min. 52). When Jane cannot find Tom she feels obliged to dance with Mr. Wisley. Accompanied by violins they dance in constellations of two and four people when seemingly out of nowhere Tom enters such a constellation and dances with Jane for a while. The violins seem to assume a more dramatic air and appear louder, when Jane recognizes Tom and starts to dance with him. Their dance is organized by different shots, of which the most prominent are over-the-shoulder shots (Fig. 21) and profile-two shots (Fig. 22) that suggest an intimate relationship, as they do during the dancing sequence in *Shakespeare in Love*.



Fig. 21: Jane and Tom in an over-the-shoulder shot



Fig. 22: Jane and Tom in a profile-two shot

After the intimacy between Jane and Tom has been established by their unintentional reencounters, their shared activities, their first touch and the dance described above, they seem ready to seal their love with a kiss. This targeted action functions as a symbol among the standard situations that signifies the definite devotion of the characters. Soon after the second dance referred to above the upset Jane leaves the house and escapes into the garden, where Tom joins her. Jane finally openly admits that she has strong feelings for him, when she asks him how it is possible for her to dispose of herself with affection when he is leaving the next day (min. 59). The following kiss is Jane's first kiss and, for all the audience knows, may well be Tom's first kiss out of love, which bestows this moment with a particular

romantic significance. The lovers kiss again after their temporary separation (min. 86) and at the beginning of their elopement (min. 89), but, in general, scenes of physical intimacy are rare. With regard to a sexual act the film largely adheres to 18th century rules of propriety. Apart from a married couple (Jane's parents) and a married couple-to-be (Eliza De Feuillide and Henry Austen) no sexual contact between any movie characters is alluded to in *Becoming Jane*.

Despite Jane and Tom's initial happiness, the romantic life of Jane Austen is furnished with obstacles as with most other narratives. Considering the three-act structure Jane and Tom reach the Crisis stage soon after their first kiss. The trope of the Argument does not even have to be applied, since the Forbidden Love Plot presents enough complications. Resistance against the lovers' union has existed from the beginning, on the one hand, from Jane's mother, and on the other hand, from Tom's uncle, the judge. Even though he has never met Jane, societal boundaries make it clear that the judge would not consider her eligible, as she is poor and inherits no reputable position in society. Nonetheless, Tom lets Jane come to London, where he wants to present her to his uncle and ask for his consent.

This plan marks the prelude to the Crisis act's climax: the uncle's angry rejection (min. 70). The judge receives a letter from Hampshire, of which the content and the sender remain unmentioned, and denies Tom's wish blind with rage by calling Jane a "penniless little husband-hunter" (min. 71). This argument is followed by a short form of the trope of Disagreement, when Tom tells Jane that he cannot marry without his uncle's consent, which Jane would be willing to do. The disappointed Jane withdraws after the argument and the lovers reach a state of temporary separation. Nevertheless, they could not reach the final act of Resolution, if their character was not induced to grow during the Crisis. So, after Tom's realization that he cannot live this lie and that he cannot marry Ms. Wexford (min. 87)³⁴, the lovers reunite only to allow Jane to realize that her character has grown, which encourages her to cancel the elopement in the Resolution act.

The final act, the Resolution, determines almost the whole nature of *Becoming Jane*: The movie may have its comedic moments, but the unhappy ending declares it to be a romantic

³⁴ "What value will there be in life, if we are not together?" (min. 87) are the exact words that convince Jane that his affection is honest and true.

drama or a melodramatic romance. Two particular standard situations determine the unhappy ending: the Separation and the Sacrifice. When Jane and Tom are already eloping, Jane has the sudden realization that she has to sacrifice their love, when she discovers a letter from Tom's mother. Tom will have more mouths to feed than just his own and Jane's, which is why he depends on his uncle and especially on the marriage to a rich woman. If Tom married Jane, he would seal the fate of his family as well. "My sweet, sweet friend, you will sink and we will all sink with you." (min. 95) is one of Jane's last sentences before she takes the coach back to Hampshire.

Since Tom and Jane still love each other, as they declare, and only separate due to altruistic motives, the parting scene is one of the most emotional moments in *Becoming Jane*, as it is in *Shakespeare in Love*. Dramatic strings accompany the scene in which Jane looks out of the coach window only to see Tom's image getting smaller as the coach reaches an ever greater distance. Nevertheless, like in *Shakespeare in Love*, an immortal bond between the lovers is preserved. "[T]heir union may ultimately prove more metaphorical than that found in traditional happy endings" (McDonald 13), but it exists in Tom's daughter, who is introduced in the trope that ends the movie, and in Jane's writing. Jane and Tom cannot be together in a physical sense, i.e. they cannot marry, but Tom is immortalized in the romantic occurrences in *First Impressions* or *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, it seems that Jane lives on for Tom, since he gave his daughter the name 'Jane'.

This ending is then followed by another trope that is also employed in *Shakespeare in Love*: the Farewell. On the one hand, *Becoming Jane*'s epilogue stresses once again that the ending of the love story is unhappy and that it cannot be reversed: Scenes of the young Jane writing *First Impressions* blend in with scenes of the performance of an opera singer. The camera pans over the audience only to reveal an aged Jane (min. 105) who, after the concert, meets an aged Tom Lefroy with his daughter Jane (min. 107). Apparently, Tom is married and even has a child, which excludes every possibility of a reunion of the lovers. On the other hand, a fulfillment of the B story has been achieved by the failure of the A story: Jane is a celebrated and admired writer, which is accentuated when Tom's daughter admits to be her greatest fan. Had Jane never met Tom Lefroy, she would have lacked the romantic experience to write *First Impressions*, with which she laid the foundation of her career in the movie. To sum up, not only the Farewell, but also tropes like the first meeting or the first kiss shape Jane

Austen's life story significantly. Jane and Tom's meeting, the process of getting to know each other, intimacy between them and their separation, in brief almost all romantic occurrences, are designed by the employment of traditional tropes in the romance.

Also *Becoming Jane*'s setting is vital for the development of the romantic love story, in which Jane Austen is placed. In contrast to *Shakespeare in Love*, in which a big city facilitates the lovers' meeting, Jane Austen's love life is situated in the country. The movie's first image introduces the setting even before the characters are shown: A long shot as the establishing shot depicts the countryside of Hampshire. (Fig. 23) Tom Lefroy comes as a stranger from London to the country, where most people are acquainted with each other, and, therefore, receives much attention and arises interest in, for instance, Lucy Lefroy, and, eventually, Jane Austen. Only because people in the country and, above all, neighbors are particularly close and move easily amongst each other's houses and the same outdoor places, Jane and Tom unintentionally meet.

A large part of the action and especially romantic meetings and occurrences between Jane and Tom happen in this countryside, either outside, or at Steventon, the Lefroys' home or at balls. When the action once moves away from the country to London, its entire romantic idyll vanishes with it. In Tom's uncle's house in London Jane is the stranger coming from the outside and threatens the uncle's idyll with regard to his plans for Tom. Furthermore, some of the locations are romanticized by romantic symbols, which is discussed in 5.2.11. Generally speaking, the whole complex of Jane's love story depends on the setting that enables the plot structure to unfold by setting the scene for meetings and the like.



Fig. 23: The Hampshire countryside

As the environment surrounding Jane Austen is almost as romanticized as her own body in the process of romanticizing the author, minor characters also correspond to the romance's characteristic appearance. Among these minor characters certain stock characters are found in the romance's repertoire and in *Becoming Jane*: Especially the unsuitable partner and the good friend enjoy great popularity. Even though Jane Austen has two suitors, Mr. Wisley and John Warren, only one is depicted as the unsuitable partner, as the latter only reveals his intentions towards the end. On several occasions Mr. Wisley's unsuitability as a partner for Jane is stressed: He does not enjoy balls like Jane, he is very shy and quiet in contrast to Jane who is constantly talking and expressing her opinion, and he is, in general, very clumsy in his approaches towards women. Even though at times he reveals a poetic side that seems to suit Jane, she never sees any merit in him. One scene in the movie finds an accurate exterior expression for Jane and Mr. Wisley's interior unsuitability: During a dance at the first ball Mr. Wisley steps on Jane's foot, which makes her utter a piercing cry and draws the attention of most people in the ballroom to the two dancers who now stand still. (min. 24) Their inharmonious dancing symbolizes the impossibility of a union between the two, whereas Jane's next dance with Tom Lefroy is distinguished by harmonious dancing moves and an animated conversation. The contrast between these two dances accentuates "the rightness of the central romance" (McDonald 11).

The role of the good friend that Jane confides in is taken by her sister Cassandra and her cousin Eliza De Feuillide. Her letters to Cassandra and her private conversations with Eliza

are the film's means of verbalizing Jane's thoughts, emotions and motives with regard to her romance. For example, the audience learns about her opinion of Tom Lefroy after the first ball in a letter to Cassandra (min. 27) or about her attitude towards mercenary marriages in a conversation with Eliza before the second ball (min. 49). Nevertheless, even though Jane Austen's relationship to her sister was probably the most important in her life, it is not discussed in depth, since she solely functions as a minor character in *Becoming Jane*. All in all, the unsuitable partner and the good friend may simply appear like an ineffectual part of the props, but actually fulfill a role in the romanticizing of Jane Austen.

Another feature inherent to romances and, therefore, also to *Becoming Jane* is the music that accompanies the action either in the foreground or in the background. In general, the music in the movie acts supportive on two levels. Firstly, it transports the viewer back in time and place to Jane Austen's idyllic and romantic countryside in the 18th century. Adrian Johnston, the composer of the score, adds "authentic period flavor" (Clark) to the film with folk dances at the first dance, the Basingstoke Assembly, which Jane refers to as a "country dance" (min. 25) and at the Laverton fair. Also Jane and Tom's dance at the second ball is accompanied by strings that set the period and, at first, are source-music, but as the dance proceeds form part of the score.

Secondly, like in *Shakespeare in Love*, certain themes accompany the romantic action and thereby accentuate the couple's emotions. On an extra-diegetic level, such a romantic theme is recognized by the viewer throughout the film and is connoted in the audience's minds with romantic action. The predominant love theme that accompanies all the 'happy' romantic action in *Becoming Jane* is "a lush and deeply romantic crowd pleaser, featuring a lovely octave leap at its dramatic apex" (Clark) that can be first heard during Jane and Tom's first kiss (min. 60), where it starts with soft piano tunes. Moreover, their elopement (min. 90), "where the arpeggiated piano motifs underlying the string melody evoke an unmistakably similar moment from Dario Marianelli's *Pride and Prejudice* score" (Clark), and the aged Jane's final public reading (min. 109) in the film are accompanied by this theme.

Apart from the love theme, the lovers' meetings in the Selbourne wood feature another noticeable theme that is at one time comical and at another time sad, but always accompanies scenes that signal the lovers' interest in the other: When Tom and Jane meet unintentionally

in the woods the music spreads a comic air in Tom's scenes, who has difficulties walking on the uneven and dirty ground, while it sheds its comical attitude when the camera shifts to Jane. (min. 20) The music continues until they begin their conversation. When Tom and Jane meet again at what appears like the exact same place in the wood, they are about to decide their elopement and kiss accompanied by this theme. (min. 88) Furthermore, the theme is employed when intimacy between them is finally established, in the scene, in which Jane touches Tom for the first time when he lies on the ground after a fight. (min. 41) The theme does not only remind the audience of the lovers' meetings in the woods on an extra-diegetic level. It is also used on a diegetic level when Jane plays it on the piano after her return from the failed elopement attempt. (min. 101) Even though in the film's diegesis Jane has never heard this melody, she plays it (to the audience) and reminds them of past romantic scenes. This reminiscence, accompaniment and enforcement of romantic scenes in *Becoming Jane* by the score as well as by source-music are major building blocks in the construction of Jane Austen's romantic body.

5.2.2. An Analysis of the Microstructure of *Becoming Jane*

On the microlevel of the movie, verbal communication as a sign for romantic love is essential in transforming Jane Austen's life into a love story. As it is the case in *Shakespeare in Love*, confessions of love largely resemble standard phrases inherent to the romantic film genre that the audience has presumably internalized and, thus, recognizes without difficulty. Phrases like "I'm yours, heart and soul." (min. 61) or "What value will there be in life, if we are not together?" (min. 87) romanticize the action, but are not a special feature of this particular romance. What functions as a special means of signaling the attraction between Jane and Tom, however, are their verbal flirtations. Their suggestive content and playful manner is filed by the audience under a certain code for flirting. The importance of such flirting to a woman is reinforced by Jane's cousin Eliza: "Flirting is a woman's trade. One must keep in practice." (min. 28) While the first two of Jane and Tom's flirtatious conversations, of which one happens in Selbourne wood (min. 21) and the other at the Basingstoke Assembly (min. 25), stress their aversion rather than their attraction, they are, nevertheless, coined by their interest for the other. There is a playful to and fro that implies that they cannot completely break away from the other. In the wood, after each has turned around continuously to go away and is forced to return by the other's words, Tom engages Jane into a discussion about

writing, which he knows to be a topic of interest to her. During their first dance they tease each other with their words while they dance around the room and are separated occasionally. This causes breaks in their conversation that compel them to stop talking and resume their sentences when they are close again, which stresses the playful manner of their relation.

If these minor verbal flirtations in Selbourne wood and at the Basingstoke assembly represent the foreplay, Jane and Tom's conversation in the Lefroys' library signals the climax of their flirtation. It is the verbally most expressive sign of their (sexual) attraction and a forerunner of their romantic love relationship. Incidentally they meet in the Lefroys' library, where Tom is reading Mr. White's *Natural History*, a book about the country of Hampshire. In one scene Tom approaches Jane while he is reading to her the following words: "Then, one leaps onto the back of another, grasps tightly and forgetting to fly they both sink down and down, in a great dying fall, fathom after fathom, until the female utters... [...] The female utters a loud, piercing cry ... of ecstasy." (min. 34) By reading to her about the mating ritual of swifts Tom visibly confuses and arouses Jane. The explicitness of the sexual act described is, in the first place, used by Tom to demonstrate to Jane that she lacks the experience to be the equal of a masculine writer. However, it does not go without notice that, at the same time, he is tantalizing and teasing her, i.e. that he is flirting with her. The playful manner of their conversation is again accentuated by a constant physical to and fro between the shelves of the library. More ambiguous statements confirm this suspicion: Smilingly he tells her that her "horizons must be widened by an extraordinary young man" (min. 35). While he is actually referring to Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which he hands to her later, Jane and the audience are not aware of the ambiguity of Tom's statement and assign it one single meaning: That Jane's horizons must be widened by Tom.

Specific modes of speaking as well as breaks and silences are no less significant in conveying the characters' (romantic) emotions in *Becoming Jane*. The quiet voice or the whisper lend Jane and Tom's conversations an intimate and secretive air. After their dance at the second ball they stand back to back, while their faces are turned to different groups of people. (min. 54) Despite this lack of eye contact, Tom seems to have noticed who is standing behind him and begins a conversation with Jane. Almost more important than their words is their manner of talking: They do not look at each other, but speak quietly or even whisper to the other. None of the other guests seems to notice their conversation. For the duration of this tender

exchange of words they inhabit their own private world that is kept a secret from everyone else. Moreover, Jane's reactions to Tom reveal that he stirs emotions in her. For example, in the library scene described above the usually talkative and eloquent Jane remains silent for an extended period and even stutters when Tom has finished reading about the mating ritual of swifts and asks her: "Is this conduct commonplace in the natural history of Hampshire?" (min. 34) Jane's silence and her stuttering becomes a meaningful signifier not only of her confusion with regard to the sexual explicitness of Tom's words, but also of Tom's ability to discompose her. In sum, Jane and Tom's mode of speaking as much as their actual words signal to the audience that interest and feelings for the other have developed on both sides and hence construct Jane Austen as a romantic figure.

Alongside verbal communication, nonverbal communication plays a major role in the representation of romantic love in *Becoming Jane*. Mimic, gestural and proxemic signs signal the characters' attraction and (romantic) love for each other and hence are an indispensable element in the construction of a romantic Jane Austen. As it is the case with *Shakespeare in Love* and presumably with romances in general, occurrences of this type of signs are numerous and manifold and, therefore, cannot all be mentioned here. One or two significant representations each are discussed in this section in order to illustrate the semiotic value of nonverbal communication.

With regard to mimic signs, Jane and Tom's dance at the second ball presents the eyes and the mouth as particularly powerful transmitters of romantic love. Since their relationship began by aversion and not love at first sight, none of their initial eye contacts conveys as much emotion as the one established during this dance, which is soon followed by their first kiss. At the beginning of the ball Jane's eyes are searching for Tom Lefroy but instead meet Mr. Wisley, who asks her to dance. Jane agrees, but during their dance hardly ever looks into his eyes and if she does, it happens only for a brief moment. This involuntary and interrupted eye contact stands in contrast to her eye contact with Tom who unexpectedly joins the dance (min. 53). From that moment onward in which they first looked into each other's eyes they only avert their gaze when forced to by the dance's movements. Their eyes remain in a state of fixation, which signals their romantic love interest for each other. While the scarce eye contact with Mr. Wisley signifies the exact opposite, namely disinterest, a series of medium shots (Fig. 24), over-the-shoulder shots and profile-two shots depict Jane and Tom's

sustained and suggestive eye contact. The quick glance is replaced by an extended look that sends a more powerful message on a diegetic level as well as on an extra-diegetic level: The lovers are assured of the other's feelings and the audience is presented with a strong sign of affection between the protagonists.



Fig. 24: Jane and Tom's sustained eye contact

Another mimic sign that effectively reveals Jane and Tom's romantic emotions is the smile. It is an essential element in their nonverbal communication during the dance. While their eyes that remain fixed on each other seem to imply that they do not want to let each other go, their smiles signal their joy on seeing the loved one. As soon as they have beheld the other their mouths form a smile (Fig. 25 and Fig. 26). Their smiles function not only as a sign that conveys their romantic feelings to the audience. They are also used as a means of communication between the two characters. Since it is impossible to talk during this dance, they express their pleasure about seeing the other through mimic signs. Moreover, these signs are also visible to the other guests: Jane's parents and Mr. Wisley's aunt, Lady Gresham, perceive the nonverbal communication between the couple as well.



Fig. 25: Tom smiles on seeing Jane



Fig. 26: Jane smiles on seeing Tom

As far as gestural signs are concerned, hands are not only an instrument for writing romantic words in *Becoming Jane*, but also play a role in conveying romantic actions. There are two particularly suggestive scenes, in which Jane Austen is involved, that stress the importance of hands in Jane and Tom's nonverbal communication. The first one is part of the dancing sequence described above, in which this gesture alone would not be assigned any special meaning. Jane and Tom are dancing and, as the prescribed dance moves require, Tom places his hand on Jane's lower back (Fig. 27). However, the way this shot is framed tells the audience that there is more to this gesture than solely its requirement at this stage of the

dance. The lovers' heads and all other characters are excluded from the picture. It only depicts the couple from behind with Tom's hand being placed on Jane's lower back. Thereby, the placement of Tom's hand is assigned a special significance. Be it that Tom can finally touch Jane, which he has desired for a long time, or that Jane feels excitement at the touch of Tom's hand, the framing of the shot signals to the audience that this gesture has a special meaning for the couple.

The second gesture that represents Jane and Tom's affection is shown at a point in the film at which they have already established a romantic relationship. When the judge welcomes his visitors in London and they are ascending the stairs, Tom and Jane are the last of the party and, therefore, remain unseen by the others. (min. 62) In a tender and secretive gesture Tom's fingers touch and briefly stroke Jane's. (Fig. 28) Tom's hand searching for Jane's is symbolic for his longing for her, and his desire to be near her and to touch her. This symbolic gesture also stands for Tom's romantic feelings for Jane and constructs her as the object of Tom's desire.

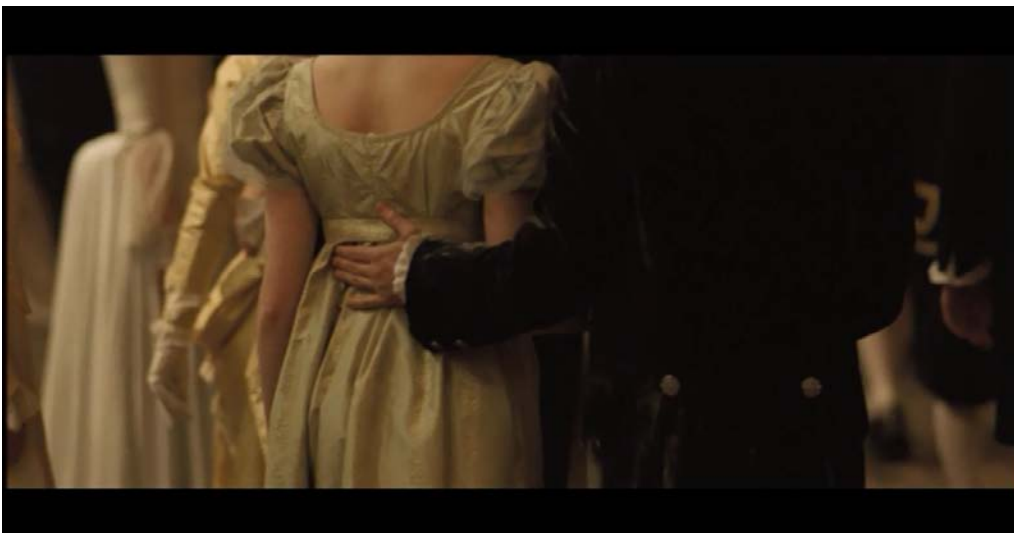


Fig. 27: Tom places his hand on Jane's lower back



Fig. 28: Tom touches Jane's hand

In one significant scene in the film, which marks a pivotal point in Jane and Tom's relationship, the mimic sign of the eye contact, the gestural sign of the touch by hand and one of the most expressive proxemic signs blend to design a romantic moment. As it was mentioned earlier in this paper, the Laverton fair brings a change to Tom and Jane's regard for each other. Even though they have been flirting heavily up to this point, the distance between the characters has always remained an acceptable one under the rules of conduct in the Regency period, which were only briefly and unintentionally disregarded before. However, when Tom is lying on the ground after the fight, the events follow in quick succession. (min. 40) At first, Jane caringly touches Tom's face with both hands, but quickly withdraws them, when he wakes up. In the following conversation they look into each other's eyes for an extended period of time and the distance between them narrows down, which is depicted in a profile-two shot. (Fig. 20 on page 97) The distance between their faces amounts to about 15 centimeters, which can be called an intimate distance. The audience that is familiar with this bodily code understands this sign and in their minds assign romantic feelings to the characters. So, this sudden proximity, which has not been shown between the two characters before, combined with the touch and the intense look unmistakably signal that an intimate love relationship between Jane and Tom is going to develop. In brief, *Becoming Jane* can neither abandon mimic or gestural nor proxemic signs in the construction of a romantic Jane Austen that is supposed to be perceived as such by the movie audience.

In the construction of Jane Austen's romantic body, particular attention is also paid to her and Tom Lefroy's physical appearances and attire. Both characters correspond to the common romance convention that "[h]ero and heroine should be both good-looking and sexy" (Kaplan 178). This feature is essential in designing them as objects of male or female desire and most romance heroes and heroines possess it. While attractiveness on an extra-diegetic level is purely subjective, *Becoming Jane* creates an attractive Jane and a handsome Tom on a diegetic level as well. Jane and Tom closely resemble Will and Viola in *Shakespeare in Love* in their representation as desirable (marriage) partners.

In the film's reality Tom is a womanizer just like Will Shakespeare. In his introductory scenes he is shown kissing a woman who presumably is a prostitute (min. 8), while he kisses another woman goodbye the next morning (min. 10) after he has been to a 'Tahitian love fest'. Moreover, throughout the whole movie Tom's reputation and experience are highlighted, which conveys a picture of a man experienced in love and hence desired by women. Even though Jane Austen behaves like the Regency rule dictates women to conduct themselves, there are other ways to express her desirability. Three different men fall in love with Jane: Mr. Wisley, John Warren, and Tom Lefroy. Their love reaches an extent that even induces them to abandon their families (Tom Lefroy) or to sabotage other people's happiness only to be with the beloved one (John Warren). Even though their love for Jane may have other reasons apart from her physical appearance as well, it is assumed that her looks are a major factor, since the suitors barely know her at first.

Clothes also contribute their share to construct the "good-looking and sexy" (Kaplan 178) Jane and Tom. Jane's physical appeal is emphasized by her accentuated cleavage in the sexually connoted library scene (min. 33), whereas Tom is simply shown without clothes on certain occasions. When he is introduced at the beginning of the film, the audience meets him during a fight, in which his naked torso is displayed. (min. 8) Later in the movie, after the game of cricket, Jane and Eliza observe Tom and Henry when they undress to swim naked. (min. 31) Tom and Henry are depicted in a subjective long shot from Jane and Eliza's perspective and are completely naked. The film's aim does not only seem to be to arouse Jane or Tom, but also to arouse and excite the viewer, i.e. to draw attention to Jane and Tom's bodies on an extra-diegetic level. So, with their construction as physically attractive

characters Jane and Tom correspond to the conventional protagonists in common romances and, in consequence, a further building block is added to the romantic body of Jane Austen.

Moreover, *Becoming Jane* adds a symbolic dimension to Jane Austen's environment. Most viewers of romances possess a certain knowledge about these preexisting signs or symbols that signal romantic love, since they are utilized in romantic movies continuously, and, consequently, can apply this knowledge. While romantic symbols in general are scarce in the film, candles appear frequently throughout the movie, which is already known to be a common romanticizing device from the discussion of *Shakespeare in Love*. Candlelight is not only shown frequently as part of the Regency setting props, but is also used to romanticize settings during romantic scenes.

One of the most romantic scenes in the film, the first kiss, is not only accompanied by the musical love theme, but is also romanticized by torchlight in the distance. (min. 60) From the perspective of the camera's long shot everything seems to be enveloped in darkness. Only the torches glow in the distance and set the scene for the lovers' intimate togetherness. (Fig. 29) Another scene in which candlelight is an essential factor for the creation of a romantic atmosphere is the moment when Jane and Tom say goodnight before they go to sleep in his uncle's house in London. Their faces reach an intimate distance and even touch only lighted by candles, while tender words are exchanged. (min. 67) (Fig. 30) In both scenes torchlight and candlelight do not accompany the romantic action, but enforce it by conveying their symbolic dimension to the audience that is familiar with romance conventions. Thus, in part the romantic Jane Austen is created and reinforced by romantic symbols.



Fig. 29: Jane and Tom kiss by torchlight



Fig. 30: Jane and Tom almost kiss by candlelight

5.2.3. Beloved Jane in *Becoming Jane* – A Summary

On an overarching narrative level as well as on a smaller detail-loving scale *Becoming Jane* reminds the viewer of a fairly conventional melodramatic romance. The film employs several building blocks pervasive in common knowledge and defined by researchers on the topic as components of the romance. The movie is shaped significantly by the couple's antagonistic and later harmonic constellation, by its prevailing heteronormativity, the classic three-act structure, the Separation Permission or the Forbidden Love Plot, elements of the Sacrifice and the First Love Plot, tropes like the meet cute or the Farewell, a typical local setting, the

stock characters of the unsuitable partner and the good friend and various (romantic) musical themes. The film's appearance is further designed by flirtatious conversations, extensive eye contact and exchanges of smiles between the lovers, suggestive gestures of the hands, intimate proximity, an attractive physical appearance of the lovers and romantically connoted candlelight. All of the signs listed above and discussed in the preceding analysis are linked to the film genre of the romance or the notion of romantic love. These signs further relate to certain codes, such as mass media, genre, bodily, commodity or behavioral codes that consciously or unconsciously deliver a message to the audience and induce the viewer to classify the movie: *Becoming Jane* is perceived as a romance and Jane Austen is regarded as a romantic figure. So, the building stones or signs that significantly contribute to the appearance of *Becoming Jane*, also decisively participate in the construction of the romantic body of Jane Austen.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to present one of the many bodies that have been assigned to William Shakespeare and Jane Austen throughout the centuries, namely the romantic body in the filmic world of the 20th and the 21st century. Among all of the representations of the authors that are available today this particular one was chosen, because of its currency³⁵ and the popularity of the romantic film genre in our times. In order to prepare the ground for the analysis and the understanding of this specific incorporation the histories of Shakespeare and Austen's embodiments have been outlined, the concept of history and the notion of the real author have been relativized, and film's special quality of history telling has been discussed. Furthermore, the notion of romantic love, the authors' connection with it and the nature of the romantic film have been analyzed as a preface for an examination of the romantic bodies of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen.

Eventually, *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* have been analyzed along the lines of a previously defined framework. This framework unites typical elements of the romance like certain plot structures or traditional musical accompaniment with visual representations of interior romantic feelings. With regard to the theory of the semiotics of film, these elements are signs that relate to codes that in turn organize the viewers' perception process. Since these codes are usually acquired at an early age, as they determine the membership to a certain group or culture, the signs are unconsciously related to and understood within the scope of certain codes during their perception. Examples for codes that are applied in the present analysis are as follows: verbal language, bodily codes (mimic or gestural signs), commodity codes (physical appearance or props), behavioral codes (proxemic signs), genre, rhetorical and stylistic codes (plot structures or musical accompaniment), mass media codes (the profile-two shot), and ideological codes (heteronormativity). As far as *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* are concerned, the elements or signs standing for the romantic film genre or the idea of romantic love as defined by secondary literature on the subject decisively influence the representation of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen. They depict them and convey them to the audience as characters with romantic feelings in a romantic environment

³⁵ The 20th and the 21st century have witnessed the romantic embodiment of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), *Becoming Jane* (2007) and *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008).

and hence romanticize them, i.e. they transform the immaterial idea of the author into a material romantic body.

In pursuing and having achieved the aim of a representation of the romantic body many more questions have been raised and certain subjects have not received the extensive discussion that they deserve: Are *Shakespeare in Love* and *Becoming Jane* revolutionary and subversive in their endings that deny a fulfillment of the love story? Or do they continue the trend of the traditional romance by adhering to its genre conventions? How is the female protagonist presented in the movie and what does this presentation tell the audience about the movies' ideology in terms of gender relations? What happens and what will happen to the idea of the author, when it is so frequently and randomly transformed? And, is the perception of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's works affected by this frequent transformation and their diverse and modern embodiments, as it is claimed in the succeeding statement:

The recent crop of biopics presents the novels as so limited by the unchangeable and sometimes unknowable circumstances of [Shakespeare and] Austen's [lives] that the books can have no relevance or interest to contemporary audiences except as trivia or gossip. (Gevirtz)

What is it that is actually admired – the authors themselves, their works, or a particular reconstructed incorporation of the author?

Unfortunately, the scope of the present paper is too small to answer all of these questions. There is no doubt, however, that they will be answered one day in other papers on and discussions of the subject, since William Shakespeare and Jane Austen's embodiments appear infinite. While another romantic Jane Austen was only recently created in the film *Miss Austen Regrets* (dir. Jeremy Lovering, 2008), a new impersonation of William Shakespeare will be presented in *Anonymous* (dir. Roland Emmerich, 2011). The authors may not be physically present anymore, but there is no doubt that they are alive and are living on in people's minds in various diverse appearances, as it was demonstrated in several of the present paper's sections. However, in which body they will present themselves or will rather be presented to the public in the future, only time will tell. Even though their incorporations have been manifold up to the present, the full transformational potential of the abstract notions of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen has not been exploited yet.

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Appendix 1: Deutschsprachige Zusammenfassung

Will and Jane in Love – Die Romantisierung des Autors im populären Kino um die Jahrtausendwende: Die Verkörperung von William Shakespeare und Jane Austen in den Filmen *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) und *Becoming Jane* (2007).

Sowohl William Shakespeare als auch Jane Austen blicken auf eine jahrhundertelange Geschichte der Verkörperung der Autorenfigur zurück. Bereits kurz nach dem Tod der Autoren, der bei Shakespeare im Jahre 1616 und bei Jane Austen 1817 eintrat, verlor sich die „Wahrheit“ über diese beiden Persönlichkeiten – ihr Ruhm und die Aufmerksamkeit, die den Autoren wie auch ihren Werken geschenkt wurde, begannen jedoch stetig anzusteigen. Schon bald wollte sich der „Fan“ nicht mehr mit der Idee einer Autorenfigur, welche die literarischen Legenden zurückließen, begnügen und William Shakespeare sowie Jane Austen bekamen verschiedene Rollen und Körper zugeordnet.

Die Bandbreite dieser Rollen und Körper war und ist unermesslich: Von gefeierten Ruhmträgern, über kultisch verehrte Stars und Heilige, bis hin zur Touristenattraktion – die Autoren fanden sich über die Jahrhunderte in den unterschiedlichsten Verkörperungen wieder. Neben dieser Apotheose und der kultischen Anbetung der beiden Autoren existiert jedoch ein weiterer Trend, der ebenfalls kurz nach ihrem Tod einsetzte und der sich nun vor allem in den Print- und Filmmedien des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts herauskristallisiert: William Shakespeare und Jane Austen werden in einer Form rekonstruiert, die es dem/r LeserIn bzw. AnhängerIn ermöglicht, nicht mehr länger zu den Autoren aufzublicken, sondern sich ihnen so nahe und verbunden wie möglich zu fühlen – die Schriftsteller werden mit einem tatsächlichen Aussehen - einem physikalischen Körper - als auch mit einem individuellen Charakter versehen.

Unter all den diversen Erscheinungsformen, seien es jene in Literatur und Film oder auch frühe Portraits wie Martin Droeshouts Portrait von William Shakespeare oder Cassandra Austens Aquarell-Darstellung ihrer Schwester Jane, hat es sich diese Arbeit zur Aufgabe gemacht, die beiden Autoren in der Rolle der Liebhaber zu untersuchen. Dass sowohl William Shakespeare als auch Jane Austen mit romantischer Liebe assoziiert werden, ist keine neue Erscheinung und ist, unter anderem, auf die Rezeption ihrer literarischen Werke

zurückzuführen. Dass die beiden Autoren jedoch selbst in romantischen Beziehungen dargestellt werden, ist ein relativ junges Phänomen, das sich aufgrund seiner Aktualität nicht nur in Printmedien, sondern auch im Filmmedium wiederfindet. Eben diese romantische Vorstellung der Autorenfiguren William Shakespeare und Jane Austen im populären Kino unmittelbar vor und kurz nach der Jahrtausendwende liegt im Interesse dieser Studie und wird anhand der Filme *Shakespeare in Love* (Regisseur John Madden, 1998) und *Becoming Jane* (Regisseur Julian Jarrold, 2007) analysiert.

Um eine Basis für das Verständnis der Freiheit und der Beliebigkeit in der Rekonstruktion der beiden Schriftsteller zu bilden, wird das Konzept der objektiven Geschichtsschreibung relativiert und der Film wird als alternative Geschichtsschreibung etabliert. Weiters werden die Bausteine des romantischen Filmgenres erläutert, um ein Werkzeug für die Analyse der romantischen Körper der Autoren in den beiden Filmen zu schaffen. Letztendlich wird im analytischen Teil der Arbeit aufgezeigt, welche Elemente des romantischen Filmgenres in *Shakespeare in Love* und in *Becoming Jane* sowieso im Speziellen in der Darstellung der beiden Protagonisten angewendet werden mit dem Ziel die beiden Autoren zu romantisieren. Dabei werden Charakteristika der Romanze, wie immer wiederkehrende Handlungsstränge oder Symbole für romantische Liebe, in den beiden Filmen veranschaulicht. Somit wird nicht nur gezeigt, dass sich die beiden Autoren in einer romantischen Verkörperung wiederfinden, sondern es wird auch geklärt wie solch eine Romantisierung im populären Film um die Jahrtausendwende zustande kommt. Hierbei wird unterstrichen, dass von William Shakespeare als auch von Jane Austen im 21. Jahrhundert lediglich ein beliebiges Konstrukt zurückbleibt, das einer ständigen Transformation unterliegt. Der tatsächliche Autor bleibt ebenso wenig greifbar wie das Konzept einer objektiven Geschichtsschreibung oder die Idee der romantischen Liebe.

Appendix 2: Lebenslauf

Persönliche Daten

Vorname/Nachname: Katrin Waldhart
 Geburtsdatum: 16. Juli 1987
 Geburtsort: St. Pölten
 Staatsbürgerschaft: Österreich
 Kontakt: katiwald@gmail.com

Werdegang

Schulbildung

Sept. 93 – Juni 97: Volksschule, Ober-Grafendorf
 Sept. 97 – Juni 05: Privatgymnasium der Englischen Fräulein, St.Pölten
 Abschluss: Matura (ausgezeichneter Erfolg)

Studium

seit Sept. 05 Studium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Wien
 seit März 06 Studium der Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, Universität Wien
 Sept. 09 – Dez. 09 Auslandssemester an der University of Maryland, College Park, USA
 (Schwerpunkt: American Literature and Cultural Studies)

Berufserfahrung

seit März 10 Seven Shop (Einkauf, Verkauf, Marketing), St. Pölten – geringfügig
 beschäftigt
 Sept. 10 – Dez. 10 Praktikum im Residenz Verlag im Niederösterreichischen Pressehaus
 (Lektorat, Presse, Vertrieb, Marketing)
 Okt. 08 – März 10 NXP Bowling (Marketing und Sales Assistentin), St. Pölten
 - fallweise beschäftigt
 März 07 – Aug. 07 Club Warehouse (Leitung der Streetpromotion), St.Pölten
 seit Oktober 06 NXP Veranstaltungen GesmbH (Ordner Tätigkeit), St. Pölten
 Februar 06 Anwaltskanzlei Dr. Nusterer, St.Pölten

Weitere Qualifikationen

Muttersprache:	Deutsch
Fremdsprachen:	<u>Englisch</u> : fließend in Wort und Schrift <u>Französisch</u> : ausgebaute Grundkenntnisse <u>Italienisch</u> : Grundkenntnisse <u>Schwedisch</u> : Grundkenntnisse
EDV-Kenntnisse:	Microsoft Office (Schwerpunkte Word, Excel und PowerPoint)