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Literary sequels, retellings, and adaptations of Jane Austen's six original novels have proliferated in the past 15 years, entering a wide array of genres and historical periods. While these novels have been studied in some detail, an empirical study of Jane Austen sequels and literary adaptations has yet to be performed. This study uses content analysis in order to determine and examine a number of key qualities that elucidate character, plot and language in ten *Pride and Prejudice* sequels, retellings and adaptations in order to determine how closely these sequels and adaptations align themselves with Austen's original. In doing so, it was discovered that, generally, adaptations tend to align themselves more closely with Austen's original in terms of plot and character description, while sequels and adaptations are less likely to depend on the original for character and plot inspiration.

Headings:

Fiction -- History and criticism -- Historical fiction

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Content Analysis

SENSE AND SEQUELS: ANALYZING PRIDE AND PREJUDICE INSPIRED
FICTION

by
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Introduction

As long as there have been novels, there have been sequels to those novels. In 1614,

Alonso Fernández de Avellaneda published *Segunda parte del ingenioso hidalgo Don*

Quijote de la Mancha, the first sequel to Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, considered

to be one of the first modern novels, nearly a year before Cervantes' own sequel to the

work (Mancing, 2006, p. 43). Since then, literary sequels and adaptations of the novel

have been alive and flourishing. The Oxford English Dictionary (Sequel, 2009) defines a

sequel as "The ensuing narrative, discourse, etc...esp. a literary work that, although

complete in itself, forms a continuation of a preceding one." It defines an adaptation as

"The process of modifying a thing so as to suit new conditions: as...the alteration of a

dramatic composition to suit a different audience" (Adaptation, 2009). In the context of

this paper, sequel will be used to describe any work that is written to occur after the

events in a previously existing novel in the world set out by the original novel, while

adaptation will be used to describe works that transform a work by recreating it so that it

is part of another medium or genre or takes place in a time period different from the

original work. The term retelling will be used to refer to works that either retell the story

of *Pride and Prejudice* from another point of view or works that assume that their plot

began in the same way as Austen's original, but it diverges at some point in the narrative

to create a different story. For example, a retelling might assume that everything in the

plot of *Pride and Prejudice* occurs up to the point where Darcy proposes, but instead of

refusing his proposal, Elizabeth accepts him, creating an alternate narrative using the

same characters. The term literary adaptation will also be used to refer specifically to adaptations that remain in book format.

In 1850, T. C. Newby published Catherine Anne Hubback's *The Younger Sister: A Novel*. Hubback, a niece of Jane Austen, wrote the book in an attempt to finish Austen's *The Watsons*, creating a three volume Victorian novel from a fragment abandoned by Austen before she began the novels that are now considered to be her major adult works (Wagner, 2002). Since 1850, authors have been attempting with increasing frequency to recapture some of the magic contained in Austen's original completed novels, assorted juvenilia, and unfinished works. From 2002 to 2009, over 60 novels closely inspired by *Pride and Prejudice* alone were published (Jane Austen Sequels, n.d.). This list merely includes sequels and adaptations set within the book's own universe (i.e. direct sequels or retellings of the novel from other characters' points of view), leaving out numerous publications that translate the novel into different settings, eras, and genres. It also leaves out adaptations and sequels based on other books by Austen and original works that use Austen as a character. In the mid-1990s, the first of two waves of adaptation of Austen's works for the screen began. The first wave began with the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* into a five-hour miniseries, followed by an Oscar winning adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*. The popularity of these films, in addition to a number of other factors, set off increased interest in all things Jane Austen. Due to their popularity, the majority of Austen's remaining novels were adapted for the screen within the next few years. The second wave also began with an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, although this time it was a major motion picture directed by Joe Wright, which was released in theaters in 2005. Again due to this adaptation's popularity,

all of Austen's other major novels were adapted for the screen again, and a number of

films paying tribute to Austen have since been released (Jane Austen (I), 2010).

     While a number of scholars have discussed the significance of these film

adaptations, less has been said regarding literature related to Austen's novels. Given the

success of the novels already in print, as well as the ever increasing number of Austen-

based novels being published, the relative lack of engagement with these texts is difficult

to understand. Conversely, while a few scholars have attempted to analyze these texts

through the lens of literary criticism, empirical research regarding these novels has not

been published. These oversights could stem from a number of causes. Most of these

works fall into the literary ghetto known as genre fiction, with many being categorized as

romance novels, though a few lean more toward other genres such as science fiction or

mystery. Genre fiction is rarely given the attention that straight fiction or "literature" is

given in the scholarly discourse. As sequels and adaptations, it is also possible that these

works are seen as unimportant in relation to the original works from which they sprang,

although it could be argued that these works are part of the reason why Jane Austen's

writings have remained popular both with readers and with scholars.

     The purpose of this paper is to perform a content analysis of ten *Pride and*

Prejudice sequels, retellings, and adaptations published after 1995, relating the novels to

Austen's original and to each other. By analyzing the texts for characteristics such as

common character traits, plot structures, and language use, it is hoped that a series of

parallels will emerge between the novels, which will help illuminate the elements that go

into works based on *Pride and Prejudice* and their commonalities and differences. It is

hoped that the research will also illuminate the reasons why these novels appeal to

readers. This study addresses these questions: What elements of character, plot, and language appear in a certain type of sequel, retelling, or adaptation? Does an author's use of character, plot, and language demonstrate a link between her book and Austen's original? How close is this link, and is it stronger for books set in Austen's universe? Why might a link to Austen's original be stronger for one category of novel than another? Which characters are transformed the most in these books? Why might this be? Why might one type of novel appeal more to a reader based on its alignment with *Pride and Prejudice*?

Literature Review

The purpose of this paper is to perform a content analysis on ten *Pride and Prejudice* sequels, retellings, and adaptations published after 1995, examining them in relation to each other and in relation to Austen's original. In analyzing these texts' contents, it is hoped that certain conclusions can be drawn regarding why a work appeals to readers and what makes it popular. As a content analysis of this type has not previously been performed, and any type of empirical research on the topic does not seem to exist, most of the relevant empirical sources in the previously existing literature deal with content analyses of other types of literature, such as syntax in novels by Jane Austen or changes in sense of safety and self-reliance in juvenile literature. A number of the non-empirical sources deal with the popularity of the literary sequel and the motivations behind its publishing. Others deal mainly with the topic of the Jane Austen sequel specifically. These sources discuss a number of topics worth exploring with regards to the Jane Austen sequel and adaptation, including the proliferation of Jane Austen related fiction, the position these novels hold as inhabitants of the worlds of both literature and popular

fiction, and the dissatisfaction inherent in these novels, which gives the reader a need to seek out other Austen based literature to fill that need. These critical works, however, deal mainly with the sentimentalized continuation of the Jane Austen novel, rather than works in other categories such as parody or pastiche.

Two sources dealing with the sequel in general and its popularity are Mary Ann Gillies's "The Literary Agent and the Sequel" (1998) and Patsy Stoneman's "The Sequels Syndrome: Writing Beyond the Ending?" (1996). Neither author mentions prequels, and the number of prequels to literary works published is much smaller than the number of sequels. In "The Literary Agent and the Sequel," Gillies (1998) discusses the economy of the sequel and the circumstances under which sequels are created. According to Gillies, a sequel occurs during an intersection of cultural and material forces, when the wishes of readers, writers, and publishers align. Readers wish to recreate the experience of reading a work they enjoyed. Writers wish to re-explore previously established settings and characters. Publishers wish to capitalize on the success of a previous work. In order for a sequel to be written, published, and successful, all three of these factors must align (p. 131-133).

In "The Sequels Syndrome: Writing Beyond the Ending?" Patsy Stoneman (1996) mainly discusses sequels to works by the Brontë sisters. However, she makes a number of interesting points about sequels in general. Rather than using the term sequel, Stoneman adopts the term "incremental literature," which includes any work of literature inspired in some way by another work of literature, rather than following directly after it as a sequel is generally defined as doing. By redefining sequels as incremental literature, Stoneman seeks to remove from them the stigmatization that usually goes along with

sequelization by categorizing sequels alongside works inspired by such classics as Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. However, Stoneman also points out that a number of sequels draw heavily on the traditions of popular romance fiction. In addition, Stoneman uses examples from a discussion held between a number of sequel writers, in which the writers themselves claim that their works are secondary, not only in that they come after an original work, but because are considered inferior to that work. Given these two opposing viewpoints, Stoneman reveals the complicated relationship between the sequel and the original. Whether or not they are considered inferior, Stoneman argues that sequels occupy an important position, that of "writing beyond the ending of their originals," (1996, p. 238) in which authors, whether consciously or not, become innovators by adapting a work to their own particular time and set of circumstances (p. 238-241, 251-253).

Tamara Wagner's "Rewriting Sentimental Plots: Sequels to Novels of Sensibility by Jane Austen and Another Lady" (2007), Deidre Shauna Lynch's "Sequels" (2005), and Anna Rosa Scrittori's "Rewriting Jane Austen" (2004) all deal specifically with sequels to Jane Austen novels, giving insight into their history, the potential reasons behind their popularity, and the tension between "literary" and "popular" sequels. In "Rewriting Sentimental Plots," Wagner (2007) begins with a history of the Jane Austen sequel. Beginning with Victorian continuations written by members of Austen's own family, through the series of continuations of Austen's unfinished works in the early twentieth century, she works her way towards the proliferation of Austen-based sequels that began in the mid-1990s (p. 217-234).

Wagner (2007) divides the more recent sequels to Austen's work into two distinct categories: sequels dealing with "entertainment" and those dealing with "transfocalization." The entertainment sequels rely largely on sentimentalism and melodrama. These sequels, many inspired by the film and television adaptations of Austen's novels that proliferated throughout the mid-1990s, use many of the same conventions as popular romance fiction. In fact, they seem to resentimentalize Austen, adding a layer of sentimentality to the works akin to that seen in other novels of Austen's day, which she actively satirized. Wagner states that the sequels dealing with transfocalization are more subversive than the entertainment sequels and seek to undermine the "prudishness, class bias, or limited range" that Austen is often accused of through the use of "comical pastiche...incidental rewriting of a character…[and] the subversive agenda" (p. 234-239).

Wagner (2007) also touches on the lack of critical discussion of the "sequels, parodies, and pastiches" (p. 235) that make up a large percentage of the newer and more widely varied Jane Austen sequels. While criticism has tended to focus on the earlier and more sentimental sequels, Wagner points out that the newer works provide a vibrant, if dauntingly large, area for criticism and analysis (p. 235-236). Scrittori (2004) also touches on the idea of a different, less sentimental Jane Austen sequel and its ripeness for analysis, but, frustratingly, claims that she "will leave this topic for another essay on Jane Austen," which does not seem to have been published yet (p. 269).

Like Wagner's essay, Lynch (2005) provides a brief history of the Jane Austen sequel in "Sequels." She then explores the popularity of the sequel from two perspectives: that of the writer and publisher and that of the reader. While Lynch claims

that the writer and publisher are purely profit driven, jumping on the Austen bandwagon as a part of a "get rich quick scheme" (p. 161), readers' motives in desiring further Austen-related literature seem to be more complex and multi-faceted. Austen's novels themselves, with their largely open and vague endings, which leave a number of characters without a set fate, leave a number of historical holes that an aspiring novelist can easily fill by re-using Austen's formula on another character. Lynch claims that the sentimental genre sequels as discussed above are "expressly conservative" (p. 167), attempting to give the readers more of the same things that they liked about Austen by dealing with a marriage plot in a Regency-era country town setting. However, the sentimentality and conservativism of the sequels make them inherently dissatisfying for a reader who enjoys Austen's satirization of sentimentality and conservativism. With its rampant sentimentality, the traditional Austen sequel seems to conform to standards that are "pre- rather than post-Austen" (p. 165). Because readers are dissatisfied, they seek out other types of Austen sequels, leading in part to the proliferation of Austen sequels in any number of genres in the past 15 years (p. 160-162, 165-167).

Lynch (2005) also describes the dizzying amount of Austen "sequels, prequels, retellings, and spin-offs," (p. 160) an ever-growing number which she claims was already over 100 published works as of December 1999. While maintaining that the books are "uniformly derivative," she acknowledges that they are also "dauntingly diverse" (p. 161). The magnitude of Jane Austen sequels and adaptations, as well as their general classification as popular or derivative fiction could explain why current criticism has yet to analyze the scope of them in any significant way.

In "Rewriting Jane Austen," Scrittori (2004) describes the ways in which authors use language in an attempt to imitate Austen's style, sometimes to comical effect. While attempting to capture Austen's style, a number of authors open themselves to criticism by Austen fans, claiming that they cannot match the original's "true flare and intellectual depth" (p. 265). Fans of Austen constantly find sequels disappointing, in part because, as time has changed, the intent behind the sequels is different from Austen's original intent. While Austen wrote to "disperse the visions of romance," (p. 266) her imitators, in revisiting Austen's world, are providing escapist literature that relies heavily on visions of romance. These sequel writers face the challenge of having to combine past and present social issues, for example struggling with issues such as feminism, which have to be palatable to a reader's modern sensibilities while at the same time realistic given the time period. They rarely succeed on both counts (p. 264-268). This lack of success could in part explain the recent proliferation of less traditional Austen adaptations, which choose certain elements or plot lines and transfer them to different settings, such as the world of late-twentieth century British society or a world in which the book's heroine must battle the undead in addition to advances from unwanted suitors.

In *Computation Into Criticism: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels and an Experiment in Method*, J.F. Burrows (1987) uses statistical analysis to determine hidden or unintentional details regarding Austen's characters. To do so, Burrows analyzes the sixty most commonly used parts of speech in Austen's novels, as well as other seemingly minor details such as punctuation dispersion. In doing so, Burrows reveals a number of interesting relationships between Austen's characters. For instance, given their strong dialectic similarities, it can be assumed that Austen meant for Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth

Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* to be well suited to each other as a couple by giving them both speech patterns suited to "two strong-minded, intelligent, and essentially well-mannered characters whose disputes are conducted on even terms" (p. 83). The low dialectic similarities between characters such as Lydia Bennet and Mr. Collins in the same novel can also be taken to mean that the two characters are in many ways complete opposites, with the majority of Lydia's thoughts and dialogue being self-focused, emphasizing the words "I" and "me," while Mr. Collins's obsession with his patroness and attempts at humility mean that his dialogue has much higher usage of words such as "her" and "she." As another example, the dialectic isolation of a character such as Mrs. Gardiner, Elizabeth Bennet's aunt, can be seen as a reflection of her isolation in relation to the other characters in *Pride and Prejudice*, as she seems, in many scenes, to have been placed into the narrative in order to provide an opposing point of view to the one displayed by Elizabeth (p. 82-85, 99-102). The use of language to establish character relationships within a novel creates an interesting rubric for examining character relationships between Austen sequels, retellings, and adaptations. The degree to which an author maintains language and plot from *Pride and Prejudice* can be used as a method for determining how far from the original a new novel may fall.

In "Challenges Then and Now: A Survey of Protagonists in Newberry Award Books, 1950s and 1990s," Jonathan Lathey (2005) uses content analysis to explore the changes in children's literature from the 1950s, when children existed in a safe and protected space, to the 1990s, when children's literature emphasized the problems children faced in a world in which their parents may not provide the same safe, protected space that they had provided in previous literature. In comparing books from the two

eras, Lathey uses a list of major childhood stressors and another of adolescent resilience factors in order to determine what changes have taken place between the two time periods. The idea of literary differences due to temporal changes is an interesting one and particularly relevant to the study of Jane Austen sequels. While some of the sequels ostensibly maintain a close connection with Jane Austen's world, a number of factors have necessarily changed, including treatment of women and the changing roles of men in society. The levels at which the sequels differ in areas such as Elizabeth's independence or Darcy's role as a caretaker and problem solver from Austen novel could be used to determine how different from Austen novels the sequels, retellings, and adaptations actually are (p. 20-23).

In "From Queer to Gay and Back Again: Young Adult Novels with Gay/Lesbian/ Queer Content, 1969-1997," Christine Jenkins (1998) uses content analysis to examine the portrayal of gay and lesbian characters in young adult fiction. In order to do so, she examines qualities such as the characters' "age, sex, race, class, appearance, single/ partnered status, occupation/interests, and the character's relation to the protagonist." In doing so, she discovers a number of patterns, including evidence that either gay or lesbian characters may be featured in young adult literature, but never both, as well as a temporal shift away from gay and lesbian characters as protagonists into roles as secondary characters in works with a heterosexual protagonist. Analyzing characteristics of different characters is another way in which content analysis can be used in conjunction with analysis of Jane Austen sequels and the ways in which characters in sequels differ from the original characters set forth by Jane Austen. To do so, it would be possible to use a number of factors, such as the number of times a Jane Bennet character's beauty or

attractiveness is mentioned, or the number of times a Mrs. Bennet character is nervous or fretful about a situation, to determine how much the work as a whole has diverged from the original source material (p. 298-302).

In "Windows and Mirrors: Secret Spaces in Children's Literature," Brian W. Sturm, Renee Bosman, and Sylvia Leigh Lamberg (2008) use latent content analysis in order to determine a number of key factors about secret spaces in children's literature. By counting each occurrence of a secret place in 18 books aimed at children and analyzing text at each occurrence, the researchers were able to determine a number of key things regarding secret places in children's literature, including "the children's reasons for creating secret spaces, the characteristics of the secret space, [and] the experience of the secret space." The idea of counting event occurrences in *Pride and Prejudice* could also be used to determine how far from an original Austen work a sequel may fall. A list of the main plot points of the novel, such as Darcy's first proposal and rejection by Elizabeth, or the characters' initial meeting and initial dislike of each other, could be counted to determine how far a new novel diverges from the source material.

A successful sequel springs from the intersection of the wishes of publishers, writers, and readers. While sequels have frequently been lumped into the category of insignificant, derivative popular fiction, the ways in which they transform previously published works into works that are acceptable to or comments on contemporary society are innovative and worthy of study. Over the past 150 years, Austen-based sequels, retellings, and adaptations have transformed from mere continuations of existing works into an entire sub-genre of literature encompassing a wide range of forms and styles of popular fiction. Broadly, these sequels can be divided into two groups: works that

conform fairly closely to Austen's time, plot and style, and those that move Austen's works into unfamiliar settings and genres, such as fantasy and science fiction. While the works that conform more closely to Austen's originals have been studied before (though not empirically), little mention has been given to looser adaptations, despite the fact that a number of them, such as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Bridget Jones's Diary* have recently eclipsed more traditional sequels in popularity. One way in which to study these sequels is through content analysis, which would involve measuring the degree to which a book diverges from its source material in matters such as character traits, language, and reoccurrence of important scenes from the source material.

Method

This study will use content analysis to examine ten *Pride and Prejudice* sequels, retellings, and adaptations published after 1995 in order to determine how closely their character, plot, and language elements adhere to the original universe as set out in Austen's source material. Content analysis is an empirical research method that takes the many words in a text or group of texts and whittles them down into a much smaller number of content categories. In doing so, it makes it possible for a researcher to analyze and draw reasonable conclusions from what could otherwise be an overwhelming amount of data. Content analysis relies on using a set, consistent procedure in order to produce verifiably consistent results (Stemler, 2001).

In order to conduct a content analysis, a researcher must first determine what data is being studied, how it is defined, the population the data is being taken from, the context in which the data occurs, the reach of the analysis, and the expected conclusions (Stemler, 2001). Once these have been determined, a researcher has several options for

conducting their content analysis. The method used in this study will be mainly

dependent on both manifest and latent content analysis. Manifest content analysis

depends on finding data that is easily observable and countable and does not require that

the researcher make inferences about a text. Latent content analysis requires a researcher

to make value judgments about the meaning of a text in order to place it into the

categories determined for the content analysis. Whether using latent or manifest content

analysis, a researcher must develop a coding scheme, in which certain elements located in

a text are categorized and counted in order to draw conclusions about that text. These

elements are known as indicators (Wildemuth, 2009, p. 298-301).

Due to the large amount of data being studied, a content analysis method seems to

be the best way to explore the novels. Content analysis will also be useful in determining

patterns between the books, which may not be evident in a non-empirical method, due to

the wide variations in genre and style among the books being analyzed. As this study

relies in part on manifest content analysis, using content analysis lends the study

credence, as the data collected by the researcher can be verified by another party.

The ten novels examined in this study (See Appendix 1) were chosen using lists of

Jane Austen-related literature on NoveList and LibraryThing. While a comprehensive list

of novels related to Jane Austen's writings could not be obtained, these lists seem to

provide a fairly comprehensive overview of the best known Austen sequels and

adaptations. Generally, the most popular novels based on *Pride and Prejudice* from each

list were chosen. Popularity was determined by the number of times a book had been

tagged or reviewed on each site. However, from these lists, I attempted to avoid

analyzing multiple books with similar themes (i.e. I only analyzed one retelling of Pride

and Prejudice from Mr. Darcy's point of view and one sequel based on a minor character) in order to obtain a wider selection of book types in this study. I chose to examine as wide a range of books as possible so that I could draw general conclusions about *Pride and Prejudice* based reading and also so that it would be possible to gain some knowledge about the breadth of literature that has sprung from a single book.

The content analysis instruments used in this study (See Appendix 2) were designed to measure each novel's relation to its source material based on a number of criteria.   The criteria include how closely the characters in each novel resemble Austen's across a selection of traits, how many key scenes or plot points from *Pride and Prejudice* recur in each novel, whether or not the book includes the opening line of *Pride and Prejudice* or a variation thereon, and whether or not the book incorporates other quotes by Austen in order to lend it greater validity or tie it more directly to the source material.

In determining the traits to study for each character, I first went through *Pride and Prejudice* and made note of Austen's descriptions of her characters. In the opening chapters of the book, Austen (1813) describes Elizabeth as having a "lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous" (p. 8) and manners that have an "easy playfulness." In describing her appearance, Austen states that she has a face that is "rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes, a figure that is "light and pleasing" (p. 16) if not perfectly symmetrical. Miss Bingley also describes her as having a "conceited independence, a most country-town indifference to decorum" (p. 16). From these three types of description, I chose three categories of character traits that seem to be used most frequently in describing Elizabeth: she is clever, witty, and/or intelligent; independent, lively, and/or spirited; and she is attractive, if not

perfectly beautiful. I also chose prejudice as a fourth character trait, as it is the second half of the title, and much of the plot hinges in Elizabeth's forming quick judgments about the people around her and adhering to those judgments.

Physically, Darcy is described as having "a fine, tall person, handsome features, [and a] noble mein". In personality, he is described first as being "the proudest, most disagreeable man," who is "haughty, reserved, fastidious" (p. 6) Austen (1813) states that Darcy has a "superior understanding," and that he is "clever" (p. 11) In one of the opening scenes, she also makes it a point to state that he tends to lead or take care of others, claiming that Bingley relies on Darcy's regard and has a high opinion of Darcy's judgment. Throughout the novel, Darcy continually takes care of others, protects them, and solves their problems, as he does for the Bennets when their youngest daughter, Lydia, runs away with Mr. Wickham. Darcy finds the couple and forces them to marry so that the Bennets and Elizabeth will not be disgraced. Darcy also explains that he has previously had to save his sister from Wickham's advances and Bingley from a number of unfortunate attachments. From these descriptions of Darcy, I determined that the four categories of character traits that I would explore were his being arrogant, rude, proud, and/or reserved; a caretaker, protector, and/or problem solver; intelligent and/or clever; and handsome and/or physically attractive.

I chose to explore only three traits for each of the four remaining characters, as they do not appear as often in any of the novels and are therefore described less. As such, I wanted their character traits to have less weight on the overall analysis of difference from *Pride and Prejudice* than Elizabeth and Darcy's traits. When introduced into the novel, Jane is described as being "uncommonly pretty" and "the most beautiful creature

[Bingley] ever beheld" (Austen, 1813, p. 7). Mrs. Bennet states that Jane has "the sweetest temper" (p. 31), and Elizabeth claims that she "never [sees] a fault in anybody" (p. 9). From these descriptions and others like them, I determined that Jane's leading characteristics are that she is sweet and/or gentle; naive; and beautiful and/or pretty.

In her opening descriptions of Bingley, Austen (1813) states that he is "lively and unreserved" (p. 6) and fond of dancing. She later states that Bingley depends on Darcy's regard and judgment, and yields "easily to the persuasion of a friend" (p. 37). Bingley is also described as "amiable," with a temper that has "easiness, openness, and dulcility" (p. 11). From these descriptions, I concluded that Bingley's leading characteristics are that he is spirited and/or lively; easily led; and nice, kind, and/or good natured.

Mrs. Bennet is described as a woman of "mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper." She tends to "[fancy] herself nervous" (Austen, 1813, p. 3), and her purpose in life is to see her daughters well married through any means she can find. From this description, Mrs. Bennet's three main characteristics seem to be that she is silly; worried, fretful, and/or nervous; and scheming and/or calculating. Austen (1813) describes Mr. Bennet as an "odd mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice" (p. 3). From this brief description, Mr. Bennet's leading characteristics seem to be that he is sarcastic and/or sardonic; sensible; and withdrawn. These traits are seen repeatedly throughout the novel in further descriptions of Mr. Bennet.

In determining the major plot points to search for in each novel, I quickly summarized the plot of the novel. In brief, two people meet and take an instant dislike to each other. He comes to admire her, but she still dislikes him. He proposes and she

refuses. They meet again, and she grows to like him, but they are separated by outside forces. Once those outside forces have been dealt with, he returns and proposes again, and this time he is accepted. For each of these sentences, I provided a label relating to either the action or the place the action was located, leading to the following labels: Meryton Assembly, where the two meet and dislike each other; Netherfield Ball, where they spar verbally with each other, though he likes her; Proposal 1, when he proposes and is rejected; Pemberley, where they meet again and she grows to like him; Proposal 2, when he proposes and is accepted (Austen, 1813).

In analyzing the language used in books based on *Pride and Prejudice*, it seemed wrong to ignore the novel's first line. The line, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife," (Austen, 1813, p. 1) was voted as the number two best first line of a novel by the American Book Review (100 Best First Lines from Novels, n.d.). As one of the most famous lines in literature, it has been adapted to a number of purposes, including describing the state of zombies in possession of brains wanting more brains (Grahame-Smith, 2009, p. 7). Given this, I felt it was important to determine whether or not literature based on *Pride and Prejudice* uses this line as a tether to the original novel. While doing an analysis of all of the language in each novel would have been difficult and time consuming, I decided to look for direct quotations either of *Pride and Prejudice* or another work by Austen that are accredited to Austen or that I recognized when reading them. As someone who has read *Pride and Prejudice* a number of times, I felt that I would recognize direct quotes from the novel.

As part of the content analysis, I went through each book using the instruments described above in order to analyze each one. For books in which the Elizabeth and Darcy characters are both introduced in the opening twenty-five pages, I read the first fifty pages and last twenty-five pages of each book closely for the appearance of any of the character trait criteria and then skimmed for plot similarities and the use of Austen quotations. For books in which either the Darcy or Elizabeth character is introduced after the first twenty-five pages, I read the first twenty-five pages and the last twenty-five pages. However, in order to collect sufficient data about each character, I also chose to read the twenty-five pages following the introduction of either Darcy or Elizabeth if this introduction did not occur in the opening twenty-five pages. I then analyzed the data collected in order to place each novel on a scale of similarity to its source material. In order to do this, I compared the number of times each trait was mentioned for each character in the *Pride and Prejudice* inspired literature to the number of times each trait is mentioned in the original. I then determined the absolute value of the difference between descriptions in the original and each of the novels it inspired. Once this was determined, I found an average difference for each trait, character, and novel. I also determined the number of times each novel included one of the plot points described above, whether or not each novel used the opening sentence from *Pride and Prejudice*, and whether or not each novel included other quotes from Austen. In terms of character traits, lower scoring books are the ones that are most similar to Austen's original and higher scoring books more dissimilar, while the opposite is true for plot and quotations. As all average scores for traits fell within a range of one to ten, scores between 1 and 4 are considered very

close to the original, scores between 4.01 and 7 are fairly close, and scores above seven

diverge widely from Austen's original descriptions.

The data was used to answer the following questions: What elements of character,

plot, and language appear in a certain type of sequel, retelling, or adaptation? Does an

author's use of character, plot, and language demonstrate a link between her book and

Austen's original? How close is this link, and is it stronger for books set in Austen's

universe? Why might a link to Austen's original be stronger for one category of novel

than another? Which characters are transformed the most in these books? Why might

this be? Why might one type of novel appeal more to a reader based on its alignment

with Pride and Prejudice?

As this topic does not deal with human subjects or sensitive issues, there do not

seem to be any overwhelming ethical issues to discuss. While it is possible that this

study may reveal issues within a book that its author did not intend to place in the text,

the potential of damaging the authors or their revenues due to any discoveries made in

this study is slight.

One benefit of this method is that when analyzing manifest, or specifically stated,

content, it is often highly reliable. When performed correctly, a coder should be able to

code the same content multiple times and produce similar results, giving this type of

content analysis high stability. Another coder should also be able to code the same

content as the first coder and produce the same data, giving this type of content analysis

high reproducibility. However, the validity of manifest content analysis is slightly more

suspect. Much content analysis has relied on face validity, which is dependent on the

extent to which a researcher's definition of concepts matches his or her definition of the

categories that measure those concepts. As manifest content analysis does not take context into account, it is possible for words to be misclassified as belonging to one concept when in reality they belong to another. As an example, the word "happy" in a sentence such as "I'm so happy," when spoken sarcastically by a character in a novel, would be classified in a positive category when it is intended negatively. Analyzing the content for latent meaning can help to increase the validity of the content by allowing the coder to make value judgments about what a text actually means. However, in doing so, the content analysis becomes open to greater interpretation, making it more difficult for one coder's to reproduce another's results and therefore decreasing the reliability of the analysis (Weber, 1990, p. 17-19).

In order to deal with the drawbacks inherent in using either latent or manifest content analysis, I have chosen to use a combination of the two, with some criteria relying on latent content analysis and some on manifest content analysis. In doing so, I have attempted to produce a number of reliable results through the manifest content analysis, which will hopefully be backed up by the validity of my latent content analysis. In trying to keep my data balanced, I have attempted to create a data analysis method in which each criterion falls roughly within the same set of numbers, so that no criterion can have significantly greater weight than another.

Importance of Study

Given the growing popularity of this sub-genre, it is important that scholars engage with the texts in some fashion. As offshoots from classic literature, they represent an interesting view of the ways in which modern readers view classic literature. As books in

their own right, often set in distant times if not places, they reveal a number of important issues about the ways readers view escapism.

Practically, this research should be of help to librarians working in collection development and reader's advisory. By identifying common threads running through popular Jane Austen sequels and adaptations, it will help librarians determine which newly published books have the potential to become popular with readers. By codifying the themes and ideas contained in a number of Austen texts, librarians doing reader's advisory should be able to look at one book, determine what is popular about it, and find out which other books would be likely to contain material that would be equally interesting to its readers. In a broader sense, this work is intended to contribute to research into literature and, to a certain extent, psychology. By analyzing these texts as part of their own sub-genre, its intent is to both explore books that have largely been ignored in the literature studies discourse and to contribute to the understanding of the modernization of classic literature. In exploring the links between themes contained in the text and the popularity of those texts, it intends to examine some of the reasons why a book may appeal to a certain reader.

Findings

Elizabeth Bennet

Overall, Elizabeth Bennet, with an average difference of 7.65, is the character for whom authors are least likely to maintain Austen's original character balance (See Table 1). However, authors appear to be most likely to adhere to Austen's example when discussing the Elizabeth Bennet characters' appearance. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet is described as having "fine eyes," (Austen, 1813, p. 19) a theme that carries through

to Elizabeth Bennet in *Impulse and Initiative* (Reynolds, 2007, p. 20) and Elizabeth

Darcy in *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife* (Berdoll, 2004, p. 25). While Elizabeth Bennet has a

figure that is "light and pleasing" (Austen, 1813, p. 16), in more modern adaptations, she

is described as "attractive" (Potter, 2007, p. 353), or else with sentences such as "I like

your tits in that top" (Fielding, 1996, p. 26).

The second most important characteristic when describing Elizabeth Bennet or an

Elizabeth Bennet analog would seem to be her prejudice. As it is half of the title of Aus-

ten's original, this hardly seems surprising. However, neither Austen nor modern authors

often describe the character as prejudiced. Rather, authors generally reveal her prejudice

through a tendency to form quick judgments. Just as Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and*

Prejudice is happy when she can be "restored to the enjoyment of all her original dislike"

(Austen, 1813, p. 25) of the Bingley sisters, Elizabeth in *Impulse and Initiative* quickly

jumps to conclusions about Mr. Darcy's sudden change of character, refusing to believe

that he could actually be other than proud and disagreeable (Reynolds, 2008, p. 27).

Emily Albright jumps to similar conclusions about the Mr. Darcy analog in *Me and Mr.*

Darcy, declaring him an "asshole" upon first meeting him (Potter, 2007, p. 44).

Authors reworking *Pride and Prejudice* do not seem to have adhered as closely to

Austen's original descriptions of Elizabeth as intelligent and clever or her descriptions as

lively and independent. Bridget Jones, whose character was the most removed from Aus-

ten's original in terms of intelligence, is berated by another character for spelling the

word "absent" as "abscent," (Fielding, 1996, p. 22). In *Me and Mr. Darcy*, Emily Al-

bright is mortified when Spike Hargreaves sees her doing a "hair-commercial head-toss"

in a hallway (Potter, 2007, p. 55). This seems to be in direct opposition to the independ-

ence and spirit of the original's actions in scenes such as her walk alone across the coun-

tryside to visit her sick sister, in spite of not being "fit to be seen" after her walk (Austen,

1813, p. 23) and opening herself up to derision from the Bingley sisters.

Mr. Darcy

In contrast to Elizabeth, Darcy's character traits were among the most closely adhered to

(See Table 2). With an average character difference of 5.55, he was second only to Jane

in character description faithfulness. Like Elizabeth, Darcy's most closely adhered to

trait is also his physical appearance. Austen (1813) describes her hero as having a "fine,

tall person, handsome features, and noble mein" (p. 6), a phrase which Seth Grahme

Grahame-Smith (2009) copies word for word in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (p.

12). In *Mr. Darcy, Vampyre*, Amanda Grange (2009) also describes Darcy as having

"handsome features" (p. 19).

While they are not described with as much faithfulness as Austen's original as his

appearance, Darcy's intelligence and his role as a caretaker or problem solver have also

been replicated fairly accurately in sequels, retellings, and adaptations of *Pride and

Prejudice,* with both scoring an average distance of 5.4. In *Pemberley by the Sea*, Calder

Westing (the Darcy analog) becomes the first person ever to beat Cassie Boulton (the

Elizabeth analog) in trivial pursuit. Darcy's intelligence and role as a problem solver are

both demonstrated in *North by Northanger*, in which he has developed a reputation as a

mystery solver, and he "[excells] at deducing answers" (Bebris, 2006, p. 27). In *An As-

sembly Such as This*, Pamela Aidan (2003) also points out Darcy's role as a caretaker and

solver of others' problems when she mentions that Darcy has persuaded Bingley to leave

Netherfield due to the supposed indifference of Jane Bennet to Bingley's feelings (p. 237).

Darcy's pride, though the first word of Austen's title, does not appear to be as well developed in Austen-inspired literature as it is in *Pride and Prejudice*. This could be due in part to the fact that three of the books being examined take place after the events of the original novel. However, even in books that follow a similar story line, Darcy is more misunderstood or awkward than actually proud. In *Impulse and Initiative*, Abigail Reynolds (2008) claims that Darcy has difficulty communicating with Elizabeth, and that he "stumbles badly" in an attempt to make her understand that he is not proud (p. 27). Rather than being proud, in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Helen Fielding (1996) describes Mark Darcy as a "complete clod" (p. 267).

Jane Bennet

With an average character difference of only 4.08, Jane's characterization in the novels studied most closely resembles her characterization in *Pride and Prejudice* (See Table 3). Austen (1813) describes Jane as a character who "never [sees] a fault in anybody" (p. 9) and who "would would willingly have gone through the world without believing that so much wickedness existed in the whole race of mankind as was...collected in [George Wickham]" (p. 167). Jane continues to be naive in contemporary sequels and retellings and in modern adaptations. Linda Berdoll (2004) describes Jane in *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife* as someone who "[endeavors] to find goodness in all God's creations" (p. 38). In *Pemberley by the Sea*, the character Erin fills the Jane role as Cassie's (Elizabeth's) confidant and the love interest to Calder's (Darcy') best friend, Scott. Like Jane, Erin "trusts people too easily" (Reynolds, 2008, p. 24).

Jane's beauty is frequently mentioned by Austen and by writers inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Mr. Darcy, Vampyre*, she is described as one of "the loveliest brides in England," (Grange, 2009, p. 9), and in *An Assembly Such as This*, Darcy notes that she is "the handsomest girl" in the room (Aidan, 2003, p. 4). Although *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet* is one of the novels whose characterization is furthest from Austen's original, Colleen McCullough (2008) still aligns herself with Austen's description of Jane, calling her "the dearest creature" (p. 88), and in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Jane sees only the best in Bingley and Darcy, despite Elizabeth's claims that "in the heat of battle, neither…[was] to be found with blade or blundgeon" (Grahame-Smith, 2009, p. 16).

Mr. Bingley

Bingley's characterization varies more widely across *Pride and Prejudice*-inspired works than does Jane's, and with an average difference of 7.04, he falls slightly into the category of characters that diverges markedly from the original (See Table 4). While he remains easily led by Darcy throughout most of the novels examined, his characteristics of liveliness and being good natured vary more widely across novels. Although Bingley is hardly mentioned in *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet*, Colleen McCullough (2008) does describe him as being "too used to following [Darcy's] lead to raise an object" to his plans (p. 17). The relationship of Darcy as leader with Bingley as follower is most strongly developed in *An Assembly Such as This*, the novel in which Bingley's characterization most closely resembles that laid out in *Pride and Prejudice*. As part of this characterization, Pamela Aiden (2003) provides Darcy and Bingley with a back story in which Darcy saves Bingley from being the object of a "cruel joke," and since that time he

has led or advised Bingley in most aspects of his life, including his manner of dress (p. 2).

While Bingley's good nature and friendliness are slightly more in line with Austen's original descriptions than his lively spirits, neither one is particularly close, with the two characteristics having an average distance of 8.5 and 9.5, respectively. In *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife*, Bingley's kindness and good nature have apparently fallen away following his marriage, and he is described a sexually inattentive husband. After marrying Jane, Bingley has an affair with another woman, with whom he has a son. Following Jane's discovery of the affair, Bingley's spirits and liveliness remain subdued as he attempts to earn forgiveness (Berdoll, 2004, p. 122, 225, 378).

Mrs. Bennet

With an average difference of 7.65, Mrs. Bennet's descriptions vary fairly widely from her characterization in *Pride and Prejudice* (See Table 5). These descriptions tend to favor her being nervous and worried over silly and scheming and calculating. On the first page of *Mr. Darcy, Vampyre*, Mrs. Bennet is described as "complaining about her nerves" (Grange, 2009, p. 3), and in *Me and Mr. Darcy*, Emily describes her mother as having been "traumatized following a trip to France in which she was required to use the bathroom over a hole in the floor, which she claims to have caused her hot flashes" (Potter, 2007, p. 62). While Mrs. Bennet is not described as being silly or scheming and calculating as often in works inspired by *Pride and Prejudice* as she is in the original, they still form a part of her character descriptions in modern day works. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Helen Fielding (1996) sets up Bridget's mother as a woman scheming to marry her daughter to a rich man in the opening pages of the book, in which she reintroduces

Bridget to Mark Darcy, claiming that he is a "top-notch lawyer" and "terribly lonely" in the hopes that her daughter will begin a relationship with him (p. 11). In another effort to find a rich husband for one of her daughters, the Mrs. Bennet of Abigail Reynolds' (2008) *Impulse and Initiative* neglects to invite Bingley, who is a guest in her home, to sit by her at dinner, in the hopes that he will sit with her daughter Jane and restart their relationship (p. 39).

Mrs. Bennet's characterization generally relies less on her being "invariably silly" (Austen, 1813, p. 289), than it does in *Pride and Prejudice*, though she is not generally an intelligent character. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Mrs. Bennet appears to be unaware of the importance of learning the "deadly arts" in the face of the increasing zombie menace and calling those arts "Oriental tricks" (Grahame-Smith, 2009, p. 24). In *Impulse and Initiative*, Mrs. Bennet is seen as silly enough to adopt a flirtatious manner with Mr. Darcy when he attempts to be civil to her, but she is not actively described as silly (Reynolds, 2008, p. 40).

Mr. Bennet

Mr. Bennet is one of the characters whose characterization in sequels, retellings, and adaptations is fairly closely aligned with Austen's description of him, with an average distance of 6.33, although he only appears in five of the ten books surveyed (See Table 6). For Mr. Bennet, the trait most closely aligned with Austen's use of it is his tendency to withdraw from and avoid company. Austen (1813) establishes Mr. Bennet as a character who avoids social gatherings and withdraws from company fairly early in the book by making a point of his not attending the Meryton Assembly where Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet (p. 8). In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Bridget's father exhibits a similar reticence

in social situations, withdrawing from his daughter's direct questions about what is going on between himself and her mother, and acting embarrassed and unwilling to explain when questioning Bridget about her mother's behavior (Fielding, 1996, p. 34, 38). In *Mr. Darcy, Vampyre*, Mr. Bennet's first appearance involves shutting the door to his library to keep the sounds of his family out, and he is later mentioned as having been "content to stay at home" rather than take his family traveling to France (Grange, 2009, p. 4, 31). Mr. Bennet's position as a sensible man, in contrast to his silly wife, is also well established in *Pride and Prejudice*-inspired literature. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Mr. Bennet insists that his daughters learn the "deadly arts," as they are more practical than dreaming of marriage as their mother would advise (Grahame-Smith, 2009, p. 8). He also attends the Meryton Assembly, in contrast to his behavior in *Pride and Prejudice*, and while there he advises his daughters in the best way to defeat a zombie horde that attacks the party.

While Mr. Bennet's sense and withdrawn tendencies are described fairly closely to the ways Austen sets them up in *Pride and Prejudice*, his sarcasm is less evident in literature inspired by the novel. Only one example of Mr. Bennet's sarcasm is given in *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife*, when Berdoll (2004) claims that "human folly had always been a great source of amusement for Mr. Bennet" (p. 39). Though his sarcasm is not apparent in any the dialogue examined in *An Assembly Such as This*, it is noted that he watches Darcy and converses with Bingley with "a glitter of sardonic amusement" in his eyes, but these are the only mentions of his sense of humor (Aidan, 2003, p. 49-50).

Plot and Language

Plot and language similarities fell between zero and eight, with each novel scoring either a zero, one, three, five, or eight (See Table 7). Lifting much of its description and dialog straight from the original novel, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* scored one of two eights, as it uses the opening sentence, contains a large number of direct quotations from *Pride and Prejudice*, and follows the plot of the original almost exactly. *Me and Mr. Darcy*, the other eight, also uses direct quotations as well as directly modeling its dialog and plot structures on *Pride and Prejudice*. This novel acknowledges its relationship to *Pride and Prejudice*, both in the title and in its two main characters' interest in Mr. Darcy as a character. The two novels that scored zeroes were *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife* and *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet*. They are both direct sequels to *Pride and Prejudice*. However, both novels had relatively high character differences as well, implying that novels that claim to exist within Austen's world feel more able to take liberties with other structures set up by Austen, such as plot and character descriptions.

Discussion

Overall, the ten books selected had an average character difference of 6.71, with a standard deviation of 1.61 (See Table 7). Nine of these books were within a range of 5.51 to 8.00, with *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* being the outlier at an average character difference of 2.64. The number of plot and language similarities varied more widely, with an average of 3.2 similarities per book, but a standard deviation of 3.12, so that only six of the ten books were within one standard deviation of the mean, while the remaining four were within two standard deviations. The relatively small deviation in character differences would seem to indicate that authors of sequels, retellings, and adaptations

follow a fairly set formula in determining the traits from Austen's original that are most important to adhere to in order to claims a relationship with the original.

When broken up into groups of sequels and retellings versus adaptations, adaptations were more similar to *Pride and Prejudice* than were sequels and retellings, both in terms of average character difference and plot and language similarities. While adaptations had an average character difference of 6.34 and a plot and language similarity of 5.4, sequels and retellings had an average character difference of 6.34 and plot and language similarities of 6.71. This could be due to several factors. While it makes sense that adaptation plots would follow that of *Pride and Prejudice* more closely in order to have a way to tie the adaptation back to the original novel, one would assume that the characters would undergo a more drastic change in order to update them to a modern setting or place them in a different genre. However, the characters in adaptations are more similar to Austen's originals than the characters in sequels and retellings. While this can be explained in part by the fact that Austen's characters transform to some extent over the course of *Pride and Prejudice*, it is still unexpected that characters who are supposed to be the same people as those described in *Pride and Prejudice* should be more different from Austen's originals than characters in adaptations that do not claim to exist in the same world as the one Austen describes.

The changes in character, plot, and language could be due to a number of factors. One possible explanation is that authors who intentionally set their books in Austen's time and use Austen's characters feel that there is less need to further connect their works with Austen's original, as they are already "branded," in a way. Authors choosing to use different times or different worlds (such as a zombie-infested Regency England) may

have more to prove regarding their books' relation to Austen and *Pride and Prejudice* and so they are less likely to diverge widely from the original with either characters or plot development.

Another possible reason for the increased similarities between adaptations and the original text is that adaptations may tend to be closer in genre to the original than sequels and retellings. The adaptations examined in this paper, such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Me and Mr. Darcy* maintain the use of satire to a greater extent than books such as *Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife* or *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet*, which rely more heavily on the traditions of popular romance fiction. This makes sense, as Jane Austen wrote to satirize the mores of her day, and authors writing in the present day would in theory have more to satirize when writing about settings they have experienced than they would when writing about an era in which they have not lived. In addition, fiction set in eras other than the present day, especially the Victorian era and earlier, seems often to be categorized as either romance or historical fiction. As such, it would seem to be logical that authors writing about other eras would adopt the tropes of these genres rather than those of satire. Patsy Stoneman's (1996) conclusions that sequels draw heavily on the traditions of popular romance fiction and that authors of incremental literature, whether consciously or not, become innovators by adapting a work to their own particular time and set of circumstances would seem to support this hypothesis. It also seems likely that novels drawing on the traditions of romance and historical fiction would be more likely to resentimentalize Austen's work, as discussed by Wagner (2007), than authors drawing on genres such as satire or science fiction.

Another unexpected finding is the evidence that characters based on Elizabeth Bennet differ most widely of all the characters studied, while Darcy characters are among those with the least variation. In addition, the fact that the difference in Elizabeth Bennet characters is seen most strongly in a decrease in the character's intelligence and independence is unexpected. As Darcy and Elizabeth are the characters that receive the most characterization throughout almost all of the novels studied, it seems unlikely that the differences in Elizabeth's characterization stem from the fact that she is discussed more frequently and in more depth than other characters. This is mostly due to the fact that, if this were the case, it would be expected that Darcy's characterization would also differ widely from his characterization in *Pride and Prejudice.*

The changes in characterization could be due in part to the ways in which women's roles have changed in the past two hundred years. While one would expect a character based on Elizabeth Bennet, who in the original is already intelligent, witty, independent, and spirited, to adhere closely to a similar template, it can be argued that women's liberation has decreased the stakes for women. In 1813, Elizabeth Bennet has to be intelligent and independent because she has little else. She is actually dependent on a structure that keeps her firmly in one place, and without a certain amount of intelligence or independence there is no way for her to find either happiness or security. Conversely, two hundred years later, a woman is no longer defined by her position in society or her ability to snare a husband. As a character is judged less for being single, and as a woman living independently is less of an oddity or social pariah, characters do not need to be either intelligent or independent in order to set themselves apart from the average woman. While the success of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies,* which reached number three on

the *New York Times* best seller list in April 2009 and is the novel that most closely adheres to Austen's original, with a plot and language score of eight and an average character difference of 2.64, would seem to indicate that Austen's plots and characters are well suited to modern sensibilities, it is possible that modern audiences, while they appreciate an independent and intelligent female character, do not require one*,*

Another explanation for the differences seen in characters such as Elizabeth Bennet and Mrs. Bennet could be that these adaptations, sequels, and retellings are inspired more by the 1995 BBC film version of *Pride and Prejudice* than they are on the actual novel. In *Me and Mr. Darcy*, Alexandra Potter (2007) has her male lead, Spike, interview a number of women about why Darcy is such a beloved and lusted after character. Their descriptions of Darcy use adjectives such as "smoldering, sexy, moody, brooding, and dashing" (p. 351). While Austen claims that Darcy is handsome, none of these traits are mentioned in the original novel. However, in the film version, Colin Firth is definitely sexy, smoldering, and brooding. This could explain the detail paid to characterizing Darcy in subsequent fiction inspired by *Pride and Prejudice*, while (female) writers do not pay as much attention to Elizabeth, whom they may not as a sex symbol.

Given the greater similarities in character, plot, and language to Austen's original shown by adaptations than by sequels and retellings, it can be concluded that readers enjoy fiction inspired by *Pride and Prejudice* for different reasons. It is possible that readers whose primary interest in *Pride and Prejudice* is the era it takes place in, and who prefer historical fiction or romance over satire or comedy would be more likely to enjoy a *Pride and Prejudice* sequel. Readers whose primary interest in *Pride and Prejudice* is the

plot, the characterization, or the relationships between the characters might be more inclined to prefer an adaptation.

Summary and Conclusions

While sequels and adaptations based on Jane Austen's six novels have been in existence since the mid-nineteenth century, they truly began to proliferate following the 1995 BBC adaptation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* for television. While a number of literary critics have analyzed these novels, their focus has mainly been on the more closely related Austen sequels, and little has been written about adaptations. Austen-based literature has often been classed as inferior. Due in part to this perceived inferiority, these novels have lagged behind film adaptations in the amount of analysis given them and do not seem to have been analyzed empirically. In conducting a content analysis of ten sequels, retellings, and adaptations based on *Pride and Prejudice*, the novels were examined for their relationship to Austen's novels on a number of fronts, including character traits, plot, and language. The purpose of examining these novels was to discover answers to the following questions: What elements of character, plot, and language appear in a certain type of sequel, retelling, or adaptation? Does an author's use of character, plot, and language demonstrate a link between her book and Austen's original? How close is this link, and is it stronger for books set in Austen's universe? Why might a link to Austen's original be stronger for one category of novel than another? Which characters are transformed the most in these books? Why might this be? Why might one type of novel appeal more to a reader based on its alignment with Pride and Prejudice?

In analyzing the material, evidence was discovered that fiction that takes Austen's characters or characters based on those created by Austen and sets them in a universe other than her own may be more likely to adhere to the plot, language, and character traits set out in *Pride and Prejudice*, while sequels and retellings that occur in Austen's place and time period may be more likely to alter the characters and plots. This may be due to the fact that adaptations are more likely to fall into satirical genres, while sequels and retellings may be more inclined to incorporate the traditions of romance and historical fiction, which deal more with sentimentality.

Overall, characters based on Elizabeth appear to diverge the most from the characterization set up in *Pride and Prejudice*, possibly due to changing views of women and their place in society, or the popularity of film versions of *Pride and Prejudice* over the original novel. The evidence that Darcy's characterization is more closely adhered to would seem to indicate that authors may be either fans of the film versions of the novel or might their readers to be fans of the film version. However, while some characters may diverge widely from the traits set out in *Pride and Prejudice*, most characters adhered fairly closely to Austen's originals, with a few exceptions such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet*. This would seem to indicate that, though some of the plots or characterizations may change, the characters and stories created by Jane Austen have a lasting appeal to the modern reader.

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Appendix 1: List of Novels Studied and Synopsis (from NoveList)

An Assembly Such as This: A Novel of Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman… by Pamela Aidan
Told from the perspective of Darcy, the first installment of a trilogy based on Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" begins with his observations of the Bennet family during a disastrous Netherfield Park ball, and offers insight into his complicated past.

Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife: Pride and Prejudice Continues by Linda Berdoll (From Booklist)
In Berdoll's...novel, the Darcys begin their married life as one of the happiest, most in-love couples imaginable. Berdoll picks up the story after their wedding, but flashes back to the days after the courtship, when Elizabeth and Darcy's passion for each other grew stronger. After a spicy wedding night, the couple finds their compatibility extends far beyond their matched wits. As Elizabeth settles into her role as mistress of a large household, her sister Jane grapples with her own, less passionate marriage to Charles Bingley. Thrown in as well are an illegitimate young man who just might be Darcy's son, a vengeful serving man who plagues the Darcys and develops an unhealthy fixation on Elizabeth, and suspicions of infidelity.

North by Northanger, or, The shades of Pemberley by Carrie Bebris
Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam Darcy find their situation compromised by challenges to the family fortune, the arrival of Darcy's imperial-minded aunt, and the discovery of a family heirloom that holds the key to a secret conspiracy.

The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet: A Novel by Colleen McCullough
The best-selling author of The Thorn Birds presents a sequel to Pride and Prejudice that finds the willful third Bennet sister setting out in her late thirties in pursuit of adventure while her sisters worry about her at home.

Mr. Darcy, Vampyre by Amanda Grange (From Publishers Weekly)
Grange (Mr. Darcy's Diary) continues Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, beginning on Darcy and Elizabeth's wedding day and follows the two on their honeymoon trip to Paris, the Alps and Venice during a lull in the Napoleonic Wars. Told from Elizabeth's point of view, the story is about her expanding horizons as she leaves the sheltered life she led at Netherfield for her new world as a wife and a traveler outside England. Darcy's continued lack of physical attention to Elizabeth makes her realize that something isn't quite right, but the clues provided in the text are too subtle for her to figure out his secret. By the time Darcy reveals his true nature, more than two thirds of the way through the book, Elizabeth is able to accept his announcement (which she sees as less disturbing than her more mundane fears).

Pemberley by the Sea: A modern love story, Pride and Prejudice style by Abigail Reynolds
Marine biologist Cassie Boulton likes her coffee with cream and her literature with happy

endings. Her favorite book is Pride and Prejudice, but Cassie has no patience when a modern-day Mr. Darcy appears in her lab.

Impulse & Initiative: A Pride & Prejudice Variation by Abigail Reynolds (From Booklist) Reynolds...asks, what if Mr. Darcy had persisted immediately in the wake of Elizabeth Bennet's first refusal? Persuaded by his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, to snap out of the funk he's been in since Elizabeth turned down his marriage proposal, Darcy, along with Mr. Bingley, returns to Netherfield to try to woo the woman who has captivated him completely. At first reluctant to change her opinion of him, Elizabeth gradually comes to enjoy his company, but she's convinced she'll never be able to love him. Time serves to change her mind, however—so much so that she agrees to marry him—and she even succumbs to a moment of intense passion before their wedding.

Bridget Jones's Diary by Helen Fielding
The daily chronicle of a 30-something single English woman who is convinced her life would be perfect if she could lose weight, stop smoking and develop "Inner Poise."

Me and Mr. Darcy: A Novel by Alexandra Potter
Emily has a string of disastrous dates and decides she has had it with love, but after fleeing to England on a tour of Jane Austen's country she runs into Mr. Darcy, the hero from "Pride and Prejudice."

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith
As a mysterious plague falls upon the village of Meryton and zombies start rising from the dead, Elizabeth Bennett is determined to destroy the evil menace, but becomes distracted by the arrival of the dashing and arrogant Mr. Darcy.

Appendix 2: Instruments

Instrument - Elizabeth

Trait	Prejudiced	Clever/Witty/ Intelligent	Independent/ Spirited/ Lively	Eyes/ Appearance
Page No.				

Instrument - Darcy

Trait	Proud/Rude/ Reserved/ Arrogant	Caretaker/ Protector/ Problem Solver	Intelligent/ Clever	Handsome
Page No.				

Instrument - Jane

Trait	Sweet/Gentle	Naive	Beautiful
Page No.			

Instrument - Bingley

Trait	Spirited/Lively	Easily Led	Nice/Kind/ Good Natured
Page No.			

Instrument - Mrs. Bennet

Trait	Silly	Worried/Fretful/Nervous	Scheming/Calculating
Page No.			

Instrument - Mr. Bennet

Trait	Sarcastic/ Sardonic	Sensible	Withdrawn
Page No.			

Instrument - Plot and Language

Plot or Language Device	Present
Love/Hate Relationship	
First Sentence	
Direct Quotes	
Meryton Assembly	
Netherfield Ball	
Proposal 1	
Pemberley	
Proposal 2	

Table 1

Average Trait Difference (Elizabeth):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	6.4	4.4	5.4
Average (Trait 2)	12.6	10	11.3
Average (Trait 3)	11.6	9.4	10.5
Average (Trait 4)	3.6	3.2	3.4
Average Distance	8.55	6.75	7.65

Table 2

Average Trait Difference (Mr. Darcy):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	9.4	10	9.7
Average (Trait 2)	4.6	6.2	5.4
Average (Trait 3)	5.8	5	5.4
Average (Trait 4)	2.4	1	1.7
Average Distance	5.55	5.55	5.55

Table 3

Average Trait Difference (Jane):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	5.6	4.67	5.25
Average (Trait 2)	3	2.33	2.75
Average (Trait 3)	4.6	3.67	4.25
Average Distance	4.4	3.56	4.08

Table 4

Average Trait Difference (Mr. Bingley):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	9.2	10	9.5
Average (Trait 2)	3	3.33	3.13
Average (Trait 3)	9	7.67	8.5
Average Distance	7.07	7	7.04

Table 5

Average Trait Difference (Mrs. Bennet):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	11.2	7.5	9.56
Average (Trait 2)	5.6	4	4.89
Average (Trait 3)	8.6	6.75	7.78
Average Distance	8.47	6.08	7.41

Table 6

Average Trait Difference (Mr. Bennet):

	Sequels	Adaptations	All
Average (Trait 1)	12.5	9	10.4
Average (Trait 2)	8	4.67	6
Average (Trait 3)	4	1.67	2.6
Average Distance	8.17	5.11	6.33

Table 7

Average Difference and Plot Similarities by Book

Book	Average Difference	Plot Similarities
Pride and Prejudice and Zombies	2.64	8
An Assembly Such as This	5.51	3
Pemberley by the Sea	6.64	5
Mr. Darcy, Vampyre	6.82	1
Impulse & Initiative	7.1	1
Mr. Darcy Takes a Wife	7.19	0
Bridget Jones's Diary	7.6	5
North by Northanger	7.63	1
Independence of Miss Mary Bennet	7.99	0
Me & Mr. Darcy	8	8
Average (Sequels)	7.08	1
Average (Adaptations)	6.34	5.4
Average (All)	6.71	3.2
Standard Deviation	1.61	3.12