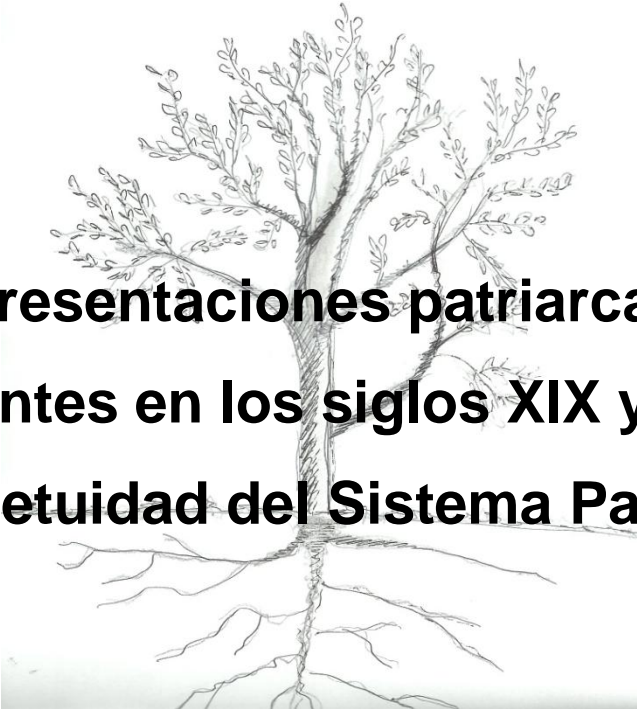UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CÓRDOBA

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Representaciones patriarcales presentes en los siglos XIX y XXI: La Perpetuidad del Sistema Patriarcal

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ABSTRACT

The cinema is an important part of people's everyday lives, and it contributes to influence our perception of the world and of ourselves as subjects. A vast amount of research has been made on gender representations in the cinema, but it could still result startling to establish parallelism between gender representations in twenty-first-century films and in a classic nineteenth-century novel. A careful analysis could explain particular social processes that could account for the perpetuity of patriarchy, and the results could suggest that the patriarchal system adapts itself throughout time, and does not lose its hegemony in the construction of social identity. With the purpose of enquiring about parallels between gender representations, a first analysis will be necessary in order to observe whether the films *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *Bridget Jones' Diary*: *the Edge of Reason* could be considered a parody of the classic nineteenth-century novel by Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, and the way ironic inversion marks the critical difference between them.

A mis padres, a mi esposo Sebastián
y a lo mejor de mi vida, Juan Pablo y Josefina.

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INTRODUCTION

Up to the year 2009 I had been fundamentally interested in the exploration and analysis of novels and other academic texts, especially from the point of view of Gender Studies. However, in those months, I attended a course in Literary Criticism, during which I was first introduced in the multi-and inter-disciplinary field of Cultural Studies. This new vision brought about new questions, and, moreover, it offered the opportunity for recontextualizing those new questions in a different framework: contemporary pop-culture phenomena.

Cultural Studies as a field does not only present an effective chance to approach TV programmes, rock n' roll or films as objects of study, but it also provides epistemological, ideological and intellectual framework to analyze the how and the why. In this manner, scholars find themselves able to draw on diverse disciplines to study, analyze and uncover issues of power and ideology in popular culture. Accordingly, Terry Eagleton (1983) acknowledged the power of discourse, and of any practice involved in the construction of meaning, from TV to the novel or the natural sciences. He explained that, while modeling subjectivities consciously or unconsciously, these practices produce effects strongly associated with the maintenance or the transformation of existing hegemonic systems.

Louis Althusser (1974) asserted that ideology works in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among individuals, or "turns" individuals into subjects through the process of interpellation (57). Years later, in *The Western Canon*, Harold Bloom (1994) acknowledged the advent of new literary forms in these days and age. Amid strong criticism, the author even seemed to mourn the way mass culture has reached a significant part of the population: "the morality of scholarship, as currently practiced, is to encourage everyone to replace difficult pleasures by pleasures universally accessible precisely because they are easier" (528). Furthermore, Bloom dared to foresee that literary studies as such would not have a future, because it is probable that Departments of English at schools or in universities will, and they have actually already started to, become Departments of Cultural Studies, and that canonic authors of a standing equal to Shakespeare or Wordsworth would be replaced by popular superheroes, singers and TV characters. Whether one agrees (or not) with Bloom's gloomy tone and low remarks about scholars' embracing the emergence and celebration of mass cultural forms, it

cannot be denied that they have arrived to stay, because they have a literary reality, and one can picture its spreading as an octopus' arms making way through society. Thus, in this scenario, it could be interesting to inquire into the possible outcome, as far as ideology issues are regarded. That is to say, this "easy" access of the population to cultural forms could clearly lead to Althusser's concept of interpellation, since it facilitates the propagation of the influence of hegemonic forces, the perpetuity of social conditions and the manipulation of individuals' social identities. Cultural Studies, in this manner, presents a priceless field to search for enlightenment on the subjects of ideology and hegemony.

From the perspective of Cultural Studies, Culture is understood as a process of construction of meanings, in which subjects become active participants. However, these meanings should not be taken as preformed beforehand and forced onto subjects, although their "freedom" to construct meanings must be thought circumscribed to certain boundaries set by an enfolding social "freedom". In other words, subjects are expected to construct meanings which correspond with the ideology produced and circulated by hegemonic forces through massive texts, which, in turn, are made popular by subjects. In this manner, one can observe the way individuals are constructed and still construct their own meaning within, even if against, meaning provided by dominant culture.

From the point of view of Gender Studies, the possibilities that Cultural Studies offers as a field have become invaluable, since they legitimize inquiries and analysis of representations beyond academic circles, which could allow an easier understanding of the reasons why the patriarchal order seems so difficult to undermine. To be precise, it should be considered that the agencies which encourage and perpetuate certain representations in particular have transcended scholarly canons and got to collective institutions, such as the school, the cinema or the family.

Gerda Lerner (1986) mentioned the dangerous possibility to see the patriarchal order as natural, and its expansion or constant reinvention as "normal" or "meant to be". The author insisted on the importance to understand its historicity, and the way patriarchy, as a result of historical processes, has situated the woman figure in the passive end of the binary system, "adjusting" herself to "the other". She appears to have seen herself traditionally trapped in immanence, defined and judged by shape, size and body functions. Therefore, subordinated to and dependent on men, women have

traditionally found that the possibilities to subvert the order are poor and scarce. As a result, and as Susan Bordo (1993) emphasized:

> The cost of such projections to women is obvious. For if, whatever the specific historical content of the duality, the body is the negative term, and if woman is the body, then women are the negativity, whatever it may be: distraction from knowledge, seduction away from God, capitulation to sexual desire, violence or aggression, failure of will, even death. (p. 5)

Therefore, Gender Studies' theories have developed fundamental methods to approach different objects of studies, trying to uncover (and subvert whenever it is possible) ideologies underlying patriarchal representations. It is not surprising, then, to come across gender representations in different cultural objects with apparent established parallelisms. However, finding this kind of instances in cultural objects belonging to different periods could turn out to be unexpected. When watching a contemporary popular film one could be reminded of representations found in a nineteenth-century novel, but when exploring certain parallelisms, it is startling to discover that, after two centuries, the same representations are not just accepted, but they are still celebrated. In other words, it seems that nothing has been able to undermine the social order in such a long time, but, on the contrary, the patriarchal system appears to have found and adopted new means to perpetuate itself. This is the case of the representations found in the successful saga of *Bridget Jones' Diary*, directed by Helen Fielding, and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, indisputable milestone of the western canon.

Nowadays, there exist numerous centres dedicated to research in gender roles and representations, and their significance in everyday life. Universities around the world even offer doctoral studies in Gender Studies that aim at its enlargement and consolidation, and they also include contributions from other fields of science and knowledge which grant theoretical and practical instruments. Hence, the acknowledgment of Cultural Studies as a research field has encouraged even further exploration and, what is more, at a massive level.

This is the case of films and TV, for instance. Cultural Studies considers the cinema an optimum territory for the analysis of the way subjectivities are constructed. As a producer of images, meanings and ideologies, the cinema provides Gender Studies with an important source of prime order to inquire about dominant representations, not only regarding gender categories, but also about the relation between gender and other categories such as class, ethnicity, education or age. Therefore, academic circles have,

in due course, acknowledged Cultural Studies as an imperative in Gender Studies, encompassing cross-disciplinary work which approaches contemporary phenomena as its object of study.

Consequently, much of the academic research around the world has involved itself with music, television, the cinema and other cultural experiences. For instance, the University of Malta gathers doctoral thesis on stereotypes observed in TV programmes, in advertisements or in films. Furthermore, departments dedicated to Gender Studies have been created, especially in United States and in Great Britain, such as in Wellesley College, USA. Books connected to Gender Studies and the media have been released, like *Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies & the American Dream*, by Marjorie McCann (1973) or *From Reverence to Rape* by Molly Haskell (1974). This kind of books, for example, has explored women's representations in Hollywood films throughout decades. Yet, these works tend to focus on the body and women's sexuality as stereotypes: the sexy and *femme fatale*, or the strong woman who is capable to confront the powers of a war on her own. Likewise, in the digital library of the University of Houston-Clear Lake, Texas, USA, one can read thesis centered on Hollywood images which reveal women choices among work offers.

Miradas, a digital magazine (released by the International School of Television and Cinema) and *La Aljaba*, a Mexican Journal which is concerned with women's studies, gather numerous essays about the cinema and Gender Studies. Among these, one could highlight *Sobre representaciones de la mujer en el cine y crítica feminista*, or *Cine y estudios de género: Imagen, representación e ideología. Notas para un abordaje crítico*. Similarly, new technologies have also played a large and important part in Gender Studies, and new portals in Internet have been created to put forward discussions and interviews concerning matters related to films and gender. An example of which is the case of the *Portal de la Comunicación* where films are discussed from different theoretical approaches. Nevertheless, it can be noticed that most of the studies carried out on representations in films as objects of study are related to the body, violence or professions (mainly in male spheres). Hence, and as it has already been mentioned, in spite of the significance and transcendence of this rich legacy, comparative studies, merged with the field of Cultural Studies, which approach patriarchal representations in cultural objects produced by women in different historical periods are scarce.

The interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies, then, results invaluable for undertaking a profound analysis of two objects of study which, at first sight, seem to have nothing in common. The first one is *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen, which is considered to be a literary masterpiece from the early nineteenth century. The second one belongs to the cinema territory: a contemporary saga which enjoyed worldwide acceptance and praise, *Bridget Jones' Diary* (2001) *and Bridget Jones' Diary: the Edge of Reason* (2004). Could *Pride and Prejudice*, a romantic milestone in the western canon, be analyzed next to a contemporary popular film?

To begin with such a challenge, the theory of parody by Linda Hutcheon will support an analysis of the comedies, which will try to uncover the connection that exists between these and Jane Austen's novel. Moreover, this analysis could even be regarded as an intention to establish a bridge between two far-away eras, bringing these two artistic expressions (separated by two centuries) together.

Secondly, Cultural Studies will provide the framework for a simultaneous research that looks forward to connecting the cinema and Gender Studies' theories. In this manner, a thorough observation of representations found in the films will raise more questions about parallelisms between these ones and representations found in the novel. Could it be possible to observe analogous gender representations in cultural objects separated by two centuries? If this is the case, it will become crucial to look for possible explanations that may account for the stubborn continuation of certain representations. Thus, in this manner, this research addresses the challenge to study, uncover and explain the reasons for the perpetuation of the patriarchal order.

Both will have

succeeded, once again, in speaking of love.

Umberto Eco (1983)

<u>Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework</u>
<u>Opening doors…</u>

As we begin the new millennium, one can observe the way Cultural Studies has made its way firmly and determinedly. It is an acknowledged fact that its objects of study (films, songs, comic strips or best- sellers) reach a high percentage of the population, higher than literary academic texts can reach. Among severe criticism, Harold Bloom has asserted that everyone is encouraged to "replace difficult pleasures by pleasures universally accessible precisely because they are easier" (p. 520) and, at first sight, he seems to be right in several cases. Nowadays, numerous universities around the world offer newsletters, websites, publications and journals concerned with the various complementary aspects of Cultural Studies, most of which can easily be searched out on the Internet, significant tool within the field, as a practical result of globalization. Similarly, even elementary education school syllabuses appear to have replaced the study of classic literature with the study of other cultural practices such as films, music, dances, among others. Hence, we might agree with Harold Bloom who believes that literary studies as such will not have a future, that the current "Departments of English" will, and have already started to, become "Departments of Cultural Studies" and that Shakespeare, Milton or Wordsworth will be replaced by Batman, pop singers and TV characters. Yet, the field of Cultural Studies might be able to provide the possibility for canonical writers and works to be reached through everyday texts. According to Antony Easthope (1991), it not only becomes central for Cultural Studies to reconstruct an everyday text in academic analysis, but it is also significant to explicitly confront texts belonging to the canonical tradition. Therefore, even though Cultural Studies takes "the everyday popular culture" as a point of departure, it aims at its reading alongside canonical texts, trying to overcome any hegemonic superiority that may tend to consign traditions a central or a subordinated position.

Easthope has traced the birth of Cultural Studies as an academic field to the 1950s, when Raymond Williams challenged Leavisism and its appropriation of the concept *culture* exclusively for the English ruling social class. Williams presented the term *popular culture* for the first time as the free expression of the working class, thus

broadening the concept to a general definition as the whole "way of life" of a society. Afterwards, and mobilized by both Marxism and structuralism, Cultural Studies came to understand *popular culture* not so much as a free expression, but rather as "a set of imposed and constrained meanings ultimately determined by economic power (Althusser's so- called 'dominant ideology' thesis)" (p.72) .

This period witnessed the emergence of a hard form of structuralism with the publication of Louis Althusser´s *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* in France in 1977. As indicated by his theory, individuals are constructs of ideology, conceiving ideology as a necessary force in social reproduction, omnipresent and trans- historical. Even before they are born, the subjects are assigned specific ideological roles which will define him/her as far as gender, family, nationality or even religion are concerned. The author has understood the TV and the arts, among others, as Ideological State Apparatuses which function by the dominant ideology to secure an essential 'harmony' in society. The communications apparatus crams every 'citizen' with daily doses of nationalism, chauvinism, or moralism up to the point that "it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by that very precise operation called interpellation or hailing" (p.174). In this manner, Alhusser has confirmed that ideology provides a conceptual framework through which we interpret and make sense of our lived material conditions and, through the Ideological State Apparatuses, it produces culture as well as our consciousness of who and what we are.

Similarly, Easthope has explained that Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony has been theorized and used to analyze popular culture as "a form of settlement negotiated to the advantage of the ruling bloc" (p.73). Thus, ideas, values and beliefs are observed as neither accidental nor imposed from above, but as negotiated through a series of encounters and collisions between classes, resulting in subordination ruled not by force but by consent on the part of the dominated. Yet, Cultural Studies practitioners have stressed that hegemony, as well as the individuals subjected to hegemony, come into being at the intersection of multiple, potentially contradictory discourses. Furthermore, history is continuously transforming and rewriting itself, fact that leads to the possibility of questioning or even undermining existing hegemonic practices. Therefore, in order for powerful forces to maintain control, they are obliged to adapt to new historical contexts by constantly revising and even altering their dominating system.

Simon During (1993) has understood Cultural Studies as the study of contemporary culture. The author has denied the idea of considering Cultural Studies an academic discipline or as possessing a well- defined methodology or clearly demarcated fields for investigation: "we need to think of cultural studies not as a traditional field or discipline, nor as a mode of interdisciplinarity, but as what I will call a field within multidisciplinarity" (p.27). It borrows and appropriates theories and methods from usually more highly institutionalized disciplines (ethnography, psychoanalysis, politics, economics or literature, among others) to function as a field within the academic.

On the other hand, Stuart Hall has emphasized that there is something at stake in Cultural Studies: a dialogic approach to theory. He has correctly registered a tension in the intellectual community which opposes "a refusal to close the field, to police it" and "a determination to stake out some positions within it and argue for them" (p.99). Consequently, it can be assumed that Cultural Studies is committed to a moral evaluation of modern society and to a radical line of political action. Hall has claimed: "I don't believe knowledge is closed, but I do believe that politics is impossible without what I have called 'the arbitrary closure', a practice which always thinks about its intervention in a world in which it would make some difference, in which it would have some effect" (p. 108).

As it has been explained to this point, Cultural Studies functions by making use of theories and methodologies, borrowed from social science disciplines, to analyze all varieties of cultural forms and practices. The aesthetic practice of the current century has brought about a number of implications for theory that needs to be regarded and examined. This analysis will take into consideration two objects of study which belong to different periods of time: the early nineteenth and the late twentieth century. The nineteenth century witnessed a major literature movement in England, romanticism, which treasured originality and individuality at the centre of art. In the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*, William Wordsworth (1800), an early leader of the movement, strongly affirmed that "every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great or original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished" (as cited in Bradley, 1999, p. 99). For the romantics, originality grew to be an institution, literature became valuable as an expression of unique feelings and particular attitudes and the artist's personal vision alone was taken as a guarantee of artistic integrity.

Although the romantics lost energy at the turn of the century, their creative ideal of originality endured, and the twentieth century saw the birth of the modern world

bringing about a self- reflexiveness of all cultural forms and a captivating interest in the absorption of novelty into custom. Modern artists started then to experiment with new ways of looking, thinking and seeing, proposing new ideas for the functions and the materials of art. Accordingly, then, self-consciousness and self-awareness seem to have grown into an important principle of modern art, leading to experimentation with form, materials and processes.

Critics eventually came up with new definitions which sought to reflect, work on and arrange the inherited legacy. Coinciding with the arrival of the *Avant-Garde*, modernists aimed at the retention of vital elements in order "to enrich the traditions of their respective literary culture" (Travers, 1998, p. 107). In his essay Tradition *and the Individual Talent* (1920), T. S. Eliot considered it necessary for a writer to perceive the importance of the presence of the inherited legacy, since it becomes, as a principle of aesthetic criticism, standards for appreciation and value of the writer. In other words, the writer seems to be judged, by comparison or contrast, by standards of the past which has asserted its immortality in his work. Eliot emphasized, in this manner, that the literary mind needs to change, but without abandoning canonical authors in the development.

However, John Barth (1995) remarked that, in due course, the literary mind stopped worrying about being judged against tradition or, even worse, fearing the decline and death of literary forms. Instead, the concern switched from the novel to the reader. And this moment is when Barth dated the beginning of literary Postmodernism: when the focus was on the reader, and the anxiety was no longer the death of the novel, but it became the death of the reader. Along these lines, Umberto Eco (1983) appeared to have achieved greater clarity in the issue of inherited legacy in postmodern life and art, offering an illuminating account of a distinctive attitude: the ironic "double coding". Using a witty and enlightening explanation, the Italian semiotician and novelist asserted that double coding presents a scenario similar to that of two lovers with an enigma: they cannot tell innocently "I love you madly" to each other because they would reproduce somebody else's words. Thus, the only solution for these two lovers is to accept that it is no possible to speak innocently, but it is possible to appropriate the words and utter them in an age of lost innocence: "Neither of the speakers will feel innocent, both will have accepted the challenge of the past, of the already said, which cannot be eliminated, both will consciously and with pleasure play the game of irony" (Eco, 1980, as cited in Barth, 1995, p. 123). In this manner, the postmodern literary mind cannot but accept the

inherited legacy, appropriating it, as it has just been mentioned, in an age of lost innocence to open pathways for new and original literary forms.

Eventually, the notion of *parody* came along as a significant mode of formal and thematic construction of texts, after a long record of theories related to intertextuality. Mijail Bakhtin (1981) introduced the idea of the continual dialogic work carried by literature. This dialogue between works of literature and authors allow literary works to inform and to become continually informed, too. Similarly, and inspired by Bakhtin, Kristeva (1969) coined the term "intertextuality" for the first time to develop the concept further and describe the idea that texts absorb and transform other texts. Nonetheless, Linda Hutcheon (1985) asserts that this absorption is not magical and it is the superlative work of Michael Riffaterre (1978) the one which first acknowledged the fact that only a reader can activate the intertext. Later, Hutcheon adds to his theory by explaining that the reader-decoder-activates the intertext in a controlled manner, controlled with an encoded intent with critical distance.

Although parody has placed itself under the attack of persisting romantic views that visualize it as distastefully breaking with nineteenth century ideas of originality, Linda Hutcheon has asserted that parody has turned out to be "an important way for modern artists to come to terms with the past" (p. 101). This author's line of reasoning results really effective for appreciating an acknowledgment of masterpieces in postmodern art mainly. Hutcheon has recognized a positive feature of parody's ethos concerning the respect that many artists show for the original text in their parodic creations. The author has brought the concept "trans-contextualization" to the picture, which implies distance in order to observe an object of study critically and with a particular objective. It can be considered a complex mechanism that makes possible a non-mocking rewriting of the original piece of art (or art form). However, this intended repetition uses critical distance indicated by ironic inversion to mark difference rather than similarity. "Parody, then, in its ironic 'trans-contextualization' and inversion, is 'repetition with difference'" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 32). Therefore, irony results a key component in Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody, both in its semantic and, especially, its pragmatic functions. In reference to the latter, it is required to consider the signals of the encoded message within the text intended to be inferred by the decoder and, then, the practical effects of the parodic message.

Gender Studies into Cultural Studies

It has been acknowledged that the arrival of Gender Studies to Cultural Studies, now over thirty years ago, shattered the field along concrete and revolutionary lines. Stuart Hall described the onset very peculiarly: "as the thief in the night, it broke in; interrupted, made an unseemly noise, seized the time, crapped on the table of cultural studies…" (p. 104). Gender Studies have not only taken advantage of cultural studies' respect for the marginal subject, but also for its critical political involvement. After a significant number of years of research, this field has made its way to find theoretical legitimation to introduce gender as a valid analysis category. It has focused on the centrality of gender and sexuality to the understanding of power, trying to uncover the assumptions restricting the meaning of gender to that of masculinity and femininity.

Long before current times of Gender Studies, there have been feminist writers and activists who have displayed an evident concern over the potential of women as individuals. Such is the case of Mary Wollstonecraft, frequently called the "first feminist" and even "mother of feminism". Back in the eighteenth century, this author revealed her ideas on women's subordination in her political treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). In those initial days, during which women started reflecting about the meanings encompassed in the word 'woman' and about the implied roles in the family, at work, in society or in life, her work became a milestone in the history of Gender Studies.

"One is not born a woman, one becomes one" concluded Simone De Beauvoir in 1949, when she analysed the way gender differences are set in hierarchical opposition in *The Second Sex*. Since then, core ideas about gender construction and about the inequality between genders are persistently held up for scrutiny in relation to power and to the way meanings and truths have been generated in social discourse. Writers and thinkers have historically attempted to carry feminist ideas into education, social work, policy making and mainstream politics.

Historicity comes up as a crucial issue that needs to be taken into consideration to understand not only the causes and the consequences, but also the mechanisms of the patriarchal system. Gerda Lerner (1990) has asserted that the patriarchal system emerges from historical processes and, as such, can only be ended by historical processes. In order to avoid its consideration as natural, as a product of human biology or even as ordained by divine forces, the patriarchal historicity needs to be examined, understood and, whenever possible, for political reasons, undermined.

Stephen Bonnycastle (1997) has referred to the patriarchal order in our society, too, claiming that it encourages men and women to take on different roles in mixed company. The author has stated that both men and women "often fulfil their assigned roles in social groups without knowing that an assignment has taken place" (p. 188). For ages and ages, both women and men have been socially structured so as to internalize social roles through ideological social discourse. The male and female roles "assigned" by ideological social discourse lead men and women to adopt, and encourage, whatever behaviour is considered correct in different social situations, such as at school, at work, among friends or at home. The term "correct" happens to be symbolic of a group of cultural features, meanings and values conventionally associated with femininity and masculinity, constituting and conceptualizing, in this manner, a gender identity. In an attempt to recognize and study underlying social conventions, and exploiting a crucial theory of Structuralism, binary oppositions have become central and decisive. Gender identity has historically been defined by binary oppositions, whose poles have assembled the characteristics related to femininity and masculinity. Nevertheless, Gender Studies has persistently insisted that passivity and subordination have forever, and deliberately, been brought about on the feminine pole. Simone De Beauvoir already affirmed it in *The Second Sex*: as long as men are considered 'the One' or 'the First', women become 'the Other'. She asserted very clearly:

> Man never thinks of himself without thinking of the Other; he views the world under the sign of duality […]. But being different from man, who sets himself up as the same, it is naturally to the category of the Other that woman is consigned. (pag. 69)

Thus, women turn out to be definable only in relation to men, in interaction with and in opposition to them. For instance, in western society, whereas aggression and competence have traditionally been associated with men, women have been defined as passive, cooperative and expressive. Therefore, it can be asserted that the male dominance has forever been advantaged in the public as well as in the private sphere. It is worth adding that everyone in society, both women and men, has actively *participated* in this historical construction of the patriarchal order, even without awareness.

Later on, Poststructuralism emerged with the deconstruction of these binary oppositions, bringing about a destabilization of the structures. By decentering and reconstructing them, they prompt the change of focus onto the subordinated pole. In this

manner, poststructuralist waves in Gender Studies were impacted by the work of Jacques Derrida on deconstruction and difference, and aimed at the rediscovery and exploration of femininity by analysing and deconstructing discourse in patriarchal culture. Enquiring and testing "self-evident" truths, Gender Studies focused on a political attempt to recognize that norms and standards are not absolute.

Eventually, representation became one of the crucial areas for debate. The way women perceive themselves, and are perceived by others, turns out to be a major discussion issue. The qualities of ideal-type femininity have been constructed and communicated to the population at large, generation after generation, reinforcing patriarchal binary oppositions. More often than not, and facilitated by the mass media, certain images are regarded as stereotypes since they seem to repeat themselves up to the point of standardization. They appear to communicate effortlessly and when enquiring the reason, it becomes clear that stereotypes exist, not only within an individual's mind, but also at a collective level. However, representation needs to be understood as a much more complex concept than that of stereotype. One main difference, for instance, is that the latter often carry a derogatory connotation about an individual on the basis of their gender, what does not always correspond to the concept of representation. Nevertheless, in due course, it has become clear that beliefs about sex differences influence social perception, modeling behavioral explanations and expectations. That is to say, social perception of men and women is ineluctably shaped by dominant ideologies, and correspondingly transmitted through gender representations in the media.

Along these lines, one could consider that emerging images of women in advertising or in the film industry could result to be contradictory in many cases. For example, nowadays, it is not unusual to come across portrayals of women of colour or lesbians, among others. Yet, when looking into them closely, it is not unexpected to find that they frequently concentrate only on subjects connected to racism or sexuality. Therefore, gender representations instituted in western society give the impression of being still limited and dominated by dominant ideologies that preserve the perpetuation of qualities of ideal-type femininity.

Margaret Marshment (1993) has observed that "representation is a political issue. Without the power to define our interests and to participate in the decisions that affect us, women (or any other group in society) will be subject to the definitions and decisions of others" (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p. 139). Thus, representation and

politics turned out to be different, but interwoven, concepts in gender studies, although the first contains an implied contradiction regarding the second one. Judith Butler (1999), on the one hand, identifies the operational function of representation with the objective of broadening the legitimacy of women as political subjects, and, on the other hand, its normative function (provided by language) that shows or distorts what it is considered true about the woman category. From this contradiction it can be read that the feminist subject is discursively formed by the same political structure which will ultimately allow her emancipation.

In this manner, the word parody has been brought into the picture once again by Judith Butler (1990) to construct the notion of gender parody. In an attempt to uncover the truth about the original identity after which gender fashions itself, she arrives at the conclusion that imitation is a key word. The author has affirmed that there is no origin which may account for gender identity. Rather, there is imitation of gender's representations within cultural practices. Transvestism is presented to illustrate the point of gender imitation: when a transvestite imitates gender, the implicit imitable structure of gender is manifested.

Therefore, the words representation, construction, system and historicity get together in any attempt to outline a definition of gender. Teresa de Lauretis (1987) has agreed that gender is representation, and she has also offered a definition. She has worked on a comprehensive series of propositions, utterly consistent with each other, as a starting point. Firstly, she has affirmed that gender is representation with concrete implications for the individuals in their material life. When an individual represents and is represented as a woman or as a man, she or he is assigned and must assume certain meanings in society. These meanings are associated with identity, value, prestige, social hierarchies, among others. At the same time, while drawing on Alhusser's notion of ideology, she has claimed that this representation is its construction. Althusser's theory itself could work like a technology of gender, since it has the particular function of constituting individuals as women and men. Thus, Althusser claimed that individuals are constructs of ideology, then, consequently, they are constructs of gender. Indeed, de Lauretis has affirmed: "the construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation" (de Lauretis, 1987, p. 5). De Lauretis has also added that this construction still continues today, even in the intellectual community, through the different technologies of gender, as well as the institutional discourse. Technologies of gender like the cinema prompt the production and spreading of gender representations,

fact that reinforces hegemonic values. In this manner, the need of uncovering the ideological principles underlying the discourse of everyday technology is highlighted. This discourse is, by no means, left out of the processes which structure the patriarchal historicity, so necessary to understand and, if possible, undermine, as pointed out by Gerda Lerner. Finally, de Lauretis has gone further stating that gender construction is also affected by its deconstruction, because there will always be positions favouring androcentric interests within academic Gender Studies. Judith Butler has also drawn attention to an odd, yet true, fact: a woman is not only a woman. With no apparent intention of creating a scandal, what she has intended to suggest is that the concept of "woman" is not exhaustive. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), the author has explained the necessity to go beyond the masculine/feminine binary opposition, since it decontextualizes an individual's "identity". Gender is the result of a constitution intertwined by racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional aspects which, at the same time, constitute identities discursively. The historical urgency of Gender Studies to determine the universal character of patriarchy should not disregard the context in which women are immersed. Butler has argued that there exist limitations of the discourse around representation, which undermine any attempt of universalization or unity. Nevertheless, it can be asserted that gender is performative since it conventionalizes the identity it presupposes for the subject through discursive practices. The category "woman" has been, then, historically constructed through discourse (neither from a beginning nor up to an end), and within a spatiotemporal context: "one is not born a woman, one becomes one".

Hence, just like there is no subject able to escape a defining culture, there is no body able to escape gendered cultural meanings. Susan Bordo (1993), for instance, has indicated that bodies carry an imprint which varies consistently with determined historical ages. She describes the postmodern body as "absolutely tight, contained [...] that is protected against eruption from within, whose internal processes are under control" (p. 190). This interesting metaphor gives one a sense of "fitting" the contemporary period associated with a consumer culture which appears to get out of control every now and then. Bordo considers this "tight" and slender body an ideal metaphor for anxiety about internal processes struggling to keep oneself disciplined and attain, in this manner, social empowerment. Excesses, like bumps, bulges or flabby buttocks, should be attacked since they have become evidence that one does not care about oneself or, even worse, that one does not know how to keep a correct "firm"

attitude. Socially, it becomes a flaw which ought to be erased, just as it is erased in the images we come across everyday in ads, films and fashion. These images appear to be constantly teaching us "how to see", guiding us to the final objective of being able to distinguish between what is normal and what is a defect. Gender studies has identified what were regarded as 'stereotypes' of feminine behaviour and physical appearance, and this work has been extended to wider cultural criticism to show how women and men might be affected by the way gender is represented to them in different fields.

In *Gender Trouble,* the body is considered a constructed instrument that constructs gender. In other words, the body and the psyche become an arrangement of cultural meanings, which are imposed and internalized in order to construct identity. Later, in *Bodies That Matter* (1993), Butler has emphasized that bodies are, indeed, indeterminate as far as gender is regarded. However, she has acknowledged that bodies carry the mark of gender, together with the marks of race, class or sexuality.

It becomes vital to become aware that gender performativity (a celebrated concept established by Butler) cannot be theorized independently from repetitive and forced regulatory sexual regimes. Consequently, she has asserted that the already mentioned arrangement of cultural meanings, delimited by and in social discourse, leaves out a range of subjects who, willing to choose and capable of choosing, do not fit the hegemonic heterosexual regime. And, in this manner, gender construction finds its limitations in these individual subjects, whose bodies result, as a social consequence, rejected, deligitimatized or, not even considered "bodies".

In the context of the XXI century, Gender Studies is still engaged in analyzing and in theorizing about gender representations, and about gender construction issues. Scholars contribute from different perspectives, drawing attention to cultural practices such as advertising, the film industry or fashion magazines in attempts to question, explain or even undermine existing hegemonic values. For instance, recent waves in Gender Studies, conscious of the historicity that has taken place and of feminists' radical thoughts, appear to have focused their attention on women who could be portrayed as having achieved success in a man's world, using 'patriarchal' indicators of success such as money or fame. They also tend to be less dogmatic and much more pluralistic about sexuality and personal expression such as cosmetics and fashion choices, always on the lookout for issues of class and race. Nowadays, women seem to enjoy consumism, and they seem to develop these expressions which, not so long ago, were considered patriarchal-ordered.

What goes around tends to come around. The trouble-free, and of course encouraged, access of the population to cultural forms other than academic texts, also facilitate hegemonic forces to spread its influence, assign social identities and shape individuals: an effective influence for a definite perpetuation of social conditions. The consumist culture traps the subject in its final objective of consuming-consumed perpetuation. Althusser has claimed that cultural practices distributed by particular institutions and the media, carry discrete messages with hegemonic effects. The cinema, then, as every other Ideological State Apparatus, should not be disregarded as a powerful means of hegemonic forces to keep the objective of perpetuating the system through the maintenance of certain values. It has grown to be a highly influential cultural instrument, since the gender images that are successfully communicated to the population, ultimately affect its perception, fostering their gender construction. The cinema should not be considered a mirror of reality because it is not a neutral instrument of reproduction. Not only is the cinematographic text produced within a determined social, economic and cultural structure but also it is interpreted by subjects who carry particular experiences standing in a specific context. This fact constitutes the meeting point between Cultural Studies and Gender Studies. The cinema turns out to be, then, an excellent source to enquire about gender representations.

EARLY 19th CENTURY – EARLY 21ST CENTURY:
A PARODIC BRIDGE

Directed by Sharon Maguire, *Bridget Jones' Diary* was such a success that people all over the world waited anxiously for the sequel to appear in 2004, *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, this time directed by Beeban Kidron. Both films, especially the former, present several characteristics regarding characters, plot details and even verbal quotations which have been made to be taken as an amusing parody of Jane Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. Yet, it is worth mentioning that, in order to be successfully decoded, an audience which is itself self-conscious about linguistic practices is required. That is, the film creators have provided a level of familiarity through these features, intended to be decoded by the audience, but, at the same time, they have provided the starting point for innovative rewriting.

Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody places a particular emphasis on the absence of the ridicule, and also presents irony as an essential element to signal critical distance between the contemporary romantic comedies and the nineteenth-century novel. In addition, when watching the cinematographic sequel, the film makers' deliberate intention to rewrite the parodied text becomes clear, inquiring into women's social experiences, which seem to face certain process of change (yet, as it will be shown, they remain static). Their objective seems achieved when the viewer notices the points of connection, rewritten and reevaluated, between the stories separated in time but linked by themes and motifs of central significance in the construction of gendered representations a woman faces throughout history.

As it has already been mentioned, parallels can be drawn between the original *Pride and Prejudice* and the contemporary cinematographic sequel *Bridget Jones' Diary*. The works have overlapping perspectives and concerns. Hutcheon has explained that parody results a more complex process of imitation than allusion or pastiche, since the act of parody implies incorporation with the function of separation and contrast. She has brought up the concepts trans-contextualization and ironic inversion to help in this function. Throughout the creation of the dialogue with the text from the past, the film makers have consciously appropriated the necessary forms to mark difference in perspective between the two texts, generating a meaning of its own. This meaning is intended to be considered independent from the parodied novel by adding the necessary

elements to make it contemporarily coherent. In other words, the text has been adapted to current times in order to create distance and establish contrast.

Historically, the concept of parody has also been linked to the concept of satire. If a person looks up the word "parody" in a dictionary or in an encyclopedia, she or he will come across words like "mocking", "ridiculous" or even "against". Nonetheless, parody needs to be distinguished from satire. To begin with, satire uses, indeed, distance to ridicule, to scorn or even to attack what it is satirized. Yet, the most significant difference is that satire aims at social customs or even social hierarchies, whereas parody seeks a reformulation or reprocessing of another cultural object, and does not necessarily comprise negative judgment. Moreover, "any real attack would be self-destructive" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 44). To illustrate the concept of satire, one does not have to look too far: in *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen satirized the portrayal of certain emblematic class characters of the eighteenth century, mocking their language, comments, manners and even their attitudes. Characters like Mr. Collins, Miss Bingley or Lady Catherine turn out to be suitable for Austen' satirizing intentions, as they show an overestimation of their class status in different parts of the novel.

In the films, on the other hand, the viewer comes across certain scenes that may initially lead him/her to make a negative interpretation and regard the romantic novel as the object of a negative evaluation. Nonetheless, after a while, the viewer realizes that the first impression is erroneous. As the story develops, it is understood that the comic effect is brought about by a playful irony, whose ultimate goal lacks all intention of mocking or ridiculing the novel. Furthermore, Austen's satire of emblematic characters is also parodied. The difference is held in time. In this manner, the viewer can observe peculiar characterizations of Bridget´s mother, Pam, her friend Una, her lover Julian or even Daniel Cleaver. Class status does not come up as an important issue here. It can be observed that the inflated portrayals of Cleaver's sex appeal or Pam as a rebellious housewife entail a negative judgment, facilitating a satirizing effect around typical contemporary issues.

The film makers' intention of parodying the romantic novel becomes obvious when Bridget, the protagonist, introduces the viewers to the beginning of the problems in her family with a deliberately borrowed quotation from *Pride and Prejudice*. The first line of Jane Austen's masterpiece is read with the following words, with an unmistakable meaning: "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). Ironic

inversion becomes necessary to adapt this quotation to the twenty-first century context and to begin creating a playful mood in the comedy. Through ironic inversion, the words carry a different connotation so that they come to terms with parody's peculiar function: imitation characterized by ironic inversion. Therefore, in *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the director chose the same line but to introduce the subject of Bridget's parents' separation. Ironically, then, this nineteenth-century line signals the end of her family, typical situation of our times: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that as soon as one part of your life starts going OK, another spectacularly falls to pieces." (Maguire, 2001)

Once irony is seized, the viewer decodes the intentional encoded message without much trouble. The fact that these words refer to one's personal life, perhaps one´s family, happens to be clear. However, what needs to be trans-contextualized is the "truth universally acknowledged": the idea that results natural for everyone "everywhere"… but not at whatever time. The temporal context should be taken into account: time passes, things change. Two hundred years ago, it was considered natural for men to start looking for a wife, and for women to wait for potential husbands to come along. Forming a family was an absolute fact, beyond question for any respectable citizen. It was consented, agreed, "acknowledged". Nowadays, on the other hand, citizens face a quite different reality, in which, more and more, the absolute fact seems to be that there is no family safe from the ghost of divorce. There are no absolutes as far as family unity is concerned. There is an ironical inversion in the family situation that tests one's ability to tackle personal crisis as well as possible in order to be able to move on. The words, in both cases, were uttered by women. Yet, the first quotation describes the circumstances surrounding a man, while the second one has changed its focus to the woman.

The themes chosen for the film should be considered signals of the encoded message, intended to be inferred by the decoder. "All parody is overtly hybrid and double-voiced" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 28), and here there is no simple repetition of themes, but rather a dialogue with the past, "a dialogue which recirculates rather than immortalizes" (p. 28). Pride, prejudice, dating and marriage can be observed as major themes in both art forms. However, recirculation, in the theory of parody, implies difference rather than similarity. And, in addition, difference in a recirculation of themes presupposes a change of contexts. As a result, it can be asserted, then, that parody comes about in a recontextualization of themes that has made possible their deliberate and critical recirculation. In this case, the film director seems to have

undertaken a position which has let her adopt the necessary critical distance for a recontextualization to take place. In this manner, then, the themes have been taken, reevaluated and adapted to fit the century in progress.

To start with, in Austen's early-nineteenth-century art work, Mark Darcy is read as a symbol of pride, encompassing characteristics that add to his superior feeling. The author describes Mr. Darcy, eclipsing Mr. Bingley, as they enter the assembly room in the third chapter: "but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien," (p. 15). Nonetheless, there exist other factors that seem to outweigh his good looks. Pride, indeed, becomes his eventually unmistakable foremost feature: he belongs to a family of aristocratic background; he owns a breathtaking dwelling and his wealth results incalculable. And pride seems to be highlighted over his good looks as the story develops, putting emphasis on the impression that he is an unpleasantly proud man, particularly in the first chapters. Elizabeth points out to him, almost in a cruel manner: "From the very beginning… of my acquaintance with you, your manners, impressing me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, were such as to form the groundwork of disapprobation,…" (p. 157).

In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, modern proud Mark Darcy also looks down on everyone he comes across with. Bridget points it out to Mark herself on two opportunities, in both films. "You're haughty", she says during her declaration of love; or she yells it during a crucial argument in *The Edge of Reason*: "You look down your nose at absolutely everyone". Nowadays, however, pride seems to involve professional achievement, rather than belonging to an aristocratic family. He is especially presented as a well-known and successful human rights lawyer and, moreover, Bridget takes every chance she gets in the second film to let everybody know. After the secretary greets Bridget good morning (and reminds her of her late arrival), the protagonist apologizes but she also explains that she has been in bed with her boyfriend, and she adds "He's a human rights lawyer, you know." The secretary, in a tone that reveals growing weariness, replies "Yes, we know" (Kidron, 2004).

As far as prejudice is concerned, in the novel this major theme mostly revolves around "first impressions", which, incidentally, was the novel's original title. Based on appearances, Mr. Bingley falls instantly for Jane, and Jane for him; Elizabeth is captivated by Wickham and Mr. Darcy does consider Elizabeth "not handsome enough

to tempt" him (I, iii, 14). First impressions appear to be crucial, and almost enough, for a character to estimate a person's value.

Initially, Wickham is regarded as wonderful in the eyes of Elizabeth: "he is, beyond all comparison, the most agreeable man I ever saw" (p. 120), fact that leads her to believe Wickham's deceptive story about Darcy's cruel treatment, and to frown upon Darcy. In addition, she takes his words to be true without a doubt, the very first time she hears them. She tells her eldest sister: "there was truth in his looks" (p. 74). Afterwards, she also senses that Darcy is to blame for Bingley's indifference towards gorgeous and shy Jane. After her accusations, he explains in the letter for Elizabeth: "Her look and manners were […] engaging as ever, but without any symptom of peculiar regard […] though she received his attentions with pleasure, she did not invite them by any participation of sentiment" (p. 160). Like this, Mr. Darcy admits his early prejudices against Jane's feelings, after observing her attitude towards Bingley, mistaking it for indifference. It takes the rest of the novel for Elizabeth to overcome her prejudice, learn the truth about facts and about Darcy's true nature, work out her feelings and finally celebrate the union of their complementary personalities. It is a gradually developed love that moves Elizabeth from a "definite" rejection of Darcy's first marriage proposal: "I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry" (p. 157), to a happy admission of her sentiments: "I love him. Indeed he has no improper pride. He is perfectly amiable." (p. 294).

Similarly, in the film, both characters need the story's gradual development in order to let fair judgment prevail over prejudice. First impressions also appear to count significantly, from the very beginning. When they are first introduced, they do not fall for each other, in spite of their mothers' intentions to fix them up. Moreover, they seem to disgust each other with their manners. Modern Mark Darcy explains it to his mother, making painful remarks: "Mother, I do not need a blind date. Particularly not with some verbally incontinent spinster […] who smokes like a chimney, drinks like a fish […] and dresses like her mother." Bridget overhears this, and she cannot help to form a lower opinion of him, except when she notices he is wearing a childish reindeer jumper. As the story develops in the first film, other events take place that strengthen their formed opinions based on first impressions. For example, modern Wickham, now called Daniel Cleaver, and his misleading story cannot be absent in this parodied text. He deceives Bridget as he lies about the reasons why his friendship with Darcy had ended.

Once again, honor and dishonor arise and recirculate as valuable issues, but contexts have changed. In the eighteenth century, Jane Austen deemed money as central to cause a key honor conflict among characters, whereas nowadays the reason turns out to be unfaithfulness.

Modern Mark and Bridget do not fall in love with each other at first sight. After having taken chances to learn more about the sweet protagonist's true nature, Mark surprises Bridget with the following statement: "I like you very much, just as you are." (Maguire, 2001). As far as Bridget is concerned, a series of facts, which include her mother disproving Cleaver's lies and Mark's noteworthy help in her career, affect and ultimately change her opinion. At the end, she acknowledges she has prejudged him unfairly and admits: "But you're a nice man... and... I like you. So if you wanted to pop by sometime... that might be nice. More than nice." (Maguire, 2001).

Marriage is a major theme in Austen's novel. Marrying her daughters becomes Mrs. Bennet's worry throughout the story and it turns out to be the characters' ultimate goal. Marriage means happy ending not only for Elizabeth, but also for Jane and Lydia, who feel passionate about it, and for Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte, who felt spinsterhood was hunting her. Although Mr. Bennet did not show loving feelings for his wife, the thought of ending his marriage was not an option. Marriage was sacred and seemed to bring about, in most cases, eventual happiness. However, Maguire has taken distance in order to analyze the twenty-first-century situation and the marriage theme has developed into a dating theme. In Austen's times, marriage was possible without dating; now dating has been brought into the spotlight. Furthermore, ending a marriage is not longer considered as offensive as it used to be two centuries ago. Therefore, we can observe Mark Darcy's divorced status and Bridget's parents' separation during the comedy, though they get back together at the end. The viewer is even presented with a homosexual man, Tom, who happens to be one of the protagonist's best pals. Likewise, the rest of Bridget's thirty-year-old friends appear to be enjoying their bachelor lives, focusing on their professional careers and their dating adventures. They do not look worried about their possible destiny as spinsters.

Although both art forms focus on the process of falling in love, their marked difference consists in the purpose or in the ultimate objective. Whereas characters in *Pride and Prejudice* look forward to meeting a respectable man to get married, characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary* look forward to meeting a man to start dating. What viewers enjoy on the screen is not romantic proposals or fancy weddings, but the

comings and goings of dating. Marriage, then, no longer constitutes a final objective in itself. Furthermore, it neither signifies a barrier for people to reach happiness, as it is implied in the novel.

Similarly, parallelisms can be found in both novel and cinematographic production on the level of characters, yet with ironic difference. The protagonists of both creations are women, Elizabeth Bennet and Bridget Jones, though the second one turns out to subvert the ideal features of the heroine in Austen's classic novel. Elizabeth, the heroine of the parodied text, is portrayed as beautiful, intelligent, witty and determined. Her sensible actions help the rest of the characters in the story endure many sorrows. Moreover, she feels ashamed for her sisters' embarrassing behavior in social meetings. The girls, Lydia, Kitty and Mary, do not care about making fools of themselves when they chase single men or laugh without reason. Mary attracts everyone's attention when, in the middle of a ball, she decides to play the piano and sing, without neither grace nor tuning. In the comedy, on the other hand, we find ironic inversion in the portrayal of the main female character. Bridget looks as a woman who embodies personality traits present in the younger sisters. Bridget Jones is the counterpart of Elizabeth Bennet: slightly overweight, over thirty, often reckless and still single, though very worried about becoming a spinster. She leads a chaotic life and constantly embarrasses herself in social situations, too. For instance, she does not hesitate to cover a mistake with a lie at work:

> Daniel: Was that...F.R. Leavis?
> Bridget: Mm-hmm.
> Daniel: Wow.
> Bridget: Huh.
> Daniel: The F.R. Leavis... who wrote "Mass Civilization and Minority Culture"?
> Bridget: Mm-hmm.
> Daniel: The F.R. Leavis who died in 1978? Amazing.
>
> <div align="right">(Maguire, 2001)</div>

Likewise, Darcy acknowledges some of her personality traits when she admits he likes her, for the first time in the following dialogue:

> Mark: I don't think you're an idiot at all. I mean, there are elements of the ridiculous about you. Your mother's pretty interesting. And you really are... an appallingly bad public speaker. And you tend to let whatever's in your head... come out of your mouth… without much consideration of the consequences. I realize that when I met you at the turkey curry buffet... that I was unforgivably rude and wearing a reindeer jumper... that my mother had given me the day before. But the thing is, um... what

I'm trying to say very inarticulately is... that, um...in fact... perhaps, despite appearances... I like you very much.
Bridget: Ah. Apart from the smoking and the drinking... and the vulgar mother and the verbal diarrhea.
Mark: No. I like you very much-- just as you are.

(Maguire, 2001)

As it has already been mentioned, both characters are misled by incorrect first impressions. Both characters need the story to develop to overcome prejudices and value what deserves to be valued. Both characters undergo sorrows but build up strength in order to pull through. However, Elizabeth Bennet gets to a happy end as a result of her rationality and sense. Bridget Jones gets to a happy end in spite of her lack of rationality and sense. The humorous effect takes place when viewers are able to decode the ironic inversion of the situation.

Mark Darcy turns out to be another deliberate attempt to parody the romantic novel. His name and proud personality have been purposefully borrowed from *Pride and Prejudice*, though re-contextualized in the twenty- first century. Furthermore, the actor who played him in *Bridget Jones' Diary* is the same actor of the 1996 BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*. The second Mark Darcy is a wealthy and well-known human rights lawyer, representing the ideal husband for a woman nowadays, just like the earliest Mark Darcy was ideal for a woman in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, in the film viewers come to see a peculiar trait never observed before. Near the end of the story, Darcy dismisses Daniel Cleaver, the modern equivalent of Mr. Wickham, ironically differently from the way Mark Darcy dismisses Wickham. The latter, gentlemanlike, arranges Lydia Bennet's marriage economically with Wickham and the couple disappears, to everyone's relief. On the other hand, in the twenty- first film production, Mark Darcy also dismisses Cleaver but, ironically… not so gentlemanlike. They have a fight and our hero beats treacherous Cleaver in front of a very confused Bridget. Who could have ever pictured prim and proper Mark Darcy coming to blows in the street?

Scatterbrain Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Jones share several features which unite them, in spite of the time that separates them. For instance, getting their daughters married is their primary concern. They do not seem to know their limitations, taking advantage of whatever chance is within their reach in order to make a match. Thus, Elizabeth and Bridget are also united by the embarrassment experienced in social gatherings when their mothers exceed themselves and even become grand hazards for

the protagonists to find respectable mates. Nonetheless, in spite of their shared features, an ironic inversion can be observed in their own lives. Mrs. Bennet seems to have little to live for outside her already mentioned concern: "Three daughters married!...Oh, Lord! What will become of me. I shall go distracted" (III, xvii, 295). On the other hand, it becomes clear that Mrs. Jones's life does not orbit around Bridget. In the twenty-first century, Mrs. Jones sees options and decides to make a choice to change… for better?

> Mum: And now it's the winter of my life... and I haven't actually got anything of my own. I've got no power, no real career... no sex life. I've got no life at all. I'm like the grasshopper who sang all summer. I'm like Germaine sodding Geer.
> Bridget: Greer.
> Mum: Well, anyway, I'm not having it. And I've been talent spotted.
>
> (Maguire, 2001)

Although she returns to her husband at the end, viewers get surprised with the adventures Bridget's mum launches herself into along the film. She makes her appearance as an assistant in a shopping channel, she starts an affair with another man and eventually moves out of her house. Mrs. Bennet grows to be an active participant of her daughters' lives. Mrs. Jones grows to be an active participant of her own life.

There is consent in that a text is not the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts and the structures of language itself. Recognizing the 'dialogical' nature of literature in a broad way, Kristeva (1980) affirmed: "Any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations… is the absorption and transformation of another" (as cited in Khosravi Shakib, 2012, p.183). This is to say, the presence (and the impact) of one text on another becomes undeniable, and it has been said that *Bridget Jones' Diary* constitutes a simple example of intertextuality since it could be seen as a rearrangement of a prior text, and with subtle allusions through elements such as the name of the publishing house that Bridget works for, Pemberley Press. However, Hutcheon has gone further and deeper in analysis, starting from the point that intertextuality can be found "in the eye of the beholder" (p. XVI) and does not entail a communicator's intentions. Yet, the beholder needs clues and signals to decode the effect, and the film creators achieve it through the rearrangement of themes, characters, structural conventions, motifs and even plot details from the original text. Critical distance, as well, results vital for an inversion of contextual situations that aims at a reinterpretation of particular conventions. In this manner, women's social experiences seem to have been rewritten to suit the current century so that gendered representations are presented as evolved (but not changed), and linked to themes of central significance in their construction. Irony, in

addition, grows into the glue that holds the inverted situations together. And the most significant irony could be the fact that a twentieth-century audience comes across social representations which appear to repeat themselves, almost two centuries later, in a film, with celebrated acceptance throughout the world.

WHAT ABOUT MEN?

The philosophical principle of understanding reality through dichotomous thinking (also called binary thinking) is considered to have had a crucial influence on the development of Western theories of knowledge. Dichotomies present entities defined in relation to each other and, moreover, in opposition and mutual exclusion of each other. However, these binary oppositions have been traced as structured according to hierarchies, privileging and asserting the dominance of one term over the other (Derrida, 1967, cited in Payne, 2002). Poststructuralist approaches have inverted this traditional logic in a way that the term considered central, primary and originating is affected by (and depends on) what has been construed as secondary, marginal and derivative. Accordingly, in the field of Gender Studies, binary oppositions have become the target of a solid feminist attack because of the dominant element's tendency to be associated with masculinity, while the subordinate element is associated with femininity. Dichotomies are understood as fundamentals of a way of thinking within which patriarchy seems to be fundamentally embedded. Thus, for instance, men have been historically associated with rationality, strength, action… and the list continues. On the other hand, women have been historically associated with whatever subordinately complements the pairing: emotions, weakness and passiveness.

As a result of the rejections of these dualistic definitions, there have been attempts to develop new non-dichotomous ways of thinking. A number of theorists have supported the relational notion or, in other words, the relational thinking, which acknowledges "complexity, plurality and heterogeneity (or 'difference'), rather than simple, mutually exhaustive dualisms" (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p. 25). This relational thinking admits connections, links and mutual dependence between entities. For example, through her poststructuralist theory, Judith Butler (1999) has challenged the following analogy: gender is to culture as sex is to nature. She has explained that the material (nature, the body, sex) is interrelated with the discursive (culture, embodiment, gender). Sex is a social construction since cultural values and practices are said to mutually interrelate with biology, and "gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature", or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive", "prior to culture"' (Butler in Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p. 26).

The entities defined in dualisms (in mutual opposition) have also been associated with stereotypes, a matter that has added to the rejection of dichotomous thinking. The

opposite poles involve opposite characteristics which turn out to be difficult to project onto the opposite entity. What defines one entity cannot be used to define the opposite one. In this manner, these characteristics could be understood as constant and static, always associated with one entity, and finally constituting the so-called stereotypes.

It has already been mentioned that, as an Ideological State Apparatus, the cinema keeps perpetuating the system through the maintenance of hegemonic values and spreads images which will both construct and affect viewers' perception. Gender representations found in films often correspond to stereotypes due to the fact that these exist at a collective level. So, once again, the cinema turns out to be a significantly valuable tool for enquiring about gender representations that keep perpetuating hegemonic values throughout time.

Authors like Stephen Bonnycastle (1997), Whitehead (2002) or Connell (2002) have examined the issue of gender representations in different cultural products. The former has introduced the topic explaining that there is a system in our society that encourages men & women to take on different roles in mixed company. This system is known as the patriarchal order and both men and women "often fulfill their assigned roles in social groups without knowing that an assignment has taken place" (Bonnycastle, 1997, p. 155). Since he/she is born, every individual is expected to carry out "correct" gender behaviors which have been naturalized by the social and cultural environment in which the individual is immersed. This so called "naturalization" takes place through the validation and teaching carried out by various institutions such as the family, the school or the media. This is to say, and continuing with Bonnycastle's ideas, that we house within our psyches both masculine and feminine characteristics which give rise to significant consequences in our everyday lives, like our styles of clothing, career choices and, from a very early age, even toys to play with. The theorist has even presented a list of what is seen as attractively masculine/ feminine:

Masculine	Feminine
Thinking	Feeling
Aggressive	Compliant
Rational	Transrational
Fixed	Fluid
Speaking	Listening
Taking strong action	Passive or Weak Action
The Conscious mind	The Unconscious, dreams, fantasies

Feminism, he has concluded, becomes deconstructive in order to recognize how the patriarchal system is passed on socially as part of our ideology, and political with the objective of subverting it when possible (p. 201).

Lois Tyson (1999) has referred to the way the patriarchal system continues through movies, television shows, books, magazines and advertisements, and has asserted that the patriarchal roles established in the system are destructive for men as well as women. Men are supposed to be sexually active, strong, physically powerful and emotionally stoic. They are also supposed to be the economic support of the family, thus fulfilling the biological role as provider. Likewise, they are supposed neither to show signs of weakness like crying, fear or pain, nor to fail in any domain, whether it is work, family or another aspect of his life. Tyson has argued that these features allocated to men consequently promote the belief that women are innately inferior to men, and, in addition, that those subjects who do not accept patriarchal ideology "are often derided by both patriarchal men and women, as weak and unmanly" (p. 85).

These notions remain consistent with a cultural-ideological approach that defines masculinity and femininity as social constructions, relative to a particular time and culture. These hegemonic forms result difficult to define at any given time because they are culturally variable as well as constantly reinvented and challenged. However, there is a repetition of features which has characterized masculinity in a particular manner, even in different, separated-by-two-centuries, periods of time. Jansz has stated that there are four central characteristics of contemporary men: they must be autonomous and should not admit dependency on others; they should attain achievement and provide for their families; they need to be tough and act aggressively if necessary; they finally need to remain stoic and not to share their pain with others. Not surprisingly then, these characteristics can be observed in male portrayals in contemporary films, TV programmes or advertisements, among others; yet they can also be examined in classic cultural creations, such as Jane Austen's novel.

It has already been mentioned that in *Pride and Prejudice* and in *Bridget Jones' Diary* Mark Darcy results the ideal husband for a woman both in the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries respectively. On the other hand, the reader also comes across characters like Mr. Wickham or Mr. Collins who do not fall under the same "class". For instance, they happen to lack skills and smartness to make a proper living on their own. The former turns to his deceitful skills to captivate young girls like Georgiana in order to get her fortune, or accepts money, after running away together with Lydia, in order to

agree to marry her and not to ruin a family's reputation. The latter, on the other hand, appears to depend deeply on Lady Catherine de Bourgh's generosity. Such a portrayal of a dependent male character can only be further characterized as an unchangeable dull clown with an absurd pompous style and ridiculous manners. Mark Darcy- in the novel and in the film- shows no dependency on others regarding work, family attachment or even favors from acquaintances or friends. He looks self-sufficient and autonomous, he does not depend on others but, on the contrary, others depend on him and turn to him for comfort, advice and support. Indeed, he does not hesitate to back and support the woman he is falling in love with, either Elizabeth or Bridget. His assistance becomes central in critical moments like Elizabeth's sister's elopement with her lover or Bridget's success in doing her crucial interview that pushes her to popularity. In conclusion, in either object of study, possible bachelors considered to be desirable potential husbands do not appear to be observed as depending on others under any circumstance.

Both Marks Darcy are presented as respected, well-known wealthy gentlemen, fitting in the patriarchal image of 'the triumphant provider'. The world of work has historically been associated with the traditional masculinity since men have also been historically expected to be the breadwinner. The "ideal" man has always been the one who could provide for his wife and children, the one who could offer comfort and security: the more he could offer the better. Such an issue like social status is linked to this image: the man as provider gains respect not only from his family but also from the rest of his community. This was especially true during Jane Austen's times and she accomplished the task of describing such an "ideal" man in a picturesque and romantic manner: Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy. From the very beginning, the arrival of Mr. Bingley is most awaited in Netherfield, and information about his large fortune has been spread. In chapter one, Mrs. Bennet passes on the news to Mr. Bennet:

> Mrs. Bennet: Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; […]
> Mr. Bennet: What is his name?
> Mrs. Bennet: Bingley.
> Mr. Bennet: Is he married or single?
> Mrs. Bennet: Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!
> (Austen, 1813, p. 9)

Furthermore, even Mr. Bennet pays attention to the fact that the new arrivals at the town possess a large fortune, and present themselves as who he might consider to be what his beloved daughter, Elizabeth, deserves. Consequently, near the end, Mr. Darcy's marrying Lizzy appears to be a blessing for the family, almost unbelievable for Mrs. Bennet. She can emphasize nothing other than the promising financial aspect of such a union:

> Good gracious! Lord bless me! only think! dear me! Mr. Darcy! Who would have thought it! And is it really true? Oh! my sweetest Lizzy! how rich and how great you will be! What pin-money, what jewels, what carriages you will have! (Austen, 1813, p. 295)

Through her lines the readers can notice how important was for a family to have the daughters being provided financially for by their husbands. It cannot be doubted that being the breadwinner became a responsibility for men in traditional patriarchal societies.

In *Bridget Jones' Diary* the viewers come across a very similar picture: the main male characters also represent the hegemonic masculine portrayal as possessing the necessary economic resources to provide for a family and making a woman feel like "a princess". Mark Darcy and Daniel Cleaver have successfully fitted into this patriarchal image. It is not a coincidence that the viewers learn about this aspect of Darcy in the first presentation by, once again, the main character's mother: "By the way, the Darcys are here. They brought Mark with them. You remember Mark. You used to play in his paddling pool. He's a barrister. Very well off." Similarly, Daniel Cleaver works as editor-in-chief in the publishing house where Bridget works and he just happens to be her boss. Furthermore, there is a scene in which Cleaver picks up Bridget for a romantic mini-break holiday weekend in which he, in a luxurious convertible sports car, and after charmingly imitating a roaring tiger, asks Bridget not to sit down in little boats to read "poncey poetry" to each other. Daniel Cleaver, in just this only one scene, gathers together many aspects of what Bonnycastle and Janz have believed to be 'attractively masculine' in contemporary culture: strength, toughness, action, achievement and lack of sensibility.

Stephen Whitehead (2002) has explained that emotional inexpression has traditionally been linked to hegemonic masculinities. Jeroen Jansz (2000) has introduced this attribute as stoicism to amount to a strict control of pain, grief and vulnerable feelings. The presence of man in the public sphere, where society has always

praised stability, control and management of the self, has been (and still is) undeniable. However, when a person gets involved in emotional intimacy, vulnerability and uncertainty are experienced. Consequently, it becomes really important to demonstrate that one takes and keeps control over feelings and do not let these overcome reason. And it becomes important to know *how* to demonstrate it, too, by drawing on one's own knowledge and ability. Therefore, the anxiety generated by emotional intimacy can account for the reluctance of men to show emotions, and masculinity seems to provide the knowledge of how to respond and manage intimate situations, rather than experiencing them. Men, then, have always chosen not to show their painful feelings to others, and they still do. However, anger is the exception to the rule and they can even show more facial expressiveness when feeling angry than when experiencing fear.

This is the case of Jane Austen's Mr. Darcy. His portrayal as detached, disagreeable, arrogant and almost incapable of experiencing emotions firstly misleads Elizabeth (and the reader) to a false impression. Moreover, his generosity is afterwards justified and explained with an account of his actions and not a description of his feelings, gestures or words. Even in crucial moments like his first marriage proposal to Elizabeth, he managed to keep himself under control, in spite of her rejection, though he did not hide his livid facial expressions: "His complexion became pale with anger, and the disturbance of his mind was visible in every feature. He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips till he believed himself to have attained it." (Austen, 1813, p. 155)

Similarly, when the news of Lydia and Wickham running away together broke out and left Elizabeth and her family in misery, Darcy was depicted as distressed: "he seemed scarcely to hear her, and was walking up and down the room in earnest meditation, his brow contracted, his air gloomy", but in total control of his feelings and certainly not as desperate as the protagonist. Nevertheless, the Bennets were later saved from humiliation due to his wise and generous actions.

Although there is no man acting aggressively in Austen's masterpiece, the reader comes across very important tough characters that fill young ladies like Catherine and Lydia with devotion and illusions: the militia officers. These could even obscure other men of large fortunes such as Mr. Bingley: "They could talk of nothing but officers; and Mr. Bingley's large fortune, the mention of which gave animation to their mother, was worthless in their eyes when opposed to the regimentals of an ensign" (p. 30).

In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the viewer suspects that Darcy experiences moments of pain, though he never loses control, sheds a tear or talks about his emotions. For instance, at the end, when he leaves Bridget and England to take up a new job in USA, the viewer can only perceive a somber and stern Mark arriving at the airport, shaking his new associates' hands. However, the scene is accompanied by a slow and heartrending music which appears to comprise his gloomy feelings. On the other hand, he does not withhold anger or, moreover, he seems to choose not to. During Bridget's birthday dinner, Darcy is a guest and while they are having dessert, Cleaver interrupts and tries to get back together with Bridget. When they are about to kiss, Darcy leaves but comes back unexpectedly to challenge Cleaver to "a duel". It is then when his anger becomes evident and he starts kicking and pounding his rival.

Along these lines, it is significant to highlight also the fact that the male protagonists of the sequel face great difficulty to express their feelings. Cleaver chooses not to answer Bridget's question: "Do you love me?" in the first film, and when he tells her later: "If I can't make it with you... I can't make it with anyone", he does not mean it; it is clearly a trick to get her to have sex with him. Mark Darcy´s love for Bridget becomes apparent in many scenes, from the first part of the sequel. However, when Mark finally admits it and expresses it in the second part, Bridget is pleasingly astonished and shares it with her friends.

The characteristics associated with contemporary masculinity put forth by Jeroen Jansz have suited the classic male figure portrayed by Jane Austen in the early nineteenth century, too, in spite of the recontextualization that has compulsorily taken place. It has resulted necessary for men to rethink, revaluate and adjust those male features (the autonomous, tough, emotionally stoic and capable of providing for his family) which make a man struggle and behave determinedly. Interestingly, although time has passed, two centuries have separated Austen from Maguire and circumstances have definitely changed, these features have remained, only slightly adjusted, as requirements to gain respect, to seduce women and their families, and to be labelled as eligible bachelors. Men have kept a construed identity (which 'fits' political-social parameters) alive.

It is this kind of socialization agencies, such as the cinema, the family or the school, among others, the one that encourages and perpetuates the presence of selected representations at a collective level. Two centuries ago the 'ideal' bachelor was portrayed in a novel as the respectable man of fortune whose predictable end let him

have the heroine of the story. Today, the story repeats itself in a different, and more popular cultural form. And observation and analysis of media representations can be evidently regarded as central in the understanding of the way gendered 'reality' is constructed.

WOMEN REPRESENTATIONS
CONSTANTLY ON STRUGGLE

Several processes which seem to correspond with certain key concepts coined by third wave feminism can be observed in the representations of women found in the film speech of *Bridget Jones' Diary*, Sharon Maguire's cinematographic sequel. Third wave feminism involves a "generation of women who acknowledge the legacy of second wave feminism, but also identify what they see as its limitations" (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p. 169). Thus, it has been claimed that these nowadays perceived limitations embrace a number of aspects of individual self-expression such as manners, fashion or, more significantly, sexuality. And it is the mass-media, through different manifestations of girl culture, the main channel through which new representations are built, celebrated and spread. Correspondingly, in these twenty-first-century films, women appear not to be restricted by characteristics associated with the subordinated pole of traditional binary oppositions related to masculinity/ femininity. Furthermore, women seem willing and capable of breaking boundaries and move beyond feminine limits, constituting what it has become to be known as 'girl power'. According to Rebbecca Munford (2004), many feminist critics have positioned 'girl power' and its 'bad girl' icons as a form of popularised postfeminist discourse. Icons can be defined as 'bad' since, as it has already been mentioned, they look forward to transcending boundaries prescriptively established by previous generations, and they even look as daring limitations in contemporary political conditions. In accordance with this up-to-date kind of women's representations, most female characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary* present traits which appear to 'fit' them: Bridget, Bridget's mother, Bridget's friends, Jude and Shazzer, and Rebecca.

The film introduces Bridget's mum, Pam, going through a crisis in her personal life which seems to affect not only her, but her family as well. One day, out of the blue, she surprises her daughter Bridget with the sudden decision of making a radical change in her life. Feeling tired and bored of her monotonous marriage, she claims, quite explicitly, that she has reached a position in which she finds nothing of her own: "I've got no power, no real career... no--no sex life. I've got no life at all." These words shock Bridget after she observes her mum delightedly engaged in her first steps towards a career, promoting a wisecrack egg peeler in front of a group of women in a shopping centre. Not much later, Pam proves she feels self-confident enough to move

out. After finding it out, Bridget's eyes become even wider open when Pam makes her appearance in a shopping channel as a demonstrator: mum has had the courage to color the monotonous days and revolutionize her life. After leaving her husband, she eventually admits that she has fallen for the man who had apparently spotted her talents, Julian. In this manner, Pam, "in the winter of her life", becomes the first character to take the first step to transgress femininity parameters. She does not only alter the focus on the passive/ active patriarchal opposition in both the work and the private spheres, but she also dares to end a long marriage and live an unexpected affair.

The audience comes across with further female representations which seem to match what the third wave feminism has called "girl power" in Bridget's friends, Jude and Shazzer, ending with all suspicion of subordination. These trendy and fun-loving characters are both single and have successfully made their way into professional careers, placing themselves very far from traditional passive representations of women: Jude as the head of investment of a bank, and Shazzer as a journalist. Furthermore, they could be identified as 'bad girl' icons in several scenes, in which the audience can watch them smoking, cursing and getting drunk, questionable manners even for a twentieth-century woman. But, unaware of any scandal that may arise around them, they look as enjoying their own attitudes and their own lives. In the second film of the sequel, *The Edge of Reason*, Shazzer dates a man who is several noticeable years younger than her. Moreover, she admits that she only dates him for fun. Bridget, quite disapproving, remarks: "He's young enough to be your grandson", and Shazzer's reply is, of course, an expected admission: "I know. Isn't that great?".

In the second part of the sequel, there is another female character who adds up to the building of the 'girl power' representation: the beautiful and sweet Rebecca Gilles. At first, the audience gets nothing but charmed by Mark Darcy's colleague because of her attractive figure, genuine smile, elegant style and delicate manners. Moreover, as Rebecca comes across as the perfect woman, the protagonist feels intimidated and cannot hide her jealousy throughout the film. Bridget even admits it during a decisive argument with Mark: "It feels like you're waiting to find someone in the VIP room who's, who's so fantastic... just the way she is, that you don't need to fix her." Rebecca seems to be and have everything Bridget would like to be and to have. However, the audience becomes astonished when, against all predictions, Rebecca confesses her homosexuality and her love for the astonished protagonist: "No, Bridget, you've got it completely wrong… I'm seriously heartbroken and smitten with someone

else… You, Bridget". Thus, the character of Rebecca Gilles confirms that new movements within feminism have succeeded in drawing attention to other subjects different from white, middle-class and heterosexual women. In addition, with Rebecca, homosexuality appears to be not only accepted, but also celebrated, since it is incarnated in such a nearly perfect woman.

Bridget Jones, as the leading actress, has been, by no means, left outside this updated category of the "girl power" representation. Bridget is presented as trying to open her way into a career, first in publishing and, later, in TV. Although it becomes apparent that her career does not represent a priority in her life, she never stops working or evaluating possibilities. Similarly, the protagonist makes her appearance into the sequel as a heavy smoker and eager to enjoy her sexuality. At the very beginning of the sequel, Bridget engages herself in the first chat she has with Mark. Smoking, with a drink in her hand and chuckling, she tells Mark something about herself:

> I was in London at a party last night… so I'm afraid I'm a bit hung over. Wish I could be lying with my head in the toilet... Like all normal people. New Year's resolution: drink less. Oh, and quit smoking. Mmm. Ha! And keep New Year's resolutions. (Maguire, 2001)

She also takes pleasure in flirting with her boss, strolling around the office in a mini skirt. And when she finally sees the chance to be with him sexually, she does not hesitate. Similarly, her friends usually meet her for drinks in different bars. Moreover, the audience can easily realize how smashed she is in several scenes, making a fool of herself on occasions like her office Christmas party. Likewise, cursing seems to be a regular habit for her, without any concern about propriety. It is common, then, in both films, to see Bridget Jones with a cigarette in her hand, laughing and cursing under the influence of alcohol, flirting with Daniel Cleaver at work, or having sexual intercourse openly and happily.

At first sight, then, the representations of women found in the films appear to do more than exposing and denouncing positions defined by traditional binary oppositions. Quite explicitly, women are portrayed as willing to transgress feminine boundaries and, on their way over, challenging and even moving them. As a consequence, the already mentioned aspects of individual self-expression such as manners, fashion or sexuality, which have positioned 'girl power' and its 'bad girl' icons as a form of popularised postfeminist discourse, seem to be neither surprising nor

revolutionary in the films, but usual and part of women's everyday life. These aspects, then, can be considered to constitute "processes of liberalization".

Nevertheless, when looking more closely into the film representations, one is given a sense that a contradiction takes place. The same characters, who, at first sight, seem to struggle to leave these aspects of individual self-expression behind, also seem to gather and embrace them, manifesting reluctance to get rid of certain stereotypical traits. To be precise then, in the same film discourse, where the audience can observe the occurrence of 'bad girl' icons, it can also observe several features associated to the traditional masculine/feminine oppositions. And, in most cases, these patriarchal binary oppositions are consistent with the ones found in nineteenth-century *Pride and Prejudice*.

The issue of gender representations in different cultural products has been previously brought up citing authors like Stephen Bonnycastle (1997) or Whitehead (2002). The patriarchal order has systematically, and historically, opened its way in society, succeeding in "assigning" determined roles on both men and women. In the same way as men, women are expected to carry out "correct" gender behaviors, which are supposed to fit in the subordinated pole that complements the masculine/ feminine binary opposition. These behaviors relate, following Bonnycastle's ideas, to the woman's determined role as feeling, compliant, passive, nourishing, listening, weak, dreaming and fantasizing, among others.

Although Austen's Elizabeth Bennet presents herself as the perfect heroine, capable of enduring any sorrow and fighting for her principles, she unconsciously moves to a passive position in certain times where she can only see through a man's eyes, ends up believing what he makes her believe and takes his view when expressing her opinions. It happens, for instance, when treacherous Wickham lies about Darcy and she believes him, without needing to know more about it. Wickham's word is enough for Elizabeth, it does not seem to matter whether it is true or false, but it is his. Later, when Darcy tells his version of the facts, again Elizabeth believes him without doubting. Certainly, Darcy will eventually prove himself a man with good intentions and Wickham will prove the opposite. However, Darcy's letter telling the heroine what has happened from his point of view is, again, enough for Elizabeth to form an opinion.

The story repeats itself two centuries later, with modern Bridget as the passive protagonist. In this case, Bridget is easily misled when deceitful Daniel Cleaver tells Bridget an untrue story about his wife being unfaithful with his then best friend, Mark

Darcy. Bridget feels horrified and she believes it doubtlessly and, to make matters worse, she even takes a judgmental tone in front of Mark in a casual conversation in a party among friends and family:

> UNA: What a shame you couldn't bring your boyfriend, Bridget. What's his name? David? Darren?
> MARK: Daniel Cleaver.
> UNA: Oh. Is he a friend of yours, Mark?
> MARK: Absolutely not.
> UNA: I hope he's good enough for our little Bridget.
> MARK: I think I can say with total confidence absolutely not.
> BRIDGET: Well, I'm sure he'd say the same about you, given your past behavior.
> MARK: Sorry?
> BRIDGET: I think you know what I mean.
>
> (Maguire, 2001)

This scene may not come as out-of-date or shocking; on the contrary, nowadays women could find it absolutely habitual or natural. In other words, Bridget's has been easily misled to share a man's opinion and to take his view, and this appears to be as normal as it was in the nineteenth-century. As a consequence, sympathetic feelings seem to be experienced by Bridget's friends as it was experienced by the Bennet's sisters, what might lead to observe that women, in this film speech, still lack an active attitude which may have allowed them to reach a self-made and justified opinion.

The patriarchal binary opposition autonomous/dependent also goes over Austen's novel. Women are depicted as completely dependent on men for their financial survival. Darryl Jones (2004) summarizes briefly and to-the-point the significance for women to look for and get a husband: "Mrs. Bennet's obsession with marrying off her daughters at all costs stems from real practical parental concern-if they do not marry, they may starve" (Bloom, 2007, p. 152). Thus, whether happiness was involved or not appeared not to matter, but what it seemed to be truly important was to find someone for women to sustain them financially. In the case of Charlotte, Elizabeth's friend, Mr. Collin's marriage proposal presents itself as an opportune rescue from her inevitable fate as an old maid, though not as an evident chance to reach happiness. Belonging to a decent family, having received education but finding herself out of prosperity, Charlotte begins to despair at the age of twenty-seven. The narrator elucidates further the point: "Without thinking highly either of men or matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only provision for well-educated young women of small fortune" (p. 102). Accordingly, this character does not hesitate to accept Mr. Collins as a husband

because he will provide for what she is looking for, even though she is certain he will not make her romantically happy. She admits it to her friend "I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home" (p. 104). Similarly, the Bennet sisters appear to be able to do little more than waiting for a potential husband to come up, but much more luckily for the older sisters who finally make two fantastically rich bachelors fall for them the way the girls have fallen for them. In current times, women's situation seems to have changed radically: as it has already been observed, women have succeeded in engaging themselves in professional careers and they do no longer have to wait for a potential husband to come up in order to make a decent living. Nevertheless, there can be noticed several details regarding Bridget's attitude towards her career which may make the audience doubt about whether a radical change has taken place. Although the protagonist is certainly observed engaged at work throughout both films, it becomes apparent that work does not come first. To begin with, during New Year, Jones does not consider work as part of her resolutions, though she changes jobs a few months later: "Bridget: Resolution number one: obviously will lose twenty pounds. Number two, always put last night's panties in the laundry basket. Equally important... will find nice sensible boyfriend to go out with" (Maguire, 2001). Thus, she makes plans around her body and men, without the slightest mention of her working career, for example. Accordingly, whenever she is seen at her workplace, she appears either chatting on the phone about men with her friend, or flirting with Daniel Cleaver in a mini-skirt. Moreover, the second part of the sequel shows Bridget messing things up at work again. The scene in which she lands on a pig's farm in a parachute for a news programme reveals a detached attitude towards her working career which has not changed. Even though she has made a fool of herself on TV, she does not seem to care. Bridget Jones knows she should be career-minded but she is not. She appears to centers her life achievements around men, and, furthermore, she even engages her working time in seducing men or, at least, in planning to attract their attention, but she is never shown concentrated in moving forward on her own. As any of the Bennet sisters, she is waiting for the right man to arrive. For instance, Bridget feels overwhelmed with satisfaction when Daniel Cleaver picks her up in his fabulous red convertible sports car to take her to a weekend holiday. The audience can see her smiling and sighting, while a voice in off verbalizes her mood and emotions: "Suddenly feel like screen goddess... in manner of Grace Kelly" (Maguire, 2001). Likewise, in *The Edge of Reason*, Mark Darcy is described as nothing but "perfect*"*, and his profession as a human rights lawyer

apparently adds to his perfection. Bridget claims: "Mark Darcy is perfect. Not a fuckwit, alcoholic, workaholic, pervert or megalomaniac, but total sex god and human rights lawyer. He is a miracle, really." (Kidron, 2004). Bridget takes much pride in dating a wealthy lawyer, and she makes sure to tell everybody she knows about it. We could bring up the example mentioned in the chapter about parody, when Bridget tries to make the secretary jealous of her successful boyfriend. In this manner, it can be observed the way this film speech has highlighted the feelings of pride, satisfaction and pleasure in a woman's position oriented towards a man. The audience can watch Bridget active in different spheres of her life: among friends, with her family, at work and alone at home. However, only a relationship with a man seems to satisfy her and fulfill her aspirations. Although processes of liberalization have been introduced in the film speech, a reading between lines could make a viewer doubt about their real success. It results curious that the women mirroring these processes, the 'power girl' icons, give the impression of experiencing situations of anxiety that the doxa might induce to associate with feminine unstable independence or, in other words, with the absence of a man. In this film's speech, certain consequences have been brought about over women who seem to have challenged boundaries drawn by patriarchal binary oppositions. For example, Bridget introduces Jude with the following statements: "Daily call from Jude. Best friend. Head of investment at Brightlings Bank... who spends most of her time...trapped in the lady's toilet, crying over fuck wit boyfriend" (Maguire, 2001), as if it were hard for a professional like Jude to maintain her dignity after an affair is over. Thus, the film introduces Jude, not as a respected lady with a successful career, but as humiliated and caught in an embarrassing situation, result of another failed love affair. Jazzer, perhaps the most important exponent of the 'bad girl' icons in the films, is to blame for Bridget's imprisonment in the second film. Her story with a younger man in Thailand, which made her feel special and perky, brought about serious consequences in her friend's life. Since Jazzer was the one who had received the snake full of cocaine as a present, she should have been the one to go through rough times abroad. Once again, the doxa induces the audience to perceive that nothing good could have come from her uninhibited and fun weekend. And to make matters worse, Bridget, her best friend, faces the consequences. Jazzer's incident reminds of Lydia's elopement with Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*. Lydia also dared to challenge boundaries and elope with her lover, endangering not only her reputation, but also to her sisters'.

Similarly, the audience can observe certain contradiction as far as Pam is concerned. It is true that Bridget´s mother carries on with the sudden decision of making a radical change in her life and ending her marriage, but it is also true that she regrets it and comes back, begging her husband to accept her back. Furthermore, in *The Edge of Reason*, Pam marries her husband for the second time. Throughout the film, she is observed planning her second wedding enthusiastically, without a trace of the unconventional Pam seen in the first part of the sequel.

What about Bridget? The audience needs only to read her lines when she dates Cleaver: "Hurrah!! Am no longer tragic spinster..." (Maguire, 2001), or some of her final lines when she gets back together with Darcy: "So, as you can see, I have found my happy ending at last. And I truly believe that happiness is possible" (Maguire, 2001). Although Bridget mirrors processes of liberalization with her drinking, flirting and cursing, it is a relationship with a man what makes her shout "Hurrah!".

In this cinematographic sequel then, although evident processes of liberalization circulate in women's representations, satisfaction and happiness seem to be absolute when a woman has a man by her side. There are even other scenes showing smiley wives sitting happily next to protective husbands, showing no worries or grief, as if the doxa induced to read women's suffering, misery and regret as inherent consequences of feminine independence. It is not surprising to find representations of individual self-expression such as manners, fashion or sexuality in female characters of a twenty-first century cinematographic sequel. However, the presence of stereotypical features responding to historical patriarchal binary oppositions might lead to the conclusion that the system can be really difficult to challenge and, eventually, change. *Bridget Jones' Diary,* as a parody of *Pride and Prejudice*, has succeeded in recontextualizing gendered representations, revealing that, even though women have the possibility to be independent and not in need of a man, the patriarchal system underlies firm and solid in the reactions following their actions.

MY BODY, MY GENDER, MY WORLD

Scholars involved in Gender Studies have long acknowledged the relevance of the body in social relations. Nonetheless, the conception of what the body is considered to be seems to have come into focus, especially in relation to both nature and culture. Foucault (1975), for instance, has affirmed that the body, crossed by discourse, grows into the genesis of power. Therefore, and in agreement with Foucault, the body turns out to be an essential source for hegemony to reinforce its power over individuals, since it makes the materialization of power possible, regardless of any social consensus. Therefore, apart from its biological concept, it becomes necessary to consider the body a social construction, constituted by dimensions that include the affective, the symbolic, the esthetic and the politic.

Judith Butler (1993), for example, has emphasized the socially constructed gender over the biological sex, or, in other words, the subsumption of biological sex to socially constructed gender: "If gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes, then sex does not *accrue* social meanings as additive properties, but rather *is replaced by* the social meanings it takes on" (p. V). Consequently, an approach to the body in order to question culturally evaluative structures results significant, especially in the attempt, if possible, to undermine the underlying symbolic order.

Furthermore, the body deemed as social construct should not ignore the context within it is culturally embedded. It should not disregard the spatiotemporal parameters within which it is configured. It has already been mentioned that Althusser (1977) defined individuals as constructs of ideology, and Ideological State Apparatus as particular institutions carrying discrete messages with hegemonic effects. Nowadays, these institutions, like the media, appear to be exploited by social hegemonic forces to outline an idiosyncratic knowledge onto the body, assigning it sense and value. In this manner, then, the body develops into a container of experiences and cultural memory that shape individuals. Their identity becomes outlined and reinforced by social representations which are determined in a specific spatiotemporal context. Butler (1990), for example, has insisted on the necessity of the contextualization of an individual's identity: a *woman is not only* a woman, but gender is also the result of a constitution intertwined by racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional aspects which, at the same time, constitute identities discursively.

Thus, a woman perceives and constructs not only her social role, but also her perception of the feminine body. Culture becomes the medium through which biological sexuality is assigned a constructed identity, determined behaviors and functions. A woman is constantly presented with social representations of what it is considered feminine, and their bodies become both signified and signifier. Moreover, the arrival of the visual age has fostered the stepping of the body into the spotlight, prompting the spreading of social representations that gain validation among individuals. As a result, then, women´s bodies are exposed in order to be appreciated by others and, at the same time, they also validate others' bodies; women are signified, but they also take part of the process of signification. Women make and are made women.

Corporal perception, consequently, stems from subjectivity and social experience. The body as a social construction and the question of the manner women experience and understand their perception need to be approximated from a deconstructionist point of view. This approach can facilitate the uncovering of the patterns materialized in the body that may emerge in feminine gender construction. These patterns, which eventually become canonic standards, make evident that the body dimension has always been present.

And this fact is undeniable in *Pride and Prejudice*, although the narrative seems, at first sight, to split body and mind, to disregard any physical expression and to concentrate on experiences of the mind. However, a close reading of relations in the novel could stop considering the body just "a passive tool that mind fills up and out" (Heydt-Stevenson cited in Bloom, 2007, p. 171), and start considering it the substance onto which subjectivity and discourse perform, materializing, in this way, the ideologies it absorbs.

In the novel, more often than not, readers are introduced to expressions, comments and anecdotes related to physicality, adding to evidence that acknowledges the presence of the body. To begin with, it can be observed the way the main characters are appraised by taking sexual appeal for granted. Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy are described as good-looking, fine gentlemen and the Bennet sisters become nothing but pleasant to look at or, in Mr. Bingley's words, they can be found among "several of them you see uncommonly pretty" (p. 16). In this manner, the reader introduces himself to the nineteenth century world of characters which launches physical appeal in a nonchalant and casual way. However, if this nonchalance is skeptically scrutinized, one could reach the conclusion that a process of normalization has taken place, cherishing

bodily attractiveness and rendering it for the reader's assessment. Therefore, although it can be agreed that the story does not revolve around bodily issues, its sexually charged setting cannot be denied either.

Similarly, once the presence of the body dimension is acknowledged, the nonchalant tone also arouses suspicion as far as mistreatment of the body is regarded. For example, after the older sisters' return from their stay in Netherfield, on account of Jane's cold, Catherine and Lydia caught them up with news and gossip:

> Much had been done and much had been said in the regiment […]; several of the officers had dined lately with their uncle, a private had been flogged, and it had actually been hinted that Colonel Forster was going to get married. (p. 54)

Among idle gossip about a dinner and a wedding, the flogging of a private is mentioned, in an almost indifferent manner. This again nonchalant tone speaks of a regular habit, nothing that could cause a stir or commotion among listeners. Moreover, the flogging has been brought up and arranged in the same sentence as marriage, fact that could lead the reader to bound marriage to discipline and punishment. Furthermore, later in the story, Mr. Collins comes as the complementary character that connects these two, adding to the deconstruction that focuses on the mistreatment of the body. When he was telling Elizabeth about Lady Catherine de Bourgh and what she could consider "acceptable" in a potential wife, he explains. "your wit and vivacity, I think, must be acceptable to her, especially when tempered with the silence and respect which her rank will inevitably excite" (p. 89). Like this, Elizabeth hears how her wit and intelligence should be pitilessly silenced in case she marries a man like her cousin, a probably mean husband who would not hesitate to discipline a woman in order to keep her submissive and passive. Likewise, when the same character asks Charlotte to marry him, she does not see the point in delaying it, since she seems to admit that she would be with him for the sake of convenience and not of pleasure: "The stupidity with which he was favoured by nature, must guard his courtship from any charm that could make a woman wish for its continuance" (p. 101). And the fact that she marries him accounts for her punishment: she would be flogged with his stupidity (and his cruelty) for the rest of her life. She makes it evident in the joy felt when he is not around during Elizabeth's visit: "When Mr. Collins could be forgotten, there was really an air of great comfort throughout; and by Charlotte's evident enjoyment of it, Elizabeth supposed he must be

often forgotten" (p. 129). Consequently, just as sexual attraction is delineated in the novel, so is physical revulsion.

Transgression can be also considered another significant core subject in the approaching of the body as a social construction in *Pride and Prejudice*. It has been mentioned that culture outlines and materializes social representations on the corporal self, subsuming the biological sex to socially constructed gender. The concepts of outlining and subsumption imply that determined boundaries are taken for granted, and, at the same time, result from culturally evaluative structures belonging to a specific spatiotemporal context, too. Therefore, any character (especially female characters) that would challenge corporeal boundaries would be judged accordingly, culturally and socially, since they would be challenging a whole range of dominating ideologies. And the consequences they would have to face could be severe and unpleasant. This is the case of one of the younger Bennet sisters, whose actions almost brought disgrace to the family. Uninhibited Lydia is clearly the most palpable character who appears to act according to female instincts and carnal impulses. Her name is found next to words like "laughs", "self-willed and careless" and "parties and jokes". Her mother defines her as "so good-humoured" (p. 4) and the narrator describes her in the following lines: "she had high animal spirits and a sort of natural self-consequence, and her own easy manners" (p. 43). The reader comes across numerous instances in which she shows herself attentive to her impulses and desires. For instance, Lydia surprises and shamelessly insists Mr. Bingley on holding a ball at Netherfield Park; and she later engages herself in a lottery game, making bets and exclaiming after prizes. Impulsively, she also buys a bonnet she does not really like and she describes, in a very relaxed manner, events during their stay in London: "in a voice rather louder than any other person's, was enumerating the various pleasures of the morning to anybody who would hear her…she seldom listened to anybody for more than half a minute…" (p. 178). However, she does not stop there; when her sexuality comes under scrutiny, it can be realized that she crosses boundaries culturally outlined on the feminine body. Her elopement with Wickham makes her transgressive personality evident, but a close reading of her elopement letter to Colonel Forster's wife could reveal Lydia's active sexuality before this decision. In fact, that is the specific moment when her commited transgression can be acknowledged, though she appears to be nothing but apathetic about the possible consequences of her actions. In the letter, the following words can be read: "I wish you would tell Sally to mend a great slit in my worked muslin gown

before they are packed up. Good-bye… I hope you will drink to our good journey" (p. 229). The word "muslin" carries sexual connotation when found in old-fashioned expressions like "a bit of muslin", meaning regarded as a sex object or sex partner, or 'a bit of muslin on the sly", referring to attractive women or girls. In addition, when Lydia chooses to mention "the slit in her worked muslin gown", she could imply that she has already lost her virginity. And when these words are contextualized in an elopement letter, then there is not much left for hesitations. Sexuality was socially controlled and regulated, but Lydia challenged social boundaries by meeting her needs and desires, and her body has been used as the means to do it. If one thinks about the possible reason for this detail to be mentioned in the letter and in the story, one could reach the conclusion that Austen could have needed to gently assert the fact that one of her female characters has openly embraced her sexuality.

As it has been shown, then, body manifestations cannot be ignored. A deconstructive approach has uncovered certain truths related to the body, like the acknowledgment of its presence, mistreatment or violations inflicted on it and transgression. The admission of the issue of mistreatment finally confirms the presence of the body, just like the observation of Lydia's transgression can account for the existence of social boundaries outlined onto the female body. Both issues of mistreatment and boundaries are connected to the concept of control, a central means of subordination in patriarchal societies. Therefore, the body, illustrating existing relations of power and control, can be considered as a materialization of the ideologies it absorbs.

Two centuries later, the cinematographic sequel of *Bridget Jones' Diary* does not disregard body issues either. The presence of the body also becomes undeniable, and related truths such as mistreatment or transgression seem to be broached, too, yet with apparent different expressions. Nowadays, slenderness and consumption seem to have developed into fundamental modern social concerns, and the body seems to have developed into the target material which both perceives and constructs current social representations that mirror these modern concerns.

In the films, the audience can observe how nowadays standards of beauty are brought up all the time. The characters can clearly be viewed as fitting in what it appears to be standardized as "ideal", or, at least, as aiming at becoming as close as possible. The audience comes across characters like Daniel Cleaver, Lara (Cleaver's American girlfriend) or Rebecca Gillies, who make evident that the issue of the desirable body, fitting twentieth-century standards of beauty, is not missing. They

unmistakably suit today's homogenized images which have historically evolved into social canons of beauty, since they have resulted culturally applauded. Daniel Cleaver, with his firm, solid and muscular look, attracts every woman's attention, including Bridget's. Lara makes her entrance naked, showing openly her perfectly slender and tight body. Rebecca, in addition, is first portrayed as having "legs up to here", later corroborated and emphasized throughout the second film by Bridget herself: "lovely legs" (Kidron, 2004).

Furthermore, these characters even seem to become, more often than not, models that seem to make the other ones measure and judge themselves as "correct" or "incorrect". For instance, when Jones looks at naked Lara, almost in shock, she cannot hide feeling inferior, especially with Lara's malicious comment about her: "I thought you said she was thin" (Maguire, 2001). To make matters worse, Cleaver leaves the protagonist for the American, adding the following "Lara and… I don't know, being American and all... it has something to do with confidence and being so... well, young, you know?" (Maguire, 2001). Similarly, Bridget, when told about Rebecca's long legs, cries: "She's got legs up to here! My legs only come up to there!" (Kidron, 2004). She repeats this remark on several opportunities, in which the word "only" seems to entail a negative conversational implicature that could easily be replaced by the word "but", so as to express difference and contrast.

The preoccupation for the slender body is considered to have started in the nineteenth century, when concern connected to the pursuit of an ideal physical silhouette began to catch on in the middle-class. This concern intended to attack excess weight as its enemy and, in this way, body practices like diet or physical exercise, aimed at shaping or transforming the body to make it as slender as possible, just for purely physical reasons. Nonetheless, as time passed, it became clearer that the non-slender body became subject of a constant attack, but for reasons beyond the physical transformation. These days, thinness appears not to be enough since social representations also tend to typify bodies as tight, smooth and with a contained profile. In this manner, Susan Bordo (1993) has stated that corporeal excesses like bumps, bulges or flabby buttocks do not fit the socially constructed postmodern female picture and a "war" has been declared against them. She has asserted that, in advertisements for example, these excess body features are constructed as the enemy, and bulges must be "attacked" or "destroyed", fat "burned" and stomachs "busted" and "eliminated" (p. 189). In consequence, slenderness is an essential, though it does not seem to be enough

because the body also needs to be tight, firm and controlled. This author has also referred to a possible metaphor in the contemporary society, affirming that these excesses could account for internal processes trying, on occasions, to erupt from within, appearing to get out of control. Bordo considers this "tight" body to have become a metaphor for anxiety about these internal processes struggling to keep oneself disciplined and controlled, what could result quite hard in today's consumer society. Consequently, as it has already been mentioned, the cinema should not be disregarded as a highly influential cultural instrument that presents a beneficial possibility to enquire about gender representations and gender construction. In the films, the audience watches as Bridget struggles to fit into the described slender and tight body, showing the significance to look controlled and disciplined.

The first film starts with Bridget making her New Year resolutions. Her first resolution is decisively to lose twenty pounds. All throughout the first film, Bridget monitors its evolution by writing down her weight in her diary: "November 9. Weight: 130 pounds. Cigarettes… three"; and one month later: "December 25. Weight 140 pounds... Plus forty-two mince-pies." (Maguire, 2001). In addition, she can see monitoring notes everywhere, even as part of street advertising, which also displays evolution in her sex life: "Weight: 131 pounds. Have replaced food with sex. Cigarettes: 22…all post- coital" (Maguire, 2001). This monitoring continues in the second film, fact that accounts for her constant efforts not to lose the grip on the body. Likewise, there are frequent comments about her body like "Have bottom the size of Brazil", or when she admits her looks in front of her boyfriend: "My legs only come up to here and yes, l will always be a little bit fat" (Kidron, 2004), in a clear allusion to Rebecca Gillies; or her final line "And I truly believe that happiness is possible. Even when you're and have a bottom the size of two bowling balls" (Kidron, 2004). These comments make evident that she has centered her life on the body. Her success or her failure seems to be imprinted on her body.

Correspondingly, on occasion of a book launch, after Bridget's friends have advised her to look gorgeous, the protagonist can be observed picking stomach-holding-in panties, which help to hold any weak muscles in the stomach: "chances of reaching a crucial moment... greatly increase by wearing these" (Maguire, 2001), she says showing her large pants. Similarly, in the second part of the sequel, a very embarrassed Miss Jones can be seen trying to get dressed hidden and wrapped up in a bedspread: "I don't want you to see any of my wobbly bits" (Kidron, 2004), she tells Darcy. Clearly, and

agreeing with Susan Bordo, bulges and "wobbly bits" are considered a humiliation that needs to be hidden, contained, tightened and controlled.

Along these lines, the issue of mistreatment can also be acknowledged. Not only does the audience observe the protagonist feeling humiliated to the already mentioned Lara's comment about her overweight look, but also Bridget appears to continually live an intense mortification that could get in the middle of her career development or her happiness, even without other people's opinion. Her instability makes her fluctuate between intensive, and even excessive, exercise in the gym and compulsive eating. The protagonist appears, then, to be involved in a perpetual and dramatic war with her body, during which she turns out to be psychologically harmed several times. Curiously, her body is most perceived as being punished or "flogged" whenever she is brought into conflict with a man. For example, after breaking up with Daniel Cleaver, Bridget can be watched cutting the mold off to eat the cheese underneath and finishing, in this way, everything she has in the fridge; a few moments later she can be seen as passing out with a bottle of vodka in her hands and falling over because of weak legs due to excessive spinning. These binge behaviors fit perfectly in what Susan Bordo has referred to as a metaphor for anxiety about internal processes getting out of control, and a struggle to keep oneself disciplined. Thus, the mistreatment of the body can be considered an effect of self- punishment: the woman is "flogging" her own body as a result of her failure to keep hold of a man.

Transgression also comes up as an issue not to be disregarded. However, transgression in the film seems to be connected to the body from an angle different from *Pride and Prejudice*. The body as a sexual object appears not to be the cause of cultural and social judgment in the film. Women are shown, quite explicitly, having (and enjoying) sexual intercourse quite often and without attachments. Bridget and her friends talk freely about sex and they do not look guilty to live their sex life to the fullest. The audience can even observe the way Bridget feels pleased and proud of her sex life when she answers the phone with the following opening line: "Bridget Jones, wanton sex goddess... with a very bad man between her thighs" (Maguire, 2001). Similarly, a scene in the second film shows Bridget bragging that she had been delayed for work: "Sorry. I was in bed with my boyfriend" (Kidron, 2004). Although in the second film the audience can even notice the presence of a Thai prostitute, it appears difficult to take it as an attempt to deem sexual intercourse as an act of transgression. Moreover, it can be observed how Bridget and her parents are invited to a "Tarts and

Vicars" party, for which they are supposed to wear fishnet tights and dress up as prostitutes and priests on a Sunday afternoon. It even gives the impression of celebration or, at least, that prostitutes are no longer a taboo subject. However, there are certain attitudes portrayed in the main female character that reveal female instincts which seem to challenge nowadays corporeal boundaries. The signs of body transgression turn out to be, as it has already been mentioned, disordered relations to food and hunger.

Susan Bordo has also explained that "the representation of unrestrained appetite as inappropriate for women […] make restriction and denial of hunger central features of the construction of femininity and set up the compensatory binge as a virtual inevitability" (p. 130). In this manner, the body becomes the materialization of corporeal boundaries socially constructed and consented, and eating becomes a shameful transgression, as long as it cannot be controlled and limited. Bridget's impulses to drink until she passes out, or to raid the fridge could, then, illustrate Bordo's theoretical statement related to eating as a body transgression. Furthermore, in the film, the female character can be observed eating in excess when she is alone, and never when she has company. On the other hand, when she finds herself in public, among friends or with her boyfriend, Bridget can be seen eating properly and minimally, as if the public sphere would hold her impulses back and she would free them in private, like a dirty secret.

An analysis of *Pride and Prejudice* and the cinematographic sequel *Bridget Jones' Diary* has shown that the body is undeniably present as a social construction. And, approaching it as such has led to issues like mistreatment and transgression. The spatiotemporal context in which it is embedded outlines and reinforces social boundaries on the body. Women are constantly led to perceive and construct the feminine body, including its appropriate behaviors and functions. In this manner, it has been made evident that, throughout the years, women have been involved in a significant phenomenon: they have struggled to restrain internal processes that would impulsively try to get out of control and, in consequence, lead to acts of transgression. Uncontained desire or unrestrained hunger as uncontrolled impulses could be considered essential, then, to be disciplined in patriarchal societies, since the physical body has demonstrated to be subjected to social (external) regulations. Similarly, a concern about control has been made evident in both cultural practices, revealing contexts shaped by existing relations of power. Jane Austen has successfully described

how mistreatment of the body would lead to control and subordination, and how unrestrained sexuality could bring about serious social consequences. Likewise, in the films, mastery and control of the slender and tight body account for possible social success and happiness in a constantly tempting consumer society. In consequence, it becomes clear that culture has successfully imposed, and still imposes its designs on the female body, both externally bound and internally managed.

CONCLUSION

The significance of the possibility to read everyday popular culture alongside canonical works within the field of Cultural Studies has already been mentioned. A thorough analysis of a twenty-first-century cinematographic sequel, in conjunction with a canonical literary masterpiece has revealed issues which involve a concern about control among existing relations of power and about socially and culturally assigned roles to gendered identities. This analysis has brought up Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony into the spotlight, showing the way ideology becomes the result of a negotiation between classes, during which subordination grows to be ruled not by force, but by consent on the part of the dominated. From Gender Studies' point of view, then, individuals take active part in the construction of representations, limited and dominated by dominant ideologies, which signify and shape gender identities.

Although his remarks highlight the opposition between 'high' and 'popular' culture, Leslie Fiedler (1975) observed the manner in which a novel needs to go back to popular origins in order to survive, and needs to assimilate past traditional fables and myths. This Jungian archetypal view, which has also encompassed cinematic forms and representations, could account for a reading and analysis of the films together with the traditional novel, and of the uncovered representations.

The creation of *Bridget Jones' Diary* has been meant to be read alongside Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and an ingenious dialogue can be observed between both artistic works that puts forward themes, characters and plot for consideration. Linda Hutcheon's concept of transcontextualization (1985) engages distance in order to enable oneself to look, with a critical eye, at and into the parodied text with a particular objective. Accordingly, *Bridget Jones' Diary* could be regarded as the enabled work in charge of taking necessary distance to observe *Pride and Prejudice* critically with a clear aim. The film gives the impression of viewing and examining the novel with the intention recontextualizing meanings and marking difference. In the process, the intention, or the pragmatic ethos, becomes clearer and different from any attempt of mockery or ridiculing. With a playful tone, but with no aggressiveness, the film's pragmatic ethos draws closer to homage and farther from attack. The concept of ethos, then, is understood as "the ruling intended response achieved by a literary text […] an inferred intended reaction motivated by the text" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 55). Consequently, the presence of a decoder becomes imperative, since his or her eyes can

detect the signals left to be detected. The film demands knowledge and recollection on the part of the viewer in order to perceive the recontextualization and reinterpretation of themes, characters and plot.

In addition, the element of irony is crucial to appreciate the parody. Hutcheon has referred to parody as imitation characterized by ironical inversion, idea that involves a reversal of conventions that could account for a new ironical context that activates meanings from the past. In this manner, contemporary Mark Darcy astonishes the viewer when he dismisses Daniel Cleaver, the contemporary Wickham, by coming to blows with him. Similarly, the clever heroine, Lizzy Bennet, has developed into clumsy Bridget and, moreover, she is still surrounded by close singular people (from sisters to friends), but this singularity has been reinterpreted and reinvented.

Along these lines, then, it can be observed how a dialogue is created from the very beginning and carries on throughout the films. This dialogue entails ironic inversion as far as themes, characters and plot are regarded, but it can only be activated as long as there are viewers with knowledge to infer the parodic intention. Furthermore, it results compulsory to take into account the fact that parody implies interpretation, and any interpretation will be made in the light of ideologies. Interpretation is ultimately ideological. In this manner, what results interesting is that the dialogue between parodied and parodic texts also offers the opportunity to look into present representations that stem from past ones, with any ideological consequence that may have been brought about in the process. As a consequence, and from a deconstructive approach, parody turns out to be a valuable resource for questioning everyday experiences which are, more often than not, considered natural. Parody allows a denaturalization of ways of life, beliefs and roles that the doxa might induce to deem as right or wrong. Thus, parody has been an effective starting point for the analysis of gender representations in patriarchal societies.

Parody, therefore, has introduced the past into the present, emphasizing the significance of history in the patriarchal process that has shaped the lives of human beings for nearly four thousand years. Gerda Lerner (1986) has asserted that history has the function of preserving the collective past, presenting it to individuals for learning to take place. We learn from the past, the author has insisted, not only from accomplishments and successes, but also from failures and errors. Any interpretation of history will outline ways of thought and beliefs, and human beings "define their potential and explore the limits of their possibilities" (Lerner, 1986, p 221).

The way certain gender-defined roles have been historically institutionalized in western societies has been illustrated. For example, and using Lerner's conception, the "stand-in wife" (p. 214) was established among women in Jane Austen's times: to be married to a wealthy, noble man meant social privileges like respect, reputation or distinction. Women could only gain respectability through their fathers or their husbands. This has been the case of most female characters, like the older Bennet sisters, in *Pride and Prejudice*. Nowadays, however, history appears to have exerted some leverage and altered the status of women, who are able to gain respectability through their studies and careers as well. As they develop economic freedom, they also seem to own more control over their lives. Bridget Jones and almost all the female character in the cinematographic sequel reflect this truth. This idea of control, as a consequence, unveils, once again, the existing relations of power in society. Gerda Lerner has agreed with Antonio Gramsci´s concept of hegemony. The former has asserted that ideas, values and beliefs are negotiated between classes, resulting in subordination ruled not by force but by consent on the part of the dominated. Similarly, the second author, using a different term, has stated that education, social restraints and coercion, or even discrimination have added to the cooperation of women with the patriarchal system. In other words, women have taken, consciously and unconsciously, an active part in a patriarchal process that has traditionally placed them in subordinated roles.

In this manner, in a nineteenth-century object of study, readers can notice portrayals of women that embrace qualities belonging to the subordinated pole in patriarchal masculine/feminine dichotomies, such as feeling, compliance, passiveness or weakness. Almost two centuries later, another object of study, that has gathered millions of people in the audience, has depicted women as economically independent, sexually liberated and with ascending working careers. Nonetheless, a deconstructive analysis has revealed ambiguities with reference to these images, and that their meaning is not always certain and unique. Characters in the films show no happy ending unless "under the protection" of a man. Furthermore, the protagonist herself shouts "Hurrah!" or "I have found my happy ending at last. And I truly believe that happiness is possible…" when she sees herself involved in a romantic relation. Therefore, it can be observed in these representations how difficult it still seems to be to subvert their consciousness and their feeling of inferiority, up to the point to present them only satisfied with a man by their side. Correspondingly, dichotomies related to masculine/feminine have also

proved that they could result harmful or destructive for men as well, since they need to work hard in order to keep up with the roles expected in what is considered "manly" and "correct": strong, emotionally stoic, autonomous and capable of providing for his family.

In addition, the consideration of the body as a social construction in both the novel and the sequel has introduced issues of mistreatment and transgression. The body appears to materialize the ideology that prevails in the spatiotemporal context of the individual. In the early nineteenth century, the body seemed to be a major instrument of patriarchal control, and families appeared to count on actions like flogging to keep it confined. Sexual appetite was to be absolutely restrained and any deviant attitude could endanger the whole family´s reputation. In the late twentieth century, the same issues have been brought up, but making use of different control mechanisms. As it has already been mentioned, in the representations found in the films, women have been liberated to leave their homes, study and to develop professional careers. Moreover, sex is no longer a taboo that could endanger a woman´s reputation. Nevertheless, at the heart of a persuasive consumer society, mastery of one´s own impulses over uncontained desire or unrestrained hunger seems to have become one of the most challenging objectives nowadays. The body, subjected to external regulations, needs to discipline any internal impulse that may try to come out of control. The consideration of the body as a social construction could facilitate the understanding of its mistreatment as a significant social means of control and subordination. Interestingly, while in the past the flogging came from outside, from husbands, captains or any other external authority, in the present it comes from inside, from the woman herself. Either way, in both periods, it is clear that the mistreatment of the body has successfully kept women socially disciplined and controlled.

In this manner, in the representations of women analyzed in both objects of study, anxiety, and even uncertainty, can be observed when they are exposed to society. Values, customs and social roles portray women as in constant search for safety and approval, no matter what time period is born in mind. However, the most desired source for safety and approval appears to be the man, just as if he represented everything the subordinated poles of patriarchal dichotomies needed to be complemented. And when the female characters finally find an eligible bachelor, joyful feelings seem to overwhelm them, either in rounding-off scenes or at the end of the stories.

Throughout the analysis of these representations, it could be observed that the patriarchal system, then, seems to be unbreakable and capable of opening its way generation after generation in an everlasting commitment. It just needs to adjust its hegemony to the popular cultural practices of the time (what Althusser has referred to as Ideological State Apparatuses), which are distributed by institutions and the media, developing them into the most important means to spread ideology on a massive scale. In consequence, the perpetuation of patriarchy becomes inevitable, and women's active involvement cannot be denied.

The possibility to apply theories related of the field of parody and gender studies to approach a canonical literary masterpiece, such as Jane Austen´s *Pride and Prejudice*, and an applauded popular romantic film of these days account for the significance of Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies becomes highly valuable for its endless resources at the time of investigating power relations, gender representations or hegemonic effects in patriarchal in society. It has been shown that it affirms the political and normative importance of history, investigating the way social formations are both produced and reproduced within the asymmetrical relations of power characterizing the dominant society. Its openness to eclecticism becomes advantageous since it succeeds to provide means to try to understand how hegemony works through the distribution of signifying practices in everyday life, adapting theory and academic research to everyday popular culture. Cultural Studies, then, has allowed to analyze women´s place in cultural production and in the dominant modes of cultural representation, where the meaning of gender is strongly constructed.

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