

Capstone Project

Modern *Persuasion*: Repackaging Austen for Contemporary Female Audiences

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Abstract

Persuasion is the last completed novel of Jane Austen that depicts the author's progressive vision on womanhood amid the rise of feminism in early 19th century England. The feminist director, Carrie Cracknell, revisits the novel in the 2022 Netflix adaptation to demonstrate the struggles of female characters in the society, reflecting the similarities of 19th and 21st century. The film has largely received negative criticism for deviating from the original novel in terms of representation of characters, language peculiarities and the overall message. While the adaptation, indeed, modernizes the source text and more vividly conveys the feminist agenda of the lead female characters at the expense of the novel's features specific to the 19th century's social and cultural spatial-temporal settings, it does so with a certain purpose. The audiences have neglected it while disapproving the adaptation for distancing from the original novel. These negative online reactions that disagree with my personal perspective on the adaptation have thus motivated me to make in-depth research on fidelity issues in Adaptation Studies, the feminist agenda in the novel and the film and identify the director's intended message. The project will argue that by emphasizing the importance of fidelity, audiences overlook the adaptation's purpose of addressing the problematic social stereotypes on womanhood and women's marital and public status - which are important for female audiences in the current socio-political context. In other words, the adaptation's urgency lies in its timely and needed message for contemporary female viewers as the director enhances the feminist voice of the main character, Anne Elliot, which is otherwise less vocal in the novel. The close reading

of the novel and the script of adaptation will further help to compare the depiction of Anne Elliot's voice and representation as well the social setting as presented in the two mediums. Besides, the negative reviews of film critics and various Twitter audience reactions to the adaptation will be used for emphasizing the bias of audiences in overestimating the value of fidelity to the text.

Persuasion (2022) deviates from the source text to repackage the idea of womanhood in the society which imposes its own visions of women's public role and marital status. For instance, while the novel presents Captain Frederick Wentworth claiming that women have no right to be present on the board of a ship because they are unfit unless visiting for the ball, the film portrays him as respectful and supportive of women's professional aspirations ("It angers me the world denies you the chance of a public life"). Undoubtedly, there are similar messages in both mediums such as women's choice to marry and related social expectations since Jane Austen has already developed feminist ideas. For example, it was found that in the novel, Lady Russel's choice not to remarry "needs no apology to the public" yet would be commonly "discontented" if she married second time; similarly, in the adaptation, when Frederick Wentworth is advertised as suitable partner for Anne Elliot, it is emphasized that "a woman without a husband is not a problem to be solved". These instances demonstrate the director's intention to convey the main idea of women's liberation from the patriarchal social system and of encouraging women to make independent choices in both their marital and public life. The deviations from the source text or the lack of fidelity to the text are thus necessary for conveying this idea to modern female audiences. Moreover, adaptations need to be informed of the current cultural and socio-political context to present a film that is relevant and to allow the adaptation to be an independent artwork. Thus, more similar findings based on the close reading of primary

sources and survey of secondary sources would be presented to argue for the importance of Netflix's take on revisiting Austen for delivering a message to contemporary female audiences.

In relation to previous study on Jane Austen's novels' adaptations, this research is the first academic research on the newest Netflix adaptation of Austen's *Persuasion*. Moreover, it puts into dialogue the adaptation, source text and two types of audience reviews - from film critics and social media users - which stands out from previous research that included analysis of the adaptation and film critics only. Thus, while the theme of this research has been in exploration before through Feminist Film Studies and Adaptation Studies, my project makes a comprehensive analysis of many sources and theories.

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Introduction

“He’s a 10”, - a quote that both online and offline audiences quickly turned into an identification of Netflix adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* (2022), a quote accompanied by common disapproval and negative commentary. The adaptation instantly became a subject of mockery across different languages and social media platforms. According to Rotten Tomatoes, a commonly trusted online film review-aggregator, the critics rated the adaptation at 30% with the majority proclaiming it unsuccessful. Similarly, Austen fans and online audiences have shared different impressions on Twitter with many criticizing the film for the lack of loyalty to the original novel. Having watched the adaptation shortly after, I realized that Netflix’ take on Austen was different from previous adaptations due to its *modernization* of the source text which ultimately fueled criticism. The audiences solely focused on how different and distant was the adaptation from the source text in terms of language, images and behaviors of the main characters. However, the larger themes related to social stereotypes on women’s marital and public status along with the message to empower female audiences were left overlooked. While these themes have been of extreme cultural and social relevance not only to 19th century society but also remain as such today, it is problematic that audiences have ignored them while discrediting the latest version of screen *Persuasion*. The online communities which encourage women to speak up, overthrow social prejudices and stand up for their own beliefs, choices, decisions and rights has turned out to be largely the people who ignore that message in the Netflix film, and instead, chose to criticize it for not being a plain portrayal of the 19th century novel. A personal positive reception of the film due to its vivid, timely and needed message to contemporary female audiences along with the conflict with viewers’ critique has driven me to further investigate *Persuasion* (2022) in depth.

The central subject of the capstone project is the film adaptation of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* directed by Carrie Cracknell for Netflix streaming platform and released on July 15, 2022. The adaptation directly positions itself as 'based' on Austen's novel, however, it modernizes the image of main female characters and language by making them more vocal and resembling the latest trends, thus unusually connecting a 19th century setting and society to those of today. The main literary themes I am investigating are the social stereotypes about women's public and marital status and female empowerment that are seen in the adaptation. The research question is the following: What does *Persuasion* (2022) tell us about the desires and wishes of contemporary female audiences which film critics and online audiences have overlooked? The initial assumption is that the director purposefully modernizes this adaptation to reflect the contemporary female audiences and meet their expectations to feel empowered by watching an adaptation of a famous writer's novel and a commonly favorite genre of period drama. Thus, I believe that the film attempts to convey a direct message to audiences that women should make decisions for themselves in issues related to their personal lives. These arguments will be presented in the discussion sections of theoretical and thematic analysis.

Methods

The project required a discourse analysis of two primary sources, the original novel and the film adaptation's script, as well as a number of secondary sources on two central themes. The film that is officially available on Netflix platform was also used for contextualizing and summarizing the cinematic techniques and peculiarities discussed in this project, while the script was obtained online for a more convenient use of the text. The different databases were utilized for the research on theoretical articles in the field of Adaptation and Feminist Film Theory Studies along with the previous scholarship on film adaptations of Jane Austen's novels. The

comprehensive study of audiences was carried out by researching online reactions of Twitter users using a hashtag “Persuasion” for better search process, and articles from film critics on the adaptation were found online.

Audience reviews

One of the most important materials of my research are critical reviews on the film adaptation. It is because the main reason for choosing *Persuasion* (2022) was the massive backlash it received from film critics and various media sources (including magazines and social media) which did not correspond with my own perception of the adaptation. I will use these negative reviews to refute them and argue against the importance of fidelity to the source text. To clarify, I plan to argue that despite these film reviews criticizing how unsuccessful or problematic the adaptation is, they overlook its main message which is, according to my argument, to address the issues that modern female audiences face. All film reviews considered belong to reputable film critics, journals, magazines and agencies such as *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, *Roger Ebert*, etc. The articles of film critics are presented in the [Appendix 1](#).

The audience reactions analyzed on Twitter are divided into three opinions where the majority is negative, some are positive and few are mixed. The main reason for choosing Twitter was the fact that English-speaking users use this platform to share their impressions and commentaries on the adaptation’s quality by using hashtags or mentioning Netflix accounts to attract attention and make their tweets more visible. The most important opinion for the project is negative critique on the fidelity issue since it has the biggest share of tweets and it is refuted by the project’s argument. The process of selecting tweets was aimed at finding more informative and expanded commentaries. For confidentiality purposes, the names and nicknames are concealed, but the data of publication is left for relevance purposes as all tweets have been

written in 2022. Firstly, most of the negative reactions criticize absence or lack of fidelity to the source text, as well as proximity to other Austen adaptations in terms of the modernization issue that is seen in Netflix adaptation. Specifically, such negative tweets will be used together with previously analyzed film critics for the argument related to the main theme. To clarify, since I argue that audiences and critics overlook the bigger message of the adaptation - that is to appeal to modern female audiences with a message about the females' role in society and independence in making decisions about marriage without considering social stereotypes and pressure. In other words, by being concerned with the fidelity issue of the adaptation and how it 'totally' changes the novel, audiences ignore the role of such changes and modernizations. The negative commentaries view adaptation as a mirror of the source novel but in another medium, however, I argue that the essence of adaptations is not to mirror the same text but to adapt to new times, generations, views, cultures and language. Next, the positive tweets support the argument against the fidelity issue and how the film enhances the roles and voices of female characters. As it can be seen from the tweets below, the adaptation is claimed to be characteristic of Austen's ambience and quality, and praised for disclosing deeper issues concerning Anne Elliot's personality. Lastly, regarding the mixed section of tweets, they also give insight into 'good' and 'bad' sides of the novel, which represent general reactions to the adaptation.

Film script and the novel

The official script of the film adaptation was obtained online and compared to the original novel's text in relation to the similarities and differences of women's representation and feminist ideas. The script of the adaptation fulfills the gaps of the novel with a more explicit message to the modern female audiences, but it also has several similarities. When compared to

the script as demonstrated below in the table, it is clear that the adaptation introduced changes in the dialogues, settings, minor changes in the plot and storyline, and, importantly, adjusted the text to be understood by the modern audiences. It was found that by intentionally deviating from the source text, the adaptation has a goal of appealing to a larger, new and specific audience rather than exactly portraying the source text. In the case of *Persuasion* (2022), the modernizing process of language, behaviors and images of main characters resonates with the contemporary female audiences by emphasizing the social stereotypes about women and marriage, and females' role in society. It can be seen further from the comparison table ([Appendix 2](#)) that some instances include the idea that society is concerned about women's public status, and that the film changes how the main characters are represented in terms of their conscience of gender-related issues.

Modern *Persuasion*

Fidelity in film adaptations

Film adaptations of the popular novels occupy a special place in the film industry as many directors rely on popularity of the source text to attract new audiences. Regardless of the level of commercial success, film adaptations often provoke critical reviews as viewers tend to compare the content of two mediums on the matter of congruency in the storyline, representation of characters, and the original author's overall idea. This made the fidelity issue that is the level of truthfulness or loyalty of the adapted version to the source text a common debate among the consumers of both mediums. The field of Adaptation Studies specifically investigates such processes of creative transformation of a text from one medium to another as well as the relationship between the two interpretations. According to Raitt (2010), fidelity has long been widely considered as a "criterion of value" that initiated conflicting views on the level of which

the visual interpretation is allowed to deviate from the original source (p. 47). Undoubtedly, by using the novels as a foundation for the film's storyline the directors have the responsibility towards the authors of the novels and to the audiences that also largely expect the film to visualize the text; however, the changes made cannot be judged as misinterpretations for several reasons. Firstly, literary texts and films are two distinct mediums - while the former conveys the author's idea in written form, the latter not only has to deliver the meaning by using cinematic tools but also to compress it to fit the limited screen time. Secondly, as the temporal frames separate the historical setting of the novel and the adaptation, directors need to contextualize the film to the modern cultural, social and political context to increase the film's relevancy. Lastly, the differences between the mediums give directors the opportunity to express their creative approach to adapting the text; however, if they were to adhere to fidelity, it would constrain the creative process. As such, the content of the novel migrates from the space and time of the original to those of the film, it gains the prospect of conveying new meanings to audiences who expect to see them (Raitt, 2010, p. 49). The French film theorists, Bazin and Truffaut, extend this idea by arguing that adaptations give the opportunity for "developing and expanding the source text" in different ways (Colin et al., 2011, p. 6). Therefore, the dissimilarities of two mediums make it impossible to accurately translate the novel into the screen; whilst audiences and critics traditionally take the source text as the standard, they might not only hinder creative imagination of directors but also diminish the value of the screen adaptation as an independent artwork.

The newest adaptations of the 19th century novels are subverting the conventional view on importance of fidelity to the text by modernizing the story's settings, characters, language and overall aesthetics. Carrie Cracknell's attempt at visualizing Jane Austen's novel, an adaptation with a contemporary version of a heroine who voices her concerns as both a 19th century and

21st century woman in Netflix *Persuasion* (2022) is an exemplary adaptation that purposefully deviates from the source text. Generally, Austen's novels have inspired many visual interpretations compared to her contemporaries' works and the genre representatives for a reason that audiences express interest in British Heritage films, costume drama genre and the feminist agenda that underlies in the author's idea. Despite the evident differences in the time periods, social context and cultural values of the original novel and present day, the fact that makes Austen's literature relevant to modern times is that her heroines remain relevant and live through experiences that women today can relate to. Austen's female heroines express the feelings of anxiety and disapproval to social norms that restrict women reflect the continued struggle with patriarchy. However, these ideas are only subtly expressed on the original text as Austen was confined by the boundaries of social imagination on feminism discourse which motivated Cracknell to choose *infidelity* to the source text to make a bridge between the images of women from the 19th century and 21st century, making women's voices more vocal in order to deliver these images as an example for the modern female viewer. The film producers acknowledge the need of modernization for the sake of presenting female heroines that the contemporary audiences need to see to feel heard; however, assigning contemporary values to the novel is what has ignited controversial audience reception criticizing lack of fidelity to the novel. However, fidelity should not be the main concern of adaptations because the differences between two mediums do not allow, and hence, do not obligate accurate translation of the meaning.

According to Cardwell's (2002) pluralist approach to Adaptation Studies, adaptation should be rather informed of its temporal and spatial environment. The approach considers adaptations in terms of culture, meaning that instead of evaluating the degree of loyalty of the adapted version, it focuses on its 'aesthetic or cultural worthiness' (p. 70). In other words, the

pluralist approach is based on ideological terms that conveys the meaning intended by the author of the original text but is aware and informed about other factors influencing the adaptation. These are cultural factors which include acknowledgement of previous adaptations, modern film and television traditions as well as social, historical and cultural context in which the screen version is created. Besides, the obstacle which discredits the essence of fidelity issue is the difference between the mediums. The adaptation process requires interpreting the narration style, literary symbols and images into a visual medium that has its own peculiarities. Hollinger (2012) suggests that a novel appeals to the audience only through written words, while the film appeals through different mediums such as the actors' play, sound, light and setting (p. 152). Indeed, the director does not rewrite the novel but uses the tools of filmmaking to revisit it, and moreover, they "take it as the starting point for some form of critical revision" as Willis (1998) claims is the ultimate goal of adaptations (p. 121). Therefore, it is argued that the attachment to the source text that the audiences still rely on is not only an inappropriate vision that fuels negative commentary on the media installment, but also creates boundaries for adaptations to be accepted as independent with a full 'cultural autonomy' (Anushiravani & Javidshad, 2021, p. 57). According to Wiltshire, "the study of recreation is then in part the study of how that disjunction between means may be resolved or sublated" (p. 88). Making a translation from one medium to another thus requires resolving the differences through storytelling tools characteristic to the target form. Austen's work, *Persuasion*, stands out in terms of the conveyance of the main character's consciousness and interior life that directly addresses the reader rather than the other characters, therefore, this feature is seen as problematic to show through the other forms. When approaching sensitive themes such as the feminist voice of *Persuasion*'s main heroine, Virginia Woolf suggests films are unable to convey the complex interior world of a character because films tend

to oversimplify the original novel and do not have tools that can help to recreate the author's ideas. However, Cracknell, indeed, finds ways to not only reflect the feminist ambitions of Anne Elliot but adapts it to women of the present day which will be further demonstrated through comparison of novel and film script. Thus, many scholars argue and modern adaptations have proven that fidelity should no longer be the criterion of value as it diminishes the worth of the adapted version. Instead, without imposing the need to mirror the details of the source text, the director gains the opportunity to express their own creative imagination.

In addition to film theorists, the fidelity issue is commonly held as important value among various audiences including professional film critics and Twitter audiences. According to a film critic, Clarke (2022), *Persuasion* aims at being totally different from the novel as “one senses the mutated story bursting to free itself from the remaining chains and properly explode its source material. The problem is not that it has moved too far from Austen, but that it has not moved far enough” (The Irish Times). While it is clear that Cracknell's film practices distance from the source, it is hard to evaluate the degree of changes as the adaptation is one of the most recent attempts at modernizing 19th century text in the cinema industry, especially on streaming platforms. The online audiences similarly largely condemn the adaptation for the same reason as one Twitter user posts:

“The Netflix *Persuasion* really is hysterically, outrageously bad. Nothing to do with historical accuracy or fidelity to the text” (July 16, 2022).

It is clear that fidelity is held as an important criterion for adapting prominent novels. This concern can be traced back to other recent period drama TV series made by streaming platforms. The modernization has become an inseparable part of adaptations as seen in Netflix successful *Bridgeton* (2020) series and Hulu's *The Great* (2020). However, in contrast with these series,

since *Persuasion* (2022) positions itself as “based on the novel”, Austen fans expected to see the real story without fictional details:

“Netflix’s *Persuasion* is BAD!!

It seems like Netflix wanted to pull Bridgeton out of Jane Austen’s novel!” (July 16, 2022).

“The Netflix adaptation of *Persuasion* is maddeningly bad. The tone is far too glib, the portrayal of Anne Elliott as a creature of caprice misunderstands the book entirely” (July 16, 2022)

It is understandable that fans pay a special attention to the representation of heroines in the adaptation because Anne Elliot has the most noticeable dissimilarities with her version in the original text. In contrast, Twitter has seen a select amount of positive commentary on the quality of the adaptation:

“I know a lot of people hated the new adaptation of *Persuasion* on Netflix, but I actually had a good time with it. It’s probably because I have no attachment to the book” (August 14, 2022).

“Just watched new *Persuasion* on Netflix and loved it. And then read all the Very Angry reviews. What are people so mad about non-Austen dialogue in what is after all, an adaptation? I felt like it got closer to the heart of the novel than any of the other P [*Persuasion*] movies” (September 24, 2022).

Interestingly, these commentaries help to understand the motivations of the audiences to criticize the adaptation - fidelity is largely imposed by Austen purists, but those who do not enforce attachment to the novel evaluate the adaptation as a work on its own. Some film critics also support the independence of the adaptations as Zacharek (*Time*, 2022) criticizes Austen purists for incorrect viewpoint on adaptations, “It’s also dazzling in its lack of originality: the virulently pro-Austen brigade is really just a subset of the larger and even more annoying “The movie can never be as good as the book” crowd. Movies are their own creations.”” Similarly, Zemler (*Observer*, 2022) suggests that new versions of adaptations do not have to initiate conflicts on fidelity as they rather give the exceptional opportunity for the novel to be understood by the

newer generations: “Who decides whether a new iteration of something is appropriate or not, especially when the author is long dead? Stories should be for everyone and we all have varied ways of accessing the themes and emotions within them. This *Persuasion*, as odd—and apparently insulting—as it may feel to some critics and viewers, is just a different door to enter the same house.” Indeed, as the director opts for changes in interpreting the story, language and vocality of main heroines on certain feminist themes, this reflects the cultural and socio-political setting of the current time, thus making the film more accessible and relevant to the modern audiences.

Notably, when the adaptation’s trailer was released ahead of the premiere date the audiences have already started expressing their rage online to which the film director, Carrie Cracknell, reacted with an understanding, “I think people have a really deep feeling of *ownership* over Austen and, rightly, have a really sort of strong connection to the book” (Erbland, 2022). While such a reaction can be reasonable the director still invited the audience to watch the film and note instances where disparities with the novel were made on purpose. Hence, adaptations should not be constrained by the intention to be loyal to the source text, because they should rather be contextualized with cultural, social and political norms of the time they are made in. As fidelity remains the focus of attention and concern of professional film critics and audiences, it is undeniable that by distancing from the novel the director gains wider opportunities for delivering the text to newer audiences given the contemporary values, temporal, cultural and social settings.

Feminist agenda and women’s representation on screen

The film adaptation acquired a notorious fame for transforming the way female characters are represented and their feminist voices being more vocal which together become *Persuasion’s* (2022) biggest strength. In the historical setting of the 19th century, Jane Austen

witnessed the early stages of feminism rise in English society, and her rising conscience of the matter can be traced in her earlier novels with Anne Elliott being her most developed female character discussing feminist ideas, although in the limits of her temporal and social settings. Anne Elliott in Netflix's adaptation takes Austen's initial ideas as a starting point for the development of her character as an unmarried feminist woman in a patriarchal society. As such, the adaptation contributes to the contemporary discourse on feminism by making main and secondary female characters more expressive of their anxieties with the social expectations enforced on them based on their public or marital status. It is important to mention that such a message is already present in the novel but is rare and more subtle. For instance, Jane Austen gives an insight into the status of Lady Russel, Anne's confidant and friend of her late mother, Lady Elliott. Austen comments that Lady Russel's status of a wealthy widow does not oblige her to explain her private life decisions to the society. She reinforces the belief that society is preoccupied with a woman's status and is "discontented" when a woman marries the second time. Austen also turns the stereotypes upside down by claiming that it is the men who ought to explain the choice of not remarrying which is against the common practice since men's marital status is inherently of less concern for the society compared to women's:

"That Lady Russell, of steady age and character, and extremely well provided for, should have no thought of a second marriage, *needs no apology to the public*, which is rather apt to be unreasonably discontented when a woman *does* marry again, than when she does *not*; but Sir Walter's continuing in singleness *requires explanation*." (Austen, p. 11)

Notably, since it is Lady Russell who initially persuaded 19-years-old Anne to avoid making an imprudent action by marrying a fortuneless captain, her image in the adaptation builds up on the original story and voices the society's general perspective on marriage:

"The truth is, marriage is *transactional* for women. Our basic *security* is on the line."
(*Persuasion* script, 2022)

This statement subtly reinforces the belief that women rely on the fortunes of their husbands as the other pursuits of women were limited in the 19th century, and this can also be experienced in some of traditional societies today. She suggests Anne cannot “throw herself” to a questionable marriage and unpredictable future because for a woman it is a matter of security. It follows that for Lady Russell remarrying cannot be neglected because she has inherited financial security, but for a young woman the guarantee of such security is one of the most important criteria in courtship for a sole reason that women lack the right to pursue public occupation and make her own fortune.

It is particularly interesting that in regard to the male characters Austen is rather subtle, while the adaptation has made vivid changes in the story to not only reinforce the idea of equal rights between men and women but also to make male characters more aware of women's struggles. For instance, the film presents Anne Elliott's beloved, Captain Frederick Wentworth, differently from the book where he is rather angry with the idea of women being present on the ship board:

“I hate to hear of women on board, or to see them on board; and no ship under my command shall ever convey a family of ladies anywhere, if I can help it.” (Austen, pp. 58-60)

In contrast, the modernized Captain Wentworth acknowledges the limited opportunities of women in public occupations and even confesses that Anne would be a great captain *if she was given the opportunity to have a public occupation*. Moreover, he claims Anne's personal characteristics are inspirational for him and that she would be best fit for ships:

“You're always best in an emergency. Anticipating the needs of others. Direct and focused, calm and thoughtful. Equipped with more intelligence than does you good. No, you're an exceptional person. *It angers me the world denies you the chance of a public life*. You'd make a great admiral.” (*Persuasion* script, 2022)

While Captain Frederick is made to be well informed of women's struggles in the film adaptation, there is still another male character, Mr. Elliott, who is portrayed contrastingly to Captain Frederick. He is less conscious of word choices regarding women as it can be seen how Anne Elliott feels the need to instantly correct him:

Mr Elliott: It was on account of being struck by this dazzling *creature*.

Anne: Please don't call me a creature.

Mr. Elliot: This dazzling, um...

Anne: Woman? Woman?

Mr. Elliot: What's wrong with creature? (*Persuasion* script, 2022)

As it was observed earlier, audiences have expressed anger with the fidelity issue, however, some viewers shared excitement about Anne's image in the adaptation. It can be seen that when the adaptation is considered separately from the source the heroine's experiences can still be interpreted successfully:

"Shocked to see bad reviews of Netflix's *Persuasion*. I absolutely loved it! Dakota Johnson embodies that character - I could feel her loss, her pain, her intelligence, and memories. Might not be the exact representation of the book but I'd watch it over again" (July 16, 2022)

One of users highlights that even the performance of the lead actress expands the audiences and invites the new generation to take a look at 19th century novel's modern interpretation:

"That's how they should be ! ...Dakota brings a new audience to Jane Austen's work and what a woman Jane was!" (July 17, 2022)

Furthermore, the film director introduces a new dimension of Anne Elliott as the actress, Dakota Johnson, breaks the fourth wall to communicate her feminist ideas directly with the audiences. While it is known that even in the novel Austen makes space for Anne to share her ruminations, Cracknell's adaptation furthers the process by giving her screen time and focus. As the closing scene gives a glimpse of Anne and Captain Wentworth's happily ever after, Dakota Johnson also looks at the camera to explicitly convey Anne's final message:

“It's okay to find love on your terms...however unorthodox. Don't let anyone tell you how to live” (*Persuasion* script, 2022)

It can be seen that the final statement depicts Anne's growth as a mature woman who reflects on her past experiences and speaks to her audience *sharing* the lessons she learned. The surface reading of this quote suggests that Anne wants her female audiences to make independent decisions in their personal lives as she acts as a 'living' fictional heroine who sacrificed quite a long part of her life to follow what others envisioned best for her, and has been suffering all along. However, this quote also demonstrates that despite such struggles, a woman can grow and learn to listen to and understand her own instincts. As Austen's most mature heroine approaching her thirties whose family gave up any hopes on her, she shows that despite *allowing* herself to be persuaded in her youth, she has become a decisive woman who is now guided by her own will. Although her reconciliation with Captain Frederick was followed by hesitation, she found the way on her terms contrary to what tradition would expect from her. Myers (1970) also suggests that Austen's typical exploration of womanhood such as in *Persuasion* results in a heroine who becomes independent and explores herself to “reaffirm her integrity” (p. 228).

The development of feminist film theory has particularly helped to positively influence the emergence and recognition of modern feminist directors who bring up issues women face because of social stereotypes. The theory offers a socio-political and cultural context that assists understanding of the changes made in representing the female characters in *Persuasion* (2022) as they are portrayed with a more vocal voice to ruminate on certain issues. Such instances in the adaptation help to connect not only the position of women in society in the 19th century and modern day, but also to see how feminism changed through the time and allowed new interpretations of the image of women in the newest adaptation. *Persuasion's* (2022) director confessed the initial interest in proto-feminism that is felt throughout the novel as feminism was

only rising in Austen's time when women were "trying to make sense of the world that they're trapped in" (Erbland, 2022). The approach with the breaking of the fourth wall is one of the cinematic techniques with which the director gains the opportunity to explore the consciousness of Anne Elliot and her vision on feminism. Not only does it draw the audience's attention, but it specifically invites the female viewers to Anne's journey where she discloses her anxieties through her experiences. Kuhn (1994), affirms that the conditions for making women *affirmative* on screen is that females ought to encourage sympathy of the audience which can be done by portraying their inner experiences and involve a text and audience's dialogue. Through the vivid portrayal of women on screen that is by giving main roles and allowing freedom of expression, as well as by delivering a new meaning from a feminist perspective, the women on screen can acquire their own 'language' which has long been absent in dominant cinema. The director believes that through the breaking the fourth-wall the female viewers become Anne's confidant or a friend and have access to "complexity of her inner thoughts", communicating with the feelings of frustration of living in such a patriarchal society (Erbland, 2022). Often such a direct contact of the heroine with the audiences happens when Anne needs to explain the situation or her feelings. For instance, as Austen is famous for satirical references to her contemporary culture, the adaptation also takes a humorous approach to Anne's failures, insecurities, and awkward situations such as drinking and spilling wine on herself or keeping 'playlists' of music sheets that Captain Frederick once gifted her. By doing so the producers create a modern heroine who is normal and authentic as Smelik (1998) suggests female audiences want to see and identify with. In her novels, Jane Austen usually explores womanhood as it was in the 19th century, and *Persuasion's* (2022) creators did just that with an image of the modern woman in contemporary cultural realities. Smelik (1998) argues that it is the development of feminist

cinema that allowed 'real' women to be shown on screen and replace the ideology of eternal femininity that was inhabiting Hollywood's vision of a woman. Such an approach resulted in liberating women in cinema as female directors "undoing the spell of a culturally dominant fantasy of the eternal feminine" (Smelik, 1998, p. 8). With the adaptation's director being feminist, Anne keeps the "elegance of mind" as Austen described her (p. 11), but her screen image is increasingly liberated to interpret a woman who has flaws and is able to learn.

Steenkamp (2009) agrees that the present-day viewers want to see a more relevant image of a woman who is less confined by the social stereotypes and is more independent. She claims that particularly film adaptations that are feminist readings of Austen's novels give more voice and power to heroines, and for audiences to be satisfied, "Austen's women must be submitted to a process of modernization..they must be more fiercely independent, more active and must challenge their male suitors more passionately" (Steenkamp, 2009, p. 5). Despotopoulou (2006) emphasizes that revisiting classic novels such as of Jane Austen allows directors to make original visual translations to the target language and culture of today to specifically address the female audiences (p. 119). Similarly, Gheorghe (2021) points out that the ideas adapted from literature to other mediums are "to some extent transformed by its new uses" to answer the call of the new times and spaces (p. 144). It follows that with the significant progress of feminist ideas today compared to its limited scope in Austen's time, feminist representation on screen is an inevitable but also a necessary development.

It was illustrated how Austen's *Persuasion* adaptation is more explicit with the idea of promoting women and advocating for women's capabilities and roles in public life, where the novel lacks it. The adaptation gives more voice to Anne throughout the visual text compared to the source text, and emphasizes the importance of women speaking up for herself and no longer

being closed out from public occupations. Such a development is a result of the ongoing discourse in feminist cinema theories where representing 'real' and relatable women such as Anne Elliot is done according to the desires and expectations of female audiences.

Conclusion

The aim of this project was to demonstrate that the audiences of Netflix's *Persuasion* (2022) have continuously overlooked the director's feminist message while discrediting the adaptation for lack of fidelity to Jane Austen's novel. The project employed a number of different forms of sources including the film, official script, original novel and online audience reviews. It was found that the discussion on Adaptation Studies theories prove that while the field is not as developed as it needs to be for furthering the academic discourse given the interest of audiences in the matters of fidelity to the source text, the existing approaches such as the pluralist approach has proven to be the most suitable to understand the nature of film adaptations. Pluralist approach emphasizes the value of making the adaptation that is informed by current cultural and socio-political discourses and this explains the modernization process done in the Netflix's film. The survey of online audience reactions in Twitter and of professional film critics disclosed that viewers are not only informed about fidelity as a term in the context of film adaptations, but also that they believe it is what Raitt (2010) describes a "criterion of value" when evaluating the quality of the adaptation (p. 47). However, it was articulated that several reasons prevent exact translation of the meaning in the process of filmmaking of adaptations. These include the differences of literary and cinematic mediums, socio-political and cultural relevance, and restriction of director's creative expression. The fact that many viewers neglected *Persuasion* (2022) and expressed their anger and distaste with the film that, essentially, makes a

critical review of the source text to give it a sense of the modern times has prevented the audiences from grasping its fundamental ideas. Optimistically, some Twitter users noted that when considering the adaptation as an independent work its discourse on feminism is clearly understandable. It was shown that Carrie Cracknell's *Persuasion* (2022) revisits Austen's classic novel for developing the themes of women's roles in patriarchal society and further contributing to the narrative that is congruent with the contemporary socio-political and cultural context. Sadoff (2009) reaffirms that the directors and audiences of today cannot interpret the novels similarly as they were understood by audiences of its time. It is because not only directors individually decide the level of faithfulness to the original text, but also need to consider the "cultural and social climate" that influence the recreation of the text and the need to answer the new audience's questions to make the film relevant (p. 52). The cinematic technique of breaking the fourth wall is one of the tools that provided audiences with access to the main heroine's consciousness and facilitated understanding of her anxieties, insecurities and ruminations on her role in the society. The close reading of the adaptation's script and its emphasized differences from the novel also exemplified the instance of when the director enhanced the feminist voice of main female characters where it was rather subtle in the source text. Thus, Netflix's *Persuasion* (2022) follows the list of Austen adaptations, but with the development of feminist film theory it acquires the possibility to interpret the novel in the ways that audiences expect to see, that is by presenting the real women and her experiences.

The importance of this research lies in demonstrating how a different perspective on Netflix's adaptation of Jane Austen's novel can offer insights into the director's message on feminism. This project also has a potential to be the first academic scholarship on the *Persuasion* (2022) since it started a few months after the release of the film, and thus contributes to the

research on Austen adaptations. It is suggested that further research would explore the cinematic peculiarities and ‘modernization’ of Austen’s characters’ backgrounds. In particular, since the casting choices for this film reflect the “woke culture” in cinema industry it would be interesting to critically examine how audiences react to such changes considering that the film adapts the 19th century novel.

Appendix 1

Twitter Audiences: Screenshots

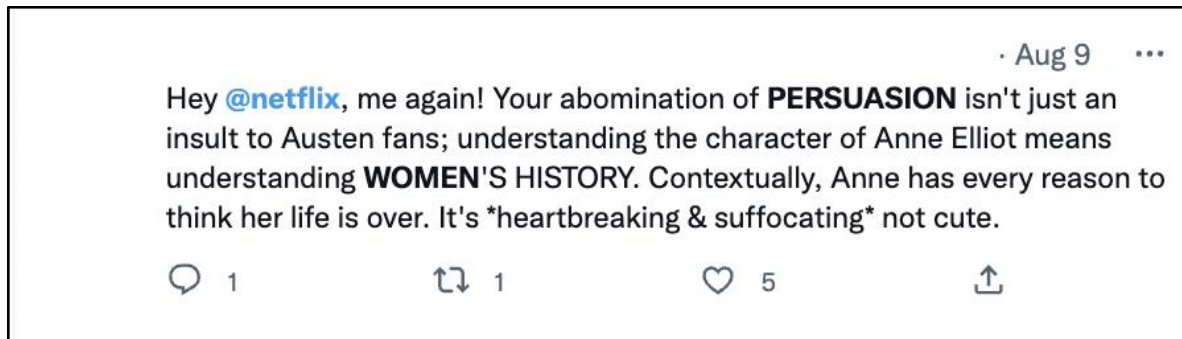
Negative Reviews



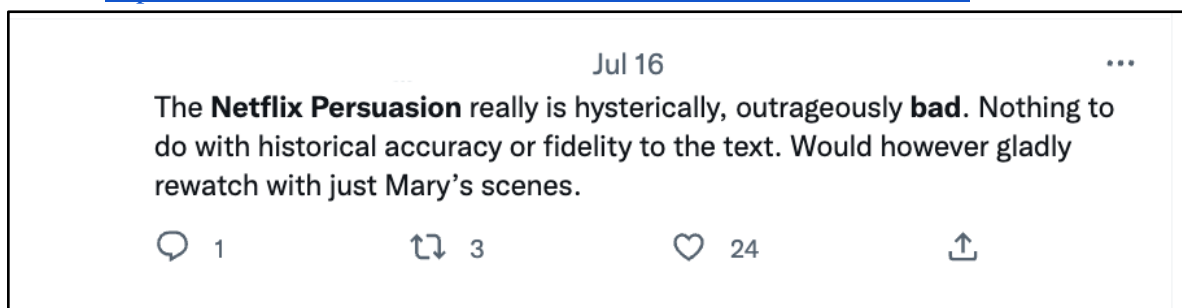
Source: <https://twitter.com/khadijapatel/status/1548235470894616578?s=20>



Source: <https://twitter.com/BitchMastaani/status/1548332485603311617?s=20>



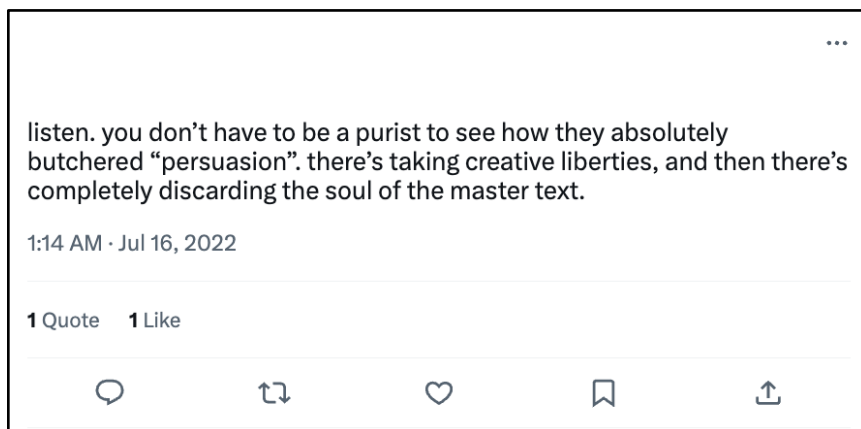
Source: https://twitter.com/Laura_Nowlin/status/1556992876801826817?s=20



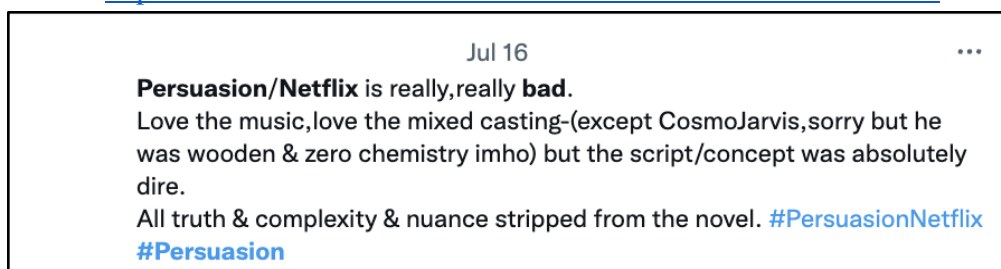
Source: <https://twitter.com/literaryla/status/1548041006284619777?s=20>



Source: <https://twitter.com/clemcssco/status/1548585634171944965?s=20>



Source: <https://twitter.com/ThinMint23/status/1548023119398375428?s=20>



Source: <https://twitter.com/msgeew/status/1548311285795655680?s=20>

Positive Reviews



Source: https://twitter.com/ami_xo/status/1556222846933819396?s=20

24 сент. ...

Just watched the new **Persuasion** on **Netflix** and loved it. And then read all the Very Angry reviews. Why are people so mad about non-Austen dialogue in what is, after all, an adaptation? I felt like it got closer to the heart of the novel than any of the other P movies

2 9 36

Source: https://twitter.com/Dralia_p/status/1573658705853403138?s=20

3 сент. ...

#persuasionnetflix was honestly one of the best modern yet time period movies I have seen in AGES!
Dakota Johnson, was sublime in every possible way.
She added such depth to her character!

9.5/10 for me 🥰

#janeausten @netflix

Source: <https://twitter.com/spiritsoul1081/status/1565855835951095811?s=20>

3 окт. ...

So, **Netflix's Persuasion** is wonderful.
I'm glad they did something different—and I think it really paid off. The cast was great, the setting and score were on point, and I loved the updated script. Who knew anachronism could be so fun and affecting?! ❤️

Source: <https://twitter.com/aidannorrie/status/1576660581783781376?s=20>

14 авг. ...

I know a lot of people hated the new adaptation of **Persuasion** on **Netflix**, but I actually had a good time with it. It's probably because I have no attachment to the book.

3 25 33

Source: <https://twitter.com/victoriaying/status/1558638148338323456?s=20>

Jul 16 ...

Shocked to see **bad** reviews of **Netflix's Persuasion**. I absolutely loved it! Dakota Johnson embodied that character - I could feel her loss, her pain, her intelligence, and memories. Might not be the exact representation of the book but I'd watch it over again. **#PersuasionNetflix**

13 57 251

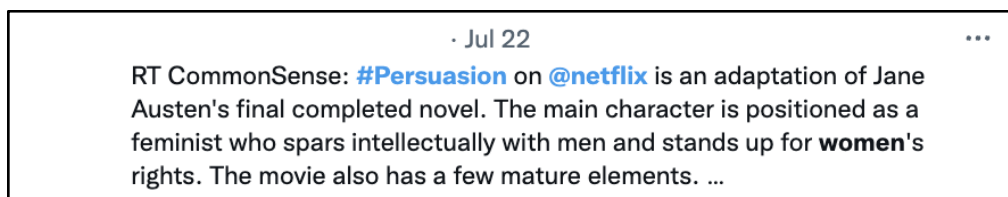
Source: https://twitter.com/Lorelle_/status/1548050757701644293?s=20



Source: <https://twitter.com/shiphuwrites/status/1552616232234680320?s=20>



Source: https://twitter.com/HollywoodKhan_/status/1548404488351784966?s=20



Source: <https://twitter.com/Spyparent/status/1550257897929580545?s=20>

Mixed Reviews



Source: <https://twitter.com/azor294/status/1557749768306053120?s=20>



Source: https://twitter.com/To_watch_or_not/status/1587425275477954560?s=20

Appendix 2

The table presents a close reading of the script on two themes: 1) social expectations related to women (including marital and public status) and 2) romance.

On stereotypes about females associated with marriage & gender equality problems	On romance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marriage is essential for women <p>Lady Russel: I'm sorry. The truth is, marriage is transactional for women. Our basic security is on the line.</p> <p>I could not let you throw yourself away on a man with no rank, no fortune, nothing but himself to recommend him.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Women keep memories <p>He didn't fight for me because he could never value a love that wasn't offered freely. I'm sure he's put it all behind him. I, on the other hand, have kept it painfully in front of me.</p> <p>[playful instrumental music]</p> <p>The first note he passed me in church.</p> <p>The playlist he made me. One lock of hair from him. And one from his horse, Sampson, whom I scarcely knew. And this cow bell, whose sad, empty knell best captures my melancholy. [clangs]</p> <p>Eight years of it. He's been all over. And the Navy adores him. "Frederick Wentworth turns a pretty penny aboard the Laconia." "Frederick Wentworth rescues a beached whale as onlookers weep." And yet... no marriage announcement. Nothing at all to indicate he's since been in any way attached to another. In other words... hope springs eternal.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmarried woman - needs to find a husband (Admiral Croft & Mrs Croft) <p>Mr. Croft: You know, Anne, Mrs. Croft's baby brother is a bachelor. He's a captain in the Navy, quite successful.</p> <p>Mrs. Croft: Edward, please don't. A woman without a husband is not a problem to be solved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being ready to go anywhere with a loved (Admiral Croft & Mrs Croft) <p>Do you always travel with your husband? Oh, yes. And no one will ever stop me.</p> <p>[Anne chuckles]</p> <p>I've crossed the Atlantic four times, gone once to the East Indies and back again. Cork, Lisbon, Gibraltar...</p> <p>The happiest moments of my life have been spent aboard a ship. You're very lucky. [Mrs. Croft] You'll see when you're in love.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women needs to pretend less smart to impress men <p>(Loisa to Anne on how to behave around Captain Wentworth)</p> <p>All right, here's what you'll do. At dinner, you'll sit right next to him. I'll sit right next to him. Then, you'll pretend not to know a thing about anything. Men like explaining things. Tell him you've never used utensils, ask him to teach you how to hold them. Is this how they're teaching courtship these days? Then, just when he starts to seem interested, don't respond to a single thing he says. As though you're a ghost. He'll be hooked. [giggles] Anne: So, then, just be myself. Oh no. Don't do that until at least the second year of marriage. Anne: That may not be the worst advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depression in marriage and desire for more romance and theater in married life (Mary is sick:) <p>I can't move. I'm on the verge of death. Charles is out shooting, not a single caring word on his way out. Hmm. And my in-laws sent me that lovely bouquet. Isn't that sweet? They'll rot, and I'll feel worse than if they hadn't sent anything at all. Hmm. How unkind is it to remind a dying person of decay? Anne, these people hate me. The children are monsters, the house is drafty and nobody cares about the theater anymore.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary's contrasting attitude towards marriage and family: isn't bothered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On meeting a handsome man (Mary, Anne about Captain Wentworth)

<p>about kids (when her son gets hurt)</p> <p>- Mary! - Charles. What happened? Mary, help. He's hurt his arm. - [Mary] What has he done? - He fell from a tree. Of course this happens the one evening people of interest are set to visit. He didn't fall on purpose, Mary. Someone will have to stay with him. I'll bring you back some plum pudding. So, it's the mother who must stay, then. It's not enough I brought these humans into the world, I must now miss dinners on account of them. This is just my luck. If there is anything disagreeable, men are sure to get out of it.</p> <p>Mary, my sweet, he's hurt. And you aren't feeling quite yourself either.</p>	<p>- Have you ever met Captain Wentworth? - In passing, long ago. - Is it true he's devastatingly handsome? - He has a kind face, yes. And is it true he actually listens when women speak? He listens. He listens with his whole body. It's... electrifying. Well, then, he sounds like just the man for you. - I insist you pursue him. - Louisa... No, no. I've made up my mind, Anne. No more hiding your light underneath a bushel. You are very sweet, but I'm not interested in receiving instruction on where to put my light.</p> <p>Or my bushel. [giggles]</p> <p>Tell me, honestly, why aren't you married? I'm waiting to fall in love.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning the importance of marriage for women (Mary suggests that marriage is the "greatest blessing" but contradicts herself by not caring about her children) <p>Mary: Frederick will surely propose to Louisa. Then they'll be married and then Louisa will be happy forever. Anne: Why must everyone always assume that all women want is to be chosen by any eligible bachelor? Mary: Because marriage is the greatest blessing that life can offer. Anne: Where are your children? Mary: How should I know?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to feel loved (Anne's monologue) <p>[Anne] He was so distant last night. I'd prefer open hostility. His cold politeness and ceremonious grace are worse than anything. "Beg your pardon, Miss Elliot, is this your chair?" [screams] Love me, you idiot! Love me or kill me now! I can't bear it!</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Message to modern female audiences - to prioritize self-love before anything else (Mary to Anne) <p>[Mary] I'm just too kind, Anne, that's my problem. I give all of my attention to others and then I suffer for it. Anne: [in Italian] How far is the Colosseum? Mary: Mmm, you're right, but how do I prioritize self-care with everyone around me constantly bidding for my attention? Anne: [in Italian] One cappuccino, please! Mary: What I've realized is I need to fall in love with myself first, and then I can truly love those around me, and that's all there is to it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Despite questioning the importance of marriage, Anne still feels loneliness and misses Wentworth. <p>Nobody tells you when you're young that life keeps going. It keeps going whether you approve of the progression or not. [sighs] And, eventually, you find yourself wondering, "How did I end up here?" A heartbeat ago, there were no two souls more in rhythm than Wentworth and I. Now we're strangers. Worse than strangers. [sighs] We're exes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognition of female abilities to participate in public life (Wentworth to Anne) <p>Wentworth: - You want to know a secret? Anne: - Always. [both chuckle] Wentworth: My most grim moments at sea, when I felt completely lost and confused and inadequate, I would ask myself, "What would Anne do here?" That's how I'd know how to proceed. Pretending I was you. Anne: - You lie. Wentworth: - I truth. You're always best in an emergency. Anticipating the needs of others. Direct and focused, calm and thoughtful. Equipped with more intelligence than does you good. No, you're an exceptional person. It angers me the world denies you the chance of a public life. You'd make a great admiral. Anne: Thanks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading Byron as a metaphor for sorrow that love brings <p>[Anne] Lord Byron. "She was my life's unerring light." "That quench'd, what beams shall break my night." Yes. [sighs] He's got me through a self-pitying night or two. I often think it is the great misfortune of poetry that it's seldom enjoyed safely by those capable of enjoying it completely. Only people who know loss can really appreciate Byron. But those people should only taste him sparingly. Otherwise, they'll be left more deeply in their sorrow. - Then, what are those people meant to do? - [Anne chuckles]</p>

	<p>Honestly, I've been trying to work that out for eight years now.</p> <p>I can only tell you what I must repeat to myself daily.</p> <p>You're young. You don't know what the future has in store. You will rally, and you will be happy again.</p> <p>- Perhaps you're right. - [Anne] I know I am.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The idea that in marriage, a woman should sacrifice her life and interests to follow her husband's lifestyle. Anne disagrees (Wentworth, Anne and friends): <p>Wentworth: I would like to have a family one day.</p> <p>As you well know, the wife of a sailor pays a tax for her husband's chosen path. It is but a small fee. Constant worry. I'd hate to ask that of anyone.</p> <p>Harville: That's ridiculous. No life is without worry. Harville is right.</p> <p>Anne: Your future wife will be perfectly capable of managing her own feelings. Don't patronize her by deciding for her what worries she can and cannot endure. Who knows? Perhaps she'll even be forging her own adventures at home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From romance to friendship (Wentworth and Anne) <p>Wentworth: Look, we haven't really had a chance to talk. I've lived with a thousand different imagined versions of you over the years. Some to rail against. Some to cherish.</p> <p>Anne: Likewise.</p> <p>Wentworth: I didn't know if I'd ever see you again. Or if you knew how much I cared.</p> <p>Anne: I think I always knew.</p> <p>Wentworth: There's no one quite like you. And it's clear to me that I want you in my life. No matter what form that takes. Bury the past and... I suppose what I'm getting at is, um... I...</p> <p>Wentworth: I would like to be friends. [melancholic instrumental music]</p> <p>Anne: I was... I was thinking the same.</p> <p>Wentworth: I saw so clearly this morning the prison</p>

	<p>my resentment had created. I genuinely hope you find love wherever you need to find it. Anne: And I thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your offer of friendship. Thank you. Thank you.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anne's claim that she can decide her life as she wants (Anne and Lady Russel) <p>He provided some relief. More than I anticipated.</p> <p>[Lady Russell] Hmm. He spoke quite highly of you to me the other night. Lady Russel: I believe there is some attachment. Mr. Elliot could attach to a potato if it suited him.</p> <p>Lady Russel: Though Elizabeth may find some satisfaction living at home forever, that life will lock you in deadness.</p> <p>Lady Russel: All I'm saying is, I hope you will accept Mr. Elliot if he makes an offer. Anne: Based on your extensive knowledge of him? Lady Russel: I may not have extensive knowledge of him, but I have extensive knowledge of you. Not only is he rich and well-mannered,</p> <p>Lady Russel: I believe you've taken an interest in him. I would never have recommended it otherwise.</p> <p>Anne: I'll admit, there is something there. But, for once, I'm asking you to trust that I have the resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of modern slang to evaluate the appearance of people <p>- What are you keeping from me? - I've seen Mr. Elliot. And he's attractive. Very attractive. You met him? In Lyme, though neither of us knew who we were meeting.</p> <p>- Do I sense a romance brewing? - That's not going to happen.</p> <p>- Because? - Because he is a ten. I never trust a ten. Oh!</p>

<p>to make my own decisions. I must rely on the instructions issued by my own heart. I tried the alternative once and I'll never forgive myself for it. Lady Russel: You mean you'll never forgive me.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women labeled as “creature” (Mr. Elliot, Anne, Wentworth) <p>Th-this is Captain Wentworth. Mr. Elliot: Yes, your good friend Captain Wentworth. I'm glad to have the opportunity to, uh, apologize for my behavior in Lyme. It was on account of being struck by this dazzling creature. Anne: Please don't call me a creature.</p> <p>Mr. Elliot: This dazzling, um... [Anne] Woman? Woman? Mr. Elliot: - What's wrong with creature? Anne: - We'll talk about it later.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The passion for romance of Anne's sister with another instance of using modern slang <p>- Just think.</p> <p>He's been nursing a crush on me for nearly a decade. Poor man. How he must have suffered. All the way through a marriage he ran away from you to secure. Isn't it mad? He must have presumed I was out of his league. I can't imagine any other reason.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settling in life is a decision that woman makes herself - Anne concludes the film with a statement <p>[Anne] There are many kinds of love. For some, the right partnership can be a lucrative endeavor. For others, true connection is reward enough. [Anne] It's okay to find love on your terms... however unorthodox. Don't let anyone tell you how to live. Or who to love. I learned the hard way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne herself is in sort of depression <p>Sometimes, I have this dream that a giant octopus is sucking my face and, as I struggle to get free, I realize that my, my hands are tentacles and I can't push it off. And then I realize, of course, that I am the octopus, and I am sucking my own face.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne's self-irony upon the news that Wentworth is engaged. The idea enforced is that a woman can endure the hardest heartbreak.

	<p>I always imagined myself confronting this moment with grace. I would astonish myself and others with my... My quiet dignity. My ability to endure. Statues would be erected in my name. "In memory of Anne Elliot, who suffered cosmic loss yet really held it together quite impressively."</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marriage proposal to Anne (Mr. Elliot and Anne) <p>Mr. Elliot: Let me say what's on my mind first. I'm new to these genuine feelings. I'm trying to learn from you, for you. You're far too good for me and I'm terrified. But I want very much to make you my wife. Nothing else would make me happier.</p> <p>Anne: - Your wife? - Yes. You don't have to answer now.</p> <p>But please, think on it.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idea that woman's love lasts longer than a man's <p>Poor Fanny. She would never have forgotten him so soon.</p> <p>Anne: Well, that's certain. We women do not forget you so soon as you forget us. Women love beyond all sensible limits. We cannot help ourselves. I don't mean to venture any claims about the differences between men and women.</p> <p>[Anne] Oh, well, I will.</p>

	<p>The only privilege I claim for my sex is that of loving longest. Loving even when hope is gone. Loving because you don't have a choice.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One of the most famous love letters in literature from Wentworth to Anne: <p>"Dear Anne..." [soft instrumental music]</p> <p>"...I can listen no longer in silence." "Anne, you pierce my soul." "Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death." "I am half agony, half hope." "I know you are to marry Mr. Elliot, but I will never forgive myself if I do not tell you this." "You alone have brought me to Bath." [gasps] "For you alone I think and plan." "But of course you have not seen this. How could you?" "Because your love has not lasted as long as mine." "Anne... I have loved no one but you." "And I don't think I ever will."</p>

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