



Pride and Prejudice

Translating and Adapting Lydia Bennet

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I. Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged that everybody must read at least one Jane Austen's novel in their life. And, although *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* are rather popular, most people read her most famous novel: *Pride and Prejudice*.

Many people and researchers have written about this novel due to its importance and popularity: they have analyzed situations, irony, the language that Austen used and why it was used. And not only researchers know a lot about *Pride and Prejudice*. We all know Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy's love story, the sweet love that Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley feel for each other and the elopement of crazy and irresponsible Lydia Bennet with shameless George Wickham. According to this, everybody knows everything about *Pride and Prejudice* and there is nothing new to say, so what is the aim of doing a new project about something that has already been studied thousands of times?

Even though a lot of research has been done, there are still new things to say and there are some characters that have been less studied, although not forgotten. Lydia Bennet is one of those. Most people only know her because of the elopement that nearly destroyed Lizzy and Darcy's happiness, but they are not really aware of who she really was. And my main aim with this project is to give her some visibility.

First of all, it is important to analyze language to get to know Lydia. Jane Austen is famous for her use of wit and language. For example, she used it to characterize her characters (Jiménez Carra, 7) so, if we want to discover how Lydia Bennet is, first of all we have to analyze her idiolect and how it was translated into Spanish. The words and expressions that are used by the youngest Bennet sister are not used by chance, but by choice of the author who wanted to express this way certain characteristics that she

possesses. However, not only Lydia's idiolect should be analyzed, but also what the narrator and other characters say about her in order to fully understand the character.

Then, it is important to analyze how she has been adapted to cinema and other audiovisual media. *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted several times and there are many adaptations that are faithful to the original novel, but there are also some others that are freer. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* is a good example of that due to the fact that it is a modern adaptation set in the USA in the 21st century. Lydia is still the youngest Bennet sister and she is shown as a girl who loves partying and flirting. She is rather similar to the original Lydia, although her story changes in order to be understood by modern viewers and to be adapted to the 21st century. Maybe now — due to the fact that western society has evolved and now chastity is not universally expected in young single women — nobody is going to force a 15 years old American girl to marry a despicable man just because they ran away together, but there are still some things that men can take advantage of regarding feminine sexuality (Martínez Uribe, 379).

And finally, it must be said that, maybe, adaptations can affect people's opinion of characters. Jane Austen is a rather popular author and there are many Janeites that love everything related to the author, but also many people that just like cinema or series and have seen some of the adaptations without reading the original novels. And most people have a negative opinion of Lydia — mostly because of her elopement, but also because of her attitude —, but what happens when people watch an adaptation such as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*? Has this series affected people's perception of Lydia? And, most important, why does it have such a big impact?

Lydia is more than just the girl who ran away with despicable George Wickham. She is more than Lizzy and Jane's sister. She is a unique character and, through this

project, we will be able to discover how she was translated and adapted and the impact that she has had on readers and viewers.

II. Translating Lydia Bennet

Pride and Prejudice has been translated several times into Spanish so there are many different versions. I have used Ana María de la Fuente Rodríguez's rendering (2009) in order to analyze how Lydia Bennet has been translated into Spanish.

Lydia, her family and the narrator

Lydia is described in the original version as a “stout, well-grown girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance” and then it is added that “she had high animal spirits” (chapter 9). It is also said that she is her mother's favourite and we can see her favouritism during the whole novel. For example, in the second chapter, when they talk about Mr. Bingley, Mrs. Bennet calls her youngest daughter “my love”. This tendency is also followed in the Spanish version. In this case, for example, the translator used “*amor mío*” in order to express the same feelings towards Lydia.

However, most of the things that are said about Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* — both by the narrator and other characters — are not that kind and nice. In fact, most of them are really negative and have a pejorative connotation. Her father, for example, says in chapter 7 that she and Kitty “must be two of the silliest girls in the country”. Mr. Bennet is one of the most critic characters and is always making fun of his daughters although he lets them do whatever they want in the end — probably because he wants to keep making fun of them. In the Spanish version the word “silly” has been translated as “*necias*” which has a more pejorative connotation than “*tontas*” in Spanish due to the fact that if someone is *necio* he or she is not only not smart, but also really stubborn with what they say or do, according to the definition provided by the Spanish Royal

Academy of Language (Real Academia Española)¹. So, as we can see, Mr. Bennet has not a really positive view of his youngest daughter.

Also Lizzy, the main character of the novel, thinks that her sister is “self-willed and careless” and adds that she “would scarcely give them [the advice that Jane and she give her] a hearing” (chapter 37). She is ashamed of her sister, especially when Darcy proposes to her and talks about her family. The Spanish translator expressed the same, although she used “*voluntariosa*” to translate “self-willed”. It is important to mention this because the word has two different meanings and connotations in Spanish: it is used to talk about people who do something willingly, but also to make reference to someone who does whatever he or she wants (Real Academia Española)². And it is usually used in a positive way so, maybe, “*obstinada*” would have been a better option to reflect Lizzy’s real opinion of her little sister.

Because, in fact, Lizzy is really hard on Lydia throughout nearly the whole novel and this is not the only time that she thinks or says something about her. Another example can be found in chapter 41, when she talks about “the volatility, the assurance and disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia’s character” which changes a little bit when translated into Spanish. The translator used “*descaro*” (audacity) to translate “assurance”, which is similar to “*seguridad en uno mismo*” in Spanish and she also translated “disdain of all restraint” as “*falta de juicio*”, which means something different although they both express similar negative characteristics of Lydia. She probably did that due to the fact that, in literary translation, the final effect is more important than fidelity — which in this context means the literal translation of the original word by

¹ 1. adj. Ignorante y que no sabe lo que podía o debía saber. U. t. c. s.

2. adj. Falto de inteligencia o de razón. U. t. c. s.

3. adj. Terco y porfiado en lo que hace o dice. U. t. c. s.

4. adj. Propio de la persona **necia**.

² 1. adj. Deseoso, que hace con voluntad y gusto algo.

2. adj. Que por capricho quiere hacer siempre su voluntad.

word — because if we do not take into consideration the linguistic conventions of the target language, they will be lost and the final text will be perceived to be wrong (Lyszczyna, 325). In chapter 47, Lizzy says that “she [Lydia] has never been taught to think on serious subjects”, that “she has been given up to nothing but amusement or vanity” and that “nothing but love, flirtation, and officers have been in her head”. In the Spanish version this part is completely transferred and words such as “*vanidad*” or “*coqueteo*” — which are the Spanish equivalents of these English words — are used in order to express the same about Lydia.

However, it is important to mention that, despite all these negative comments, Lizzy also says something rather good — due to the historical context — about Lydia in the same chapter. She says that “at least it [the letter that Lydia left for her friend Harriet Foster] shows that *she* was serious on the subject of their journey”, which was completely transferred into Spanish — “*pero al menos demuestra que se tomaba en serio el motivo de su viaje*” — and has the same positive connotation.

Finally, the narrator adds to this already long list more adjectives to define Lydia: it is said that Lydia is “always unguarded and often uncivil” — “*siempre indiscreta y a menudo insolente*”, which are similar concepts that are frequently used in Spanish — in chapter 23; that she “was a most determined talker” and that she is “extremely fond of lottery tickets” — translated as “*aficionada a la lotería*”, which is the name of the game and sounds more natural in Spanish than “*aficionada a los boletos de lotería*” — in chapter 16. It is also said, in chapter 41, that she and Mrs. Fosters become intimate friends in only a couple of months due to their good humour and spirits, which was translated as “*carácter*” — which is more similar to character in English — instead of “*buen humor*” — which is the literal translation, but does not

sound natural in Spanish and, as we all already know Lydia, it is not really necessary to specify how their characters are — and “*jovialidad*”.

On the other hand, this is what other characters and the narrator say about Lydia, but how does Lydia speak and act?

Lydia’s idiolect

First, we have to take into account that, as it have been already mentioned in the introduction, Austen used language in order to express different personalities and Lydia is a good example of this phenomenon. She uses some specific vocabulary, simple sentences and lots of exclamations (Jiménez Carra, 31) and it is easy to find several examples of that, especially of the exclamations.

During the novel, Lydia uses quite frequently “Lord!” or “Good Lord!” when something happens or wants to complain about something. For example, in chapter 18, when the ball in Netherfield has finished, she says “Lord, how tired I am!” and in chapter 23, when Sir William Lucas goes to their house to tell them that Charlotte is marrying Mr. Collins she exclaims “Good Lord! Sir William, how can you tell such a story?” among other cases. The translator tried to maintain her register and the exclamation every time and translated them as “*¡Dios!*”, “*¡Santo Dios!*” or “*¡Dios mío!*” (depending on the context).

Lydia is also really spontaneous, and usually talks without thinking as we can see in chapter 39 when she meets Jane and Lizzy after their travel and starts talking about the pleasant men that they were supposed to meet and the fact that they both are becoming old maids, especially Jane: “I was in great hopes that one of you would have got a husband before you came back. Jane will be quite an old main soon, I declare. She is almost three-and-twenty! Lord, how ashamed I should be of not being married before

three-and-twenty! (...) Lord! how I should like to be married before any of you”. As we can see, she is quite colloquial during this fragment and uses more exclamations so the translator also uses the same resources in Spanish: “*Tenía la esperanza de que alguna de vosotras consiguiera marido antes de regresar. Jane pronto será una vieja, ¡casi tiene veintitrés años! ¡Señor, qué avergonzada estaré si no me he casado antes de esa edad! (...) ¡Dios mío, cuánto me gustará contraer matrimonio antes que vosotras!*”

She is also quite irresponsible and talks without taking into account who can be hearing her as we can see at the beginning of the aforementioned chapter, when she complains because her sisters tell her to keep quiet until the waiter leaves the room: “Aye, that is just like your formality and discretion”. The translator maintains her complains using “*¡Ah!*” to translate the typical British “Aye”.

According to Austen’s usage of language, Lydia is seen as vulgar or as a person of little intelligence (Jiménez Carra, 31) and we can confirm this not only in the previous examples but also, for example, when she is talking to her mother after her marriage and she tells her what she has done in order to inform people in the neighborhood: “so I let down the side-glass next to him, and took off my glove, and let my hand just rest upon the window frame, so that he might see the ring”. She is proud of being married at her early age, wants everyone to know it and expresses it without any shame. And the translator manages again to maintain Lydia’s register, pride and disdain to other people by using equivalents and following the Spanish textual conventions — “*Mamá, ¿sabe la gente de por aquí que estoy casada?*”, for example — so that we can see Lydia as Austen wanted us to see her.

III. Adapting Lydia Bennet

Adaptation is nothing new. Morris Beja said that we adapt novels because of “the simple, even crude desire to see, as it were, what the books look like. In the beginning is the word, but we wish to see it made flesh” (79). According to McFarlane, the idea of using novels as source materials for films appeared as soon as the cinema began to be seen as a narrative entertainment (6-7) and, as soon as they started adapting literary works, people started writing about this. Even Virginia Woolf wrote about this phenomenon in her essay “The Cinema” (1926).

Due to the fact that, as I mentioned before, *Pride and Prejudice* is probably Jane Austen’s most famous novel, it has been adapted several times. For example, in 1995, the BBC recorded a six episode TV series starring Collin Firth as Mr. Darcy and Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet and then in 2005 a *Pride and Prejudice* film was released. According to Geoffrey Wagner’s classification (222) these are examples of transposition — which means that there is a minimum interference while adapting the text to the screen. However, there have been other adaptations such as *Bride and Prejudice* — a Bollywood-style adaptation — or the famous Bridget Jones’ Diary — based on a book that was a reinterpretation of *Pride and Prejudice*. And we cannot forget, of course, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. There have been plenty of reinterpretations of this novel and for this project I have analyzed one of them: *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*.

Wagner said that, apart from transposition, there are two other categories of adaptations: commentary — “where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect” — and analogy — “which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making *another* work of art” (223-227). *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (TLBD from now on) is a good example of this last category

since the creators took the story and completely adapted it for 21st century context and audiences, so that they created a new different product that keeps the spirit of the original. Maybe it is not as faithful as the BBC series or the 2005 film, but, although fidelity has traditionally been used as the basis for the analysis of film adaptations, there are some authors as Berghahn who believe that this approach is problematic and erroneous — she says that most fidelity critics “would like to put film-makers into strait-jackets and make them slavishly illustrate their source material” — (73) and others that say that “an adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium” (Stam, 2005, 3-4). So, in the end, adaptations are judged to be successful when there is harmony and congruence with the original (Belton, 177) and TLBD fulfill those requirements.

The story is set in California, nowadays, and is told by Lizzie Bennet, a 24-year-old grad student who lives with her parents and sisters and tries to prepare for the future. This YouTube series was created in 2011 by Hank Green and Bernie Su and won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media-Original Interactive Program in 2013.

In this series, Lydia Bennet is the youngest of the three Bennet sisters and a “party girl”. She does not like studying or following any rule; she just wants to have fun, party with her friends and have sex with as many hot guys as possible. She does not care about anything and is used to people’s comments or, at least, that is what she wants everyone to believe.

She is a modern Lydia, but, at the same time, we can also identify Austen’s Lydia due to her way of speaking, all her exclamations, her energy and her joy. She is still Austen’s Lydia, but now she is also a modern girl who has problems that young people today can relate to.

Lydia in TLBD

In TLBD, Lydia is seen as a problematic girl and even Mrs. Bennet — who always refers to her as “my love” in the original novel — judges her and calls her “selfish and irresponsible” (episode 9 of *The Lydia Bennet* — Lydia’s own video series). And Lizzie is especially hard on her “baby sister”, as she usually calls her. For example, in the second episode of TLBD she says that she will introduce her sisters so that everyone can understand her when she says that “Lydia’s being a stupid whore-y slut again” and also says that they are “really proud that she’s now too old to be on any reality show about having babies in high school”. These comments are modern adaptations of all the criticism that Lizzy casts upon Lydia’s behavior in *Pride and Prejudice*. For example, in chapter 47, she says that “she has been given up to nothing but amusement and vanity” and that “nothing but love, flirtation, and officers have been in her head”.

In TLBD, she is still really spontaneous and nervous and has her own idiolect. She speaks like some young people in the USA and uses abbreviations such as “OMG” or “obvs” and expressions such as “jackpot, right?”, “whaaaaat?” or “enjoy the adorbs” — episode 20 is, in fact, called like this because she is the one that appears in it. She also uses “duh” a lot when she says something that, for her, is obvious. So, as we can see, although the language has been adapted to our linguistic code and to an specific audience, some features have been preserved — the exclamations, for example, are still used; we only have to change “Lord!” for “OMG” — and Lydia’s language is still characteristic and used to define her personality, which is rather similar to the original. She is also always laughing, shouting and teasing Lizzie for being “perpetually single”. We could even say that, even if her main objective is not getting married as it was in

Pride and Prejudice, she is still obsessed with guys and is really worried because her sisters never go out with men.

However, even if at first she seems to be only this, she is more complex and through the series we can discover the real Lydia Bennet. Especially in episode 70, when Lizzie gives her a book about how to become a successful adult and stop being a party girl for her 21st birthday and she gets hurt. She is so angry and upset with her older sister that she starts acting like everybody expects her to behave: she becomes more irresponsible and even stops talking to Lizzy. She feels bad because her sister, who is supposed to be there for her, judges her and thinks, as everybody else does, that she is just an embarrassment to the family. And this is pretty obvious when we see not only TLBD, but also *The Lydia Bennet* which is, as I have mentioned before, Lydia's own video series, and expands our limited vision of the story. She starts posting videos while Jane and Lizzie are in Bing Lee's house and keeps making them when Lizzie is visiting Charlotte and when they both stop talking to each other. In these videos, we can see the real Lydia. She speaks about what people say about her, she runs away to Los Angeles to see Jane when her mother calls her "irresponsible and selfish" and, finally, she films her trip with some friends to Las Vegas — the modern version of Brighton — and her relationship with Wickham, who takes advantage of her fears, her low self-esteem and her troubles with Lizzie. And this is rather important because in both TLBD and *Pride and Prejudice* our knowledge is limited to what happens to Lizzy. So this new story that the creators decided to include adds more narrative and expands our vision of some of the characters.

I think that many girls can identify with Lydia because she is real. While you are watching TLBD, you do not see the characters as literary characters from 1813, but as real people from our generation. Lydia could be our friend, our sister or our cousin. She

makes mistakes, she enjoys life, she is just a young girl who wants to be happy. She is so real that you can easily relate to her and, when everything gets difficult because of Wickham, you are worried for her. And that is probably why I think it is worth it to analyze her character and development in TLBD.

Lydia and Wickham

There are many different approaches that can be used in order to analyze an adaptation like, for example, McFarlane's narrative approach, which mentions some elements that are rather important in this series. For example, the narration is essential in TLBD because there are nearly no other elements. Of course, spatiality is also important — although in this specific series is limited to a room — and the different used codes too — especially cultural codes due to all the changes that had to be made in order to adapt the novel to the 21st century —, but the narrative is the most important factor here. In TLBD we do not know what happens behind camera and only discover it because Lizzie tells us her version of the story. According to McFarlane, one of the first-person narrations techniques that can be used is the “subjective cinema” (16) which suits TLBD due to the fact that, as I said before, we can only discover what is going on because Lizzie (or, sometimes, Charlotte, Jane or Lydia) tells us and gives her own view of the events. This is rather similar to the narration on the novel because, although in *Pride and Prejudice* there is no first person narrator, our knowledge is limited and we can only know what happens where Lizzy is — we do not know what happens to Jane in London or to Lydia and Wickham when they elope, which is, in fact, one of the most important moments in *Pride and Prejudice* and the one that I am going to analyze and compare.

Although we do not know what happened in Brighton, it is said in the novel that Lydia and Wickham were brought together “because their passions were stronger than their virtue” and, due to this, they nearly ruined Lizzy and Darcy’s happiness. However, it is important not only because of this, but also because it shows readers the importance of virtue. For modern readers it can be difficult to understand why it is so bad that Lydia runs away with a man that she is supposed to love, but at that time it was scandalous and, as Mary said in chapter 47, “we may draw from it this useful lesson: that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable; that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behavior towards the undeserving of the other sex”. Women had to be pure and this elopement nearly ruined the reputation of the whole Bennet family and especially Lydia’s, who would have been damaged forever if she had not married the man she had run away with. Women were inhibited in expressing their sexuality and, by running away with Wickham, Lydia goes against every accepted social standard of behavior. Chastity was the price to pay to find a good husband and get married, and marriage was necessary not only for social approval — nobody wanted to become a spinster —, but also for economic security (Hole and Levine, 218). However, and as I said before, modern readers are not familiar with this and, as Cartmell and Whelehan remind us in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature on Screen*, extra-cinematic factors such as historical events or trends are vital to film adaptations (4), so, how could TLBD take this part of the novel and adapt it to our time? Women are supposed to be free to go out with whoever they want nowadays so the fact that a 21-year-old woman — because in this version Lydia is not a 15-year-old teenager, but a 21-year-old young adult — goes out with a man is not scandalous. However, feminine sexuality keeps

being a taboo and there are men with no scruples that take advantage of this (Martínez Uribe, 379). And that is exactly what Wickham does to Lydia.

First of all, I think it is important to say that the creators of this series gave a further explanation of what happened to the youngest Bennet sister while Lizzie was at Pemberley. Lydia, although brought down by economics and social shame, has always been seen as romantic and adventurous (Wilkes, 19), and Mr. Wickham easily captures her because of that, but we have never really seen what happened between them because, as I have mentioned above, in *Pride and Prejudice* we only know what happens where Lizzy is. However in TLBD, and especially in *The Lydia Bennet*, we can be witnesses of their relationship. And it is an abusive one. Lydia, the cheerful party girl who everyone rejects finally finds someone who loves her and supports her and falls completely in love with a boy that seems to be perfect although we all soon realize that he is not that good. He is always lying; he forces her to do things that she does not want to do like admitting that they are dating when she is not prepared for that; he tries to break her bond with her sisters by saying that Jane and Lizzie have never accepted her in their little group. He manipulates and destroys her with his comments and actions. It is heartbreaking to see Lydia getting smaller while we watch her videos: her voice, which used to be loud, is now quiet; her cheerful character is now calm and submissive; and even her look changes. At the beginning she always wears colorful clothes, but while she is dating George she starts wearing darker ones (Martínez Uribe, 377-378). She changes and finally does everything he wants her to do in order not to get him angry: even allowing him to film her while they are having sex. And that is exactly the scandalous event in TLBD: George sells the video to a company that wants to post it online. This is why Lizzie has to return home, this is why Darcy has to interfere, this is why Lydia's reputation would be damaged forever. Lydia is not expected anymore to be

a virgin and inhibit her sexual desires — nowadays it is not important that “their passions were stronger than their virtue” —, but a sex tape is something scandalous that can still ruin a woman’s life and that most young modern spectators will understand — and we cannot forget that the audience-targeted is one of the most important factors that must be taken into account in order to adapt a classic novel according to Cardwell (2002, 72).

Although the problem differs from the original one, the episode in which Lizzie discovers that Lydia is in trouble (episode 84) is rather similar to chapter 46 in *Pride and Prejudice*. There are even some sentences in the adaptation that remind us of the original. For example, in TLBD, Lizzie tells Lydia that “the internet is forever” (episode 85), while in the original novel she says that “she is lost forever” (chapter 46). In the series, Lizzie is also at Pemberley — in this adaptation, Pemberley Digital is not an estate, but Darcy’s company, and she is shadowing it for one of her independent studies — when she discovers what has happened to Lydia, and her relationship with Darcy is quite good at that moment. In fact, he has just invited her to go to the theatre when she receives the message and he offers to book her a flight and to send her all her things. In the original version, when Lizzy has just read the letter, Darcy arrives and also helps her. He hears what has happened and worries because he knows George Wickham and what he is capable of. And in both versions he finally solves everything: in *Pride and Prejudice* he finds Wickham in London and pays him so that he marries Lydia while in TLBD he finds him thanks to an app and the help of his sister Gigi — as we can see in *Domino*, one of Gigi’s spin-offs³ — and buys the company that owns the video so that they do not publish it.

³ Gigi, who has had a short relationship with Wickham, contacts him using Domino (one of the apps that they are developing at Pemberley Digital) and, when he accepts the terms of use, Darcy can find him.

However, we cannot know everything that is going on due to the limits of the format. According to some authors as Stam (2000, 68-69) or Cardwell (2002, 72), there are many things that we have to take into consideration when a novel is adapted in addition to the audience-targeted like, for example, the political constraints and, of course, the conventions of the medium. Although the adaptation of classic novels as modern YouTube series has not been really studied yet, we can say that most *vlogs* share certain characteristics that TLBD follows: they are recorded only in one place, there is one person — or maybe more, but usually only one or two people — who is in front of the camera talking, and all the videos should be short. We can only see what happens in a room and we are supposed to see only what the *vlogger* allows us to see. We can see this, for example, when Lizzie finds out what has happened to Lydia. We do not know where the youngest Bennet sister is or if she knows anything about the sex tape and can only wonder what is going on as Lizzie does. And this is also a good example of the subjective first-person narrator that McFarlane mentions (16) because our knowledge is limited and we can only know what Lizzie knows. However, this is perfect in this context because in *Pride and Prejudice* we neither know anything about Lydia or the rest of the Bennet family when Lizzy is with her aunt and uncle. We are alone with Lizzy and her wonders and regrets while she travels home and with this usage of *vlogs*, the creators have been able to maintain the uncertainty.

In TLBD, Lizzie returns home, although this time she is the only one in her family that knows what is going on with Lydia because it is not Jane who writes a letter to her, but Charlotte who texts her. In episode 85, when she arrives home in order to talk to her “baby sister” — because she is sure that Lydia knows everything and wants to release the video in order to become more famous in YouTube —, Lizzie is really hard on her, but she also blames herself and wonders if she could have prevented Lydia

— in fact, she starts blaming herself in chapter 84, when she discovers the truth; she says that she “could have prevented this” and, when Darcy tells her that it is not her fault, she asks him “then whose fault is it?” She wonders if she could have done something to stop what is happening and says that she should have watched Lydia’s videos in order to find out what was happening and avoid it. Also, as I have already mentioned, in *Pride and Prejudice*, when she reads the letter and also while she is going home, Lizzy blames herself for not telling Lydia — and everyone — the truth about George. In chapter 46, for example, she tells Darcy: “When I consider that I might have prevented it! I, who knew what he was”. In both versions, she wonders whether she could have saved Lydia. And she also defends her and her intentions in both. In TLBD, when she discovers that Lydia knows nothing about the webpage, she tells everyone that they are going to release the video without her consent while in *Pride and Prejudice* she says that “at least *she* was serious on the subject of their journey” and that “it was not on her side a *scheme* of infamy” because, in her letter, Lydia said that they were going to Gretna Green, a place that was famous for its marriage laws and for allowing young people to get married quickly and without any permission (Jiménez Carra, 109), so it was implied that Lydia wanted to get married. She ran away with Wickham in order to marry him, not only to live with him. He probably fooled her and assured her that he wanted to marry her. Although we cannot know it for sure because of the limitations of the narrative, he probably lied to her as he did in TLBD. In the series, Lydia said “yes” to the video, but she only gave her permission to record it, not to sell it to a company or to publish it. Wickham deceived her and Lizzy knows this in both versions.

Episode 87 is probably the most important in order to understand what the changes in this scene imply because this is the one in which Lydia and Lizzie finally

talk to each other. Lydia becomes the narrator now and explains that she loves George and only wanted to prove him that. She also blames herself and repeats some comments that people have made about her life, for example, that she “has been acting like a stupid whore-y slut again” — as Lizzie said in episode 2 — or that she is selfish. This is probably the main difference between Austen’s Lydia and this new Lydia: she completely breaks in this new version. We can see the consequences of her relationship with Wickham and how hurt she is. She is not happy and carefree as the original one is and she blames herself for going after her sister’s ex and admits that she “wouldn’t talk to anyone or listen to anyone” while in *Pride and Prejudice*, when she arrives home (chapter 51), we can see that she is proud of being married — maybe because that is what people always expected of her or because marriage was her only option if she wanted to maintain her and her family’s reputation after the elopement, but also because she feared becoming “an old maid” — and she acts as if she was better than her poor single sisters. During this whole chapter she asks if people know that she is married, comments that she had considered “funny” the idea of returning home married, although never truly expected that to happen, and, simply, shows off. She even wants her parents to “leave one or two of my sisters behind you” and assures that she “shall get husbands for them before the winter is over”. Lydia has no regrets and keeps acting as the girl she used to be and listens to no one. Even her aunt complains about this in the letter that she sends to Lizzy in chapter 52: “If she heard me, it was by good luck, for I am sure she did not listen”.

On the other hand, as I have mentioned before, in TLBD, Lydia’s reaction is completely different. As Martínez Uribe says, this situation — being a victim of someone as despicable as Wickham — gives Lydia a chance to redeem herself (379). She has to go through this difficult situation and finally decides to change and is given

the opportunity to do so because, unlike in the novel where her only chance due to the social context is to marry despicable George Wickham to maintain her reputation, in this adaptation she has the opportunity to become a better person — which is not completely surprising, due to the fact that the USA is the Land of Opportunity, where everybody can get a second chance. So here we can see again the importance of the extra-cinematic factors that Cartmell and Whelehan mention (4) and of the audience-targeted (Cardwell, 2002, 72) — we cannot forget that this series has been created for young western people who expect certain things and who are used to happy endings so Lydia must have one. And because of her redemption, she stops posting videos, starts going to a counselor and pays more attention in class. Also, it is important to mention that everyone in the family supports her — even Mr. Bennet blames himself and supports Lydia — and assures her that she is not guilty of what has happened to her while in the original version, Mr. Bennet, for example, says that Lydia cannot return to the house because neither Wickham nor her are welcome there anymore — “into one house in the neighbourhood they shall never have admittance. I will not encourage the imprudence of either, by receiving them at Longbourn” (chapter 50). Her sisters are also hard on them and, although Lizzy says at first that Wickham has fooled Lydia, when they meet and she sees how happy her sister is, she also rejects her and blames her — she starts thinking that “their elopement had been brought on by the strength of her love”, wonders why “he chose to elope with her at all” and tells her that she does not “particularly like your [Lydia’s] way of getting husbands” (chapter 51). In TLBD, on the other hand, nobody blames Lydia and they protect her — as it is probably expected by the audience-targeted. Lizzie, for example, keeps blaming herself and apologizes for not being there for her and makes sure that she knows that she loves her (episode 87). She even apologizes for all the things that she has said about her “on and off the

Internet” (episode 88) and, instead of growing apart as they do in *Pride and Prejudice*, their bond grows stronger — for example, Lizzie says that she did not really know her and Lydia answers that she did not really let her. And Mrs. Bennet even prepares her favourite dishes when her husband finally tells her the truth about why Lydia and Wickham are not seeing each other anymore and Lizzie and Jane have left Pemberley and Los Angeles and have returned home, as Lydia explains in *The Epic Adventures of Lydia Bennet*, a book about Lydia that is set after TLBD and where she tells her life and what she is doing now: her recovery and how people — those who were supposed to be her friends, in fact — start treating her after finding out what has happened. And, although her redemption at home was quite easy because of what Lizzie, Jane and their parents did their best in order to make her feel better, the rest of society still judges her. As it probably does in the original novel despite her marriage.

So, as we have been able to see through this analysis of the novel and the series, many changes have been made to the plot of TLBD — which according to McFarlane, differs from the story (that can be shared by both novel and adaptation) and alters sequence, highlight different emphases and defamiliarize the story (23) — in order to adapt the novel to this specific context and for a certain audience. However, there are many parallelisms between the original and this new version and, what is more important, the message of the novel has been respected and kept. As Cardwell affirms “adaptations have become more courageous and imaginative, and viewers seem more willing to accept changes to plot and dialogue if they perceive some underlying attempt to achieve fidelity to the style, tone, or spirit of the original” (2007, 193) and TLBD is a good example of this phenomenon because all the changes that have been already mentioned were done in order to properly transfer the original story for a modern young audience.

And, in the end, even if the situation is different and we are now in the 21st century, Lydia's story is still the same old story about women, purity and sex. Feminine sexuality keeps being a taboo and people still criticize women and attack them using this as a weapon so I think TLBD's creators made an excellent job adapting Lydia and did not betray the original source.

IV. Jane Austen, adaptations and society

Jane Austen is one of the most important or, at least, popular British authors of all ages and, although some other writers such as Mark Twain or Henry James were anti-Janeites — the name given to those who do not like Jane Austen in comparison to the Janeites, those who love her — and despised her, people have continued reading her novels. Also, in the United Kingdom and the USA appeared a long time ago the Jane Austen Societies, which organize activities such as games, dramatizations, balls or reading clubs. They also meet to drink tea and, in conclusion, to talk about Jane Austen and her books. In the USA, they have an exaggeratedly anglophile character while the ones in the UK are more meticulous according to Claudia Johnson (in Rodríguez Martínez, 163-164).

The Jane Austen Society of North America or JASNA is one of the most important societies in the world, and it has published since 1979 a journal about Jane Austen and her work called *Persuasions*, which can be found online since 1999 (*Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal Online*) (Rodríguez Martínez, 164). However, there are Jane Austen Societies in many more countries. For example, there is also one in Spain: The Jane Austen Society España.

In Bath, we can also visit the Jane Austen Centre, where you can enjoy Jane Austen's exhibits, drink a "Tea with Mr. Darcy" or "The Dashwood's Tea" — in the Regency Tea Room — or buy some thematic gifts. They have even developed an app with daily Jane Austen quotes. And on the internet we can find more pages and forums about Austen and there are people that write *fanfics* based on her novels. Even the Bank of England is going to release this year a £10 note (Martínez Uribe, 458) and a £2 coin with Austen's portray. Therefore, as we can see, even if she died 200 years ago, Jane Austen is still alive thanks to the Janeites.

Lydia, readers and viewers

Although the novels are rather popular, and in spite of this, there are many people who have only seen adaptations and these can change people's perception of characters and situations due to the differences between the new versions and the original ones. There can be subtle references like, for example, feminism in *Mansfield Park's* adaptation (1999) — Fanny compares women's situation to the slave's — (Martínez Rodríguez, 514) or big changes like the ones that have been explained in the previous section that can make us change our minds.

I have made a research in order to discover what people who have read *Pride and Prejudice* and/or watch TLBD think about Lydia and the influence that this adaptation has had on them. I created a short survey with five simple questions and asked some people to fill it:

- Have you only read the book, watch the series or both things?
- What do you think about Lydia?
- If you have read the book and watched TLBD, has your opinion about Lydia changed?
- If you have watched TLBD, do you think Lizzie was fair with her sister?
- If you have read the book, do you think that Lydia is as guilty as Wickham for what happened?

20 different people participated in the survey and, according to their answers to the first question, 12 had only read the book, but 8 of them had also watched TLBD. Nobody had only watched this adaptation.

First of all, I think it is important to know what people think about Lydia, because she is not a really popular character as Lizzy or Mr. Darcy are, for example.

And, according to their answers to the second question, most people have a negative opinion on Lydia. They say that she is selfish, spoiled, irrational and irresponsible. They also call her superficial, stupid and there is even one person who says that he or she prefers Mary “who looks more like a rubber plant than like a person” to Lydia. However, there are other people who say that she is just a victim and a naïve child who wanted to grow up too fast and there is also a person that is more neutral and says that she just wanted to be free, although she is also rather immature.

However, has this negative opinion changed after watching TLBD? Can an adaptation do that? Due to all the changes that the creators of TLBD made to Lydia and her redemption, that is a real possibility. Although this survey cannot be considered definitive or truly representative, 5 out of 8 people said, when they answered question number 3, that their opinion changed. One of the participants said that “although she kept being noisy and a bit annoying, you can feel sympathy for her” and some of them commented that the changes in the characters were an important factor for their change of mind. One mentioned that the ending was really important because it shows how things really are and does not try to make them “more beautiful” — as happened when Lydia married Wickham, got what she wanted and learnt nothing — and other one commented that TLBD make us wonder what could have happened if Lizzy and Jane had paid more attention to their little sisters or if Lydia had not been forced to marry Wickham. However, and as the neutral person said, it is important to remember that there are many differences between Austen’s Lydia and this new Lydia. At the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, Lydia does not learn anything, while in TLBD, she changes — as it has been explained in the previous section.

According to answers to question 4, everybody thinks that Lizzie was not exactly unfair with Lydia — most of them only said that she was maybe not really

understanding or a bit hard and that she could have prevented her about Wickham. And, finally, according to answers to question 5, people who have seen TLBD are usually not as hard on Lydia as people who have only read the novel. In fact, 4 out of 8 people said that Lydia was not guilty and blamed Wickham for what happened while only 2 out of the 12 people that have only read the book, defended her. The rest blamed Lydia and some even said that she was guiltier than Wickham and that, even if she was just a young innocent girl, she should have been more intelligent and not run away with him. However, I think that it can be said that TLBD has had a certain impact on people's opinion about characters and situations.

TLBD and transmedia

TLBD has had a bigger influence in society because it is more than just a YouTube series. The creators not only made Lizzie's and other characters' *vlogs*, but also their Twitter and Tumblr accounts in order to upload pictures and show different moments and conversations that are mentioned in the videos, but not really happened in them. They made the story more real by doing this and the audience could feel as if they were interacting with the characters. And, in fact, they did because there are some especial episodes in both Lizzie and Lydia's *vlogs* where they answered questions from the viewers (Martínez Uribe, 347).

This phenomenon is called transmedia and, although it was used for the first time by Marsha Kinder in 1991 in relation to children literature and the fact that it usually uses different platforms, it was not popularized in an academic context until Henry Jenkins published *Transmedia Storytelling* in 2003 (Martínez Uribe, 346). He defines transmedia storytelling as "stories that unfold across multiple media platforms, with each medium making distinctive contributions to our understanding of the world, a

more integrated approach to franchise development” (293). So, as we can see, TLBD is a good example of transmedia because there is interaction between the audience and the characters and it has parallel *vlogs*, accounts in different platforms and even two books: *The Secret Diary of Lizzie Bennet* — which is not exactly a novelization of the series, but the diary that Lizzie writes while recording the videos so that we can discover what happens behind the camera — and *The Epic Adventures of Lydia Bennet* — which is, as I said in the previous section, a book about what Lydia did after TLBD.

The audience — mostly young people who are used to the internet, social networks, YouTube and famous *vloggers* — could see itself reflected in the series because, by using all the aforementioned elements, the thin wall between reality and fiction nearly disappears and the story becomes more believable and possible (Martínez Uribe, 348-349). So, as we can see, new approaches to classic novels can attract young spectators who can become readers and this will make classic authors keep their popularity for many more years.

V. Conclusion

Lydia Bennet is a character that has been considered stupid and immature by most people while reading the book mostly because of the language that she uses. Her exclamations, her complaints, her not-so-smart conversations, her obsession with soldiers and her attitude after her elopement and wedding made people judge her.

When Lydia was translated into Spanish, everything was left there — it had to be there in order to express the same; even if we like Lydia, we cannot change Austen's words — and people kept judging her. She is called “*necia*”, “*indiscreta*” and “*insolente*” among other negative adjectives. Not many good things were said about her both in the original and the faithful Spanish translation.

However, adaptations can make a difference. As we have been able to discover in section III of this project, there are different types of adaptation according to Wagner and, although there have been many transpositions of the novel — the BBC series in 1995 or the 2005 film — , there are also other adaptations such as *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* which have different approaches to the original story.

The creators of TLBD gave a different approach to Lydia and brought her from the 19th to the 21st century. In this series she is a “party girl” who just wants to have fun and, in the end, go through an abusive relationship with Wickham, who takes advantage of her problems and her low self-esteem to make her let him film her while having sex and then tries to earn money by selling the video to a webpage. They gave a modern approach to Lydia's elopement because most young people (the audience-targeted) can understand the impact of this new situation better than the original one and also because, nowadays, it is not scandalous for a young unmarried girl to go out with a man. Unfortunately, feminine sexuality keeps being a taboo and some men like Wickham still take advantage of this situation as we can see in TLBD.

However, and although the scene is rather different, there are many similarities between the original situation in the novel and the one in the series. Lizzie has to return from Pemberley to support her family and blames herself for not being a better older sister and for not having been able to avoid what has happened to her baby sister and, in the end, Darcy is the one who pays to solve everything. And, in both versions, Lydia was fooled by Wickham: in the novel, she says that they are going to Gretna Green so it is clear — or, at least, we can suppose — that she just ran away with him because she thought that they were going to get married while in TLBD, she says that she just wanted to prove that she loved him and it is clear that she always believed that the video was going to be kept in private.

This new approach also gave Lydia the chance to redeem herself because, although in the original novel, she keeps acting the same and shows off when arrives home — we can even say that she thinks that she is better than her poor single sisters —, in this new version she changes after what happens with Wickham and has the opportunity to become a better person — probably because of the audience and the social context. He betrayed her. She trusted him and he let her down. He exposed her to the whole world and just disappeared and Lydia cannot be the same after that. She grows stronger and becomes a more mature woman, although things are not going to be easy. However, at least, her whole family supports her and does not blame her and her bond with Lizzie grows stronger.

It is also important to mention that all the changes that are made while adapting a novel can affect the image that people have of the characters and, due to the fact that Austen keeps being a rather popular author and many people have read or seen an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, it was not difficult to check if, in this case, this statement could be true. After asking 20 different people about both the novel and the

series, it was found out that most of those who have seen the series and read the novel were not as hard on Lydia as the ones who have only read *Pride and Prejudice* and most of them also affirmed that they changed their mind about Lydia after watching TLBD. However, and due to the little number and common socioeconomic background of people interviewed, we cannot affirm that this truly represents the general opinion on this subject.

Therefore, as we can see, this series has a big impact on viewers, probably due to transmedia. TLBD is not only Lizzie's vlog. Some other characters such as Lydia post videos too— and Lydia's videos are really important because they fill an important gap and explain what happened between the youngest Bennet sister and George Wickham — and the characters also have their own social network accounts — Twitter and Tumblr, for example — and use them. They interact, post photos and show viewers what is happening between videos. And young people, who are used to social networks and famous *vloggers*, can identify with them. By doing this, the story becomes more real, more possible. It is easier to believe that Lizzie, Lydia and all the characters do actually exist and it is also easy to forget that TLBD is a 200-year-old story retold for a modern audience.

In conclusion, maybe it is not a truth universally acknowledged anymore that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife, but it is certainly true that *Pride and Prejudice* is one of the most famous novels ever written and that, due to all the modern adaptations that have been done recently, it will keep delighting new generations for many more years.

Appendix

Due to the fact that TLBD is a video-diary, a videoblog has been created in order to explain to the general public the main aspects of this project. The YouTube channel is called “Lady Bennet” — for the Bennet sisters — and it can be found in the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRX_j9MGGuYJLJp2ShQP6YA

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