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LITERARY INTERPRETATIONS AND SCREEN ADAPTATIONS: *MANSFIELD PARK*

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The text discusses Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* in view of two screen adaptations of the novel, Patricia Rozema's of 1999 and Iain MacDonald's of 2007, treating them as interpretations of the original but also creations with their own ideological agenda. On the one hand, such an approach is influenced by the Romantic notion of authorship, which copyrights the originator of a text. On the other hand, it reads later-date versions of novels as expressive of their contemporary concerns and formative of readers' perceptions.

Key words: Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, screen adaptations, slavery, feminism, reading

Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* is often perceived as her least entertaining novel but it strikes critics as a masterpiece packed with multiple layers and meanings. The specificities of narration and characters make it a challenge to adapt. The heroine is nothing like Elizabeth Bennet: Mrs. Austen "thought Fanny insipid" and Anna Lefroy, the author's niece, "could not bear Fanny" (Austen 1998: 376). Certainly, readers' takes on the novel vary, and a Mrs Garrick claims that "all who think deeply & feel much will give the Preference to *Mansfield Park*," whereas Lady Gordon is delighted to say, "in Miss A-s works, & especially in M.P. you actually *live* with them [the characters], you fancy yourself one of the family" (Austen 1998: 377, 378). The strengths of the novel are very much related to the narrative techniques employed in it; one of the striking effects is a clash of subjectivities by means of free indirect discourse. That is to say, the voice of the narrator is entangled with the voices of the characters, whose speeches and thoughts are reported indirectly. The constantly shifting points of view leave the readers uncertain of the narrator's values and knowledge, and question the attainability of knowledge in general.

Mansfield Park is a book of 159,526 words and the complete audio-versions produced by *LibriVox* take between fourteen and a half and sixteen hours to listen to (cf. *LibriVox*). Screen adaptations of the novel are

inevitably trimmed-down versions of the original – Patricia Rozema's film of 1999 runs for 112 minutes, and the ITV production of 2007, directed by Iain B. MacDonald, comes to 88 minutes without the advertisements. Even the BBC televised mini-series of 1983 (dir. David Giles), nicknamed the "purist" version (Fergus 2003: 69), does not exceed 317 minutes. This, of course, means that stories are contracted and characters disposed of. As a result, film-makers highlight one or two of the leading interpretations of the literary classic and sacrifice the rest. In other words, each screen adaptation offers a different reading of the original, which would make it a legitimate heir of the invariant, while distinguishing it from previous interpretations. This essay compares and contrasts Austen's text and its latest visual modifications, treating screen adaptations as interpretations of the original but also creations with their own ideological agenda. On the one hand, such an approach is very much influenced by the Romantic notion of authorship, which copyrights the originator of a text, or in McCutcheon's phrase, "the Romantic ideology of cultural production as original creation (McGann 91), as opposed to Augustan and postmodern theories of cultural production as imitation and bricolage" (McCutcheon 2012: 72). On the other hand, it takes into account the fact that later-date versions of novels are not about their author but are "rich in messages about current thinking" (Macdonald 2003: 1); what is more, adaptations are "texts with the same status as any other text in the ongoing, historical construction of a composite, palimpsestic work," Brenda Silver has suggested (qtd. in Fergus 2003: 70). Thus, fidelity is not an issue in this discussion; what is prioritised is the director's choice to highlight certain aspects of the source material and build around them.

The novel focuses on social hierarchy, on status and connections, and we have the lower-middle-class heroine Fanny Price brought up in the household of her upper-middle-class aunt and uncle. By the end of the story, it transpires that one of the central problems planted in it is the juxtaposition of *nature* and *nurture* with regard to character: to what an extent characters are shaped up by circumstances and how much depends on their intrinsic worth. This is closely related to the role of education and the responsibility of parents in raising their children. The narrator is very much aware that morality is cultivated but she also seems to claim virtue for the country in opposition to the vices of the city. In addition, it is a novel brimming with sexual energy: the flirtations of Henry and Mary Crawford, who come from London; the feelings of the Bertram sisters for Henry and their rivalry over his attentions, even though Maria is engaged to be married to another (Mr Rushworth); Edmund's fascination with

Mary; Fanny's jealousy because she is in love with Edmund etc. Christianity has a central role in the text with Edmund destined to be ordained and Fanny the potential wife of a clergyman.

The slave trade is mentioned just once but has become the interpretative core of the novel after Said's *Culture and Imperialism*. In the narrative, Sir Thomas has an estate in Antigua and makes a trip to settle his affairs there. Austen chooses not to elaborate on his business, except for a fragment of a conversation, in which his niece asks him about the slave trade. The question is referred to indirectly and retrospectively, and Sir Thomas's answer remains uncertain but, in view of the existing textual evidence, the heroine's driving force is not political rebelliousness although many a critic have argued to the contrary – the speakers are Edmund and Fanny:

> „Your uncle is disposed to be pleased with you in every respect; and I only wish you would talk to him more. You are one of those who are too silent in the evening circle."
> „But I do talk to him more than I used. I am sure I do. Did not you hear me ask him about the slave-trade last night?"
> „I did – and was in hopes the question would be followed up by others. It would have pleased your uncle to be inquired of farther."
> „And I longed to do it – but there was such a dead silence! And while my cousins were sitting by without speaking a word, or seeming at all interested in the subject, I did not like – I thought it would appear as if I wanted to set myself off at their expense, by shewing a curiosity and pleasure in his information which he must wish his own daughters to feel." (Austen 1998: 136)

Edward Said reads the situation as the impossibility to connect the two worlds "since there simply is no common language for both" (Said 1993: 96). On the basis of that he claims that "references to Sir Thomas Bertram's overseas possessions […] make possible his values, to which Fanny Price (and Austen herself) finally subscribes" (Said 1993: 73). In response, Brian Southam has argued that the silence has to do with Sir Thomas being a supporter of the slave-trade, while Fanny's question lines her up with the abolitionists (Southam 1995: 13). This position absolves Austen from imperial sins, which accounts for its popularity, but the "dead silence" is much more readily applicable to the egotistical self-centredness of the members of the Bertram family, who seem indifferent to Sir Thomas's experience. Keeping this in mind, David Bartine and Eileen Maguire detect "two sorts of reactions to the slave trade, two reactions that might be typical of the structure of attitude and reference of the dominant culture: stories of the slave trade are of no interest or concern to some while they might be

forms of entertainment to others" (Bartine 2009: 45). Less sympathetic to Said's argument, Boulukos brings in a different perspective with the concept of amelioration; he sees both the heroine and her uncle in favour of the humane attitude towards slaves, challenges the idea of guilty silence on the grounds that "for Jane Austen, there was no such silence to break" because "slavery and colonialism in Austen's time were not veiled in silence, but were in fact frequently and passionately debated and often discussed in literary discourse" (Boulukos 2006: 365, 366). The variety of claims are only possible because no narrator's comment accompanies the exchange between Fanny and Edmund; therefore, it is up to the readers to assess the heroine's sincerity, modesty, or naivety as displayed in her speech, or the feelings of the members of the Bertram family.

Contesting Southam's interpretational make-over, Boulukos's argument that Sir Thomas and Fanny concur on amelioration accommodates the fact that the "concept was put forward not only by the defenders of the planters but also by such abolitionists as William Wilberforce, the parliamentary leader of Abolition, and Thomas Clarkson, with whom Austen claimed to be 'in love' in an 1813 letter to Cassandra (Letters 198)" (Boulukos 2006: 370), and that it was "a moderate, even a consensus position–one both sides were eager to link to their own efforts, and one that forgave much to planters, especially those willing to reform, as it condemned slave traders as the true villains" (Boulukos 2006: 373). Indeed, the novel retains a degree of sympathy for Sir Thomas – a father who does not necessarily want to sacrifice his daughter's happiness to an advantageous alliance even though he is glad she chooses not to give up the engagement, and an uncle who moves his niece to tears by providing a fire in her room once he finds out she has been deprived of it. Fanny Price does not bother herself to consider that it has taken him years to notice. In both cases there is ironic detachment but the author may have felt that her own father cast a bit of a shadow over him. Biographical sources tell us that "the Revd George Austen became in 1760 a trustee of a plantation in Antigua belonging to an Oxford contemporary, James Nibbs; Nibbs became James Austen's godfather, and sent his own son to school at Steventon" (Tomalin 2000: 291). Of course, Jane's father never had to act the trustee, and her brother Francis wrote that "slavery however it may be modified is still slavery, and it is much to be regretted that any trace of it should be found to exist in countries dependent on England or colonised by their subjects" (qtd. in Roberts 2005: 333). To add to the ambivalence of the discussion, even Said acknowledges: "everything we know about Austen and her values is at odds with the cruelty of slavery" (Said 1993:

96). Overall, it is not easy to pinpoint Austen's views on the topic in all their nuances and biographer Claire Tomalin relies on *Emma* to make her case (Tomalin 2000: 291) and brings in Fanny Austen's "African Story" to reinforce it (Tomalin 2000: 292-294).

The title of the novel bears another allusion: historically, the Earl of Mansfield turned into an emblem of the abolition of slavery and the slave trade – he was Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench between 1756 and 1788, and in 1772 ruled against returning a black man back to slavery in Virginia (White 2006: 5-7). His decision was widely celebrated by abolitionists, among them William Cowper, Austen's favourite poet. Nevertheless, it is also claimed that Lord Mansfield "was torn between his deep revulsion against slavery and his reluctance to establish legal principles that he knew would sweep away the entire system of slavery and wreck the economics of the plantation system" (Kenyon-Jones 2010). The suggestion that Sir Thomas's mansion might be referencing an anti-slavery activist is thought-provoking. Another allusion links the figure of Robert Norris, "an infamous slave trader and a byword for pro-slavery sympathies" (Byrne 2014), with Austen's villain in the novel. Mrs Norris, who has attached herself to the Bertrams household, initially appears to be Sir Thomas's stand-in but is eventually acknowledged as the epitome of wrong that must be counteracted, "an hourly evil" (Austen 1998: 316). Thus, the implications are not exactly of an author "culpably indifferent to slavery in Antigua" unless interpreters sacrifice "*Mansfield Park*'s particular complexity – including what I see as its moral complexity" (Fraiman 1995: 809, 808). This complexity, I would argue, is a function of the narrative techniques used in the novel – free indirect discourse highlights perceptions and challenges the possibility to objectify knowledge.

Co-produced by the BBC and Miramax, Patricia Rozema's *Mansfield Park* was released in 1999. It offers a postmodern fusion of fact and fiction combined with a heritage film feel to it due to the attention paid to costumes and other period details. Two choices dominate this production: it transforms the character of Fanny into an echo of Jane Austen herself and it highlights the slavery theme, which was all the rage in the literary criticism of the 1990s. The approach is hardly surprising as

> Animated images of literature in performance are seldom produced by accident or chance, nor are they natural and ideologically neutral. They have been designed and built (consciously or unconsciously) by their author(s) in order to project a specific agenda and to encourage a particular set of responses. (Reynolds 2013: 1)

Thus, Rozema's Fanny sublimates her energies by means of story-telling, inserting fictions in her letters to her sister, and becomes the author of Jane Austen's juvenilia, including the parodic "History of England": "It was in this reign that Joan of Arc lived & made such a fuss[1] among the English. They should not have burnt her–but they did" (16'35"-16'57"). This Fanny, played by Frances O'Conner, is much more confident if compared to the heroine in the novel – or even to the character put forward in the BBC mini-series from 1983, dubbed the "purist" version of *Mansfield Park* (Fergus 2003: 69) – but also much more contemporary in being an active individual with her own agenda. The mare Fanny is riding in this film is given the name of Shakespeare and Edmund discusses his cousin's writing along the lines of "wild constructions" (20'14"). In other words, a double bind has been achieved: formally, the heroine evokes the author, whose popularity has reached unprecedented heights after the 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*; surreptitiously, she re-writes an early nineteenth-century code of feminine passivity into a late twentieth-century preoccupation with the emancipated woman, who is in touch with her feelings.

Thinking of this silver-screen version in terms of writing is very much encouraged by Patricia Rozema, who declares: "Movies are written. Actors flock to well-written things. The scenes direct themselves if they are written properly" (Herlevi 2000). Rozema's script provides one more parallel with Jane Austen. Sent off to Portsmouth, Fanny Price is visited by a charming Henry Crawford (Alessandro Nivola) very much as in the novel but there the similarity ends. In the film adaptation, Sir Thomas's plan to shock her into realising what a life of poverty means so that she would reconsider Henry's proposal actually works – she accepts him; on the following morning he comes with a bouquet only to find their short engagement broken (1:36'05"-1:40'40"). Needless to say, nothing of the kind occurs in the novel – there Fanny consistently rejects her suitor even if she finds him more agreeable after her disappointment at the lack of warm feelings for her and the deficiency of manners in her father's house. But the turn of events in the script maps out a biographical reference. In December 1802, while on a visit to her friends Alethea and Catherine, Jane Austen received a proposal of marriage from their brother Harris Bigg-

[1] Austen's original word was "row" – compare to Jane Austen's *The History of England* at the British Library's Online Gallery: http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/-ttp/austen/accessible/pages5and6.html. In the interview with Patty-Lynne Herlevi 2000, Rozema says: "I went from old to new to old again, so I could be sure that every joke would work now and that every dynamic or argument would work now."

Whither and said yes. By the next morning, however, she had changed her mind (cf. Tomalin 2000: 182-184).

Along these lines, the abolitionist's ideas expressed by Fanny Price in Rozema's adaptation directly allude to Austen and exonerate her from Said's charges of conniving in the imperialist project. Indeed, the film heroine believes in the abolition of slavery (20'53"), has done some reading on the matter, and points out to her uncle (Harold Pinter) that a slave should be freed in England (44'33"). The latter echoes the popular interpretation of Lord Mansfield's ruling in the Somerset case, even if it were not strictly true (cf. Nadelhaft 1966: 193-194). Furthermore, the heroine refuses to be sold off at a ball like one of Sir Thomas's slaves, and rides out in the rain, sarcastically claiming that the imbecility and irrationality she is accused of must be adding to her female attractions (46'58"-47'20"). Her speech evokes echoes of Wollstonecraft's rhetoric in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and it is no revelation that the parallel between a poor female relation and a slave comes from feminist criticism. Susan Fraiman has put it in a nutshell: "For this and other domestic tyrannies, including the casual import and export of Fanny Price, the slave trade offers a convenient metaphor" (Fraiman 1995: 812). The message is reinforced by cinematic means, such as the caged-birds imagery, outlined by Monaghan :

> Less shocking – but perhaps more effective because of its subtlety, dissemination throughout the filmic text, and ability to broaden the slavery theme to include the situation of women – is the repeated presence of caged birds in the background of interior shots involving female characters. The extension of the bird motif to include the choreographed flight of trained doves arranged by Henry Crawford and shots of a flock of wild starlings that swoop high in the air during Fanny's final voice-over monologue points up the essential difference between the illusionary escape from the prison of patriarchy promised by Henry […] and the real liberation that Fanny achieves by cultivating her artistic and sexual powers. (Monaghan 2006: 63)

Monaghan's conclusion echoes an earlier one: "If marriage for social position is failed liberation, then writing, in this film, can be seen as a truer form of liberation for an early nineteenth-century woman" (Troost 2001: 201). Within the framework of the film, Fanny's liberation through writing is readily transferable onto Jane Austen, who wrote the texts her heroine pens here: in effect, Rozema establishes Austen as a feminist.

The slave plantation business is central in Rozema's screen adaptation: it is reinforced by Tom's sketchbook of the reality in the West

Indies, which Fanny finds and leaves through to see the brutalities of torture and rape depicted along with drawings of Sir Thomas as the perpetrator; the latter interrupts the shocking experience and declares his son mad – he sends Fanny away and destroys the evidence (1:50'56"–1:53'00"). The scene responds to Said's accusations of Austen's "dead silence" on the topic of slavery and echoes Southam's re-interpretation of the novel mentioned earlier.

The sexual energy of the novel is translated into the only nude scene in Austen heritage films: Mrs Rushworth's adultery with Henry Crawford (Victoria Hamilton and Alessandro Nivola) takes place under her father's roof and Fanny happens upon them. Irony is largely missing from this dramatisation until unexpectedly restored in the epilogue: freeze frame shots provide us with glimpses into the lives of Mrs Norris (Sheila Gish) and Maria, and of the Crawfords (with Embeth Davidtz playing the part of Mary). The technique is reminiscent of the 1963 film adaptation of *Tom Jones*, directed by Tony Richardson, in which the playful music and the freeze frame shots give it a cartoonesque effect; to this the voice-over adds an Austen-like detachment.

A very different use of the voice-over comes up with the 2007 screen adaptation of *Mansfield Park*, director Iain MacDonald, which introduces a first person narrative – in the twenty-first century, when everyone is the author of their own story, Fanny Price (Julia Joyce, Billie Piper) relates to the viewer her tale. Irony enters with the Crawfords, Hayley Atwell and Joseph Beatie – a femme fatale and a seducer fresh from London aiming at the Bertrams; he calls her "dearest minx" and she limits their method to the use of their "natural powers" (6'13"–7'20"). The topic of improvements on property is touched upon by Henry Crawford's impertinence in suggesting "an element of the unexpected, of romance" for the mansion, and the double meaning of *romance* is illustrated immediately: as soon as he mentions a ruined castle and makes one think of remote medieval settings, the arrival of a parasol for Maria (Michelle Ryan) redefines romance as a love affair because the occasion redirects Henry's attention from Julia (Catherine Steadman) to her elder sister. His gallantry is not appreciated by Mr Rushworth (Rory Kinnear), Maria's fiancé. Jealousy is only hinted at here but lavishly elaborated on in another quarter: Fanny (Billie Piper) has to witness Edmund's growing admiration for Mary Crawford. In this adaptation, Edmund (Blake Ritson) examines Fanny's drawings and asks her opinion of Mary, at which point Fanny's discomfort is visualised as a stone in her shoe (14'30"-14'55"). Later on Fanny appears to be waiting for ever for Edmund and Miss Crawford to return from their riding lesson

and when they finally do, Mary gives real offence by rudely blurting out, "Your cousin and I had so much to talk about we quite forgot you" (15'33"-16'55"), which is much more discourteous than anything she says in the novel. On the whole, this is an adaptation that focuses on the complexity of human relationships, which are essential to the novel. One of the narrative techniques that affords this complexity to the original text is the use of free indirect discourse: "The movement away from dialogue toward internal views presented in free indirect form results in a penetrating view of character, and, in the case of Fanny Price, the first look into the psychology of jealousy, guilt, and anxiety" (Flavin 1987: 137). This, of course, is a challenge for any screen adaptation: script-writers and directors make it their job to restore the suppressed dialogue.

In the 2007 version, the family dinner after Sir Thomas's (Douglas Hodge) unexpected return brings together the threads of diverse tensions and acts as one of the filmic substitutes of free indirect discourse. Maria's disappointment in Henry Crawford is revealed in an exchange with her brother Tom, played by James D'Arcy (28'00"-28'12"). After the scene of throwing the script of *Lovers' Vows* into the fire, the father's firm veto on play-acting is confirmed in a short dialogue with his elder son (28'14"-28'25"). Mr Rushworth's jealousy of his rival is vented through a comment on Henry, which actually says that "he is too short to be considered a well-looking man (28'41"-28'55"). Edmund changes the topic by referring to the family's affairs in Antigua (28'57"-29'04"), which the father is happy to discuss. Fanny then raises the question of slavery: "I hope you don't mind me asking, Sir, but now that you have lived amongst it, do you think slavery may continue in the same way" (29'06"-29'16") – the query occasions momentary embarrassment, followed by Tom's remark that their cousin is friend to abolition (29'19"-29'21") and the father's answer, "I think, my dear, we may very well do without slavery, but without order we are lost" (29'24"-29'33"). The latter episode references the earlier adaptation but demonstrates quite a different attitude towards the topic of slavery. It acknowledges the critical discourse and defines the characters' dispositions with more care than the novel allows for, limiting, however, the use of postcolonialism as an interpretative tool to a couple of clues. The next hint comes in the shape of a walking stick with an African head carved on top, made prominent when the patriarch knocks with it on Fanny's door and demands an explanation with regard to her refusal of Henry Crawford's proposal. Once again slavery is utilised as a metaphor for the treatment of the heroine but the point is implied rather than propagandised. Ideology is left for the audience to tackle – or to disregard.

The responsibilities of parents are brought home by Sir Thomas in the scene of his failure as a father (1:17'28"-1:18'01"). The education discourse of the novel, where readers are privy to Sir Thomas's reflections, is transformed into a public confession in the film.

This adaptation features contemporary women, active and sociable. The heroine is not the inhibited creature of the novel, she is cheerful, constantly laughing, manages to persuade her uncle she wants a picnic on her birthday (39'39"-39'56"), always has an answer for everyone, assuring Mrs Norris that she shall never forget she must be the lowest and the last "unless, of course, I'm enjoying myself too much to remember" (40'18"-40'21"), and is even witty upon her aunt's departure: "I don't know whom I feel more sorry for, Maria or Aunt Norris" (1:23'54"-1:23'59"), provoking Edmund's gleeful comment "Now that's better: a frown doesn't suit you" (1:24'02"-1:24'04"). The quip occurs towards the end of the film and, as the chronicler of her own story, Billie Piper's Fanny is rendering the words of Austen's narrator, "it may be reasonably supposed that their tempers became their mutual punishment" (Austen 1998: 315), but prior to that she is allowed to pursue her own ends. The visit to Portsmouth is entirely obliterated in this adaptation. In the invented scenes of Tom's illness, the poor relation is depicted as an Anne Elliot, taking care of her cousin and reading to him the racing news; yet, she challenges Edmund's judgement of her as being too kind to quarrel and declares herself safe from being tyrannised. The excessive modesty and submissiveness of Austen's heroine have been relinquished for the sake of twenty-first-century audiences.

Hayley Atwell's Mary reminds the viewers that nowadays a wife can expect of a husband to change his ways for her sake but she is quite emancipated in the novel itself, asking Edmund to give up being a clergyman and choose a career in law instead. Still, in MacDonald's screen adaptation, she is also pulling the strings of her brother's behaviour – when told he wants to stay and make Miss Price fall in love with him, her approval is needed to sanction the plan:

> „Well, perhaps a little bit of love might do her good. She's very sweet and I'll not have you make her unhappy. Really, I couldn't bear it if you were to turn out like our step-father."
> „All I'm asking is to make a small hole in Fanny Price's heart." (35'20"-35'45")

She concedes with a movement of the head and the scene dissolves into the next one, in which Mary is playing the harp for Edmund.

The Lady Bertram Jemma Redgrave personifies is much more energetic than the novelist would have her. The prototype in the novel is an ineffectual woman, "who spent her days in sitting, nicely dressed, on a sofa, doing some long piece of needlework, of little use and no beauty, thinking more of her pug than her children, but very indulgent to the latter when it did not put herself to inconvenience, guided in everything important by Sir Thomas, and in smaller concerns by her sister" (Austen 1998: 16). In the film, she walks out with everyone else and sends her parasole to Maria lest her daughter should catch a headache and make them all suffer (10'32"-10'36"), she agrees with Sir Thomas's plan to make a trip to her mother's so that Fanny should have a chance to reconsider Henry's proposal (1:01'18"-1:02'46"), she supervises Tom's homecoming when he is taken dangerously ill (1:08'26"-1:09'10"), and turns out to be quite perceptive of young people's feelings, arranging for Fanny and Edmund to pick lavender together in the hope that her son may eventually propose marriage to the girl who has been in love with him since she was ten (1:30'10"-1:30'15"). Moreover, she prompts Sir Thomas to provide the Milton quote, which is referenced by Henry Crawford in the novel, describing a wife as "Heaven's *last* best gift" (Austen 1998: 32). This creates a tender moment between Lady Bertram and her husband (1:30'20"-1:30'36"), and old love is used to set off the newly found love between Edmund and Fanny.

The dramatisation ends romantically with Fanny's marriage to Edmund, the wedding dress and kissing in public appeal to modern sensibilities, while their dance references the newly introduced waltz in Regency England: Thomas Wilson's *Description of the Correct Method of Waltzing, the Truly Fashionable Species of Dancing* was published in London in 1816. A happy-ever-after promise for the newly weds transforms the story into a fairytale. This version of *Mansfield Park* reinforces the courtship novel interpretation of Jane Austen for twenty-first century audiences, copying the finale of the celebrated 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*.

The two adaptations of *Mansfield Park*, Patricia Rozema's of 1999 and Iain MacDonald's of 2007, offer divergent interpretations of Jane Austen's novel, with the former's instructive ideology and the latter's entertaining humanism. They certainly add to the audience's perception of the novel – having seen them, it is impossible for readers to ignore the slavery issue and unfeasible to take Fanny Price's passivity at face value and they are on the look out for the hidden energies of the text.

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