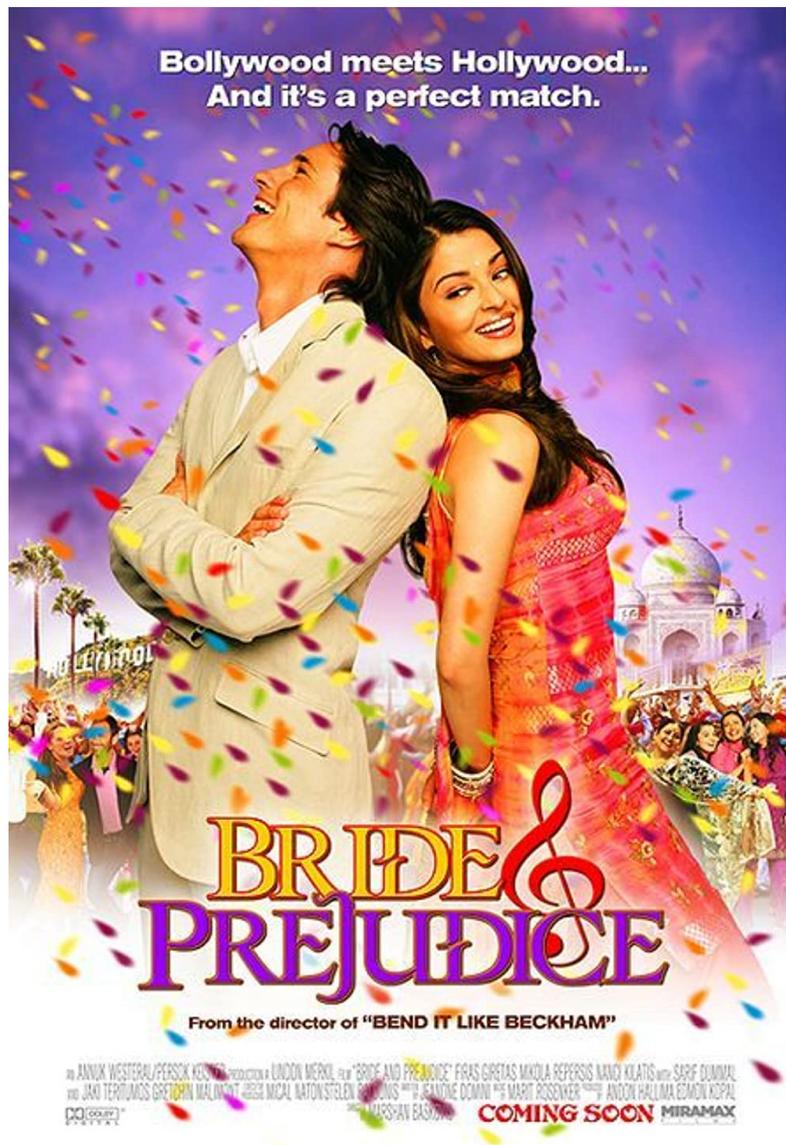


Beyond Textuality and Back: Gurinder Chadha's Literary Adaptation *Bride & Prejudice* as a

Product of The Adaptation Industry



Isabel Cramer

6567584

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Supervisor 1: Dr. Paul Bijl – Supervisor 2: Dr. Jeroen Salman

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## Summary

“Beyond Textuality and Back: Gurinder Chadha’s Literary Adaptation *Bride & Prejudice* as a Product of The Adaptation Industry” considers how the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* can function as a necessary complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate, and proposes an alternative way of engaging with objects such as adaptations and literary works. By going beyond textuality and interacting with the academically underrepresented Adaptation Industry, one can uncover how the institutional actors influence and shape the textual form an adaptation takes. This approach helps give depth to the popular existing text-focused research while at the same time providing an extra layer of depth by acknowledging the extratextual presence of the influential, yet largely overlooked, actors within the Adaptation Industry. With the help of this theory, as constructed by Simone Murray, one will be able to better understand how an adaptation is the product of complex sociology of adaptation that leaves nothing to chance. This thesis takes Murray’s theory a step further by engaging with the audience reactions to the influence of the Adaptation Industry as reflected in the adaptation. Even more so, this thesis analyzes the contradicting extratextual ideal audience versus the actual audience. It is important to include the audience reactions to the Adaptation Industry as reflected in *Bride & Prejudice* in this research, as the academic debate rarely mentions its presence, much less critically engages with it.

With clear structure, this thesis project will address the perfectly valid existing text-focused research on *Bride & Prejudice*, while functioning as a demonstration as to how the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* can function as a necessary complement to the existing academic debate. This will firstly be done by engaging with the influence of the director as the “author” that shapes *Bride & Prejudice* as a

literary adaptation. After all, a film's final product and perception are influenced by the persona, background and media image of the director as well as the classificatory genre and ideal audience she has appointed the production. Secondly, this thesis will draw from the industrial side of the Adaptation Industry in the shape of Miramax, Bend It Films and the UK Film Council. This analysis of influencing factors such as the seasonal calendar, institutional hierarchies, convergence, as well as funding and marketing will help one can better understand how, where and when the audience is presented with a specific literary adaptation. Lastly, this thesis will demonstrate the difference between the ideal audience and the real audience of *Bride & Prejudice*, as well as how the presence of the Adaptation Industry actors has been received and reflected on by the viewers. These critical global audience reviews on *Bride & Prejudice* reflect how extratextual factors from the Adaptation Industry such as genre, the director's background and the producing institutions can alter an individual's understanding of the film, and help them develop more critical interpretations.

Rather than ignoring the extratextual dimension of a literary adaptation, adaptation and literary scholars are enabled to create a more balanced analysis without ignoring the textual dimension. This will ensure a more rounded out, balanced way of conducting research, where a textual approach is no longer put on a pedestal, but rather put on a balancing scale alongside an extratextual approach.

## Introduction

What if there is a way for the fields of adaptation and literary studies to enrich their body of research beyond their dominant textual focus without ignoring their existing knowledge based on textual analysis? In line with Simone Murray's concept of the Adaptation Industry, one can uncover how the decisions of extratextual, institutional actors such as the director and producing institutions have a strong influence on the final form of a literary adaptation and its subsequent reception. Studying adaptations like this uncovers how a film is the product of a complex sociology of adaptation that leaves nothing to chance. Each actor within the Adaptation Industry fulfills its strategic role to create a cultural-commercial product that will lure audiences to the cinema. Adaptations serve to tell us more about the cultures, values, ideologies as well as historical and political occurrences they seek to represent – but they also reflect the institutional influences of production companies and directors.. Not only are their decisions directly reflected in the film's narrative, these reflections also influence the viewing experience of the audience. It is important to include the audience reactions to the Adaptation Industry as reflected in *Bride & Prejudice* in this research, as the academic debate rarely mentions its presence, much less critically engages with it. The dominant approach of academic adaptation and literary studies should be taken beyond its textual focus and create space for the extratextual as well. Rather than ignoring the extratextual dimension of a literary adaptation, adaptation and literary scholars are enabled to create a more balanced analysis without ignoring the textual dimension. The textual and extratextual dimensions are inextricably interconnected, and can help give more depth to each other. The textual dimension can thus be utilized to provide support and proof for the extratextual, and vice versa. This will ensure a more rounded out, balanced way of

conducting research, where a textual approach is no longer put on a pedestal, but rather put on a balancing scale alongside an extratextual approach.

This thesis proposes an extension of the field of literary and adaptation studies. This can be realized by utilizing Murray's theory on the Adaptation Industry to better understand the surrounding institutions and actors involved in creating a literary adaptation. However, the textual dimension of an adaptation is equally important. On the one hand, I want to propose straying away from dominant research methods where close reading or other textual methods are foregrounded, and instead highlight the extratextual as an equally important and valid way of understanding the literary adaptation as a research object. On the other hand, I want to add further to the academic debate and the Adaptation Industry theory by taking into account the audience as recipients of the Adaptation Industry. After all, the audience is presented with the sum of all the decisions that have been made throughout the production process of a film, and the way in which they experience the film is essential to better understanding how the Adaptation Industry is reflected within a literary adaptation, despite the fact that the audience is not an actor within the Industry. In short, I will contribute to the academic fields of literary and adaptation studies by demonstrating how the textual and the extratextual approaches should be used as complements to each other in order to give each dimension more depth and background, as well as by analyzing how the Adaptation Industry has an influence on the audience reception and interpretation.

Gurinder Chadha's literary adaptation *Bride & Prejudice* can help one better understand how Murray's Adaptation Industry theory can be used as a new approach, complementary to the dominant textual approach. *Bride & Prejudice* features motives and characters with similar temperaments as its original text. Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet is the equivalent of Chadha's temperamental, headstrong Lalita Bakshi, and the Bennet sisters (minus one) are reflected in their counterparts Lakhi, Jaya and Maya. Chadha maintains the

feminist charge from Austen's original throughout the adaptation, but transplaces it to a modern Indian setting. Mrs. Bakshi is eager to marry her daughters to successful men, and is delighted when the eligible bachelors Balraj and William Darcy come to visit Amritsar. Lalita and Darcy are entangled in arguments from the start, with Darcy putting forth stereotypes and Lalita countering them with critical feminist arguments. Lalita and Darcy grow closer and apart in waves throughout the film with the interferences of a proposal from Mr. Kholi and the avances of Johnny Wickham, while love-struck Jaya struggles with her situation with Balraj. With settings in Amritsar, London and California, the Bakshi family travels across the globe to chase love – with all the setbacks that come with it – to at last come to a joyful, double-marriage ending.

The existing, text-focused body of research on *Bride & Prejudice* validly frames the adaptation in light of its Postcolonial and exoticizing tendencies. However, numerous of these tendencies can be explained by analyzing the culture economy surrounding the film's production. *Bride & Prejudice* reflects how the extratextual influence of the Adaptation Industry is at the foundation of the adaptation's textual dimension. Choices made by the institutions involved in the production of a literary adaptation are often reflected in the final film, despite being often overlooked by textual-oriented scholars or labeled solely as a narratological phenomenon. These institutions include the producing entertainment industries, financial support, marketing teams and the director. I will add to the Adaptation Industry approach by taking the audience into further consideration. In order to clearly establish the difference between the Adaptation Industry and the audience, I will shortly explain how the dynamic between the Industry and the audience functions. The actual audience is an extratextual actor – but is not a part of the Adaptation Industry itself, as they do not play a role in the direct production of the film, but solely give meaning to its final product. Their significance is hence indispensable and exposes a lot about how the motives

and intentions of the Industry are received. However, the *intended* audience as determined by actors within the Adaptation Industry, in this case Gurinder Chadha, is a part of the Industry as it is directly produced by it and shapes the final outcome of the film distinctly. After all, the actors work towards producing a film that pleases the expectations of the audience they aim for. Hence, it is key to consider both the actual audience and the intended audience in order to fully understand the dynamic between the Adaptation Industry and the light in which an adaptation is eventually received.

This thesis is titled “Beyond Textuality and Back: Gurinder Chadha’s Literary Adaptation *Bride & Prejudice* as a Product of The Adaptation Industry”, as its main focus will be on analyzing the extratextual Adaptation Industry while considering and returning to the textual level in order to provide a rounded-out, balanced analysis of *Bride & Prejudice* by considering its textual and extratextual dimensions. This will be realized through a thorough analysis of what has already been said about the adaptation, as well as how the different institutional actors are involved in the Adaptation Industry and the audience reception of *Bride & Prejudice*. The analysis of *Bride & Prejudice* as a product of the Adaptation Industry by taking into account the links between the director, the producing institutions and the audience will serve as a critical, underrepresented mode of understanding and exposing the influence of the Adaptation Industry on the literary adaptation by going beyond its textuality without ignoring it. Hence, the research question is structured as follows: How can the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* function as a necessary complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate?

Arguably, *Bride & Prejudice* has only been one-sidedly analyzed, resulting in a one-dimensional and incomplete discussion of the adaptation in the field of adaptation studies. In order to create a more balanced and rounded out understanding of *Bride &*

*Prejudice* as a literary adaptation, the field must go beyond textuality and inspect the adaptation's producing institutions and audience reception.

This thesis has as its aim to better understand the surrounding industry of this literary adaptation rather than solely its textual or narratological elements - as these have been widely analyzed and discussed in the traditional academic field of adaptation studies. Rather than a sole focus on textuality, I propose also adding the extratextual to the academic equation. In order to explore this idea, it is essential to investigate how the director, producing institutions and audience influence the production of *Bride & Prejudice*. Approaching *Bride & Prejudice* with the help of Murray's theory on the Adaptation Industry will help close the gap between the textual and extratextual approaches in the predominantly traditional, text-focused field of literary and adaptation studies.

As the primary methodology for this work of research, I will be performing an analysis and application of "the Adaptation Industry" as conceptualized by Simone Murray. Murray proposes a new mode of understanding the literary adaptation in *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation*. Rather than seeing an adaptation in light of its familiar textual dimensions, Murray suggests analyzing the culture economy surrounding the production and reception of the work. She states that the production itself matters, but that the role of the producer plays an equally big role; "but who the producers are in an era of infinite digital reproducibility, collective creation and "producerly" media practice remains an open question" (22-3). Murray proposed taking the sociology of the adaptation into consideration, as well as the presence of the audience. However, this thesis takes Murray's theory a step further by taking the extratextual Adaptation Industry into account while returning to the textual dimension and audience reception in order to create a more balanced, multi-dimensional body of research on *Bride & Prejudice*. Secondly, this

thesis takes into consideration how paratexts produced by the Adaptation Industry such as marketing and interviews, influence the audience.

As Murray focuses primarily on the extratextual without ignoring the textuality, I propose taking another step to consider the influence of the Adaptation Industry on audience reception and interpretation. The actors within the Adaptation Industry, such as the director or the producing institutions, each have a direct influence on the way in which a film is produced, as each of their decisions shape the film toward its final form. A textual analysis is derived from this final product, and hence indirectly influenced by the choices made by the production parties.

Based on established theories such as Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation*, Murray wishes to stray from the conventional textual, comparative analyses in order to engage with concepts such as audience agency. Murray hopes to nudge adaptation studies beyond its text-focused comfort zone in order to realize a sociology of adaptation (4). This will bring the field far beyond the solely textual specifics of a literary adaptation, and will rather enable one to ask and understand how the different parties involved in the production and reception process influence the final form of an adaptation. This approach will help better understand the influence of the producing institutions, as well as uncover how audiences become aware of the influences of the Adaptation Industry and react to them (Murray 5).

Murray states:

“Adaptations set off fireworks not only in their disciplinary reception, but also in their very institutional creation. Adapted texts may be interesting – not so much for their intricate ideological encodings, but for the way they illuminate the contexts of their own production – a sphere in which competing ideologies are just as prevalent, albeit largely ignored by commentators outside of the industries themselves” (5)

Hereby, Murray explains that adaptations “illuminate” their own context, as the adaptation reflects the choices made by the actors within the Adaptation Industry. The Industry is reflected within the adaptation, but it also produces numerous byproducts such as marketing and paratextual interviews that contribute to the way in which an adaptation is received by the audience. Hence, the final adaptation illuminates its meaning through its Industry-based background, where the textual findings originated in the extratextual.

Key to this research project, Murray’s theory revolves around the processes by which adaptations are made, the forms they take on, as well as how the audiences are defined versus the actual audiences who encounter the adaptation (6). Murray explains that the parties involved in the Adaptation Industry both constrain and enable adaptations in “little-analyzed ways” (6). These constraints and facilitations are based on the complexly interlinked cultural and commercial concerns that influence the production process (6). This highlights the importance of the literary adaptation as a cultural product, as well as a commercial product – and the way in which these interlinked roles are balanced.

Murray's theory takes into account the complex workings of the adaptation industry by addressing both the cultural and commercial sides of the matter. She defines the link between the cultural and the commercial by emphasizing the different – yet closely interlinked – currencies of the cultural economy that are described as critical prestige and financial reward (6-7). She describes her theory as filling the gap between macro-oriented political economy and textual- and audience-focussed cultural studies. Her goal is to examine the “how” and “why” of adaptation from the perspective of the authors, agents, publishers, editors, book prize committees, screenwriters, directors and producers who make adaptations a reality (11).

Murray affirms that the industrial substructures of the literary adaptation provide “new understandings of which texts are commonly adapted, why they take the specific forms they do, and how they influence or respond to audience evaluation” (22-23). Murray states that “attention to texts and audiences cannot of itself explain how these adaptations come to be available for popular and critical consumption, nor the intricate production circuits through which they move on their way to audiences, nor the mechanisms of elevation in which the adaptation culture industry is fundamentally complicit” (11-12). In short, Murray aims to rethink adaptation in a revolutionary way by treating a literary adaptation as the product of “a system of interlinked interests and actors” (16).

One of these actors is the director, who will be conceptualized as the “author” in Chapter 2 of this thesis. This concept stands central to understanding the role of the director in the Adaptation Industry. Importantly, Murray emphasizes that the Adaptation Industry is strongly comparable to the century-old book-publishing circuit, and states that “the book is demonstrably as much the product of institutions, agents and material forces as is the Hollywood blockbuster” (13). Hence, by treating the director as the author of a screen adaptation it becomes possible to see a videographic work in a similar light as a novel – which then makes it viable to view a literary screen adaptation as a parallel or extension to the book publishing industry.

This theoretical framework serves to guide my arguments according to the concept of the Adaptation Industry, and is foundational to my analysis of the adaptation in relation to the existing academic discussion as well as its underrepresented cultural production factors and audience reception. By providing a critical literary review and overview of the most prominent research done on *Bride & Prejudice* in Chapter 1, I will be able to highlight the importance of the extratextual presence of the adaptation industry and its influence which has been strongly underrepresented in the field of adaptation studies. This way, I will create an

innovative analysis which takes into account a multitude of facets relating to the Adaptation Industry in order to accurately, respectfully and critically engage with the involved parties who have their unique presence in the production and reception of *Bride & Prejudice* as a literary adaptation. This thesis uniquely proposes putting the text- en industry-focused approaches on an equal playing field while simultaneously taking into account the influence of the Adaptation Industry on the audience and their viewing experience.

Most research in the academic field of adaptation is based on Linda Hutcheon's *Theory of Adaptation*, most famously revolving around the resistance against fidelity theory and focus on intertextuality between original and adaptation. Hutcheon's theory is utilized mostly in terms of its textual capacities. However Murray mentions Linda Hutcheon's celebrated *Theory of Adaptation* as a theoretical support to her theory on the Adaptation Industry (4). Therefore, in line with Murray, I would like to use Hutcheon's adaptation theory beyond its often-used textual potential, and rather focus on how it can be evolved to understand the *extratextual* Adaptation Industry as well. Hutcheon's untapped potential is uncovered by Murray, who rallies that the theory can be used to stray away from the traditional even further by replacing the "intertextual" with the "contextual" (Murray 7). The "contextual" will be referred to as the "extratextual" throughout this thesis, so as to establish the concept that the Adaptation Industry functions as an additional, "extra" layer to the understanding and analysis of a literary adaptation. Despite the usefulness and importance of understanding the adaptation as an independent work, it is important to take Murray's aforementioned theory as a more specific basis for this research project.

Having established the theoretical framework, it is useful to outline the structure which this research project will take on. The first chapter, "Textual Approaches: Postcolonialism and Exoticization in *Bride & Prejudice*", provides an offset for the rest of this thesis by outlining the existing scholarly insights and their limits, as well as providing an

alternative, complementary approach to analyzing *Bride & Prejudice* by means of the Adaptation Industry. Both the existing academic discussion as well as the Adaptation Industry are valid and detailed in itself, but focusing solely on either the textual or extratextual sociology of the adaptation is not enough. The textual scholars approach *Bride & Prejudice* with the help of the broad concept of postcolonialism that is reflected within the adaptation – whereas the concept of the Adaptation Industry offers a smaller, more focused scope where the direct influences on the creation of the adaptation stand central. These approaches are equally valid and useful, but incorporating both in the academic field will provide a far more in-depth understanding of an adaptation. The sociological approach revolving around the Adaptation Industry opens up a new dimension for the text-focused scholars.

As an example, *Bride & Prejudice*'s Eurocentric tendencies stem from decisions made directly by the UK Film Council and Gurinder Chadha. Interestingly, the textual scholars do note the Eurocentric tendencies of *Bride & Prejudice* on a textual level, but fail to notice that these tendencies stem from the extratextual decision made by the UK Film Council. In turn, this has a direct effect on the audience reception, as reflected in the audience reviews that comment on the foregrounding of Western culture. These approaches should ideally be used as complements to each other: this way, the extratextual helps better understand the textual dimension and vice versa. This chapter serves to demonstrate the existing scholarly knowledge on *Bride & Prejudice*, as well as how this knowledge can be enriched by considering the influences of the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach.

In Chapter two, “Gurinder Chadha: The Role of the Director as the “Author””, there will be a focus on the application of Simone Murray’s theory on the Adaptation Industry. This chapter focuses on the extratextual influence of Director and

screenwriter Gurinder Chadha as an actor in the Adaptation Industry. Becoming aware of the director's influential position as an "author" makes it more challenging to solely take the textual dimension into consideration. Taking into account Chadha's media image, her heritage as well as her personal motives for creating this adaptation, it becomes clear how these factors have influenced the final shape that *Bride & Prejudice* has taken on. The creative and personal aspects of the director help better understand the adaptation beyond the textual dimension. This chapter argues that an adaptation's final form and perception are prominently influenced by the image and persona of the director, as well as the genre and ideal audience they construct.

The third chapter, "The Institutions: The UK Film Council and Miramax as Actors within the Adaptation Industry", revolves around the institutional actors in the Adaptation Industry. The creative presence of director Chadha in the production of *Bride & Prejudice* is by no means a singular force. Importantly, the cinema seats are filled by the institutional side of the Adaptation Industry. Numerous institutions are involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*, such as the well-known large entertainment companies Pathé and Miramax. The activities and roles of the producing institutions, such as marketing and advertising can help one better understand their direct influence on the film and its cinema audiences. The financial side of adaptation production will also be highlighted with the help of Howard S. Becker, who theorizes that the "artist" needs resources to create their work and is not merely a creative generative fountainhead. In this chapter there will be a main focus on the institutions that were best recognized by the audience in order to provide a concise overview of the workings of the institutional side of the Adaptation Industry as well as their influence on audience reception. These include Miramax, based on its film style, the UK Film Council, based on its governmental influence, and Bend It films, based on its link to the director. These actors in the Adaptation Industry have a strong impact on both the film production as

well as audience recruitment and reception. Above all, nothing is accidental about the encounter between a literary adaptation and a viewer. Even more so, there will be a focus on how, where and when the audience is confronted with a literary adaptation. One will be able to better understand how the Adaptation Industry influences a film on a textual level through its institutional hierarchies, convergence, funding and marketing. As conceptualized in Henry Jenkins *Convergence Culture*, media is both produced and consumed differently in modern times as a result of convergence, as is reflected in the dynamic between the Adaptation Industry and the audience of *Bride & Prejudice* (16).

The fourth chapter, “The Audience: Idealized Spectators and Individual Viewer Reception of *Bride & Prejudice*”, demonstrates the difference between the ideal audience and the real audience of *Bride & Prejudice*, as well as how the presence of the actors within the Adaptation Industry have been received. By engaging with the audience and their understanding of the film as a product of the Adaptation Industry, one can confirm that it has a direct influence on the adaptation and the audience’s viewing experience. The chapter is driven by the contradiction between the “spectator”, or ideal audience, and the actual “audience”. It becomes clear that Chadha’s envisioned audience is far from reality, as *Bride & Prejudice* was met with countless critical online reviews by Western and Indian audiences alike. The audience consisted of anything but “unassuming Western viewers”, as Chadha had initially hoped. Chadha’s presence was recognized especially by Indian reviewers, who noted her problematic position in relation to India, as well as how Chadha inaccurately depicted Indian culture. Most reviews reflect a primarily textual engagement with the adaptation, but numerous reviews reflected how the adaptation foregrounded Western values. Within the sample reviews used in this chapter, it is reflected that Chadha’s intentions and motives for creating *Bride & Prejudice* were not received in the way in which she had hoped. Even more so, the critical reviews reflect how extratextual elements such as genre, the director’s

background and the influence of the producing institutions can alter an individual's understanding of the film, and help them develop more critical interpretations. It is furthermore essential to analyze how the audience interacts with the reflection of the Adaptation Industry in *Bride & Prejudice*, as academic research rarely mentions its presence, much less critically engages with it. This will effectively highlight how the understanding of an adaptation can be enriched by the Adaptation Industry, but also by looking at the audience reception.

## Chapter 1

Textual Approaches: Postcolonialism and Exoticization in *Bride & Prejudice*

Before entering the analysis of the Adaptation Industry in relation to *Bride & Prejudice*, it is useful to first offer an overview of the popular existing text-focused research done on this literary adaptation. This overview will serve as a basis for analyzing how the extratextual dimensions of the Adaptation Industry influence the audience reception rather than solely the textual dimensions – while at the same time establishing numerous links with the Adaptation Industry. The existing textual approach to *Bride & Prejudice* is perfectly valid and useful, but the scholars have missed the opportunity to include the extratextual Adaptation Industry in order to deepen their arguments by providing foundational information on the origins of the textual elements. This can be done through basing textual findings in their origins that, in this case, stem from the Adaptation Industry. This chapter reflects the current academic debate revolving around *Bride & Prejudice*, but highlights that with the instrumentarium of the Adaptation Industry theory and an audience-focused approach one can give a background to the textual dimension which will subsequently create a stronger, more grounded academic argument.

Additionally, this chapter contrasts academic readers and broader mainstream audiences in order to present a wide range of critical views. The scholars who have analyzed this adaptation are experts in their field and have an academic gaze when engaging with their object, whereas the consuming audience has decidedly different views as they engage with an adaptation on a much more personal, subjective level without the same conceptual knowledge that a scholar would have. Hence, it is interesting to analyze whether the audience reacts to the Adaptation Industry, as it has gone largely unnoticed in scholarly research despite its prominence.

Gurinder Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice* is not merely controversial in terms of its production decisions and style – but has furthermore been widely analyzed through the lens of postcolonialism and the act of exoticization. As a film that was created with the intention to fight Indian stereotypes, *Bride & Prejudice* makes surprisingly little effort to consider the position it takes in relation to the United Kingdom and its role as a previous colonizer of India. Whereas the film occasionally touches upon stereotypes linked to India's position in the world, it seems to do more harm than good when analyzing the adaptation from a postcolonial perspective. How can an Adaptation Industry and audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* function as a complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate?

Firstly, it is useful to set apart the frame that the text-focused scholars draw from in their discussions of *Bride & Prejudice*. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said developed a theory relating to the interplay of knowledge and hegemony. Said concluded that the representational issues of other cultures solidified the ongoing phenomenon of “Othering”, often depicting the “Other” as outside of modernity, exotic, irrational and feminized (Ponzanesi 2). This understanding of Said's theory has been extremely influential for analyzing texts and visual works alike, as such works are oftentimes “biased and curated to reinforce the Western point of view as inherently structured around a position of superiority and domination” (Ponzanesi 2). Hence, Said's concept of postcolonialism is highly applicable to Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice*, as will be argued in Chapter 3 that Indian culture is commodified to fit the tastes of a Western audience, created amidst numerous production factors.

Building on the concepts of postcolonialism, the exotic and the Other, there are some essential aspects of *Bride & Prejudice* and its postcolonial ties to the UK that are central to the way in which this adaptation has been previously analyzed. Taking into account Edward

Said's concept of Orientalism as well as the film's mode of exoticization and glorification of the West, one can conclude that Gurinder Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice* struggles to fulfill her intentions of abolishing Indian stereotypes relating to the position of India as well as their imperialist past, as will be more deeply discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter functions as an analysis of the existing text-focused academic debate on the dynamics of postcolonialism, Othering, exoticization and glorification in *Bride & Prejudice*.

A large body of research on the topic of postcolonial uses of Austen's texts in the globalized modern world has accumulated over recent years. According to Vivian Kao "the uses and reuses of colonial cultural products emphasizes the agency of postcolonial artists in remaking what may once have been imposed upon them newly useful on their own terms", as Chadha had envisioned when creating the concept for *Bride & Prejudice* (Kao 48). In accordance with Kao, rather than seeing the appropriation of a postcolonial work such as *Pride & Prejudice* as *resistance*, it would be more useful to see it as an empowering form of *use* (49). The colonial text can be re-shaped to form a new, useful narrative which can function as a response to new power inequalities produced by global capitalism (49). Chadha indeed re-uses *Pride & Prejudice* to comment on the power inequality of global capitalism – American capitalism in specific – but according to most academic analyses, the adaptation fails to challenge Indian stereotypes rooted in colonialism as she had originally intended to.

The addressing of stereotypes can be seen as very much in line with the general understanding of the function of postcolonial works. Dr. Sandra Ponzanesi states that "Postcolonial theory has critically contributed to revisiting the representation of the Other, addressing long-standing tropes and stereotypes about cultural difference and racial otherness" (Ponzanesi 1).

However, academic critics have found that Chadha's film misses some key opportunities in challenging postcolonialist or stereotyping views that could have been addressed by reusing Austen's text in a contemporary, culturally significant way. As an example, Chadha tends to focus on the imperialist relationship between India and the USA based on capitalism, rather than the imperialist relationship between India and the UK, which is far more significant to the historical development of the country in terms of culture and language. In the adaptation, this is directly reflected by female lead Lalita, who reacts to Will Darcy's hypocritical views on India by blurting out "I thought we got rid of imperialists like you", to which Darcy replies "I'm American, not British". Lalita sharply affirms this by exclaiming "Exactly" (Chadha 00:26:50-00:26:57). Chadha hereby establishes that she acknowledges the postcolonial relationship between India and the UK, but rather focuses on American imperialism. This interaction between Lalita and Darcy signifies that Chadha indeed made a conscious choice to keep the postcolonial implications on the background. In addition, she in fact upholds certain aspects of colonialism within the film, for example through the exoticization of Indian culture. As a result of this mode of representing Indian culture Chadha, as part of the Adaptation Industry, fails to fully challenge the stereotypes she had intended to with this film.

The film is practically fully produced in English, rather than including other Indian languages such as Hindi. Despite the fact that India sees English as its second mother tongue, it is important to reflect on *why* this is the case. The imposition of the English language on Hindi and Indian culture in *Bride & Prejudice* reflects the colonial relationship between India and the UK. British language and culture were superimposed on India – and thus positioned as superior during the period that India was a British colony. By presenting the Western audience of *Bride & Prejudice* with English rather than Hindi can be explained by the fact that an English film will draw larger crowds or will be seen as more "normal" or less alien

and may therefore be perceived as “better”. This issue could have been solved through the use of English subtitles, while keeping the more realistic use of Hindi in place. This seems to be the result of a lack of interest on the part of Adaptation Industry with regard to the colonial implications of imposing one language onto another, especially as English is a second native language to India as a result of their colonial past (Singh).

As Kao explains, the English believed they were responsible for liberating India from centuries of oppression stemming from a backward religious hierarchy that inhibited the progress of the masses toward becoming modern subjects, and thus infusing Indian society with English liberal ideals (61). However, in practice this model of liberating India through free trade was primarily aimed at gaining profits in a ‘rational’ way – and thus the British state remained authoritarian over India (61). The displacement of Indian culture to make room for British culture was a damaging practice which positioned India as the Other, claiming their inferiority in terms of development as the British sought to educate and reform the Indian people to ‘improve’ (61).

India’s position as the Other was at the foundation of a power imbalance with the UK, where Indian culture was regarded as exotic and intriguing. Interestingly, the word “exotic” was initially introduced into the English language in the fourteenth century as meaning “alien, introduced from abroad, not indigenous” (223 Berghahn). Gradually, the term ‘exotic’ gained the connotation of “a stimulating or exciting difference, something with which the domestic could be (safely) spiced”, “absorbed into a home culture, essentialized, simplified and domesticated” (223-4). “Exotic” is thus a representational strategy which aims to appropriate, domesticate, simplify and commodify the culture of the “Other” for consumption within the appropriating country or community (224). Exoticism has thus been understood as a form of cultural translation, through which one culture tries to make sense of another in

terms of language, traditions, rituals and way of life (224). Exoticism oftentimes results in the spectacularization of cultural differences, uneven power hierarchies and modes of colonialism (230). Berghahn explains that exoticization can be understood as a form of commodity fetishism, which is acknowledged to be unethical and exploitative by most Western critics (230). The explicit use of vibrant colors, such as the colorful musical-style scenes at the market where all the women wore color-coded, brightly colored sari's is one example of the fetishism of Indian culture for the sake of visual pleasure of a Western target audience. Hence, Chadha is arguably complicit in commodifying the culture she had hoped to protect, as addressed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3.

Stella Butter, however, argues the possibility that Chadha strategically uses a mode of exoticization to satirize. Maya, one of the Bakshi sisters, performs the sensual snake dance in front of a small tea gathering between family and guests, among which are eligible bachelors who she hopes to seduce. "The strategic use of exoticism is highlighted and criticized by satirically exaggerating Maya's hilarious attempts to capitalize on her Indianness. The presentation of Maya – towards the end of her dance emphasizes how 'unfitting' her performance of Indianness and femininity is" (175). Maya's snake dance scene can hence be seen as a tool with which Chadha attempts to confirm the existence of Indian exoticization while simultaneously ridiculing it.

However, even if the exoticization of Indian culture was in fact strategic, the adaptation strongly glorifies the West through its depictions of Western culture and character dynamics. The blatant glorification of the male love interests poses a central point of interest when analyzing the film's tendency of glorifying the West. As Butter affirms, the postcolonial critique articulated in *Bride & Prejudice* is significantly weakened through its use of symbolic gender roles (181). Lalita is prominently an embodiment of the Indian nation and

cultural nationalism (181). We experience Lalita as being the main challenger to the stereotypes she faces from the non-Indian (or non-Indian identifying, in the case of Mr. Kholi) characters. Butter argues that Lalita is “eager to be romanced by the west” as her attraction to the white male love interests Wickham and Darcy shows (181). Lalita is the representation of India in *Bride & Prejudice*, through which Chadha hoped to abolish stereotypes. Lalita fights back against the characters who overtly disrespect India through attempts to open their eyes to the short-sightedness of their views, for example in her encounter with Darcy’s mother, who reduces India to the cliché of “yoga and spices” (Chadha 01:17:30). Lalita in turn wittily points out that a country is more than merely its representation within, in this case, the USA.

However, Lalita has the tendency to respond to a stereotype of India with another stereotype targeted at her challenger. Lalita, during one of their first encounters, critiques Darcy on supposedly coming to India to find a “simple woman” (00:22:21) by arguing that “Americans know the answer for everything, including marriage. Pretty arrogant, considering they’ve got the highest divorce rate in the world” (00:22:50). Lalita might state the hard fact that America has the highest divorce rate in the world, but fails to consider the cultural differences which lay at the base of this issue. This results in an even wider gap between the two cultures, rather than the two cultures coming closer through elaboration and understanding by emphasizing that they are not so alien after all, as Chadha had originally intended for *Bride & Prejudice* as will be discussed in Chapter 2. Lalita’s role as a representative in fact results in the coding of the East as feminine and the West (in the shape of Darcy and Wickham) as masculine, which corresponds to Orientalist clichés where the East is regarded as feminine and exotic from the Western point of view (Butter 181).

Returning to the characters within *Bride & Prejudice*, a significant character who embodies the act of glorifying the West is Mr. Kholi. Kholi appears as a media stereotype,

and is defined by his own thinking in clichés (Butter 175). Kholi desperately attempts to assimilate to American culture, and tries to do so by denying his own identity as an Indian. In fact, the way in which he stereotypes India and its people is his attempt to detach himself from his Indian heritage. His stereotyping acts consist mainly of derogatory expressions towards Indian people and its culture by putting it off against a glorified perception of American culture. Mr. Kholi constantly expresses his position as superior to native Indians: “These Indians do not know how to treat tourists – India is decades behind!” (Chadha 00:54:59). Mr. Koli participates in the act of Othering by explicitly stating “these Indians”, signifying their position as the different and primitive, while asserting his position as a privileged and wealthy tourist. Kholi once more makes this distinction by creating a binary between “developed professional Indians”, indicating overseas Indians, and “underdeveloped taxi drivers” (00:36:53), signifying the native Indian population. However, in his hypocrisy he proclaims that despite all this, American girls are inferior to Indian-born girls. Mr. Bakshi attempts to fight Kholi’s Americanized, stereotyping views by arguing that India is still a young nation since its independence, refuting Kholi’s arguments that India is unattractive and financially corrupt (00:36:23).

As a side effect of Western glorification, skin color plays an important role in *Bride & Prejudice*. Butter states that the postcolonial critique staged in *Bride & Prejudice* is undermined by the factors of whiteness as a norm and the aforementioned use of allegorized gender roles (179). Reading into the casting, it is no coincidence that the female lead character is played by an actress with a very light skin color (179). As a matter of fact, the person with the darkest complexion is the Bakshi servant. This implicates whiteness as a norm in both Hollywood and Bollywood cinema, whose female stars are oftentimes light- (or lighter-) skinned (179). Importantly, this aspect is reflected in audience reviews as well, as shall be discussed in Chapter 4.

Furthermore, the choice of locations used for this film are controversial and once more foreground Western culture over Indian culture. Most of *Bride & Prejudice* was shot in the UK as a result of a production restriction imposed by the UK Film Council in return for a stipulation. As will be extensively discussed in Chapter 3, the UK Film Council assigning this restriction to such a significant part of a film that aims to break Indian stereotypes is controversial from a postcolonial perspective. Again, the UK is positioned as a superior force, especially from a financial point of view. *Bride & Prejudice*, as an Indian narrative, is positioned as inferior to the UK Film Council, which has the authority to put restrictions on the production in return for financial aid.

However, the choice of location *within* India is equally controversial. One of the main Indian locations in *Bride & Prejudice* is Amritsar. This city is known for the Amritsar Massacre from 1919. As a result of social unrest in light of the demand for Indian self-rule, British troops opened fire on a peaceful gathering of people in an enclosed garden, causing 379 deaths and 1500 casualties (Aldea 177). The indifference to these important details by the Adaptation Industry reflect a mode of exploitation and commodification of Indian culture to fill cinema seats. As an example, a postcard representation of Amritsar in the opening shot of the film is matched to a cliché representation of London. Butter states that “The tourist gaze informs the representation of cultures and nations throughout the whole movie.” (179-9). This results in a one-sided reflection of, prominently, Indian culture. The surface-level, commodified representation of Indian people and cultural phenomena does not align with Chadha’s intentions for *Bride & Prejudice*.

In the next three chapters of this thesis, I will show that an Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* can function as a complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate. As presented in this chapter, the current textual

findings on *Bride & Prejudice* are perfectly valid and useful, the scholars have missed the opportunity to base their findings in their origins from the Adaptation Industry. This is why this thesis proposes to study the interplay between the textual and the extratextual dimensions in order to round out the academic research as will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapters. Postcolonial cinema, which *Bride & Prejudice* can be labeled as, should be understood as an optic through which one can address questions of postcolonial historiography, epistemology, subjectivity, and geography in order to open up space for repressed or omitted histories of nations or communities (Ponzanesi 6). Hence, it would have been important that Chadha had interacted with India's colonial past with the UK rather than its current imperial relationship with the US. This would have fortified her ultimate goal in creating this film, as her intentions importantly revolve around addressing and challenging stereotypes made about India as presented by the West as a result of Orientalist narratives that have influenced the Western understanding of India ever since the nation was colonized by the UK.

## Chapter 2:

## Gurinder Chadha: The Role of the Director as the "Author"

In many ways, Gurinder Chadha and the institutions that are linked to *Bride & Prejudice* project their views onto the screen, and subsequently impose them onto their audience. A wide body of text-focused research is already available on postcolonialism and Orientalism in relation to Chadha's film, but taking into account the Adaptation Industry surrounding *Bride & Prejudice* can help one better understand how the film's perception is influenced by the persona of the director as well as the classificatory genre that she has appointed to the film. Even more so, while many articles do note the extratextual element of genre, *Bride & Prejudice* being a mixed-genre "Bollywood meets Hollywood" production, there is very little engagement with Chadha as the director – and even less with her husband and co-writer Paul Mayeda Berges. Whereas a bibliographical analysis of this kind would be conventional in articles on literary works – like Jane Austen and her *Pride & Prejudice* – it seems to be nearly completely omitted from the research done on Chadha's film. Her media image and heritage are mentioned, but there appears to be a lack of critical engagement with her complicated roots as seen in relation to her motives or intentions as well as the adaptation as a final product. Giving attention to essential extratextual factors from the Adaptation Industry, how can we engage on a deeper level with the influence of the director as the "author" that shapes *Bride & Prejudice* as a literary adaptation?

Linda Hutcheon, a foundational scholar for Murray's theory on the Adaptation Industry, suggests that the function of the adapter should be rethought. She states, quoting Wimsatt, that "knowledge about the "maker's mind and personality" can actually affect the audience members' interpretation: what they know about artists' desires and motivations,

even about their life situations when they are creating, can influence the interpretation of any work's meaning, as well as the response to it" (109). With this argument, Hutcheon rallies for an understanding of the director in the context of his or her personal situation and background. Hutcheon emphasizes the importance of the adaptive process as a "total of the encounters among institutional cultures, signifying systems, and personal motivations" (106). She explains that the motives for choosing a story are intensely private – yet extremely understated in academic literary circles since the twentieth century (106). The extratextual statements of intent and motive, as Hutcheon explains, exist to round out our sense of the context of creation (108). She critically states, however, that intentions and motives must be confronted with the actual textual result as reflected within the adaptation, as "intending to do something is not necessarily the same thing as actually achieving it" (108-9). This is precisely why Chadha and *Bride & Prejudice* are an engaging case study for analyzing how Chadha's statements of intent, such as the strive to create a mixed-genre film for Western audiences as well as to break Indian stereotypes, can help one understand an adaptation on a deeper level than solely on the level of its textual elements. Even more so, it helps the viewer look more critically at whether or not the director's intentions are fulfilled in the adaptation's final form. For Chadha, there were indeed personal considerations on multiple levels at the basis of her motives and intentions for *Bride & Prejudice*, as well as for choosing *Pride & Prejudice* as an original story.

In order to better understand Chadha's motives and intentions, I would like to engage with the concept of the director as an author, or the "auteur". Importantly, Chadha wrote the screenplay for *Bride & Prejudice* with the help of her husband Paul Mayeda Berges, and is in many ways the literal author of *Bride & Prejudice*. However, the "author", according to Mark Rose as quoted in Harold Love's work, "does not really create in any literal sense, but rather produces texts through complex processes of adaptation and transformation". This concept is

especially applicable to Chadha's film as a literary adaptation, as she transforms one narrative to create another. Hutcheon explains that the director as an auteur is never merely another adapter: "The director does not subordinate himself to another author; his source is only a pretext, which provides catalysts, scenes which use his own preoccupations to produce a radically new work" (82). As we can see, the author is an essential force that shapes the narrative: in many ways, the author *is* the essence of the film. By this, I mean that the film reflects the visions, ideals and background of the director-author.

Director Chadha explains that her goal for *Bride & Prejudice* was to get Western audiences to become more interested in Bollywood film by introducing them to a mild, recognisable form of Bollywood-*style* cinema. After her success with soccer film *Bend it Like Beckham*, revolving around an Indian protagonist and her family, Chadha longed to create a film that would pay homage to the Bollywood tradition, as well as appeal to Western audiences. The director grew up in London, and has worked in both England and America for most of her career. As a result, her experience is undeniably influenced by British film history. Chadha states that she wanted to combine the British and American influences with her childhood of "growing up on Indian movies" (One Guy's Opinion). And thus, Chadha came to the realization that she wanted to create a movie that would reflect all three – British (film) history, American musical and Indian Bollywood cinema. As a goal, Chadha meant to create a film based on a novel which belongs to a significantly different time and space, and making it relevant for the present-day social and cultural dynamics of a globalized, contemporary cinema audience.

But why was Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* in particular chosen as the base work for Chadha's adaptation? One essential reason is based on financial accessibility. Ever since Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* lost its copyright and entered the public domain, a cascade

of popular adaptations flooded the cultural sphere worldwide. Hutcheon explains this phenomenon by stating that generally, adapters rely on a selection of works that are well-known and widely popular – and for legal reasons – are no longer copyrighted (29).

Even more so, Indian cinema has a history of consistently capitalizing on classic 18th- and 19th-century European novels with plots centring on romance, inheritance and feminine frustration (Geraghty 163). This signals towards a strong similarity between Bollywood cinema and 18th and 19th century European novels, as film generally thrives on a model of recognition in order to satisfy their audience. This phenomenon is explained in Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *The Culture Industry*: "What's new in the phase of mass culture compared to that of late liberalism is the exclusion of the new – it rejects anything untried as a risk. In film, any manuscript which is not reassuringly based on a best-seller is viewed with mistrust. That is why there is incessant talk of ideas, novelty and surprises, of what is both totally familiar and has never existed before" (106).

However, Murray explains that readers of a literary text are not easily or unproblematically converted into screen audiences (157). There is indeed an appeal to adapting a well-known literary work. *Pride & Prejudice*, in this case, has an established market profile, which obviates the need for market research about the attractiveness of the narrative (157). Austen's work had success in one medium, and has proven to be successful in attracting consumers in other media as well – and thus is likely to achieve this result again (157). The widely read and loved works of Jane Austen thus naturally form an appealing base for film adaptations, as they invoke a feeling of recognition or even nostalgia in the target audience. *Pride & Prejudice*, as Austen's most well-known canonical novel, would form an obvious choice to attract the attention of the largest possible audience.

However, Murray warns that adaptation scholars fatally overvalue the original property, and assume that the original possesses an almost talismanic cultural power which is in itself sufficient to lure readers into cinemas (157). The scholars overlook the fact that adaptation productions have hundreds of people dedicated to marketing a film to create audiences (157). Murray affirms that factors beyond solely the text and its reputational aura come decisively into play here (157).

Director Chadha attempted to create a film that was both familiar and never seen before, by means of taking Austen's canonical work as a base and transposing the narrative to India. There is a clear attempt by Chadha to fuse the styles. The Bollywood style and conventions were heavily reconstructed to work with – rather than against – the conventional ways in which *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted (Geraghty 166). She explains that the process involved a lot of balancing work between the “East” and the “West” in order to maintain authenticity (One Guy's Opinion). This act of balancing cultures and melting them together ties in with Chadha's take on life: “We're all different, and we're the same at the same time” (One Guy's Opinion). She states: “I think the reason I have the drive I do is ultimately about racism. It's about finding ways to diminish the impact of *difference*” (Jones 178).

However, Chadha fatally contradicts her statement on diminishing difference, as she continuously establishes the differences between the “East” and the “West”. Chadha admitted in her One Guy's Opinion interview that in order to balance the film, she had to tone down the Indian actors: “The western actors had to find a way of bringing their performances up, and the Bollywood actors found a way of bringing their performances down”. She described the Bollywood actors as melodramatic and extravagant, the American actors as thinking they were better than the Indian actors, and the English actors as thinking they were superior to

any of the other actors. Hereby, Chadha implies a hierarchy, where the Western actors are perceived to be superior to the Indian actors in terms of skill. This does not help in diminishing stereotypes about Indian culture (among which Bollywood falls). In *Bride & Prejudice*, the acting is decidedly more Hollywood-style than Bollywood-style. This signifies an imbalance between the “East” and the “West”, as Chadha calls it, confirming that the adaptation indeed appreciates Hollywood acting over Bollywood acting. (One Guy’s Opinion).

In her next sentence, Chadha explains how the crew grew closer during the filming process: “By the end, at the wrap, I’ve got all these photos of the English crew with their arms around the Indians going, ‘Oh, I love you, mate!’” (One Guy’s Opinion). Rather than a casual description of the crew putting their arms around each other, Chadha sketches the image of the English taking the Indians under their wing. Despite her motto of sameness and equality, she hereby creates a divide that is arguably unnecessary and controversial in its nature.

Returning to Chadha’s decision to work with *Pride & Prejudice*, there is more to the choice of Austen’s novel for this adaptation. Chadha aims to celebrate the Bollywood tradition while making sure that the film stays away from mocking Indian cinema traditions. She explains that it would have been easy to poke fun at Bollywood conventions “because it is quite cheesy. It’s a trite thing—it’s very melodramatic, and all the emotions are out there, it’s very long and very camp” (One Guy’s Opinion). Chadha wanted to take a work that was completely the opposite of her original idea, and was inspired by Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice*. Nobody had previously established the unique combination of Indian Bollywood and British Regency before. To Chadha, it meant combining two core elements of her British-Indian heritage. Jane Austen notably functions as a figurehead for British literary history – whereas Bollywood cinema is a widely recognized aspect of contemporary Indian culture. However,

Chadha's view is arguably one-sided, as she fails to communicate the diversity of the Indian film industry.

But then why did Chadha opt for a literary work that is so far removed in both spatial, temporal and cultural terms? *Pride & Prejudice* seemed a logical choice to Chadha, as she explains that the canonical novel reflects the socio-cultural realities of contemporary India (One Guy's Opinion). Hence, *Bride & Prejudice* matches the feminist tendencies of Austen's original, solidifying the argument that the two works are intricately linked despite the strong differences in eras and cultures. Chadha explores how Austen's novel from the 1790s reflects not only Regency England, but also accurately represents the socio-cultural realities in early 2000s small-town India.

As Butter puts into words, a major factor that fuels Jane Austen's popularity is the fact that the transformation of her work creates a site for negotiating contemporary cultural identities (167). Both in Austen's work and Chadha's adaptation "women weren't considered 100% unless they were married" (One Guy's Opinion). Women were submissive and largely bound to domestic life. Arguably, *Bride & Prejudice* functions to bring the action and motivations of Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* into the modern global sphere (Jones 175). As Chadha puts it, "women weren't really to speak out too much, they weren't supposed to have minds of their own, they weren't supposed to go out and find husbands—their mothers were supposed to help with that—all these things are completely true two thousand years later in contemporary India, in small-town India. It's exactly the same" (One Guy's Opinion). Despite the fact that the analysis of similarities between the novel and the adaptation edge towards a textual analysis, the origin of Chadha's decision to use Austen's work is extratextual as it is based on her personal motives and intentions for the film she was seeking to create.

Even more so, Chadha's statements on the situation of India and the Indian woman are key to understanding how Chadha's position can be seen as controversial. Chadha's heritage and media image – as well as the audience reception thereof – is essential to understanding how *Bride & Prejudice* functions as a transnational film, and complexifies the underlying links between the original and the adaptation. Whereas one might argue that bringing forth heritage as an influencing factor in itself would create an insufficient argument, Chadha arguably utilizes and exploits her heritage to create her own media image. In her interviews, such as in *One Guy's Opinion*, Chadha acknowledges the fact that she is not Indian, but affirms her affinity with her Indian family heritage as well as her desire to create more films revolving around marginalized Indian people (*One Guy's Opinion*). Chadha is recognized as a director who produces stories about the struggles of Indian women and immigrants in England, and consistently highlights Indian culture in her films and trailers.

However, when critically engaging with how the director presents herself in front of the media, some contradicting facts come to the fore. Interestingly, Chadha undermines herself by acknowledging that she is incapable of making a fully Indian movie as she is not Indian herself (*One Guy's Opinion*). Yet, she still creates a film based on Indian culture and with the goal of breaking Indian stereotypes. Arguably, this is an example of Chadha exploiting her Indian heritage, as she wishes to validate her decision of making a movie about Indian society despite the fact that Chadha has spent most of her life in Western society, married to a white American man, and has no record of visiting or residing in India. If we take these factors into consideration, are Chadha and her co-directing husband best suited to express the sentiments of small-town Indian women by saying that things are “exactly the same” as in *Regency England*?

Even more so, Chadha's ambiguous self-representation has a distinct influence on the reception of *Bride & Prejudice*. Her media image influences whether the adaptation is received as authentic, and can thus also be a source for criticism, as is further explored considering the audience reviews in Chapter 4. Chadha presents herself in the media as having a strong connection with Indian culture. For the New York *Bride & Prejudice* premiere she can be seen wearing Indian-style clothing, through which Chadha establishes her Indian-ness towards the media and cinema audiences (AFP Photo). She frames herself as authentically Indian despite claiming that she is not equipped to make an Indian film – and arguably once more exploits Indian culture for the sake of validating and exoticizing *Bride & Prejudice* for the Western target audiences.



Chadha's heritage as part of her media image is reflected in both positive and negative audience reviews. IMDB reviewer Martinhafer, notes that “The director, Gurinder Chadha, is of Indian descent but was born in Kenya and raised in the UK, so her making a film that blends cultures (like her other famous film, “Bend It Like Beckham”) is a natural” (MartinHafer). He notes Chadha's heritage and has developed an understanding of the film and her style in relation to the extratextual information of the director's background. However, Reviewer Red-125 had a different extratextual experience: “Gurinder Chadha is very skilled, but she's of Indian descent, not really from India” (Red-125). These reviews depict the importance of a critical engagement with, in this case, the director's background as the “auteur” and an essential influencing force behind the literary adaptation.

The director can be understood as a shaping actor within the Adaptation Industry, and can thus be seen as an influencing force on the film's production process and eventual

reception. Especially Gurinder Chadha, who is both the screenplay writer as well as the director, has a distinct influence on the process of the creative creation of *Bride & Prejudice*. In Chapter 4, the reception of the director's choices will be brought to the fore from the perspective of the audience. Chadha seems to be aware of her influential position, as she states in an interview published in *The Hindustan Times*: ““As a director you have to have a position which the audience can take away with them,” she ruminates. “You have to be able to influence the way people think”” (Chatterjee). Chadha understands that the cinema screen is more than merely entertainment, and embraces the idea that film, as art, can influence the way in which people view the real world. However, despite the fact that her motives and intentions are seemingly pure, their execution is arguably questionable – and naturally have a direct influence on the audience reception.

In relation to the audience reception of the director as part of the Adaptation Industry, Henry Jenkins suggests that there is a Romantic impulse to consecrate the author as the self-generative creative fountain-head of the adaptation (26). The author as an artist is viewed as motivated by pure intentions rather than the intention of gaining profit – a view which has long remained prevalent in adaptation studies (26). At a more cultural level, authors function as creative spokespersons and aesthetic guarantors for their works within the Adaptation Industry, reassuring existing and potential audiences of an adaptation's quality (26-7).

Chadha is often seen in relation to her extremely popular earlier production *Bend It Like Beckham*, and the audience reception echoes that they have watched *Bride & Prejudice* after their positive experience with Chadha's earlier work. This way, authorial status becomes in itself a part of the marketing project surrounding a major film adaptation such as *Bride & Prejudice*. Hence, Chadha can be seen as not only the director-author, but also the brand ambassador and adaptation promoter of her work, as notable in her public interviews and

activist media image. Jenkins explains that the author figure “takes her place alongside the other individuals via which the industrial nature of screen production can be marketed to a society predisposed towards individualistic explanations of cultural phenomena” (49).

Chadha is a cog in the larger production wheel within the Adaptation Industry rather than a singular creative force. Hence, it is important to normalize analyzing literary adaptations through the lens of the entire scope of the Adaptation Industry rather than solely that of the director in order to achieve a more complete, multifaceted analysis.

As a conclusion, taking into account the responses provided by Chadha, it can be argued that there are complex and essential personal factors underlying the reason as to why a literary text might be adapted. The director as a shaping actor within the Adaptation Industry can thus be seen as an influencing force on the film’s production and eventual reception. By taking into account Chadha’s personal motives, history and heritage, we can begin to understand how these forces influence her decision and intentions for creating a Bollywood x Hollywood adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice*. By exploring these personal aspects of one of the largest creative forces in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*, one can enrich one’s understanding of a literary adaptation beyond the comparative textualities between original and adaptation, or the solely textual dimensions of the adaptation itself. Despite the purity of Chadha’s motives and intentions for creating *Bride & Prejudice*, aspects of her background, interview statements and final choices for the film prove to be controversial. Chadha can be seen as a media figure who is the product of her heritage and society, the influence of which is clearly reflected in *Bride & Prejudice*.

### Chapter 3:

#### The Institutions: The UK Film Council and Miramax as Actors within the Adaptation Industry

As Miramax cofounder Harvey Weinstein confirms, it is the distributor's responsibility to find the audience (Murray 158). Weinstein, as the figurehead of Miramax, had been responsible for shepherding arthouse literary adaptations to mainstream audiences for two decades and underlined the importance of an audience-focused marketing strategy (158). Despite Chadha's intended motives and ideal audience, it is up to the institutional side of the Adaptation Industry to realize the goal of filling cinema seats. This is done through market positioning, advertising, release strategies and award campaigning. The director-author, productions companies, movie stars and literary-award kudos all work tightly together to bring a literary adaptation to the widest audience possible (158). Large production companies, such as Miramax and the UK Film Council, are fractured into sub-roles (159). These sub-roles are hierarchical, with the decision-making executive producer at the top. Each institution is made up of an ecosystem of interconnected roles and ranks. This highlights the diverse range of roles that these institutions fulfill in order to successfully monitor and execute the adaptation's production and any interactions between film and audience (159). This confirms that there is nothing accidental about the encounter between a film and a potential viewer (183).

As mentioned, the director is by no means a singular or individual force in the Adaptation Industry. A director by herself is virtually always at the mercy of cultural film institutions and production companies for financial resources. There are a myriad of producing companies involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*. These companies include Miramax Films, Pathe, UK Film Council, Kintop Pictures, Bend It Films, Inside

Track Films, and Bride Productions. By considering the influence of the institutions involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*, one can uncover how important reflections within the textual dimension are decided by the Adaptation Industry.

In this analysis, I will focus mainly on the institutions that were best recognized by the audience in order to provide a concise overview of the workings of the institutional side of the Adaptation Industry as well as their influence on audience reception. This chapter will include analyses of Miramax, the UK Film Council, Bend It Films, as well as the marketing apparatus surrounding *Bride & Prejudice*.

Interestingly, and confirming the unconventionality of an extratextual approach, most academic research overlooks or ignores the presence of the influential institutions that are part of the Adaptation Industry. In order to gather the type of little-analyzed knowledge presented in the arguments made in this chapter, one must go beyond textuality and dedicate close attention to the Adaptation Industry. The presence of the institutions involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice* has a direct influence on the final product of the film, and hence its textual dimension. The overarching decisions that these institutions make give meaning to the film on both an extratextual and textual level. Hence, this chapter will focus on the roles of the most prominent institutions involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*, and how they have influenced the final product of the adaptation.

### *The Influence of Entertainment Production Giant Miramax*

For *Bride & Prejudice*, the main institutional actors are well-known American entertainment and production company Miramax, the government-owned promotional department UK Film Council, and Chadha-owned Bend It Films. Miramax is best known from their productions *Pulp Fiction*, *Kill Bill* and *Reservoir Dogs*, all three directed by

Quentin Tarantino. Miramax is one of the most recognized companies involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice*. During recent years, Miramax negatively became the center of attention, as Weinstein was charged with numerous allegations of rape and sexual assault. However, the past of this entertainment company is linked to revolutionary filmmaking. As Murray states, “Miramax became synonymous with upscale, arthouse films which managed to cross over into mainstream, blockbuster successes” (170). Their style is hence understood as different from conventional mainstream blockbusters, as reflected in the audience reception discussed in Chapter 4.

Film scholar Alisa Perren, as quoted in Murray’s work, describes Miramax’ style as having a “strong potential for festival-circuit and critical acclaim; edgy, boundary-pushing subject matter and/or avant-garde cinematic styles; and the ability to sustain marketing campaigns; centered upon sensational, exploitation-style publicity” (171). For *Bride & Prejudice*, especially the boundary pushing subject matter and exploitation style publicity are prominent. The film cover is embellished with the proud exclamation “Hollywood meets Bollywood; and it’s a perfect match!”. *Bride and Prejudice* offers itself as a hybrid which strives to adapt Indian Bollywood film for Western tastes, which Chadha describes as “Bollywood and Hollywood, tied up with a British sensibility” (164 Geraghty). The movie is marketed as a balanced intermingling of Hollywood and Bollywood, in order to peak interest in Western audiences that are usually drawn to Hollywood films. The production aims to push the boundaries of a Western audience beyond solely Hollywood by presenting them with a hybrid work – and the film is hence marketed as Hollywood and Bollywood being a perfect match. This way, the producing and marketing departments exploit Hollywood’s connotation of success and renown, and the perception of Bollywood as exotic and unique from the perspective of the Western target audience.

This can be related to how media are consumed differently in modern times. As Henry Jenkins explains in his theoretical work *Convergence Culture*, convergence involves both a change in the way media is produced as well as the way in which media is consumed (16). For *Bride & Prejudice* this is especially prominent. Convergence is at the basis of Miramax' development, as the company became well-known by bringing arthouse film to a mainstream cinema audience, effectively pushing the boundaries of traditional mainstream film. This also reflects a change in the consumer's media consumption, who became more interested in arthouse-style film. For *Bride & Prejudice*, a similar phenomenon took place. *Bride & Prejudice* is naturally an adaptation of Austen's original novel, meaning that the content is consumed through a different medium. However, the more interesting fact is that the adaptation is a unique hybrid between Bollywood and Hollywood. This makes the way in which the film was produced and presented to the audience unique. Similar to how Miramax marketed arthouse film to a mainstream audience, Bollywood-inspired *Bride & Prejudice* is targeted at mainstream Western audiences.

*To Adapt or not to Adapt: The Reputational Aura of a Renowned Novel*

Murray's theory can be used to critically analyze the link between the original novel and the literary adaptation. She argues that the media industries appear to be pursuing a "culturally democratizing agenda of making acclaimed literary works available to demographically broader screen audiences" (18). Even more so, the industries attempt to allay audience suspicions that their motives are industrial by constantly affirming their respect for the original literary work, often referring to their prize-winning pedigree and literary or canonical nature (18). In the case of *Bride & Prejudice*, Miramax functions as a

producer of a hybrid literary adaptation that attempts to culturally democratize the literary work of Jane Austen by fusing Hollywood and Bollywood styles.

However, their motives are not purely based on their “agenda of making acclaimed literary works available to demographically broader screen audiences” (18), but are rather based on an effort to maximize their audience reach. Demographically broader screen audiences may result in larger cinema audiences, which in turn will bring about a larger revenue for the parties involved in producing *Bride & Prejudice*. Arguably, this is cleverly masked by the effort of Chadha and the producing institutions to market the film as a work that aims to diminish stereotypes and proudly introduce the Bollywood film style to the Western cinema audience.

From an institutional point of view, creating an adaptation on the basis of a renowned and well-loved author such as Jane Austen is appealing for numerous reasons. As Murray argues, the key appeal to adapting a bestselling book or author is the “established market profile of a particular narrative”, which “obviates the need for market research about the story’s attractiveness, thus heartening financiers, facilitating green-lighting and allowing marketing departments a rough idea of target demographics for the resultant adaptation” (157). Austen’s *Pride & Prejudice* is her most popular and widely known novel, which in itself has an established market profile. As a result, institutions such as Miramax are relieved from the task of in-depth research on the story – and financiers such as the UK Film Council will give a production confirmation and financial aid more easily as they are aware of the existing position that Austen’s work has in the cultural hierarchy as a canonical literary work. Even more so, the story is appealing to the UK Film Council on the basis of Jane Austen’s British heritage, as well as Britain’s position in relation to India. However, the UK Film Council is unsuccessful in its approach to reconciling the relationship between the UK and

India, as the stipulation is more readily understood in light of the postcolonial relationship between India and the UK.

Returning to the reputational aura that is appealing to institutions, Murray argues that the pre-sold nature of bestselling works is highly overvalued by adaptation scholars (157). Attributing too much value to the reputation of the original narrative takes away credit from the enormous marketing and publicity operation that is tasked with creating film audiences (157). The marketing apparatus is tasked with creating buzz about a film property, converting public awareness into the all-important ‘want-to-see’ factor, and then delivering sufficient numbers of well-disposed audience members' posteriors to grace cinema seats” (157). If a film receives sufficient audience members, the success of the film’s subsequent sales such as DVD, On-Demand and broadcast will become more successful (157)

#### *The Influence of Government-Owned UK Film Council*

Despite the fact that there was no money lost on buying rights from the original work, the production of *Bride & Prejudice* proved to be expensive with a budget of 7 million dollars. The Bollywood and Hollywood extravagance in combination with multi-location settings and masses of actors for performing the musical songs required heavy financial support. As Howard S. Becker discusses in *Art Worlds*, the “artist” needs resources to create their work. Especially in the case of *Bride & Prejudice*, the unique production was unfamiliar terrain. In line with Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory, *Bride & Prejudice* is “both totally familiar and has never existed before” (106). Chadha attempted to uphold a balance between Western and Eastern, in order to maintain a structure of recognition while at the same time introducing new cultural elements. This can be related to Chadha and the UK Film Council stipulation. New and unique ideas call for more (financial) resources, which needs to be taken

into consideration when understanding the involvement of the UK Film Council. Hence, the stipulation offer provided by the UK Film Council was a necessity for the production of *Bride & Prejudice* as a never-been-done-before film that leans on two abundant styles.

However, the presence of the UK Film Council proves to be a controversial institutional influence. The UK Film Council promised to provide Chadha with a financial stipulation on the basis of one key term: most of the adaptation had to be filmed in the UK. Hence, there is an overwhelming presence of tourist attractions such as the London Eye, Little Venice and Somerset House. The UK Film Council assigning this restriction to such a significant part of a film that aims to break Indian stereotypes has postcolonial implications. Again, the UK is positioned as a superior force, especially from a financial point of view. *Bride & Prejudice* is positioned at the mercy of the UK Film Council, which has the authority to put restrictions on the production procedure in return for financial aid. The UK Film Council celebrates *British* film, indicating a pattern of commodification of Indian culture for British or Western audiences. The prominent presence of the UK in a film that aims to establish a balance between the West and the East complexifies the relationship between Indian and British culture. The Indian locations, such as Goa and Amritsar, are greatly outnumbered by landscapes from the USA and UK.

Despite the fact that the motivation for creating a hybrid film stemmed from director Chadha, the largest involved institutions had a significant influence on the locations that were used in *Bride & Prejudice*. The variety of international filming locations were the result of decisions made by the UK Film Council as well as the need to depict both Hollywood and Bollywood style. Chadha's self-proclaimed incapability of producing a purely Indian Bollywood film proves to be more complex when we consider this stipulation from the UK

film council – which, before its abolition in 2010, supported the production of films within the UK film industry (“UK Film Council”).

### *The Influence of Chadha-Owned Bend It Films*

Another part of the production ensemble is Bend It Films, a film, theater and TV production company headed by Chadha and Berges themselves. This means that Chadha does not only play the role of screenwriter and director, but is also involved in the adaptation’s production and marketing. Arguably, Chadha takes up an institutional role in the Adaptation Industry, rather than solely a creative role. Interestingly, the YouTube extension of Bend It Films, Bend It Networks, released a film trailer for *Bride & Prejudice* 10 years after its original release in 2004, when YouTube did not yet exist. However, it can be argued that the trailer is likely a trailer that used to be screened at the cinemas around 2003 or 2004, and was later released on YouTube when Chadha joined under the username “Bend It Networks” in 2014. The film has a low video quality and is made in a style that corresponds to film from 2004 rather than later. It is, however, interesting that Bend It Films’ marketing department still puts effort into marketing the film years after its release.

The trailer has a strong focus on the Bollywood aspects of the adaptation (Sayer). In the trailer, there is only one short fragment that includes central London – the rest of the video is packed with Bollywood-style dance scenes and Indian clothing. The trailer puts an overwhelming focus on the Bollywood elements, despite Chadha's proclamation that the film is not Indian but rather a Bollywood x Hollywood hybrid created for Western audiences. This could signify an effort on the production team’s behalf to lure in audiences with the trailer’s emphasis on “exotic” Indian culture. The lack of “Western” influences in this supposedly

hybrid film trailer is curiously contradicted by Chadha's strong statement that the film is by no means Indian, and edges on the blatant exploitation of Indian culture.

*Cogs in the Marketing Machine: Marketing as an Extratextual Influence*

As demonstrated with the cinema trailer, digital marketing campaigns were not yet prominent in the early 2000's. Rather, Miramax' literary adaptation productions relied on a three-pronged marketing and publicity strategy (Murray 171). The fanbase of the original, acclaimed work, in this case Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*, functions as early opinion-setters for the film's reception (172). This way, as Murray explains, the involvement of the book world is essential to the marketing process of a literary adaptation through the engagement of the novels' fans (157). The fan reactions can then be utilized to create a launch pad for a broader distribution campaign (172). Such instances of fan approval can be used to build critical and reviewer praise – especially in the build-up to the film awards season (172). *Bride & Prejudice* was successful at building such a distribution platform, as reflected by the many international nominations for British Independent Film Awards, Golden Trailer Awards, Washington DC Area Film Critics Association Awards – and even India's Stardust Awards by courtesy of the prominent Indian actresses featured in the film, despite India not falling within the target audience group.

Murray argues that the distribution marketing machine that presents a literary adaptation to the world is more influential than ever (183). She describes that the playing field of film reviewing has been tilted strongly in the favor of the marketers, as they have access to powerful means of “shaping the critical reception of a literary adaptation” (183). This ties in with the statement made about – and by – Chadha that the director has the power to influence their audience through their intentions and motivations. The marketing of a film

is arguably equally influential, but in creating an audience platform for the film. Murray explains that there are multitudinous factors that influence the final box profit. By releasing an adaptation at the right time of year, premiere district, upmarket venues and geographical scale of the audience platform, the marketers attempt to attract audiences to the cinemas (183). Or as Murray formulates: “there is nothing accidental about a modern audience member’s encounter with a screen adaptation” (183). *Bride & Prejudice* has a clearly established target audience: Western audiences with an open mindset towards watching a “spiced” version of Hollywood film.

Hence, the premiere events were held in the UK and the USA, by virtue of the influence of the UK Film Council (UK) and Miramax (USA). The film’s first premiere was held in the luxurious West-end London Palladium theater on the 4th of October. The event was Bollywood themed, “decorated with Indian fabrics and fairy lights and abuzz with the sound of Indian drummers” (“*Bride and Prejudice* Makes Dazzling London Premiere”). In the USA, the film was released to the public on the 11th of February in the USA, on the same day that Lincoln Day is celebrated. This is a public holiday in a number of states, making a cinema visit more attractive. As Murray confirms, film is influenced greatly by the seasonal calendar, and thus the audience (164-5). Whereas the northern hemisphere summer is a popular release period, briefer holidays are also often attractive slots for major film releases, as reflected by the releases of *Bride & Prejudice*. From analyzing solely the textuality of *Bride & Prejudice*, these prominent extratextual marketing phenomena would have remained unnoticed, despite their influence on the encounter between the adaptation and its potential viewers and subsequent reception.

As a conclusion, there are infinite ways of exploring the institutional side of the Adaptation Industry. The hierarchy of roles and positions within the production companies and organizations are remarkably complex, and each individual decision arguably has an

impact on the final product of the adaptation as well as the audience recruiting process. The large institutions involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice* each play an important role in the creation of the adaptation. However, some of these institutions have a more foregrounded position, in this case by virtue of their film style, like Miramax, or their governmental influence, like the UK Film Council. It is important to understand the influence that such players in the Adaptation Industry have over the film production and audience recruitment as well as reception. After all, nothing is accidental about the encounter between a literary adaptation and a viewer. Even the smaller production players such as Chadha's Bend It Films add more dimension to one's understanding of the adaptation and the Adaptation Industry alike. By studying the intricacies of institutional adaptation production, one can uncover the importance and influence of the seasonal calendar, institutional hierarchies, convergence, as well as funding and marketing. Each of these elements is at the basis of how, where and when the audience is presented with a specific literary adaptation. Similar – or even complementary – to the textual dimension of case study analysis, the extratextual dimension consists of many sub-divided roles of which the institutions are a prominent part. It is hence important that more academic research is done on the extratextual side of the production of literary adaptations in order to come to a deeper understanding of how a film is produced, finds its audience, and is subsequently received.

## Chapter 4:

The Audience: Idealized Spectators and Individual Viewer Reception of *Bride & Prejudice*

After having analyzed the director and the institutions involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice* as a literary adaptation, it is key to involve the audience and the way in which they understand the film as a product of the Adaptation Industry. The actors within the Adaptation Industry have a direct effect on the final product that the audiences watch in the cinema, and hence have a strong influence on their viewing experience. In this chapter the significant difference between the ideal and actual audience will be critically discussed, as well as how and why certain elements of the Adaptation Industry are received by the individual viewer. In other words, what was the intended audience, and how did the actual audience receive this literary adaptation as a product of the Adaptation Industry?

For this chapter, it is useful to first establish how we define the “audience” and the “spectator” in relation to *Bride & Prejudice* as a case study. Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright state that there is an important distinction between the idealized viewer, or subject, and the individual viewer (72). The idealized viewer is the “spectator”, and is not an individual, flesh-and-blood person, but is rather the overall idealized target viewer as intended by the filmmaker, as opposed to the individual viewer (72). The individual viewer is the single audience member who gives personal meaning to the images they see on screen (73). This is also known as “reception”, and is reflected in the reviews that came out after the adaptation was released.

In the case of *Bride & Prejudice*, as firmly stated by Chadha, the intended film audience is Western. To Chadha, the ideal audience is one that is open to seeing India in a new light rather than through the lens of stereotypes, and is moreover interested in a “spiced”

version of the Hollywood and musical film they are used to. Chadha firmly asserts how she envisions the target audience, classification of genre as well as ideological goals. These goals include views on both feminism as well as racism. She clearly states that she “does not hope that people think it is an Indian movie”, and explicitly states that the film was created with an unassuming Western audience in mind (*One Guy’s Opinion*). Her views on the interlinked nature of the women in Jane Austen’s novels and contemporary Indian women moreover reflect a feminist intent for female representation and empowerment on screen.

Chadha furthermore displays a strong intent to abolish racism and its accompanying practice of stereotyping by the West. These parameters function as a lens to understand how Chadha envisions her ideal viewer, or spectator. In short, Chadha’s ideal audience is one that wishes to be entertained with the splendor of Hollywood and the musicals that they are familiar with – an unassuming, Western audience with an open mind that knows little of the real India, or is willing to suspend their knowledge for the sake of the entertainment that the film offers. The demographic and reviews of the individual viewers, however, often diverge strongly from the ideal spectator that Chadha had in mind.

*Bride & Prejudice* is not only a hybrid film by virtue of Chadha’s heritage, but most importantly functions to fulfill her motives to bring a taste of Bollywood to the “ideal” Western audience. The film is one that creates a hybrid between the uniquely new (Bollywood) and familiar (Hollywood, musicals) – which will ensure that a hesitant audience can more readily accept new cultural elements as they are delivered in a recognizable context. “Recognizing”, as confirmed by Chadha’s intentions and motivations for the adaptation, seems to bring joy and comfort to the spectator rather than a feeling of alienation.

As Murray states, this mode of recognition is one of the reasons why books should never be seen as “the rapidly obsolescing poor cousin to everburgeoning screen media”, but

should rather be celebrated for their prominence as the origin for book-derived content in the multimedia age (23). Books, as Murray explains, remain an important entry-point into a content franchise. This highlights the importance of engaging with a literary adaptation, where cross-media engagement with content plays a prominent role (23).

In *Bride & Prejudice*, familiarity is constructed by explaining cultural phenomena that would otherwise be self-explanatory to the members of the depicted culture. In the film, this is done by explaining the meaning of cultural elements such as henna. For the Indian characters and viewers, this information would be a given, and hence the explanation of such a cultural element signifies that the target audience is indeed not Indian. According to Chadha's approach, when the Western audience is exposed to an unfamiliar cultural element, an explanation of how this unfamiliar element can be understood within the framework of Western culture will help the audience understand rather than to mock.

However, the spectator – or ideal audience – is far removed from reality. After its release, *Bride & Prejudice* was received not only in the UK or USA. Interestingly, the film was received in Indian cinemas as well, despite India falling outside of the established ideal audience. Importantly, the adaptation was the subject of several (critical) articles in the *Hindustan Times*, one of India's largest newspapers.

Despite the fact that the adaptation is targeted at Western audiences, The *Hindustan Times* created a platform for *Bride & Prejudice* and gave attention to the mixed-genre adaptation. The *Hindustan Times* is one of the largest English-language newspapers in India, read by millions of Indian people. Its positive acknowledgment of *Bride & Prejudice* would have made for excellent marketing. However, the newspaper was critical: "The publicists of *Bride & Prejudice* do not tire of telling the world that Gurinder Chadha's new film is "Bollywood-meets-Hollywood in a perfect match" fare. But the director herself seems to be

unwittingly at odds with that assertion. “*Bride & Prejudice* is a British film with a nod to popular Hindi cinema,” she insists. So, does that make the Aishwarya Rai-starrer Bollywood enough?” (Chatterjee). Arguably, this newspaper brought the attention of Indian people to the existence of *Bride & Prejudice*, resulting in more Indian viewers and reviewers scrutinizing Chadha’s depiction of Indian culture on screen. The leading newspaper critically assesses the extratextual establishment of genre by questioning whether Chadha’s film is truly a mix between these genres as is marketed – or whether the audience should be more critical on the contradiction between the marketing slogan and Chadha’s statements.

Moreover, online reviews were critical, as Indian people started publishing their opinions on the way in which Chadha depicted Indian culture in a problematic way. Numerous reviewers criticized Chadha as an unfitting director for producing an Indian film as a result of her heritage. Non-Indian audience members reacted critically to the film, taking Indian culture into consideration, whereas others seemed to have little to no extratextual knowledge of the film at all and took the depictions of India at face value.

From these critical reviews, we can see that there are strongly diverging opinions on the adaptation’s classification of genre. As can be argued on the basis of some of these reviews, the marketing of *Bride & Prejudice* as an extratextual aspect had a notable effect on the audience’s viewing experience. Especially the “Bollywood meets Hollywood; and it’s a perfect match!” slogan was subject to constant criticism. The widely circulated slogan describing the film’s genre classification is part of one of the first extratextual elements the audience encounters, and naturally is an element that the audience remembers during their viewing experience of *Bride & Prejudice*. The way in which the film has been marketed hence had a noticeable effect on the light in which the individual viewer experienced *Bride & Prejudice*.

As an example, IMDB reviewer Padiyark writes about their confusion on the film's genre and intentions: "Is it a Bollywood satire? Or is it a Bollywood version of *Pride and Prejudice*? Or is it a Bollywood film with one Caucasian? Or is it a criticism/analysis of Indian culture? I just didn't get this film." (Padiyark). Their understanding of the film seems to be that the film is labeled as some form of Bollywood, rather than a hybrid. Reviewer Gradyharp seems to be under the same impression: "There are so many films like *Bride & Prejudice* that a term has been created for them: Bollywood" (Gradyharp). Another similar review was posted on how the film transfers Austen's narrative to modern-day India in the "Bollywood" musical style but with English dialogue (JamesHitchcock). These reviews stand in stark contrast with the ideal audience that Chadha had envisioned. Rather than an unassuming Western audience, the individual viewer seems to be aware of Chadha's failure to fulfill her goal of creating a non-Indian Hollywood x Bollywood-*style* adaptation.

However, these reviews also reflect a lack of extratextual engagement. Whereas the elements of the incorporated Bollywood style are recognized, the audience seems to rely on "Bollywood experts" or are confused as to how this adaptation can be classified. As reflected by Gradyharp, some viewers are even under the impression that the film is purely Bollywood, and are seemingly also unaware of the "Hollywood meets Bollywood; and it's a perfect match" slogan printed on the film cover. Their views are thus derived completely from the textual dimension of the film and show no influence from the Adaptation Industry or other surrounding extratextual factors such as marketing and institutional or directorial statements. The critical reviewers are seemingly unaware of Chadha's published statements on the adaptation's genre classification, and thus display confusion about the goal of the film.

Contrasting to the reviews that display an understanding of *Bride & Prejudice* as a Bollywood film, some viewers experience the film as one that is strongly Western in its

approach and cultural depictions. This Westernification is arguably the result of the UK Film Council constraint, which stated that most of the adaptation had to be filmed in the UK. Consequently, the influence of this controversial regulation resulted in the foregrounding of Western culture. This phenomenon demonstrates how the UK Film Council, as part of the Adaptation Industry, had a direct influence on the final adaptation, as well as how the adaptation was received by its audience. A key issue that was addressed in the audience reviews was the way in which the film seems to foreground Western values and culture. One reviewer writes: “While there is still stratification in Indian society, “caste” never comes into the story: the setting is the sub-continent but the “values” are very Western” (Jamesrupert 2014). Reviewer Kingslaay writes a review from the Indian point of view: “I am disappointed with how Hollywood smears and diminishes rich Indian culture. Western countries have forever seemed happy to live in ignorance and propel Indian stereotypes like arranged marriages. This will once again suit an uneducated and ignorant Western audience who are happy to have their ignorance reinforced rather than learn about other rich cultures” (Kingslaay). Kingslaay reflects on the Western ignorance and practice of stereotyping that Chadha hoped to abolish, and effectively states that Chadha failed to fulfill her goals for this adaptation.

The individual audience members have furthermore published a myriad of reviews on this subject. IMDB reviewer Red-125 writes: “Although the movie is full of singing and dancing, Bollywood experts tell us that it’s not really Bollywood. For example, Aishwarya Rai is very beautiful, but in a European/US way, rather than an Indian subcontinent way”. Rai is one of the highest-paid actresses in India, and is in many ways a figurehead for Bollywood cinema. However, in accordance with the argument that *Bride & Prejudice* foregrounds Western culture, Rai has an appearance that is highly in accordance with Western beauty standards. As a result, Indian values, realities and beauty standards are put in the background

as Rai is presented as the embodiment of India and Indian beauty in *Bride & Prejudice*. This once again ties in with the concept of familiarity, where the Western audience is presented with easily-digestible portrayals of Indian culture.

*Bride & Prejudice*, with its aim to appeal to a mainly Western audience, arguably becomes a standardized product which functions solely to meet the needs of a wide audience (Adorno & Horkheimer 95). Such standardized products are directly derived from the needs of the audience – in this case an audience that might be put off by the idea of watching a true Bollywood film (95). Hence, *Bride & Prejudice* might not be effective at abolishing racism and stereotyping of Indian culture, but merely function as a Westernized mask to gain the approval of a Western audience – who according to Chadha, would otherwise not see the appeal of a Bollywood film. When looking more closely at Chadha's motives and target audience, the commodification of Indian cinema seems an underlying issue. *Bride & Prejudice* is remarkably in line with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's theory on the culture industry, and how culture is increasingly commodified to fit (global) mass consumption. After all, Mainstream commercial film production is a strongly audience-maximizing, risk-reducing mass-market enterprise, as is reflected by the goals and ideal audience for *Bride & Prejudice* (Murray 162).

Alongside the influence of the director and the presence of the audience, there are several institutional actors that influence the way in which an adaptation is received. In this case, the most prominent institutions that are linked to the production of *Bride & Prejudice* are Miramax and the UK Film Council. What is interesting to look at now, is whether the audience includes reflections on the institutions in their reviews of the film. Surprisingly, the UK Film Council remains unmentioned in the audience reviews, and even in academic research the institution is rarely mentioned, much less critically discussed.

In the case of *Bride & Prejudice*, Gurinder Chadha is positioned within a network of institutions that have set several guidelines for her adaptation. We have already established in Chapter 3 that the link between the UK Film Council and Chadha's film are disputable in terms of its colonial implications. These guidelines have acted as constraints for the personal motives and intentions that Chadha outlined for this film. Rather than bringing forth an accurate representation of India to the Western audience, the UK Film Council complexified this goal greatly by requiring Chadha to film a substantial portion of her adaptation in the UK.

Not only did this constraint take away from Chadha's motives, the presence of the Council as a benefactor creates an imbalanced power dynamic that can be understood as a reflection of postcolonial times. Ensuring the audience is aware of the significant influence the UK Film Council had over the production of *Bride & Prejudice* will help them look more critically at the film and its postcolonial undercurrents as a result of the production parties. Miramax, however, is pointed out by several reviewing audience members. Miramax is known as the enormous entertainment company previously led by Harvey Weinstein. Being linked to popular films such as *Pulp Fiction* and *Shakespeare in Love*, the audience is likely to have heard of the company as well as their notable, alternative style before. One IMDB reviewer describes the film as a Miramax style romantic comedy Bollywood film (Chris\_Docker).

*Bride & Prejudice could* have been a fully Indian film in order to fight Indian stereotypes in film by presenting an accurate representation of Indian culture rather than a version of Indian culture modified to fit Western tastes and perceptions. As Adorno and Horkheimer claim, the audience is trained to identify film directly with reality (100). Bollywood film depicts a reality which diverges greatly from daily life, exaggerating and

stereotyping certain aspects of Indian culture for the benefit of creating a commercial film for the masses. As Surangama Guha argues, “Bollywood blatantly commercializes crucial aspects of the cultural ethos of the Indian society” (33). As an example, Mrs. Bakshi’s behavior is naturalized in the context of an established set of representations of the Indian mother from the Western perspective (Geraghty 165).

Furthermore, Geraghty explains that there is a pervading British stereotype about young Asian women resisting the expectations of their families (165). Lalita as a character very much fits into this stereotype – as she is modeled after the headstrong Elizabeth Bennet. It would thus – in the case of *Bride & Prejudice* – be especially important to provide Western audiences with accurate representations of Indian culture. Inaccurate representations can cause the spectator to view those representations as an extension of the real world, resulting in the creation of stereotypes. Contemporary audiences are prone to viewing real life as an extension of film, hence internalizing certain ‘truths’ which a film might present, however unjustified, racist or stereotyping they might be as a result of passive consumption. Hence, this commodified adaptation would not work as effectively as Chadha might have hoped in erasing stereotypes with the help of Bollywood or Bollywood-style film.

As a conclusion, the audience reception was critical on primarily a textual level, but included highly important notes on the extratextual as well. This effectively highlights the importance of analyzing the audience reception of a literary adaptation with the influence of the Adaptation Industry in mind. The review samples included in this chapter show how Chadha’s intentions and motives for *Bride & Prejudice* were not received in the way in which she had hoped. Rather than abolishing stereotypes and introducing elements of India to a Western audience in a respectful manner, reviews reflect the idea that the film reinforces Western views and values rather than Indian ones. The fact that *Bride & Prejudice* was

received in India as well resulted in a myriad of reviews published by Indian audience members. Despite falling outside of Chadha's ideal audience, the Indian reviewers posted numerous critical reviews reflecting on the controversial position Chadha holds, as well as how Indian culture is depicted inaccurately. This arguably takes away from Chadha's goals for the adaptation: despite the fact that Chadha states that the film is not meant to be Indian at all, despite her intentions of bringing a recognizable version of Indian culture to a Western audience. Moreover, the audience notes how prominent producing company Miramax is reflected in *Bride & Prejudice*. Whereas there is little to no engagement with the UK Film Council, audiences do seem to be aware of other influences that the Adaptation Industry has on a film production. Miramax, by virtue of its popular productions and awards, is naturally better known than a government film council. This confirms the fact that the extratextual Adaptation Industry should be more often included in the analyses of literary adaptations. In other words, the critical audience reviews reflect how extratextual elements such as genre, the director's background and the producing institutions can alter an individual's understanding of the film, and help them develop more critical interpretations.

## Conclusion

The analysis of *Bride & Prejudice* as presented in this thesis has uncovered the often overlooked importance of the Adaptation Industry. The adaptation has been widely discussed on a textual level across the world by audiences and scholars alike. Especially in the field of adaptation studies the Postcolonial and Orientalist textual perspectives have proven to be popular. However, this field and its approaches are derived from literary studies and film studies, which results in the predominantly textual approach to *Bride & Prejudice*. This leaves the sociology of the adaptation, such as the film's production factors, substantially underrepresented. Through analyzing the cultural production factors of the Adaptation Industry as well as the existing academic research, I was able to highlight the importance of the extratextual presence of the adaptation industry and its influence. This thesis aimed to provide an answer to the query of whether the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* can function as a necessary complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate.

*Bride & Prejudice* is experienced as controversial by scholars and audiences alike in its approach to Indian culture. The literary adaptation is often analyzed in light of its textual qualities by literary and adaptation scholars, while the extratextual presence of the Adaptation Industry is largely overlooked despite the fact that many textual elements in adaptations are based in extratextual decisions. This singular focus on textuality obscures the influence of prominent parties that have shaped the textual content into its received form. Each of these actors in the Adaptation Industry have a direct influence on the way in which a literary adaptation is produced and eventually received by cinema audiences. Arguably, *Bride & Prejudice* has only been partially analyzed, resulting in a one-dimensional and incomplete discussion of the film in the field of adaptation studies. As this thesis has demonstrated, it is important to inspect an alternative to the widely analyzed textual dimension in order to create

a more complete and balanced understanding of *Bride & Prejudice* as a literary adaptation by going beyond textuality. Each of the chapters included in this thesis help answer the overarching question: How can the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* function as a necessary complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate?

With the help of Simone Murray's *The Adaptation Industry: The Cultural Economy of Contemporary Literary Adaptation*. Rather than seeing an adaptation in light of its dominant textual approaches, Murray suggests analyzing the culture economy surrounding the production and reception of a literary adaptation. Murray hopes to nudge adaptation studies beyond its text-focused comfort zone in order to realize a sociology of adaptation (4). She describes her theory as filling the gap between macro-oriented political economy and textual- and audience-focussed cultural studies.

The first chapter, "Textual Approaches: Postcolonialism and Exoticization in *Bride & Prejudice*", served as an offset for the rest of this thesis. The adaptation had been primarily analyzed through the popular lens of postcolonialism and exoticization. For *Bride & Prejudice*, it is useful to highlight the extratextual dimension relating to the sociology of the adaptation. As an example, scholars argued that the film inaccurately represented Indian culture and commodified it to gain profit. As was shown in this thesis, this characteristic can be explained through the presence of the UK Film Council, which provided a stipulation for the film production provided that most of it was shot in the UK.

In Chapter two, "Gurinder Chadha: The Role of the Director as the "Author"", this thesis turns towards an extratextual analysis and application of Simone Murray's theory on the Adaptation Industry. When one takes into account Chadha's media image, heritage and personal motives, it becomes prominent how these factors have influenced the final shape that *Bride & Prejudice* has taken on. In order to round out the textual understanding of *Bride*

*& Prejudice*, this thesis argues that a film's final product and perception are influenced by the persona, background and media image of the director as well as the classificatory genre and ideal audience she has appointed the production.

The third chapter, "The Institutions: The UK Film Council and Miramax as Actors within the Adaptation Industry", revolves around the institutional actors in the Adaptation Industry. Large entertainment companies Miramax, the UK Film Council and Bend It Films are involved in the production of *Bride & Prejudice* and each have a distinct influence on the final film. One can better understand the direct influence that the producing institutions have on an adaptation and its audience through its market positioning, advertising and strategizing. By engaging with influencing factors such as paratexts, institutional hierarchies and convergence, one can better understand how, where and when the audience is presented with a specific literary adaptation.

The fourth chapter, "The Audience: Idealized Spectators and Individual Viewer Reception of *Bride & Prejudice*", demonstrated the difference between the ideal audience and the real audience of *Bride & Prejudice*. Even more so, it established how the presence of the Adaptation Industry actors has been received and reflected on by the viewers. Indian and Western reviewers alike posted criticism on *Bride & Prejudice* and its inaccurate depictions of Indian culture. This effectively highlights the importance of analyzing not only the Adaptation Industry from a textual or institutional angle, but also from the perspective of audience reception. The critical global audience reviews on *Bride & Prejudice* reflect how extratextual elements from the Adaptation Industry such as genre, the director's background and the producing institutions can alter an individual's understanding of the film, and help them develop more critical interpretations.

For future research on this topic, I would suggest exploring the influence of paratexts such as interviews and marketing as part of the extratextual dimension more extensively.

After conventionalizing the Industry approach, it would be only natural to expand further into the extratextual dimension in order to bring more balance to the text-focused fields of adaptation and literary studies. After all, the Adaptation Industry is only one part of the extratextual dimension.

All in all, this thesis considers how the Adaptation Industry and an audience-focused approach to *Bride & Prejudice* can function as a complement to the existing, text-focused academic debate. It does so by proposing an extension of the field of literary and adaptation studies. This can be done by utilizing Murray's theory on the Adaptation Industry to better understand the surrounding institutions and actors involved in creating a literary adaptation. I want to propose straying away from dominant research methods where close reading or other textual methods are foregrounded, and instead highlight the importance of putting the extratextual Adaptation Industry and the dominant textual approach on a balancing scale in order to round out the body of research done on *Bride & Prejudice*. The textual and extratextual dimensions are intricately connected, and help give depth to one another: the textual dimension can be utilized to provide support and background for the extratextual, and vice versa. This method will ensure a more rounded out, balanced way of conducting research, where the textual is no longer put on a pedestal, but rather put on a balancing scale alongside the extratextual.

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