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An Analysis of the Cultural Aspects in the Film and Fiction Versions of Alice Walker's *Color Purple* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

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Certificate

This is to certify that the Minor Research Project titled **An Analysis of the Cultural Aspects in the Film and Fiction Versions of Alice Walker's *Color Purple* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*** MRP (H)-603/12-13/KLMG031/UGC-SWRO dated 29/03/2013 is a bonafide work done by Vidya Merlin Varghese Assistant Professor, Post-Graduate Department of English, Baselius College, Kottayam and that the project is completed duly adhering to the rules and regulations laid down by the University Grants Commission.

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I, Vidya Merlin Varghese, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled **An Analysis of the Cultural Aspects in the Film and Fiction Versions of Alice Walker's *Color Purple* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*** has been prepared by me and also declare that this is a bonafide record of research work done by me during the course of Minor Research project allotted to me by The University Grants Commission, New Delhi and no part of this study has been submitted earlier or elsewhere for any similar purpose.

Kottayam
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The term 'culture' has undergone a characteristic paradigmatic shift. To define it in a few words would mean to limit its scope and extent. Pramod Nayar has stated in *An Introduction to Cultural Studies* that 'culture is produced through everyday living: the food people eat, the fashions they adopt, the entertainment they prefer or the festivals they celebrate' (29). Any work of art is a reflection of the culture of that particular milieu because the author is not just a product of his times but also a conscious observer of his times. His creative outpourings are indeed slices of life he observed directly or indirectly. The project entitled '**An Analysis of the Cultural Aspects in the Film and Fiction Versions of Alice Walker's *Color Purple* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice***' aims at analyzing and identifying the cultural aspects in two texts and their film versions.

The researcher's investigation primarily constitutes dual modes of action: firstly, the cultural features in the two fictional pieces are examined and secondly, it is compared with the film counterpart. The project comprises of five chapters. The first chapter is titled 'Introduction', herein, there is a foray into the broad area of focus Culture Studies. The chapter presents an outline on the beginnings and current development of Cultural Studies and its relevance in the present theoretical scenario. The introductory chapter also gives an outline of the cultural codes identified within the texts. Chapter two, titled 'The Artists and Their Craft' provides a bird's eye view upon the life of the authors-Jane Austen and Alice Walker-and their literary works. This chapter also provides a biographical sketch about the directors-Joe Wright and Steven Spielberg-and their films. The third chapter 'Cultural Scenario in the Texts' takes into consideration six cultural aspects to broadly analyse the cultural events in the novels. Chapter four 'Cultural Scenario During Transition' details out the similarities and distinctions in the cultural scenario of the two genres (film/fiction). Chapter five is titled 'Conclusion' and as the title suggests it provides a summation of all the findings in the best possible manner.

Culture is basically associated with human beings because man is a social being and mingling with other fellow beings leads to the generation of common practices or rituals. Literature focuses on life and its myriad forms. Novels present the real world of the authors. The reader is bound to detect the political, social and economic elements inherent in the works of the writers. The writers are actually presenting a cultural overview of their times. The texts chosen for study have been penned by women writers spanning across ages and continents. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Walker's *Color Purple* can be regarded as sister tales in two respects; one because they are novels written of women, for women, by women and secondly because they focus on the natural intimate bond between sisters.

Since culture deals with everyday activities, there has been a spectacular interest in the study of cultures. The two texts are of specific interest chiefly because this is an age of intermingling and understanding of variant cultures. A cross study and examination will

undoubtedly open up new vistas for cultural exchange and enhancement. The two texts are culturally apart but one may notice a common thread running between them.

Cultural Studies, an interdisciplinary approach to the study and analysis of culture, came into being in the late 1960's and 70's. As a field of academic study it finds its beginnings in the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, U.K. Critics like Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall etc, were instrumental in the development of this field of study. The early works of these writers emerged in the 1970's and it had a New Left touch to it. They (especially Raymond Williams) pointed out that the working class background or culture had no definite role in the literary study programmes at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

Stuart Hall's essay "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms" is regarded to be the 'trendsetter' in the arena of Cultural Studies. With this essay began the focus on the cultural identities, relationships within and without the society and discourses. Culture is seen as 'a text made of signs and generating meaning' (Nayar 22) and cultural studies analyses the production of meaning. By the late 1970's, Cultural Studies started showing changes in perspective. What emerged as a New Left discipline slightly oriented towards the New Right thought. This led to the discipline becoming 'internationalized' (During 13). By then, issues of gender roles, racism, the 'other' sexuality etc came within the purview of Cultural Studies.

By the late 1980's Cultural Studies included within its ambit 'cultural populism', which takes into account the relation between cultural markets and cultural products. Simon During has mentioned in *The Cultural Studies Reader* that 'Cultural Policy Studies' came into being by the second half of the 1990's (16). Today Cultural Studies is a discipline that is continuously shifting its interests and methods. Everyday life is still the object of study. Questions related to meaning production are the methods of analyzing the cultures. Cultural Studies area of interest is not limited or restricted. It has moved across national borders. 'Transnational Cultural Studies' has evolved as a new area of study. Globalization has triggered the mixing, enhancement and expansion of cultural markets.

Cultural Studies as an academic discipline in institutions around the world, took place in the early 1990's. Cultural Studies theorists have a discrete mode of analysis. Universities around the world have developed courses which encourage the learning of cultures and language. As an academic discipline, it examines borders, power barriers-political, social or cultural, cultural clashes, identities-both multiple and indigenous etc. The reach and extent of Cultural Studies is unimaginable. Thus we understand that for the Culture Studies scholar, any object of everyday life - a soap dish, comb, advertisement, uniform or whatnot - becomes the focal point for analysis. Literature also comes within the ambit of analysis because a literary text is replete with cultural signifiers. Cultural Studies is regarded to be 'a new way of engaging in the study of culture' (Longhurst et al.1). The substance and method of cultural studies includes the collaboration of different disciplines like sociology, history, geography, English and anthropology.

Cultural Studies can be seen as an endeavour to link literature with the wider cultural base of society. By examining the cultural aspects in the texts under study, certain common cultural codes or symbols have been identified. These realms reflect the cultural landscape of the texts and help decode the cultural workings of their respective periods. Six basic cultural signs/characteristics identified in the texts are:

- 1) Characters(name, physical features)
- 2) Food (eating habits and patterns)
- 3) Clothing (dress code)
- 4) Material Goods (house ,car, land, wealth etc)
- 5) Language(English gentry folk speech / Afro American speech)
- 6) Common practices(letter writing, housekeeping ,weaving, etc)

The readers are transported into the cultural milieu of the novelists. Austen and Walker are conscientious women writers whose subjective narratives have unfurled the wondrous world from a women's perspective. The charm of the texts resulted in their visual reproductions-films. The novels won widespread acclaim and readership after their film adaptations came out. In the introduction to his book *Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader*, Timothy Corrigan has cited that:

THE HISTORY of the relationship between film and literature is a history of ambivalence, confrontation, and mutual dependence. From the late nineteenth century to the present, these two ways of seeing and describing the world have at different times despised each other, redeemed each other, learned from each other, and distorted each other's self proclaimed integrity.(1) This statement establishes that film and literature when coupled can open up multiple interpretations. Literature employs words, hence, it is verbal but film is an aural –visual semblance .Reading a novel and watching its movie adaptation, obviously involves varied intellectual activities, but a close examination of the two will open up different meanings. Film and literature are regarded to be 'the vehicles for cultural identities and their myths throughout the twentieth century...'(25)The main objective of this study is to identify the cultural similarities and distinctions in the texts selected for the purpose. The project also proposes to outline where the two, that is, the film and the novels converge and diverge in their cultural mappings.

CHAPTER TWO THE ARTISTS AND THEIR CRAFT

Jane Austen (1775-1817) was the seventh child of her parents. Austen had a literary bend right from her early teenage and has to her credit about six novels. *Pride and Prejudice*, her second novel, is declared to be her most popular novel. The work was initially titled as *First Impressions*. When published under the altered title in 1813, it sold up to more than thousand copies and came out in three consecutive editions. Austen was born into a moderately wealthy family and lived for most of her lifetime in the small village of Hampshire. She had very little formal education and relied wholly on her father's library for literary acumen. The popularity of this artist is evident from the widespread admirers- which include legendary figures and political leaders like Macaulay and Winston Churchill -she has to this day, in many parts of the world.

Two centuries have passed since its publication and yet the charm of this classic novel has not waned. Austen's work focuses on the life activities of the gentry folk of eighteenth century provincial England. Her world was replete with ball room dancing , elaborate meals among the elite, marriage fixing and match making gatherings and gossips. A remarkable fact to be mentioned is that Austen was an unmarried woman who lived a cloistered life in a rural set up but the primary concern in her novels was about the role of women, their anxieties regarding marriage, financial security, mobility, education and so on. 'Jane Austen's life as a writer was a long assimilation of the social and moral climate in which she grew.'(Chawdry18)

Joe Wright, the director, was born in London in 1972. He started his career creating a few short films and television series for the British Broadcasting Corporation. Wright's feature film debut was the adaptation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* . The film, titled like the novel , is an Anglo-American production released in 2005 starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen . It is deemed to be a fairly truthful presentation of the novelist's verbal world. The film's running time is approximately 121 minutes. The film won him the award of the best new comer director.

Alice Walker, a scholar, poet, novelist, short story writer, essayist and much more, was born in Georgia in 1944. With the publication of her third novel, *The Color Purple*(1982), she bagged the prestigious Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. Walker belongs to the group of novelists known as the Afro-American writers whose literary acumen gained prominence in the 1960's .These writers' works where marked by the 'range of voices' inherent in them. (Graham 3)The novel *Color Purple* is set in rural Georgia and is partially based on the life of her great-grandmother and primarily 'deals with the black experience as Walker has perceived and experienced it...'(Guerin et al.72) The novel is populated with memorable characters and their traumatic accounts and remains to this day as a classic voicing the boldness of black women writers.

Steven Spielberg, in full Steven Allan Spielberg, is known as a remarkable director of phenomenal films. Born in 1946, in Ohio, USA, Spielberg's fame soared with the release of the film *The Color Purple* in 1985. The film was an adaptation of Alice Walker's prize winning novel *The Color Purple*. The movie garnered a series of Academy Award nominations and other honours. Whoopie Goldberg played the lead role of Celie. The film gives us a pictorial representation of Walker's Celie, Nettie and others. The film takes the bond of human relationship as the thread to weave a remarkable movie.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CULTURAL SCENARIO IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE NOVELS

‘Literature is a treasury embodying all that is to be valued in human experience.’(Storey 27) Each novel holds within it cultural jewels of the lived experience of the author. Cultural Studies aims at ‘scrutinizing the cultural phenomenon of a text...’(Guerin et.al.277) The researcher has identified certain vantage points from whence the cultural aspects of the texts can be perceived. These vantage points provide a platform to simultaneously study the cultural aspects of both the texts.

Alice Walker and Jane Austen are continents and centuries apart, but, even then their writings are fabulously scented with the culture they experienced. These two women used word power to critique their social set ups. The ladies drew their storyline from their personal experiences and hence their narratives are realistic accounts. *Color Purple* and *Pride and Prejudice* are products of different environments, be it social, geographical or cultural, yet, they provide valuable insights into the writer’s milieu. They reflect the consciousness of the writers. Austen wrote at a time when women wrote anonymously, while Walker’s writings are outright statements from and about subjugated black women. Austen ‘belonged to a period when a major shift in terms of social change was increasingly becoming evident in various spheres of life and thought.’(Chawdhry 53) *Pride and Prejudice*, a finely wrought novel of manners, illustrates her signature themes of courtship, marriage and happiness. Austen’s novel focuses on the gentry folks’ lifestyle during the eighteenth century. Her ‘novels are memorable and relevant as they can be transposed to any culture or society.’(184)

The above statement holds true for Walker’s works too, mostly because her works have always been concerned with racial, sexual and political issues. Her *Color Purple* elevates the pride and prestige of black women’s writings along with helping black women carve a niche of their own within their society. The novel has been regarded as a ‘celebration of the heroic struggle of the black woman against patriarchal culture.’(Singh 154) A cross study of the cultural characteristics will help readers sense the universal bonding that women around the world share. ‘Culture is presented as a system of coded meanings that are produced and reproduced through social interaction.’(Longhurst et.al.32) The cultural characteristics elaborated below, helps the readers gain insight into the real socio-cultural world of the writers.

1.Names

In *The Pursuit of Signs* Jonathan Culler has remarked that each ‘literary work’ has a meaning or signification for its readers and semiotics attempts to make ‘explicit the implicit knowledge which enables signs to have meaning...’(43)A cultural analysis of a novel should obviously begin with a close examination of the characters who serve as signifiers. Both the

works have a spectacular array of characters. Their names are suggestive of the naming trends of the writer's cultural ambience. Elizabeth, Jane, Mr and Mrs Bennet, Bingley, Darcy, Lydia, Rev Collins, Charlotte, Lady Catherine de borough etc. are typical and common English names prevalent during Jane Austen's days. Maggie Lane, a well known Austen scholar has observed in her book *Jane Austen and Names* that Austen's naming fashions were indicative of the character's social position and political scenario. The names allotted to each character spoke volumes of their character. In her paper titled "How Celebrity Name-Dropping Leads to Another Model for Pemberley", Janine Barchas has said that Austen's names reveal the life and times of the Regency period and she 'boldly engages her contemporary culture...' (web) During Austen's time 'the renowned northern names of Bingley, Darcy and Fitzwilliam ... would have tantalized any educated reader with their obvious catchet.' (78) Thus we see Austen's names are indicative of her times.

Steven G.Kellman has commented that Alice Walker's characters are regarded to be 'believable heroines'. The credibility of her characters lie in the names she has chosen for them. Waugamon has mentioned in her article that 'names are fascinating because of their origins, meaning, cultural and family histories. Black American naming traditions were dramatically influenced by slavery.' Looking at the names of the lead characters in the novel from an etymological perspective, we will undoubtedly trace origins of the historical experience of the blacks in America. The novel is set in rural Georgia and Walker explores the sufferings and abuse black women have to face from both white and black men alike. Afro Americans were brought as slaves to work on the cotton plantations of the white men. They lived with the whites on their land but kept up their social customs to remind them of their past. In course of time they got converted to Christianity, had separate churches and learned to read and write. Walker belonged to that galaxy of Black writers whose works reflected the moral, social and political struggle of the blacks.

African American novelists' works were characterized by 'autobiographical impulse'. Race and identity have been the main issues in the novels that came out in the 1970's. 'For many an African American author, the act of writing is part of a larger process of cultural revisionism, of redefining history and historical memory...' (Graham 5) Walker has mentioned that the novel is actually the story of her great grandmother (Singh 151) and therefore Celie is a 'historical memory' Celie is a feminine name of African origin. The name means blind in African but in German it means heaven. Celie's close associate in the novel is Shug Avery. Shug is a diminutive of sugar. Her actual name is Lillie (Walker 110). Shug, as her name suggests brings sweetness into Celie's dark life. She helps Celie explore and be proud of her feminine beauty and strength. She helps her take sweet revenge upon Albert, the man who married her just to take care of his children. Shug helps Celie set up her own stitching business. Thus the 'blind' Celie is taken to heavenly heights.

Alice Walker's works have always highlighted the power of women. Sophia has been another woman of might who has shown Celie that a woman has her own dignity. Sophia,

etymologically means ‘wisdom’. She gives Celie the insight that a woman must believe in herself. Shug and Sophia, together, help Celie revive her strength while she in turn becomes their rock of solace through thick and thin. The male names in the novel—Mr Albert, Tobias, Harpo, Jack, Mr Alphonso, Adam, Samuel—have a touch of Christian conversion element in them. Celie’s sister is christened Nettie. This name is German in origin and means clean, strength, hope... Nettie’s letters provide her with the hope to pull on in spite of all the brutalities she had to undergo. Nettie teaches Celie to read and write. Nettie was the only person other than Shug, who loved Celie unconditionally.

2 Food

Food serves as a key tool for cultural analysis as it can be deemed as a metaphor for the cultural environment inherent in the text. ‘Whatever is eaten, wherever it is eaten and whoever it is eaten with says something about the diners.’ (Longhurst et al. 128) Austen’s novel focuses on the Regency era of England. Her novels reveal only scanty details of what the participants had for their meals. Meal time however was when family met together to comment on the upcoming balls and neighbours. The events in the novel are timed between breakfast, tea time and dinner. We have no elaborate descriptions of what they have for their meals but we do realize that Elizabeth happens to dine with the Bingleys’, the Collins’, the Gardiners and at the Rosings with Lady Catherine and even at Pemberley estate where she was served with ‘cold meat, cake, and a variety of all the finest fruits in season’. Moreover, the table was adorned with ‘beautiful pyramids of grapes, nectarines and peaches’ (Austen 258) Dining with the different people reveal the social differences that exist between Elizabeth and her dining partners. Dining was always regarded as a status symbol (159), or as a means to revive dull spirits (205) and as a means for lovers to meet together (338). When Lady Catherine calls upon Elizabeth’s house she ‘declines eating anything’ (341) because it was below her social status. Drinking tea and coffee was also another valued activity. Guests waited till tea time and were entertained with ‘coffee and muffin’ (73)

Walker’s novel is replete with food items that serve as cultural markers. The regular menu includes cured ham, coffee, yam, eggs, hot biscuits, blackberry pie, blackberry jam, fried chicken, potato salad, cornbread, chitlins, black eyed peas, pickled okra, caramel cake and lot more. Lemonade, beer and wine formed part of what they drank. The food recipes used by the Afro Americans are a reminiscence of their past. Yams and cornbread were also active components of the regular diet of the African slaves who worked for the white men. The Olinka people stuffed ‘the road builders with goat meat, millet mush, baked yam and cassava, cola nuts and palm wine’. (Walker 148) New friendships and deals were made through food.

Nettie narrates her experience at Olinka through the letters she writes to her sister. Food and eating form a major content of her letters. She tells Celie that if they wanted the Olinka men ‘to do something big’ they just had to talk about ‘barbecue’. This reminds Nettie ‘of folks at home!’ (135). Food thus brings nostalgia about things back in America. Nettie celebrates

Christmas with 'watermelon', 'fresh fruit punch and barbecue'(151).For the welcoming ceremony at Olinka, Nettie and her companions were served with 'chicken and groundnut (peanut) stew' (137) Nettie talks about the kinship that existed among the Olinka women because they shared the same man as husband. 'It is in work that the women get to know and care about each other'(150). 'Work' included preparing food, bringing up the children and working on the fields. Mr Albert marries Celie to do the same 'work' at his house. Once there, Celie bonds with Sophia(his son's wife) and Shug (his sweetheart). Celie cooks for Shug when she was ill. Sophia helps Celie with cooking and later on Shug prepares excellent food for her dear Celie. Food preparation therefore becomes an elixir for feminine bonding.

July 4th is celebrated as family reunion day by the blacks. The closing chapter of the novel mentions Celie's 'big family reunion' (259) to be celebrated on the fourth of July just outside her house. All her people join together in preparing 'potato salad' and 'barbecue' (261).Christina Regelski has commented that 'barbecue is the heart and soul of Southern cuisine and corn bread is the backbone'.(n.p) Thus we see that Walker has kept up the typical African American eating patterns intact in her classic work. She has methodically carved out the cultural practices of the African American communities during the 1960's by faithfully detailing their dietary patterns.

3.Clothing

Clothes are objects of everyday use. Examining the clothes of a particular period will provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural conditions of the individual and his community. Sociologists have argued that clothes have multiple functions. They serve as cultural markers. Roland Barthes has written in his *The Language of Fashion* that 'every social condition has its garment...'.He then adds that 'to change clothes was to change both one's being and one's social class, since they were part and parcel of the same thing'.(60) Clothes ,therefore, when studied contextually and characteristically, will convey multiple meanings. The two novels reveal the socio cultural era of the eighteenth century England on one hand and the African America society in the early 1960's. Each outfit can be regarded as a code that indicates not just the socio-cultural elements but it is also indicative of the psychological state of mind of the person wearing the garment.

Austen lived at a time when clothes determined the class of the person who wore them. Aristocracy wore coats and gowns of fine material. Women wore long skirts and there were different proportions for different parts of the garment. Garments were worn and woven to highlight the form and features of the young ladies .Young ladies in Austen's days wore large gowns indoors and when they went out they were sure to take along with them their hats or parasols to keep the sun from marring their complexion. Propriety in dress was required of women who went outdoors. Elizabeth's mother warns her not to go walk to Netherfield Park as the weather would spoil her clothes and she would thus not 'be fit to be seen' by the ladies(Austen 29). Austen does not give any elaborate details of the garments worn by the ladies.

Her descriptions are limited to mere mention of their stockings, petticoats and gowns. Her men are lucky to be presented as wearing coloured garments be it blue coats (7) or red military coats (85).

The Bingley ladies are referred to as 'fine women with an air of decided fashion' (8). Lady Catherine loved 'the distinction of rank preserved' in the clothes worn by people who belonged outside her social circle(157).When Mrs Bennet hears about Lydia's marriage being fixed with Wickham, she gets excited thinking about what clothes she ought to buy .She makes an elaborate list of the 'calico', 'muslin' and 'cambric' needed to complete Lydia's trousseau(296).Later on when Elizabeth discloses to her father about being in love with Darcy, Mr Bennet couldn't help remarking that she would have 'more fine clothes and fine carriages than Jane'(366).

The Color Purple presents us with a totally different world of clothes. While *Pride and Prejudice* offers only minutes dabs of colour here and there, Walker's work has elaborate references to the colourful clothes worn by the principal characters. Celie ,the chief protagonist is initially presented as a fourteen year old young black girl who no longer goes to school because pregnancy made her dress tight(12). Celie has nothing to wear (5) even while she is at her own home. This insignificant Celie gets new clothes when she is at her husband Mr Albert's house. Albert never ever thought of clothing her properly and when his sister tells him to buy Celie some clothes he lets her do so. Celie admired Shug Avery and she went out to buy clothes for herself she thought of 'what color Shug Avery would wear' rather than thinking of what she would like to have (21). When Celie meets Shug for the first time at Albert's house she thinks of changing her 'old dress' but does not get the time to do so(43). Albert dresses up in his best clothes to meet Shug (25)

Celie admires Shug long before she meets her in person. She remarks that Shug was dressed to kill people with her looks and singing(8). Shug is called 'The Queen Honeybee'(26) and she is brought to Albert's house she was wearing 'a red wool dress' and a 'chestful of black beads' along with a 'black hat' and 'matching shoes'. Everything about Shug was a fashion statement and Celie stands dumbstruck (44). Shug is often seen wearing red but she is also spotted in black, gold or white outfits.She wore anything from shifts (54)to tight fitting clothes (69) or loose pants(191) . Celie admired the way Shug was dressed and her plain'church going clothes' were nothing when compared to Shug's skin tight red dress (69).Shug instills confidence in Celie to admire her feminine self (74).

Sofia , Harpo's wife has to wear 'dirty convict uniforms' when she is made to work in the prison laundry (83).When Mr Albert ,Harpo and Sofia's sisters happen to know that Squeak, Harpo's 'yellow skin girlfriend' is the niece of Sofia's prison warden, they dress her up like a 'white woman' to impress him and convince him that Sofia was innocent .She is made to wear starched and ironed dress along with high heeled shoes and an old hat. But the uncle rapes her

and she comes home with dress ripped and hat missing(87). Clothes thereby signify not just identity but segregation too.

The novel goes on to elaborate the clothes worn by Nettie and Corrine. Before they set off for their mission work, Corrine buys Nettie cloth to make 'travelling outfits'. She got 'long gored skirts and suit jackets to be worn with white cotton blouses and lace-up boots' (120). She goes to Harlem and notice that all the colored people were 'dressed so beautifully', the boys there (wore 'baggy pants')(121). Samuel, Corrine's husband 'dresses in black' with a 'white clerical collar'(123). When they reach Olinka village, Corrine tells Nettie not to borrow her clothes because she didn't want the villagers to regard her as Samuel's other wife (143). The sisterly affection that Corrine had for Nettie slowly wanes and she starts suspecting Nettie's chastity. Here again Clothes function as a memory retriever. Nettie wants to convince Corrine that Adam and Olivia were her sister's children . She tried hard to make Corrine remember the occasion of meeting Celie at the town years ago. Corrine fails to remember ,hence Nettie searches in her trunk for the old clothes she had bought for Olivia from the dry goods store. Corrine quickly recalls Celie's face and before she breathes her last, she duly asks Nettie to forgive her for her misunderstanding (168-9).After Corrine's death Samuel hands over all of her clothes to Nettie. This indicates the natural transition from being sister Nettie to his being wife Nettie(172).

Clothes function in the novel as unique binding force. Celie sews pants for all her people, be it Shug, Harpo, Squeak, Jack ,Sofia and all Shug's band members. She started sewing to distract her from killing Albert, but by the end of the tale, sewing binds her with Albert more as a friend. He helps her pattern shirts to be worn along with the pants she stitched (257).One may thus conclude by alluding to Barthes' statement in his *The Language of Fashion* that 'The wearing of an item of clothing is fundamentally an act of meaning that goes beyond modesty, ornamentation and protection.It is an act of signification and therefore a profoundly social act right at the very heart of the dialectic of society' (90-91).

4. Material Artefacts

Any individual's social identity is marked not just by the name he has but also by the material wealth he possesses. The cultural landscape of an era is particularly characterized by material artefacts like landed property, vehicles, ornaments, furniture, houses and income of the social group. An examination of the material sources will help us gain knowledge about the socio cultural environment prevalent in that period. Cultural Studies deliberates upon objects that are part of everyday life and everyday life surely includes the material assets.

Jane Austen lived at a time when social rank determined the affluence of the individual. The society was divided into different ranks and people of the upper ranks were more privileged with all sorts of luxuries and positions of esteem. Bingley is 'the single man in possession of a good fortune' mentioned in the opening lines of the novel. His being a young man of

considerable wealth, makes him the eligible bachelor of the neighbourhood (Austen 2) till the arrival of his friend Darcy who happened to have an income of 'ten thousand a year'(8) The large estate owned by both the gentlemen make them all the more appealing to the people at Longbourn. The little village of Longbourn housed a number of families but Jane Austen specifically mentions the Bennets' household and the Lucas' abode, referred to as Lucas Lodge(15). The grandeur of the Pemberley Estate (236) and the Rosings (237) reveals the high social rank to which Darcy and Lady Catherine belonged .

In the eighteenth century all 'wealth was seen to come from the land.' (Longhurst et.al.114).It was the basis for power and position hence landed gentry were respected .Thus materials help create identity.Ladies of fortune were sought by men who had little or no money. As per the property laws of that century, the property of a lady would pass on to the husband after marriage (Austen116).The Bingley sisters 'had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds'(13) Lady Catherine's daughter was 'the heiress of Rosings and of extensive property'(64) and marriage with her cousin Darcy would unite the property on both sides and make them all the more wealthier (80). Miss Darcy's wealth of 'thirty thousand pounds' was the chief objective of Wickham when he planned to elope with the young girl (197).

Since Austen concentrated on etching a novel of manners, she does not give elaborate descriptions of opulent houses. The size of one's home signified wealth and power. In addition to this, owning a house and land indicated a secure state of affairs. Mr Collins decides to marry soon after he acquires 'a good house and very sufficient income...' (67)Large houses were adorned with gorgeous gardens (244).Gardens signified the grandeur and extent of land owned by the house owner (236). Gardens were spots for rambling(165), for lovers to keep away from interferences(340) and also as a remote place to peruse letters (178-9) Mr Collins compares his parsonage garden with that of his patroness' garden(152).Lady Catherine refers to Elizabeth's shrubbery as 'little wilderness'(341). Lady Catherine, a lady of the refined society looks upon the Bennet household with utmost disgust (341), because Elizabeth, according to her was 'a young woman without family, connections or fortune'(345) She makes judgements about the rooms in Elizabeth's house (341) The Pemberley house interiors were open for visitors. 'The rooms were lofty and handsome, and their furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor...' (237) Admiring the beauty of the interiors of Darcy's house she thinks that 'to be the mistress of Pemberley might be something!'(236)

Wealth or fortune was an inevitable part of the English society during Austen's days. The younger sons of the upper nobility 'could not marry where they like' because they were financially lean and they looked forward to marry 'women of fortune'(179). Young girls of small fortune looked forward to getting married decently. This is what prompted Charlotte Lucas to accept Collins' proposal even though she had no affection for him (121).The system of entailments left the Bennet girls with little fortune after their father's death (25). Mrs Bennet was eager to get her daughters married into wealthy families because that was the only option for

women with less fortune. Wickham was known to be a man who would never marry a woman who had no money (273). The news of Lydia eloping with him vexes Elizabeth because she knew that money was deficient on both sides. By the end of the novel Mrs Bennet is delighted because three of her daughters were married off decently (368).

Carriages were also symbols of opulence. It was primarily a means of transportation but it also served as a power symbol. Owning carriages were indicative of the financial state of the people. Mrs Bennet comments on the different carriages that Elizabeth would have after her marriage with Darcy (368). Her father remarks that she would be richer than Jane by the 'fine carriages' she would possess (366) They were ridden by single, double or four horses. Ladies travelling alone would be accompanied by a male because it was regarded to be 'highly improper' otherwise (206). Lady Catherine owned a chaise (341), a carriage (153) and a phaeton (154), all of which she used on different occasions and different purposes. She measures Elizabeth's social rank by enquiring about 'what carriage her father kept, and what had been her mother's maiden name and Carriages were the chief means of travel as it was the pre-industrial era and gossiping was the chief recreation while travelling (215).

Libraries were another socio-cultural symbol. Men and women were expected to engage in reading. Reading provided relaxation (51) and discussions about and on books were means of engaging in conversation between strangers who met for the first time (168). Mr Bennet had a library in his house and it is to this place he retired in order to get relief from his wife's trying nature (289) or to take important decisions regarding the marriage of his daughters (108). Mary, Elizabeth's sister had a philosophic mind owing to her habit of reading. After Jane gets engaged to Mr Bingley, Mary 'petitioned for the use of the library at Netherfield...' (338) A library with good books was a necessity in Jane Austen's days (51). Austen was known to have a collection of books by various authors at Steventon Rectory (Chawdhry 80) Miss Bingley asks her brother to set up a fine library when he buys a house of his own. Mr Darcy was known to possess 'a delightful library at Pemberley' which he regularly improved with books (Austen 34-35)

The mid twentieth century marked a sudden boom in almost all walks of life. New ideologies evolved and this gradually had its impact upon the cultural scenario of that era. The progress of the industrial revolution paved way for the redundancy traditional objects of comfort (Hobsbawm 261-262). Lifestyle was determined by the luxuries one possessed. Cultural Studies focuses on the values attributed to objects that constitute everyday life activities (Nayar 38). Fiction deals with everyday life and everyday life is made of materials or objects that convey a particular meaning. Walker was conscious about this cultural surge and this is evident in her descriptions of the everyday life activities of her times. Her characters are actually spokespersons of their cultural backdrop. The materials assets in *The Color Purple* vary in character from those in *Pride and Prejudice*, because the former is written almost two centuries later in another part of the world. Walker writes about the socio cultural life in the early 1960 America. Segregation had its impact upon the lives of the blacks. The Harlem renaissance had been instrumental in

giving colored people equal rights and in the rise of black middle class (Hutchinson 50). Walker's novel presents a modern world populated with trains, cars, concrete buildings, ships etc.

A coloured man owning a house of his own was deemed to be a great achievement in the 1960's because America was not yet freed from the grips of severe racial discrimination. Nettie writes about colored people in New York having fancy cars and houses that were 'finer than any white person's house down home' (Walker 121). Houses were fitted with indoor toilets and electric lights (122) Celie lived in southern part of America which was rampant with torture meted out on black women by their men. Women were mere slaves who were married to run the house and look after the children (9). Women owned nothing. 'Keeping a clean house' was a sign of efficient housekeeping (21). Celie was brutally tortured both at her house and at her husband's place. She remains silent in Albert's house because she was conscious that it was not her house (44). She opens up only on the last day she is at Albert's place (187). Celie's movement out of the house disturbs Albert because for him a house without a woman meant trouble.

A house becomes a symbol of separation, identity and freedom in the novel. Harpo, Albert's son fixes the 'creek house for him and his family' (33) A home of his own makes him work harder. Sofia moves into her sister Odessa's house when she quarrels with Harpo (64). Celie learns by the end of the novel, that she owns a large house with land around it and a dry good store (222). She fixes it up and stays there (257). Her house becomes the location for the family reunion (259). Celie stays at Shug's house in Memphis. This is where she decides to make sewing pants a means of earning money (188).

The next object of cultural association in the novel is the photograph. The chief advantage of a photograph is that it is a precise 'representation of the impression of the senses on the human eye' (Hobsbawm 16) A photograph can capture images of loved ones and fond events and hence it can serve as a recorder of every day moments. Celie gets a picture of Shug Avery and it makes her dream of the lovely lady (Walker 8) She admires the beauty of Shug (10) Shug is an accomplished singer and when her picture appears on the notices that are pasted on the trees on the way to their house, Celie's excitement has no bounds (26) Nettie was ready to trade anything just to get a picture of her beloved sister (143). She even notices that the missionary office had pictures of white missionaries only (122).

Cigarettes, magazines, newspapers, radio, telephone and make-up, are cultural objects that are associated with the advent of modernization. Shug's modernity and boldness keeps her off from her people. She is talked of as 'a strumpet in short skirts, smoking cigarettes, drinking gin.' (42). Shug's forwardness was not welcomed by the society. They turned her out because she didn't reform her ways (111). This must be read along with the cultural scenario of the mid twentieth century when women were gradually entering the public sphere and the 'essence' of

any woman 'was no longer decourousness, modesty and morality, but sensuality...' (Hobsbawm 105)

The 'motor car' becomes another symbol of pride. Owning a car meant one was well off. Sofia's new husband prizefighter owned a car (Walker 77). This car spells trouble for Sofia because coloured people having their own cars was something the whites couldn't bear (81). Miz Millie asks her husband to get her a car because 'if colored could have cars then one for her was past due' (95). Sofia teaches her driving and Miz Millie promises to let Sofia stay at her home 'all day' (96). The white lady sees to it that Sofia does not sit by her side when they ride to Sofia's place because in the South, a white and a coloured were not equals (97). Shug owned two cars because she made 'much money' (101). Mr Albert only had a wagon in the first part of the story (15), later on, it is replaced by his car (260). Even Celie's step father owns a car (162). When Shug comes to Albert's house in a car, Albert supposes that it was for him (99). Nettie rides to town 'on somebody's wagon' (114) and years later she reaches Celie's home in a hired car (259).

The dry good store in town is another cultural marker. Celie's father was lynched because he was a coloured man in possession of wealth (164). Things changed by the time her step father took custody of the store (165). Celie establishes herself as a successful entrepreneur by the end of the tale (259). Woman, especially black women were becoming all the more independent by the latter half of the twentieth century. Sofia is appointed at Celie's store and Hrpoo doesn't seem to object (254). Whites were employed at the stores run by the colored folks (255). The racial differences were slowly eroding.

Material assets thus help in mapping the cultural scenario of the times and each object is regarded as a text that communicates meanings on different planes. Cultural Studies 'engages with the everyday as its field of inquiry...' (Nayar 235) and 'everyday' includes specific products or objects that determine its the social and cultural contexts.

5. Language

Culture determines language and language is shaped by culture. 'An understanding of human language and communication presupposes an understanding of culture' (Everett 47). Written language is actually a symbolic representation of our thoughts. Literature uses written language or words to convey meanings. 'The novelist has to convey exclusively in words what in ordinary conversation we convey by words, tone of voice, hesitations, facial expression, gesture, bodily posture-and by other means' (Hawthorn 155) This magnificent tool called language enables us to verbally picture the socio cultural settings in the text. The language of any particular community is distinguished by certain rules known as grammar. A novelist puts words into the mouth of his characters thereby presents to the readers a specific understanding of not just the character of the speaker but also his cultural background.

Chawdhry has commented that 'Jane Austen's life as writer was a long assimilation of the social and moral climate in which she grew'(18).Language is a major means of characterization in Jane Austen's novel. Precision of language is an indication of correct sensibility. The choice of words and sentence construction in Austen's novels reveal a lot about the personality of the character. Mr Bennet, according to the writer 'was an odd mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve and caprice...'(Austen 3) The words spoken by the characters point at the prevalent issues of the period. For example when Elizabeth rejects Collins' marriage proposal,her mother rebukes her (109) because women of little fortune needed marriage to climb the social ladder. Darcy spoke little and his reserved nature reflects his class distinction (14) Lady Catherine being extremely rich ,spoke in an authoritative tone (159) and Elizabeth is the 'first creature who had ever dared to trifle with so much dignified impertinence'(162).

In Austen's novel 'characters can be left to speak for themselves with no interruption from anyone. This certainly increases the *dramatic* effectiveness of scenes involving dialogue...' (Hawthorn 156) Characters speaking on their own are actually the spokespersons of the writer. Austen's world consists of a multitude of characters etched out in words.The contrast between the words spoken about and by each character revealed their cultural disparity and social breeding .Collins spoke formally in long round about sentences which would be repeated often (Austen 71) Wickham 'immediately fell into conversation' and had the power to charm people with his manners and speech (72) Lydia is presented as 'untamed, unabashed, wild, noisy and fearless'(305) Jane's sweet nature is praised not just by Elizabeth(13) and Mr Bennet (337) but also by the Bingley sisters (18).

Elizabeth ,the heroine, is presented as a vivacious young lady, quick in wit and repartee (48). Through Elizabeth, Austen presented the issues of entailment (25), marriage (109) and class distinctions (160) that affected the women of her days .Words become her weapons in vulnerable situations (54).Austen's choice of words highlight the condition of women during her time. While at Netherfield , Darcy, Elizabeth and Miss Bingley discuss about the accomplishments of women as follows:

A woman must have thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word accomplished; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half deserved (36).

The discussion surely throws light on how women were judged in Austen's days. Mrs Gardiner's advice to her neice throws light on how women of little fortune had to be very cautious in the choice of their partners.(140)Austen used language to mildly satirize the world she saw.Her dignified tone transport the readers into the calm ,serene English country side.About three fourths of a chapter is allotted to describe the idyllic grounds of Pemberley estate.

Slave narratives evolved as a result of the conspicuous urge to represent self hood. Writing was a means to vent one's repressed and suppressed emotions. A bold initiative of these writers was the deliberate shift from the refined language found in canonical texts. Mary M Talbot has stated that 'Writers can use regional dialects as a literary device to convey subtle social, economic, educational and geographical distinctions, just as they can in spoken language in the real world.' (10) Alice Walker has significantly used language in *The Color Purple* as a poignant device that enhances the distinctiveness of the novel. The speech uttered by each character reveals all the distinctions mentioned by Talbot. The letters written by Celie are pregnant with the mental unrest she had. Celie, the lead character, resorts to learning because they knew that hard to be 'smart to git away' (Walker 11). Writing, for her, is a relief especially after Nettie goes away chiefly because she has nobody to open up to, no one to tell her what has happened to her, no one to help her out and no one to love her. The reader actually feels as if Celie is conversing with him because of the natural innocence and subtle grammatical errors in the text. The typical Black American dialect of the south is represented in the novel.

The writer has deliberately omitted the word endings and used colloquial speech as written language to highlight the difference between men and women in the novel (3). Another significant aspect of the language in Walker's novel is the candid statements related to body and sex. Austen's characters do not make any references to the physical attributes. Lovers too when in love only blush and become radiant. Austen lived at a time when any overt expression of emotions were not tolerated. Walker's Celie makes references to her personal parts (3). She and Shug discuss about the act of love making (74). Sofia tells Celie she doesn't feel excited when she is with Harpo (63). Shug doesn't feel ashamed to reveal her promiscuity (110). The language spoken by Celie becomes all the more poetic towards the close of the story (235) Unlike Celie, all the other characters speak fairly well. Shug uses words to revive the timid Celie. She writes a song and dedicates it to Celie. Here again language helps in bonding women. Language helps to discern the world inhabited by the characters and also adds a touch of genuineness to the day to day happenings.

Both the texts use different varieties of English. One uses the typical eighteenth century standard gentry folk utterance while the other is the Afro American dialect. Each of these variants have their own nuances and specifications and these have been clearly transmitted into the text ad labium by the characters. Language communicates thoughts. Just as there are clear distinctions between individuals, the language of each person will have its own distinctiveness. When writers pen down their thoughts, they are actually communicating their ideas and in turn initiating a change in the existing world. Austen's work was a mild attack on the foibles and vices of her era and Walker's works have been the voice of the voiceless. Each of the writers were actually portraying their mighty world through the power of words.

6 Social Practices

The social customs and practices of any period have mapped the cultural scenario of the times. Socialisation refers to the mingling of individuals. Culture is produced and moulded by socializing events and inter actions. A text may reveal the social customs pertaining to a particular period, hence the reader will be able to view the cultural practices of the milieu. The customs and practices of the eighteenth century England varied from that of those in the twentieth century America. The reader gets an overview of the socialisation patterns prevalent in these two locations and centuries by closely examining the customary socialising aspects mentioned in the texts.

Jane Austen's England of the late eighteenth century was comparatively drier than Walker's America of the early twentieth century. Entertainment during Austen's time vested solely on social events like ball room dancing, home visits and tour to the country side. Dancing was central to the society because balls gave an opportunity for youngsters to meet their prospective partners. The young girls were formally introduced into society through these balls. Sixteen was the right age for young girls to come out. 'In Jane Austen's period ,private courtship was often carried out in public places particularly the ballroom'(Chawdhry 81). Match fixing and socialization were the chief objectives of these parties mainly because they were carried out under the supervision of elders. Ball room parties gave the young girls an occasion to exhibit their accomplishments (Austen 21) while rich single men were made available for families of girls to choose(9).The days following the ball party were spent in discussing about the next ball and commenting about the ball that had been over. These discussions were held at the houses of neighbours and relatives. The women would call upon their neighbours house most often(15)

Walking was another social activity of those days. It was a means for receiving fresh air and exercise. Elizabeth and her sister love walking in their shrubbery. Walking to Meryton was something that pleased the younger Bennet girls (Austen 84).Walking was an exercise to revive broken spirits and to overcome boredom(52). Reading, singing, needle work(43) and card playing were some of the other common pastimes. Men had outdoor activities like fishing and hunting(Ross 46-55).A chief recreation of women and men of Austen's days was writing letters. Letters were written to convey invitations, to indicate the arrival of guests,to profess affection for a particular person or even to communicate whereabouts of missing people. Letters were eagerly awaited as there was no other means of conveying urgent messages.

Dining was another major activity. Meal tables were discussion points. The Bennets had their meals together .This was indicative of the filial bond. Meal times were punctuated by discussions of matters of common concern like the ball room party, the arrival of Collins or the formal invitations to other houses. Dining at large houses gave an opportunity for men and women to reveal their tastes and opinions on everything. There were precise seats allotted to the diners (Austen 159). A family's social status was indicated by the number of families they dined with (40).

Family and marriage were the principal agencies of socialization. To belong to a reputed family meant one was of the refined category. Marriage was essential for women's survival chiefly because they were not financially independent. 'In England, when Jane Austen was writing her novels, the upper middleclass women desirous of independence had few alternatives' (Chawdhry 72). They had to work as a governess, teacher or chaperone, all of which had its own limitations. A woman who eloped with a young man were regarded to be disrespectful for the refined society, hence they had to live in unknown places (Austen 295). Financial security was a prerequisite for happy marriages(1). Being married, gave women a privileged position in society. Lydia, the youngest of the Bennet girls, is the first one to be married. She prides in her higher place when she tells her eldest sister, 'Ah, Jane, I take your place now, and you must go lower, because I am a married woman'. (306) Marriage was thus essential for women's social up gradation and financial stability. Through her novels Austen has 'given an invaluable picture of the social constraints and matrimonial hopes of her generation'. (Chawdhry 54)

The Color Purple is a novel written basically focusing upon the social settings of southern America of the early twentieth century when racism reigned at large. It 'recounts one of the most pathetic stories of racial violence exposing the evils of racism in the American society.' (Singh 153) Black men were lynched if they happened to be successful businessmen (Walker 157). Black women of the South were doubly oppressed because of the torture they had to bear from their men and the whites alike (93). Marriage was the key area of violent subjugation and discrimination. Celie, the protagonist is first depicted as a fourteen year girl raped by her step father whom she calls Pa. The men in the novel had the liberty to keep as many women they wanted but the women who did so were called 'slut, hussy, heifer and street cleaner.' (42) Women were bound to remain silent and obedient. Harpo's father tells his son to give his wife 'a good sound beating' (35) just to show her that he was the master of the household. The men decide what their wives ought to do. Celie breaks loose from all shackles the moment Shug enters her life.

Women in the novel bond together. This is reflective of the African culture wherein women become sisters by being wedded to the chief (150). The novel abounds in subtle references to racial discriminations the women have to face. Sophia, Nettie, Mary Agnes are some of the many characters who are victims of oppression. The positive aspect is that in spite of the many trying situations, the women don't seem to hate each other. Sophia and Mary Agnes understand each other (91) much better than their husband Harpo knows them. Shug and Celie are inseparable so much so that Mr Albert becomes insignificant for them (246). 'Quilt-making is a part of African American women's life and their culture. Walker also says that her mother used to spend the winter evening making quilts enough to cover all their beds.' (Singh 158) Women become close by working together. Sofia and Celie make a quilt. Shug donates 'her old yellow dress' to make a pattern (Walker 56) When Sofia leaves Harpo's house Celie gives her the quilt they wove together. Weaving thus becomes a cultural activity for bonding.

Juke joints and clubs with jazz music and blues singers mushroomed all over America during the beginning of the twentieth century. These spots were occasions for men and women to enjoy their leisure and they were also instrumental in creating budding singers. 'The blues are traditionally pithy oral lyric works using a variety of loosely fixed structures into which poured the subject matter of an individual experience that reflects communal interests.' (Graham 122) Blues singing had its roots in Africa but they were 'planted squarely into the American environment' to produce African American art (Graham 123).

Shug is an independent blues singer in the novel. Her independence makes her free and powerful. Shug liberates Celie from the clutches of a meaningless marriage. Celie learns to stand on her own feet by recognizing her inner might. Celie no longer needs marriage to secure her. By the end of the novel, she earns her own living, has a house of her own and lives without the support of any man in her own place (Walker 259). Singing gives Mary Agnes the right platform to voice her inherent feelings (91). Women singers became all the more liberated with the evolution of clubs (197). Women of the twentieth century did not need the strong hand of a man to fend for them. This in turn led to evolution of individuals who were politically and culturally conscious of the world they inhabited (261). Marriage did not curtail the mobility of women as they become all the more independent.

Travel in Jane Austen's days were confined to horse rides. Regency England had been colonially rich but cultural symbiosis was not as prevalent as in Walker's America. The new century was marked by technological, political and cultural changes. Books were read along with coloured magazines. Smoking, travelling by car, telephone, gramophone, are cultural artefacts pertaining to modernity. Nettie travels to Africa and England by ship. Cultural mingling leads to identification of cultural roots (146) and sharing of values (248).

Family get-togethers were foregrounds for strengthening kinship and family ties amongst the Afro-Americans. For them, family did not comprise solely of blood relatives, it included everyone who was associated to their group in some way or the other. When Sofia is put in jail, her family comprising of her sisters, their husbands, Harpo, Mary Agnes, Celie, Shug, Mr Albert and all the young ones discuss means of freeing her (85). Shug, Harpo, Swain, Squeak and the children (all family) sit in the front room of Odessa's house 'singing and singing' (105). Family reunion is celebrated on the fourth of July. It is an occasion for celebrating with barbecue and lemonade (261). Thus family as an institution was not merely an institution with set boundaries. Family dissipated lessons of unconditional love, mutual understanding, care and unity.

The two texts thus delineate the cultural settings of the corresponding times of the authors. 'Cultural studies describes how people's everyday lives are articulated by and with culture.' (Grossberg 8) The cultural codes elaborated above will widen the range of cultural discourses inherent in the texts. Culture permeates through every facet of day to day life and cultural signifiers can help illustrate the social, political, economical and geographical contours of significant time zones.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL SCENARIO DURING TRANSITION

Since the time of its inception films have been characteristically and categorically influenced by literature. Almost all great literary pieces of the world have had their film adaptations till date. It is estimated that about eighty percent of Hollywood movies have derived their life blood from classics and bestsellers that belong not just to the present but also to the bygone era .Literature and films are narratives ,but there is a distinct way in which each presents a story– one is wholly verbal while the other is a visual and aural semblance. Joe Wright’s film *Pride and Prejudice* was released in 2005.The film has been regarded to be an enchanting on screen adaptation of Jane Austen’s novel by the same name.Alice Walker’s novel *The Color Purple* was made into a motion picture by the famous director Steven Spielberg in 1985.

The relationship between films and literature has mostly been symbiotic in the sense that each one relies on the other for its propagation .Cultural theorists have opined that films and literature can be seen as businesses and cultural vehicles that present figures of gender, race , fashion and class. Despite their similarities and connections, films and literature use materially different ways to describe the world. In both there is a reconstruction of images. When a novel is converted into a film there is a gradual shift from a ‘uniquely verbal medium’ to a ‘multi track medium’(Stam 74). A novel is produced by a single person but a film is the collaborative effort of many people. Amy Villarejo has opined that ‘film is structured like language’ (27) In other words a film is made up of a number of units that require close study. Film analysis aims at describing the world on screen. Mise en scene is commonly known to aim towards identifying and isolating the elements of what is put on the screen. It is a French term that can be translated as ‘staging’ or ‘putting into the screen’ (Dix 11). Filmic mise en scene generally coincides with theatrical staging elements like setting, props, lighting, make-up, hair -style and acting .A comprehensive mise en scene analysis will focus not just on the theatrical components but also on cinematography ,the distinct visual attribute that makes film an innovative medium of expression.

Pride and Prejudice was written by Jane Austen in 1813.Two centuries have passed since its publication and yet the charm of this classic novel has not waned. Joe Wright’s film by the same name is an Anglo-American production. It is deemed to be a fairly truthful presentation of the novelist’s verbal world. The novel runs up to more than three hundred pages and the film’s running time is approximately one hour and twenty one minutes. Spielberg’s *The Color Purple* was a commercial success chiefly because of the cast. Walker’s novel was a Pulitzer prize winning story that was written in about two hundred and sixty pages while the film took up about

one hour and fifty four minutes. The film versions of both the novels came out in the twentieth century.

When a novel is transformed into a motion picture it naturally undergoes many modifications. The task before the director is to realistically portray what the novelist has imagined. Cinema, according to Robert Stam, 'becomes a receptacle open to all kinds of literary and pictorial symbolism, to all types of collective representation...and to the infinite play of influences within cinema, within the other arts, and within culture generally .' (79) The words in the novel have symbolic meanings. The film, a visual medium, provides little scope for the spectator's imagination. The director re arranges, compresses or adds episodes to present a mirror version of the novel. This is a challenging task specifically because while changes are made the director should be overtly conscious not to stream away from the primary text-the novel.

The project aims at substantiating how the cultural codes identified from within the novel have been presented in the camera frame. The researcher singled out six cultural codes from the two novels. These have aided in delineating the cultural milieu of the texts. This section explores the same how the same facets have been appropriated in the films which are actually adaptations of the novels. As mentioned above, adaptation has its own short comings. The world of literature and that of cinema are poles apart but the films have strived to bring out the charm of the novels through the charisma of celluloid .According to Robert Stam ,the novel is the 'source text' and it is 'a dense informational network' that provides the 'film text' with the 'verbal cues' needed to 'amplify, ignore, subvert,or transform'(83) from one genre to the other. Thus we notice that the director has the freedom to modify, mediate or mutate events within the primary text.

1.Characters

Both the films are confined to an hour and half minutes. The whole story has been condensed to a few shots.The title of the novels are retained in their film versions. It is a clear cut indication that the film maker does not propose to distance his work from that of the novelist. The original significations of the title are maintained .It is also an impasse for the director because he is bound to be doubly conscious not to disturb or deviate from the original threadline of the author's viewpoint. Thus elaborate characterisation and descriptions have to be avoided.The novelistic character undergoes certain changes, chiefly because as Timothy Corrigan has said 'a literary character's appearance, which is originally grounded in words and a reader's imaginative visualization of those words, is made concrete and visible in a movie'(428) .The actors chosen in the film have revived their star value with the release of the film. Keira Knightley was nominated for the Oscar.Whoopie Goldberg was debuting as Celie in *The Color Purple* .She won many nominations and awards for her triumphant performance in the movie. The actors have striven to make the film memorable and a sure hit in the market. Andrew Dix has said in his *Beginning*

Film Studies, that ‘what concerns star studies is not the flesh -and- blood performer as such but the array of meanings that she generates across platforms....’(199)

Both the films have chosen appropriate cast to ‘generate meaning’. The film *Pride and Prejudice* (2005) was the second film version of Austen’s novel. The first one was released in 1940. The project has taken Joe Wright’s movie (2005 release) for study because Wright’s film received average reviews due to the presence of the young Knightley and Macfadyen in the lead role. The other memorable figures in the movie are Donald Sutherland, Judi Dench, Brenda Blethyn, Rosamund Pike and Tom Hollander. Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple* was filmed only by Spielberg. The film was widely appreciated for its cast too has brought in certain modifications. His film has an array of talented actors like Danny Glover, Oprah Winfrey, Margaret Avery, Adolph Caesar, Rae Dawn Chong and Akosua Busia. He has included Shug’s father, a character absent in the novel, whereas Wright’s film has substantially limited the total number of characters but he has maintained the lead characters. The prime focus of the film is the heroine, Keira Knightley, who dons the part of Elizabeth Bennet. When Knightley appears in the opening scene on screen, there is what is technically known as high key lighting which aids in noticing not just the beauty of the surroundings but also the captivating charm of the heroine, from whose perspective the film moves on. Austen’s description of Elizabeth’s beauty comes up only in the third chapter. Though Elizabeth is Austen’s chief protagonist, she (Austen) does not attribute undue attention to her.

As in the novel, Celie, is the narrator of her tale when it is made into a film. Here Celie literally grows from a fourteen year old little girl into a lady and we (viewers) get to see and hear story. Austen is the omniscient narrator of her tales but the film does not require a narrator. The story unfurls automatically through the scenes on screen. The distinct characteristics of the performers are left to the viewers to decipher. What words elaborated in the text become enactments in the film and the lucidity of performance will help the spectators concretize the verbal images. We will undoubtedly agree with Robert Stam’s opinion that ‘...the cinematic character is an uncanny amalgam of photogenicity, body movement, acting style, and grain of voice, all amplified and molded by lighting, *mise-en-scene*, and music.’ (79)

2. Food

The food of any particular era provides the texture of the cultural scenario. To evoke the cultural background, the director has given careful attention to the food items eaten or served by or for the actors. In Wright’s movie, one can easily identify the sumptuous meal comprising of Victorian bread, butter, milk, eggs, roasted meat, tea, boiled potatoes and much more. The meals at Rosings are marked by the elaborate dishes served on the table. Food has an expressionistic power in the films. Spielberg’s film is set in the period between 1909 and 1937. A close look at the food shown on screen will help the viewers notice the shift in time. The typical Afro American diet of eggs, ham, lemonade, corn bread, coffee and even barbecue is presented in the

most tantalizing manner. Harpo's jukejoint serves cold drinks. One may not fail to notice the coco cola seal upon the wall of the building before which Sofia has parked her car minutes before she is arrested by the mayor. Celie, the house keeper, has transformed Mr Albert's untidy, rat infested kitchen into a cosy, neat food preparing arena. As in the novels, both films use the dining table as the meeting place for the family. Arguments, discussions and revelations make up the dining scene in Spielberg's piece, while the pleasant, calm, refined manners and etiquettes of the Victorian era are categorically presented in Wright's film. Food thus helps in conveying social and cultural meanings of the film.

3.Clothing

Costume or clothing along with make up and hairstyle help augment 'the believability of a film's world'(Villarejo 37). The costumes along with the props and settings of the movie help in transporting the viewers into the time period of the novelist. Austen's eighteenth century gentry folks lifestyle is represented through the attire worn by the characters. Pale colours like white, grey, dull green and peach are worn by the ladies in the movie *Pride and Prejudice*. The costumes reflect the class distinctions vividly. Lady Catherine's opulence is presented through the black taffeta and gemmed ornaments she has put on. The heroine is mostly presented wearing the loose gown of the Regency period. The white gowns are worn at the ball room dance party. Women went out wearing hats. The film presents the younger Bennet girls going off to Meryton to buy ribbons for their hats. The director has limited the use of colour to enhance the cultural background of Austen's days. Meryton is represented by focusing on the red coloured uniform of the militia. The hair styles also supplement the visual effect. The hair -dos give the film a realistic touch.

Coming to Spielberg's film, here too, the costumes are reflective of the early Southern Afro Americans. The typical knotty, curled Afro- American hair is what Celie and Nettie have in the film. Shug, the modern woman has her hair straightened and brushed well. Celie wears oversized frocks and her head is covered by a bandana. The women at Harpo's pub poke fun at her dull clothes and hat. Shug wears shining, decorative outfits while she is singing. At other times she wears tidy suits and matching shoes. Celie, the successful business woman wears black suits, veiled hats, hand gloves and stilletoes. The men wear pants and shirt while at work or home but suits are worn for formal occasions. The attire or the 'dress', according to Davis et.al., 'promotes two forms of cinematic pleasure-the pleasure of observing the dress and the pleasure of analyzing the dress.'(422) By 'analyzing the dress' we can read the meanings that the director articulates through them.

4.Material Artefacts

Cinematography includes everything that comes within the purview of the camera. The camera includes within its frame every element necessary to present the tale. This includes the settings and the characters. The settings help create the genuine atmosphere of the work. The

locale of the movie has to generally concede with that of the novel. For this, the camera gathers within its focus select spots and things to 'create' the world. The production notes of both the films have elaborated about the locations where particular scenes were shot. While the camera pans through each scene, one will obviously notice the materials or props that enhance the mood of the film. Andrew Dix has stated that 'the chief value of showing a prop such as a cigarette or parachute is to disclose it in all detailed peculiarity... (14)' The material artefacts identified in the previous section are concretised through the film. The sisterly affections, the monetary distinctions, the geographical differences and the social distinctions existing in the novels have been genuinely preserved in their film versions.

Through the camera's lens we perceive the English society of Austen's days with its ball room parties, huge mansions, plain households, scenic countryside, carriages, noisy towns and serene villages. Spielberg has for us a wonderful feast of images pertaining to the America of the early 1900's and late thirties. The houses of the blacks are comparatively big. The mailman delivers letters first on horse back and later by riding his own car. Celie's kitchen has the traditional firewood stove and metal utensils. Shug smokes cigarettes. The furniture, crockery and gardens in Wright's film have the classic regency touch in them. Celie's house has only one or two wooden pieces of furniture. The inside of the house is not shot in detail. Spielberg has focused on the facial expressions of the characters rather than on their material artefacts. Even then they are captured within the scene.

5. Language

'In the novel, the line of dialogue stands naked and alone; in the film, the spoken word is attached to its spatial image.' (Bluestone 248) The written language in the novels are actually 'read' by the readers while in their films we hear the 'speech' of the characters. The audience identifies each voice with the character. Emotions are conveyed through dialogue delivery. The viewer can clearly distinguish the consciously refined speech of Collins, the haughtiness of Lady Catherine, the vivacity of Elizabeth, the aloofness of Darcy, the nervousness of Mrs Bennet, the sarcastic tone in Mr Bennets utterance, the immaturity of Lydia and the meekness of Jane through their dialogue delivery. On the other hand, Spielberg has cut short some of the sentences in the novel to suit the frame work of the film. Nettie and Celie along with all others have the typical American slang in their conversations. The intonation and sentence construction are different from standard English. This coupled with the performance of the actors speak volumes. Language in the films don't generate meanings independently. The cultural setting is charted when dialogue delivery, sounds, silence and music are read simultaneously. The dialogue reflects the way of speaking in a specific historical time and space and thus provides a realistic portrayal of the time.

6. Social Practices

'Adaptations are like forgeries and translations: they always seem to bear traces of the

cultures from which they have emerged' (Hawthorn 188) The films convey the cultural set up of the novels through a number of attributes. The social practices help recreate the world presented by the author. Speech, music and noise within the films, when closely studied, will reveal that they enhance the cultural atmosphere of the films. Film adaptations are primarily undertaken to retain the spirit inherent in the primary texts (novels). The music in Wright's film was scored by Dario Marianette. There are seventeen sound tracks employed to signify different scenes or moods. Music is a key element as it supplements the settings. The jollity and liveliness of ball room parties are signified through the rhythmic background dance numbers heard on screen. The notes played on the pianoforte vary in tenor depending on the character (Mary, Elizabeth, Miss Darcy). Music conveys the inner most feelings of the characters. For example, Elizabeth's uneasiness after being spotted by Darcy at his estate, is heightened by the ascending violin notes played in the background. Spielberg's film begins with an Afro American folksong sung by Celie and Nettie. Quincy Jones directed the music of the film. The blues song by Shug helps recreate the world in Walker's novel.

A significant point to be noted is that not all social practices hinted in the novel *The Color Purple* are presented in the film. However, the filmic version of *Pride and Prejudice* have done justice to the elements in the novel. The exclusions or inclusions have not disrupted the cultural scenario because they were supplemented by background music, suitable settings and talented performers. Spielberg's film has left out the quilting scene, the body marking scene in Africa is juxtaposed with Celie using Mr Albert's razor under the pretext of shaving him, Shug's house in Memphis, the African women working together, the family reunion on July 4th have been omitted, but they have been replaced by Shug encouraging Celie constantly through words and action, Shug and Celie rummaging through Mr Albert's boxes, Mister Albert's father joining them for dinner when Celie reveals that she is leaving and much more scenes. Wright's movie has in fact used the social practices to highlight the Victorian social settings. Regency England was marked by ball room dances, visiting neighbourhoods and nearby towns, touring around the country, halting at inns, dining and playing card games.

The major issues of marriage and entailment, prevalent in Jane Austen's time have been subtly voiced in the film. The racial discrimination meted upon black women by their men and the whites have been sketched in the film. However both the films have been criticized for their lack of concern for the prominent issues of the particular period. Here, the directors have given special attention to the portrayal of the characters rather than on the social issues. A film, however engages within its length and breadth the necessary material needed for conveying the storyline. The film, is undoubtedly a new product, hence revisions and additions are permissible.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The phrase 'cultural studies' is a highly contested one in contemporary academic discourse. Theorizing culture is the main focus of Cultural Studies. Any and every object of daily life is regarded as a 'text' conveying meanings. The main objective is to analyse the cultural processes involved in the production, propagation and manifestations of the cultural background. Literature provides a sound grounding on the cultural settings of the novelists times. Literature mirrors the cultural consciousness of the writer. When read centuries later, one may naturally be transported into the cultural milieu. Knowing about the past will help in understanding the present.

Cultural life is replete with a number of significations. When a text is analysed from a cultural perspective, it unveils multiple facets and thereby creates an understanding of the latent activities or processes that are what is commonly known as culture. Culture is constructed by the community as a means to establish power. Power refers to elevated stature. Cultural practices are carried on from generation to generation. Cultural mingling leads to transformation or elimination of certain aspects of culture. Literature helps to revive the cultural attributes of a particular age because they are written in words and words convey meanings. Literature and films when coupled can become a deadly combination of composite cultural attributes. Both focus on life practices and both are strong vehicles of cultural production.

The project has identified six cultural points to describe the times of the novelists. Alice Walker and Jane Austen belong to separate time periods- one belongs to the early twentieth century and the latter belongs to the late eighteenth century –and two different cultural backgrounds(American and British). Their works, when read in the twentieth century, do carry within them, the cultural signature of their originators. When re made into films, the daunting task before the director is to retain the essence of the original work. A cultural analyst/researcher's task can be compared with that of a pearl diver. The researcher plunges deep into the ocean bed of the texts and resurges with the cultural pearls that were safely located within the folds of the texts.

Cultural studies likes taking traditional understandings of what signs are supposed to mean and interpreting how they fit into cultural settings more broadly. It aims at studying cultural identities and placing them within cultural contexts. The researcher infers that each cultural vantage point chosen for analysis, conduces ample understanding about the age with all its determining and detrimental aspects. Films primarily focus on the world around us. In other words everyday activities are mirrored in celluloid. The broad canvas of films have been beneficial in concretizing the novelists' imaginary world. The filmic representations of the

novels have enhanced readership and viewership. George Bluestone has argued that 'the moment the film went from the animation of stills to telling a story, it was inevitable that fiction would become the ore to be minted by story departments'(240)

To offer a totally comprehensive study of the cultural scenario in the filmic and fiction versions, is practically not possible as it abounds in multiple significations that can be delineated into vivid streams. The project thereby offers a wider scope for researching and retracing the cultural aspects that have been left unsaid. The researchers inferences have initiated a revived interest in the cultural disparities of the bygone days. Writing about a culturally different period, from a culturally different scenario about different genres will indeed make the task challenging, interesting and fruitful at one and the same time.

The textual analysis examines how literature and films, both inevitable parts of popular culture, have created subject positions. Drawing from different disciplines, this field of analysis opens up diverse aspects of culture and makes the research all the more interesting. 'Transgressing of boundaries among disciplines high and low can make cultural studies just plain fun'(Guerin et.al 278) In this age of multiculturalism, cultural analysis will surely help in dealing with cultural differences constructively and will also encourage acknowledgement of differences. Culture analysis looks beneath the surface to make explicit the social connotations.

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