































































































































































































































































































development in both Elizabeth and Darcy. Elizabeth's change, however, is one of perception. She comes to the realisation that she has been prejudiced about Darcy, and changes her opinion of him. Darcy's self-realisation as the result of Elizabeth's rejection is much deeper, and leads him to recognise his own arrogance and selfishness. After this, Darcy becomes more self-aware and consciously tries to be a better person in order to be worthy of Elizabeth, "[y]ou showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased" (Austen 284).

One very common and well-documented plot device which is used in modern romance novels is the transformation of the hero from "cad" to "dad" (Cox and Fisher 305). In plots which use this device, the hero starts off as arrogant or rude, and at the end he would have 'transformed' into a loving family man. The heroine's altering perception and opinion of the hero is the chief mode through which the hero's transformation is tracked. The similarities of this plot device to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* is significant. In my discussion of the narrative handling of Darcy's character development, I examine the way in which Darcy is first discovered by the people at the Meryton assembly to be "proud; to be above his company, and above being pleased" (10). Darcy's comment to Bingley that Elizabeth is "tolerable, but not handsome enough to please [him]", is overheard by Elizabeth, and raises her dislike of him (11). After this encounter, she spends a significant portion of the novel deliberately attempting to offend Darcy, and is likewise determined to be offended by whatever he does or says. She therefore misses the narrative hints that she might have been mistaken about Darcy. The reader of course sees that he has better manners than the Bingley sisters (43), and that he is devoted to his sister (39). But this is not to say that Darcy is not arrogant and proud - his comments at the Meryton assembly are undoubtedly rude; it is only to say that Elizabeth misses the hints that there could be another side to his personality. The first half of the plot is about Elizabeth's growing dislike of Darcy, while the second half of

the plot traces her discovery of the kinder side of his character. In this sense Darcy's character serves as a model for a significant portion of modern romance heroes.

In her article Linda Lee suggests that this plot line in modern romance novels which has the hero transforming from a "cad" to a "dad" is a reworking of the *Beauty and the Beast* fairy tale. Instead of a physical transformation from an animal or a monster to human form, "the modern Beast is a product of the corporate world; he is austere, powerful, and amoral but usually not physically repulsive" (59). The heroine's love, or the hero's desire for her love, transforms him into a more open, caring person, one kind enough to eventually be a nurturing father to the couple's offspring. Given the significant similarities in plot and character development which I suggest between *Pride and Prejudice* and modern romance novels, one could see *Pride and Prejudice* as a reworking of the *Beauty and the Beast* fairy tale where the aspiration for Elizabeth's love transforms Darcy from an arrogant, proud man into a more self-aware, caring one.

Much academic research has been done on romance as a genre. The genre as a whole is quite complex and continually changing, although many critics of the genre (whether academic or laymen) try to pigeonhole it as useless fluff. Academic and romance author Lee Tobin-McClain finds that she has experienced romance as, "escapism, empowerment, mood enhancement, financial lifesaver, and antifeminist tract" (295). The most well-known study of the romance genre is, perhaps, Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* published in 1984. The purpose of Radway's study was to establish whether romance reading by women reinforces traditional patriarchy by "making women the passive recipients of self-negating messages that they quite happily, unreflectively, and unresistingly incorporate as they read" (Berlant 346). In the study, which focused on a select group of women in the American mid-west, Radway attempted to study the readers' responses to the romance novels they read. Her conclusion was that "popular romance has neither intrinsically conservative nor radical

implications but always immanently contains both sites of resistance and of valorization of the structures of female disempowerment” (348). The subject of romance novels as a genre is thus a complex one, and it is not the intention of this thesis to examine the genre critically in detail. For the Smithton readers in Radway’s study: “weak heroes have no place in a romance” (73). They prefer a hero who is “strong and masculine, but equally capable of unusual tenderness, gentleness, and concern for [the heroine’s] pleasure” (81). This seems to support Linda Lee’s research, and also to correspond with the characterisation of the romance heroes that I will discuss. The rest of this chapter will attempt to provide some context for the publication of romance in South Africa, and to suggest the ways in which Darcy may have influenced the stereotype of the hero in two South African examples of the modern romance genre.



### **Romance novels in South Africa**

Romance publishing in South Africa is an active field. Afrikaans romance imprints at NB Publishers like Satyn and Jasmyn have been well-established and are offering new titles across their imprints each month. NB Publishers has a web page dedicated to their different imprints of Afrikaans romance novels. These titles were able to compete successfully with imported English Mills & Boon titles, and also with the large number of Mills & Boon titles translated for the Afrikaans market. Local Afrikaans publisher Lapa have their own series of romance novels called Romanza. For the English market, Fundza Literary Trust is an organisation aimed at encouraging reading in the youth aged 13–25. Using a mobile app, Fundza releases one new short story each week (one chapter per day) free of charge to their readers. Although the stories are spread across genres, many of the stories they publish are romances. Romance publishing in South Africa has become so prevalent that the Romance

Writers Organisation of South Africa was established in 2014. The non-profit organisation has chapters around the country to “provide support, encouragement and professional development to romance writers”. Further north in Africa, publisher Bibi Bakare-Yusuf has started Ankara Press, a romance imprint of Nigeria-based Cassava Republic. The romance imprint publishes African romances by African authors, with e-books available for sale on their website. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine in depth the state of romance publishing in South Africa and in the rest of Africa, so I will confine the rest of this chapter to examining the ways in which I think Darcy has influenced the characterisation of modern romance heroes by looking at romance novels written by two South African authors. By examining the heroes in these two romance novels, I hope to trace the ways in which the characteristics of Austen’s hero has influenced conventions of writing heroes in modern romance novels.

From 2010 until 2013 I worked as an editor at Kwela Books, working predominantly on their South African romance list, Sapphire Press. Sapphire romance novels were written according to guidelines established in-house at Kwela Books and made public on their website. The growth of the black middle class in South Africa opened up the possibility that there might be a market for romances aimed at precisely this market, the readers of *True Love* and *Drum* magazines. The books were initially published in partnership with *True Love* magazine as Romance Book Club offerings and were advertised in the magazine. Readers would subscribe to the book club through *True Love* and for a fee of R50 per month could receive one romance per month delivered to them. It soon became clear that readers were uncomfortable with the idea of committing themselves to a monthly fee and it was decided that the books would be sold through mainstream book shops such as Exclusive Books. The difficulty with this was that these books shops were situated mostly in metropolitan areas and were not reaching readers in the numbers that were required. Therefore, difficulties with the

distribution networks and competitive pricing in South Africa resulted in the imprint going dormant after I left the company in 2013. As a result of this there are a limited number of books available for discussion. Interestingly, at roughly the same time that Sapphire started publishing, another local publishing company also started publishing South African romance novels. They were called Nollybooks and claimed that the audience they were aiming their books at were young women aged 16-24 (De Waal). As a result, Nollybooks novels contained no sex (Mabuse and Wither). While the books received quite a bit of media attention at the time when they first launched, Nollybooks has also unfortunately gone dormant, and their books are no longer being sold in bookshops. Nélleke de Jager was the publisher at Kwela when the Sapphire series was launched. When asked during an email interview why she thinks the series was unsuccessful, she replied:

Distribution. It really is a fact that publishing is easy and the distribution hard, and costly. We managed to distribute Sapphire through the same channels as Mills & Boon in CNA, but merchandising was still a problem, and customers could often not find our books. Often. Making the Sapphires available as e-books online also didn't solve the problem, as I suspect many of our readers might not have credit cards. In the end the print runs became too low for us to justify the margins, and the project.

There might be a further explanation for why the romance novel series seem to be unsuccessful in South Africa. An article by Miki Flockemann investigates the popularity of soap operas in South Africa, particularly in townships such as Soweto. At the time of writing the article, the American soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful*, although immensely popular in South Africa, had been overtaken in popularity by local soap *Generations*. Flockemann's discussion focuses on *The Bold and the Beautiful*, and she finds, interestingly, that the soap "simultaneously inverts and affirms gender roles" (147). The men, for example, "are often

represented as creative, passive, and emotional, capable of tears and passionate speeches of undying love” (148). The love lives of the characters, Flockemann finds, remains “the dominant narrative strand” (148). The treatment of love and desire in the soap is similar to the treatment it receives in romantic fiction says Flockemann, in which “sex is romanticized and love reduced to pure emotion” (148). Soap operas enjoy as bad a reputation as romance novels in being considered mass culture. In discussing the way in which the soap is received by an audience in Fatima Dike’s play *So What’s New?*, Flockemann comments, “there is a negotiation of meaning in the way the women enjoy the ‘sexy and passionate’ men like Ridge, while being fully aware of the unrealistic aspect of such enjoyment, given the prevailing context referred to in an ever-present threat of township ‘jackrollers’ (gang rapists)” (152). There are therefore many similarities in the negotiation of masculinity and the portrayal of romance in soap operas compared to romance novels. It offers readers a similar opportunity for wish fulfilment in watching and projecting themselves into the glamorous lives of soap opera characters whose lives seem to be dominated by love and romance. It is therefore worth considering whether soap operas contribute to the failure of the romance novel series in offering readers an alternative for the wish fulfilment needs for the much lower price of an annual TV licence rather than a fee of R50 for the two hours’ worth of entertainment to be received by a short romance novel. Alternatively, readers can have these needs met by the variety of women’s magazines currently available. According to Addison, the total South African readership of women’s interest magazines such as *True Love* and *Cosmopolitan* is in the region of about 9.4 million with fierce competition among brands for market share resulting in the careful evaluation of content for appeal to a broad segment of the market (25). In Deidre Donnelly’s study “Globalised Girlhood: The Teaching of Femininity in *Cosmopolitan* and *True Love*” she states that “[w]omen’s magazines are

aspirational devices that present the reader with utopian lifestyle images, which offer an opportunity to fantasise about an ‘ideal self’” (37).

Sapphire Press romances are short romances, roughly 30 000 words and written mostly by local authors. All of the romances have local settings, either rural or urban, and have main characters who are black South Africans. The guidelines given to authors are quite specific, but allow for a lot of variation in the details of the plot. The guidelines, which I attach as an appendix, provide some guide as to the characterisation of the hero and heroine, the target readership, and the plot progression over the course of the ten chapters. These guidelines specifically refer to the Mills & Boon imprint, perhaps the most well-known romance imprint in South Africa. The Sapphire romances are therefore based directly on this UK imprint which publishes about 120 romances each month. During the years that I was an editor at Kwela publishing these romances, we received an overwhelming number of manuscripts from would-be authors. A significant number of the manuscripts we published were from first-time authors. In this chapter I select two Sapphire romances to examine and discuss. Both of these titles are books that I published in my capacity as editor at Sapphire Press and were selected off the ‘slush pile’ – a cache of unsolicited manuscripts. Along with my discussion of the novels, I suggest the ways in which the authors may have been influenced, either directly or indirectly by Austen’s hero, through an analysis of extracts from the novels and the authors’ responses to a questionnaire. All quotes and opinions by Make and Matsaneng in this discussion are taken from their answers to the questionnaires. The questionnaires and the authors’ responses to them are attached as appendices to this thesis.

Park and Rajan’s introduction to *The Postcolonial Jane Austen* argues:

If the essays . . . in this volume which pursue the investigation of the ‘influence’ of Austen’s novels in different times and places are not mere exercises in

comparative criticism, it is because they insist upon the ways in which Austen's 'themes' - bourgeois marriage, domesticity, female 'conduct', daughterly value, property and propriety - and her novels' distinctive forms of critical, social, and mimetic realism both apply and are intransigent to these different contexts. (15)

This collection of essays, which focuses on India and the East, does not reject Austen's novels as alien to their concerns, thereby leaving the door open for a discussion on Austen's influence on postcolonial literature. Two essays in the collection: Nalini Natarajan's, "Reluctant Janeites: Daughterly Value in Jane Austen" and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee's Swami and You-Me Park's, "Father's Daughters: Critical Realism in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Pak Wansö's *A Faltering Afternoon* [Hwichöngkörinүн Oho]" discuss similarities and influences, but the essays in this collection generally focus on representations of women while my study focuses on male characters. My study offers a different view of the significance of reading Jane Austen in Africa to that offered by Molar Ogundipe's poem "To a 'Jane Austen' class at Ibadan University" in the same collection of essays which assumes that Austen represent for African readers only a relationship of oppression and exploitation:

sons of farmers – descendants of slavers – born of traders  
in oil and liberty – offspring of riverain folk who plied to  
horror ships with eyes quick white in hope – ask why the  
Austen folk carouse all day and do no work – play cards  
at noon and dance the while – the while the land vanished  
behind closures – mothers' seeds into the holds or marts –

and pliant life into pits – and in the south or souths, the  
sorrow songs rake the skies – while death the autocrat  
stalks both bond and free? (12 – 20)

**Louise Make: *Five-Star Seduction***

*Five-Star Seduction* was written by Louise Make and published by Sapphire Press in 2011. Make, like Matsaneng whom I discuss below, is also a romance reader, thus both authors are well-versed in the conventions of romance writing. Make's story is set in Johannesburg. In it, the heroine, Langaletu Cima is a marketing executive pitching to win a marketing account for the Rhadebe Omni-Chic Hotel group. The enigmatic CEO Lazola Rhadebe finds Langa's pushiness abrasive, but allows her to pitch for the account anyway. Their relationship starts inauspiciously when Langa arrives at the meeting and Lazola discovers that Langa is the same woman that he shared a heated and intimate kiss with at a formal dinner the night before. Both Langa and Lazola are caught unaware by this. Lazola assumes that Langa uses her body to get what she wants and treats her with contempt. Soon, however, their attraction becomes overwhelming and they start a relationship, but Lazola's responsibilities often call him away and Langa begins to suspect that he is cheating on her. Eventually Lazola admits that he is in love with Langa and that there never was anyone else. The story ends just after Langa accepts Lazola's proposal of marriage.

Louise Make, the author of *Five-Star Seduction* is a UCT graduate who has occupied various positions at magazine publishing companies. Louise Make has read *Pride and Prejudice* and sees some similarities with the novel and modern romance novels:

Many stories today focus on ‘fluff’: fairly simple characters in flashy, trendy worlds, living out clichés. I love a romance that surprises the main characters with serious obstacles and forces them to examine their actions and beliefs, and trigger inner growth. The romance novels I choose today are that sort; and that is what I enjoyed experiencing with Elizabeth and Mr Darcy.

Make deliberately creates a heroine that she herself describes as “strong enough to hold her own”, as Elizabeth does against Darcy. Make describes the similarities between Lazola, her romance hero, and Darcy:

I just love alpha males, so Lazola was a work of pure instinct at the time. Now, however, remembering my crush on the seemingly arrogant Mr Darcy, I think they’re actually very similar.

Both judge their heroines quite harshly upon meeting them. Darcy looks down on Elizabeth and her family’s social standing. Lazola accuses Langa of using instant seduction to secure a contract with him. Interestingly, because he is also new to love, he hurts her in the process of just being himself. By the time he realises he wants more than sex from her, she has begun cutting him out of her life – forcing him to step out of his impenetrable armour and begin a focused and relentless seduction that demonstrates his sincerity and commitment, similar to Darcy’s dedicated pursuit of Elizabeth.

For Make, then, there seems to be a close correlation between Lazola and Darcy, and she notes some direct influences.

Langa’s initial attraction to Lazola is unwilling, yet uncontrollable. This contradiction results in a complex interior life for the heroine which invites the use of free indirect

discourse as the writer wishes the reader to have both an intimate sense of the character's thought process, and the critical distance signalled by the narrator's third-person reference. I have discussed the characteristics of free indirect discourse in the third chapter of this thesis. The benefit of using free indirect discourse, suggests Jeremy Hawthorn, is "that of an apparently dramatic and intimately direct access to a character's thoughts or speech without the distracting presence of a narrator signalled by tag-phrases such as 'he thought' or 'she thought'" (132). During the first meeting between Langa and Lazola, "[s]he snapped out of her daydreaming, angry to be fretting over her hair at a time such this. And why did he insist on calling her Miss Cima while referring to the rest of her team by their first names?" (Make 27). The use of free indirect discourse is useful in letting the reader know that Langa is not entirely in control her reactions to Lazola. She is angry with herself for thinking about her appearance when she has more important things to worry about. In pondering why he would address her so formally she is also overthinking her interactions with him, signalling an unwilling attraction. The reader now knows that Langa is outside of her comfort zone because of her attraction to Lazola, and that she might act uncharacteristically in future. This form of narration is woven throughout the novel – usually evident when Langa is in a state of angst about Lazola.

In the below extract, Langa and Lazola are speaking for the first time. Langa has somehow got hold of Lazola's direct number and contacts him to propose the idea of her auditioning to be given the marketing campaign. Lazola is irritated at her forwardness and does not hide his annoyance:

She had no idea Lazola Rhadebe would turn out to be a complete beast. Sure, it must have taken incredible intelligence and brutal focus for him to have achieved the successes that he had as a property developer and investor. Very few earn the

reputation of being the multi-millionaire business mind to watch by age thirty-six, but Langa firmly believed that there was always room for good manners.

‘You don’t know me, and you have no idea what you’re up against, mister.’ She was disturbed by the aggression in her hiss, but couldn’t seem to stop herself. “Do yourself and your hotel a favour and meet with me. Give me your best shot; I’d love to see you try to overwhelm me. I have a branding concept that will knock the socks off you, your team and any archaic advertising gimmick they may have slapped together. Sir.’

Not the advised route to take when trying to make important business connections, but it turned out to be just the attitude to silence Mr Rhadebe and catch his interest. Ten minutes later Langa let out a hushed huff as she made a note of the lunch date she’d secured. One week from Monday.

She was not nervous about proving her confidence, though she had been shaken by the threat he had issued just before hanging up:

‘I will give you one hour, Miss Cima. You had better make bloody sure to impress me, or you will never work a major contract in this city again. One hour’.

(Make 8-9)

According to Make, her characterisation of Lazola is very deliberate. Her decision to show Langa and Lazola on the phone together in the first scene was designed to show that Lazola is assertive, and that Langa is not easily intimidated.

Although the differences between these two characters seem obvious, there are several points of comparison between Darcy and Lazola. The initial characterisation of Lazola in this extract is of an egotistical man, too aware of his own importance to care about

giving offence. After this encounter, in the view of the heroine, Langa characterises Lazola as a ‘beast’. Lazola would be what Linda Lee describes as a ‘modern Beast’. This is interesting in light of my previous discussion comparing *Pride and Prejudice* with the Beauty and the Beast fairy tale. Yet right after this sentence, Langa seems to qualify Lazola’s rudeness by mentioning his success as an investor and developer. She uses the word “brutal” to describe his focus – a word which seems to reinforce Lazola’s masculinity. Langa notes that “[v]ery few earn the reputation of being the multi-millionaire business mind to watch by age thirty-six,” a statement which seems to elevate Lazola as a uniquely intelligent, successful man, making him very special. The fact that his “business mind” is referred to with admiration is evidence that here, as in *Pride and Prejudice*, intelligence is a quality to be highly prized. However, while Lazola’s rudeness is qualified, it is not excused, as Langa goes on to think, “there was always room for good manners”. Langa responds with her own aggression, which, although it surprises Lazola enough to get him to agree to a meeting, puts the two further at odds with one another, creating the tension that lasts for most of the novel. This aggressive confidence is what initially piques Lazola’s interest because Langa’s persistence is not “the advised route to take when trying to make important business connections”. This action is what makes Langa interesting enough for Lazola to agree to a meeting. As with Darcy who is initially attracted by Elizabeth’s “uncommonly intelligent” eyes, Lazola’s initial attraction to Langa is not due to her physical appearance, but her prowess as a marketing guru. So although Lazola seems to fall into an old-fashioned definition of masculinity – an overbearingly masculine alpha male – his grudging respect for Langa (acquiescing to a meeting is a sign of respect) shows that his attitude to women might not be that old-fashioned. This idea is reinforced when Langa and Lazola meet to take a tour of the Sandton-based hotel. Lazola explains to Langa the intricacies of its operation:

He started out detached until she spent an extra hour discussing European trends she thought would work in the ROCH if implemented with a proudly South African influence. Detachment turned to admiration as she asked him intricate questions that went beyond the scope of marketing. (31)

In the next line Lazola asks Langa's opinion about how to set his hotels apart from the rest. Her intelligent answer "intrigued" him (31). By the middle of the novel Langa is filling in for Lazola in media interviews, standing in for him when he is unavailable. Lazola moves from 'detachment' to 'admiration', to allowing Langa to handle business matters in his stead. Eventually he offers her a job as his head of marketing. This can be compared to how Darcy's admiration for Elizabeth's common sense and intelligence is an indication that his initial characterisation as a male that upholds old-fashioned morals and ideas is misleading.

As Cox and Fisher set out in the plot summary (138), Langa sees evidence of Lazola's honourable dealings with everyone around him after their initial disagreements. In this scene, Langa tells Lazola what she has learnt about him after spending the morning walking through the hotel with him, "[y]ou have a sharp grasp of business, but that is not the sole reason for your success. You garner people's loyalty by dedicating yours to them first. That's the secret behind your success – as far as I can tell" (Make 35). The reader is provided only glimpses of the morning's interactions between Lazola and Langa and therefore has to take Langa's word for this proclamation. This scene reminds me of Elizabeth and Mr Darcy's exchange in chapter 18 during the Netherfield ball in which Elizabeth tries to "make . . . out" the "illustration" of Darcy's character but confesses to being troubled at times (76). Because the story is told entirely from the perspective of the heroine, the reader is reliant on the heroine's reading of the hero to inform her opinion of him. According to Make, it is important for her that the hero is not easily understood – it is part of what makes him attractive. The use of third-person narration is therefore useful to her in representing a certain kind of hero, one

who is enigmatic and not easily readable. Unlike Austen, who offers some glimpses of perspective from Darcy, the reader has no direct access to Lazola's mind. Readings of Lazola's state of mind are therefore filtered through the perspective of the heroine, "Lazola let it be, but she sensed that he wasn't happy about it" (70) and "[s]omething dark flitted across his handsome face, but he cleared his expression before Langa could define it" (79). In her article titled "The Disappearing Act: A study of Harlequin Romances", Tania Modleski suggests:

The vague language has a precise function; more specific language would destroy the reader's complex relationship with the heroine causing us either to identify with her too closely or to become too detached. In other words, since his look is so 'odd,' we do not view her persistence in blaming it on the bad weather and a bad mood as completely unwarranted, yet we can ourselves attribute it to happier causes unsuspected by the heroine. (440)

This coincides with Make's intentions. According to Make, she finds the use of third-person narration useful as a means not only to invite the reader's understanding of characters, but also as a way of signalling the limits of how we attempt to understand others – in particular in situations of romantic relationships. The "precariousness" of this process, according to Make, is central to the reader's identification with the experience of falling in love, "I wanted to add to the sense of precariousness by not letting the reader know what he was feeling. We've all been there, wishing we could sneak a peek inside the person we're falling for, and (because we can't tell) hoping upon hope they like us back." In these quotes above, then, the reader (and the heroine) gets the idea that something is happening beneath the surface, that there is a complexity at play in the hero that we do not yet have access to. Make says:

When falling in love, we don't always think straight and definitely don't know all the inner workings of the person we're falling for. This leads to assumptions, misunderstandings and occasional judgements to overcome – all of which add dimension to an otherwise beautiful and thrilling story.

In Make's use of third-person and free indirect discourse (she does not distinguish these modes, but implies the shifts in perspective) she attempts both to invite insight and to signal distance and possible confusions, but also intriguing aspects of characters. Says Make: "I . . . liked the hints of mystery and confusion I got to create in third person."

Later on, though, Langa converses with Lazola's hotel manager and is told stories of Lazola's youth which further paints him in a sympathetic light. It is briefly reported to the reader that this is happening, and it is made clear that, "Thomas thought highly of Lazola and felt he deserved only the best" (Make 67). This is high praise from someone who works very intimately with Lazola on a daily basis. A comparison can be made to Darcy's housekeeper, who reports to Elizabeth that Darcy is a good landlord and master.

Descriptions of physical features in Austen's novels as well as in the romance novels also seem to invite a deeper reading of the heroes' personalities. Rather than serving as mere physical descriptions, they offer hints about the heroes' character traits. In terms of the physical attractiveness, Captain Wentworth in *Persuasion* is described in the following words, "[t]he years which had destroyed her youth and bloom had only given him a more glowing, manly, open look" (Austen 59). There is very little description of Mr. Knightley at the beginning of *Emma*, although Emma sees him at the ball arranged by the Westons and we are given this description from her perspective, "so young he looked! . . . His tall, firm, upright figure . . . He moved a few steps nearer, and those were enough to prove in how gentlemanlike a manner, with what natural grace, he must have danced" (Austen 245). In

*Pride and Prejudice*, it is stated that “Mr Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien . . .” (Austen 10). John Mullan speculates that Austen gives little description of her characters because, “Austen wants us to think not so much about how characters look, but how they look to each other” (57). Also, physical attributes are loaded with meaning. A character’s physical appearance thus has a lot to do with the reader’s construction of their perception of the character. I suggest that Austen gives us only enough physical description to help in our construction of the most important parts of their character, the rest of her descriptions speak to innate qualities as expressed by physical features. However, she allows the reader to imagine how these innate qualities would look when constructed as physical features. Wentworth’s “glowing, manly, open look” speaks of his youth and vitality. His vitality indicates his ability to change, which is proven when he changes his mind about Anne. His confidence allows him to incorporate the belief in the value of people rather than titles regardless of the fact that such a view is not popular. Austen does not tell us what manly openness looks like, but allows us to interpret physical features as reflecting innate qualities. Mr Knightley’s description, given so late in the progression of the novel, and through Emma’s perspective, is an indication of Emma’s change of perception of Mr Knightley. This is a departure from earlier description of him which focused on his advanced age. His “tall, firm, upright figure” speaks of the confidence with which he carries himself. The fact that he is tall speaks of a sense of physical power. Darcy’s “fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien” actually draws the attention of onlookers, which indicates that he must be quite something to look at. It is stated that he is tall, which, as with Knightley, speaks to physical power and confidence. Although he is described as handsome, we do not know what form this takes, and because for each reader handsome could look differently, we are invited to use our imaginations in picturing this. The “noble mien” does not strictly

delineate physical features, but speaks rather of innate quality which proclaims his confidence and dignity.

Descriptions of the Sapphire romance heroes are similarly loaded with meaning, however, the authors are more explicit about the descriptions of physical features. The first physical description the reader gets for Lazola pronounces him as “towering” above the rest of the men that he is speaking to (Make 16). Next it is stated that, “[h]e’s gorgeous. His skin was dark and his shoulders were broad. But his lips were the main source of her interest. They were so full, yet firm. A contradiction that had her wondering what his kisses would be like” (16). This description is overtly sensuous. It also deliberately conveys a sense of his physical power by emphasising to the reader that Lazola is much taller than the rest of the guests, and that he has broad shoulders. His overt masculinity is thus made clear. His “full” yet “firm” lips suggest a combination of gentleness and strength, thereby hinting that despite his powerful masculinity he is capable of gentleness. Make, like Austen, describes only those physical features which will convey specific characteristics in the hero, yet she is more overt in guiding the reader to her intended conclusion. Both Lazola and Molemo (the second hero I will discuss) are described as “dark”. The idea of skin is very important in black consciousness thought. Steve Biko, for example, argues, “[w]e are in the position in which we are because of our skin” (25). There seems to be an emphasis in both descriptions of the romance heroes on the idea that black is beautiful. This shows an awareness by the authors of the black consciousness precepts that, “to overcome their overpowering sense of alienation and to regain their dignity and self-esteem, blacks must strive not only to empty their minds of soporific Western values but they must also learn to accept their blackness and to be proud of it” (Ranuga 183). Biko felt that “blacks are suffering from an inferiority complex” which can only be overcome by “a very strong grass-roots build-up of black consciousness such that blacks can learn to assert themselves and stake their rightful claim” (21). This reclaiming of

the black skin as beautiful imbues the heroes with the power inherent in the black consciousness teachings of independence of mind, and makes them stand out as unique and powerful males. According to Habermas in his theory of the public sphere which I discuss in chapter one, he states that the “public use of reason” is influenced by intimate spheres (quoted in Calhoun 10). I suggest that in engaging in question of black consciousness, these romances participate in the creation of a new public sphere. The gratuitous description of the hero seems deliberately created to play into the wish-fulfilment fantasy that romance novels offer. The fact that the heroes are described as sexually attractive, aesthetically pleasing and powerful signals to the reader that the hero is a worthy mate, and creates some emotional investment in the reader that the heroine should end up with the hero.

Although they start a passionate and intimate relationship, Langa calls off the relationship when she thinks that Lazola is cheating with someone else, indicating that she plays a very active role in her mate selection. This rejection forces Lazola to think long and hard about what it might be that is pushing Langa away – he does not know of her suspicion that he is cheating. It also causes him to act in an uncharacteristic way. Lazola unexpectedly shows up at Langa’s office after she had been treating him somewhat coldly for a few weeks. This is after he has left her alone in his hotel room following their first intimate encounter. Lazola catches Langa by surprise when he grabs her, holds her close and says, “I’ve missed you, Langa. Just give me a moment” (79). This is not the actions of a man that had previously been characterised as an “oaf” (17) and a “beast” (8). One who has previously acted in an almost physically aggressive manner when he “sneered” (29) at Langa and “practically fling[s]” her hand aside after shaking it at their first meeting (25). Langa’s rejection of him changes him and makes him softer, just as “love works upon Darcy to open and soften his heretofore inapproachably proud character” (McCann 72). The reader sees glimpses of Lazola’s vulnerability. He soon starts pursuing her somewhat desperately, “he called her

numerous times since their last conversation, but each time Langa had refused to take his calls and replied ‘no’ to every email in which he demanded to see her” (103). Langa interprets this persistence as arrogance, as Lazola’s anger at losing his marketing manager, yet the romance reader, trained in the art of narrative misdirection, and having more insight than the heroine, knows that this pursuit is personal, and Lazola is pursuing Langa because he has developed feelings for her. Langa pulling away acts as a catalyst for Lazola’s growth. This is done intentionally by Make, “Lazola grew as a man when this boundary taught him a few lessons he needed to learn about demonstrating love.” This is similar to Elizabeth’s rejection of Darcy during his first proposal spurring his self-examination and eventual change to greater humility. Lazola’s jealousy of Langa’s colleague Ben Nkosi gives us a hint of his romantic feelings for Langa. At the launch party for the hotel Langa takes Ben as her partner. When Lazola needs Langa’s help with journalists he pulls her away from Ben saying dismissively, “I’m sure your boyfriend will survive an hour without your coddling” (47). His jealousy of Ben lasts throughout the novel. Lazola’s new vulnerability is signalled by the statement that “his stance seemed cautious” (83). When Langa finally calls Lazola back after numerous calls and emails Lazola asks, “[w]hy are you doing this? Every time we are together it’s unbelievably good, only to have you disappear on me afterwards. Why?” (104). In opening himself up to rejection this way, Lazola makes himself vulnerable. Finally he shows up at her office to declare his love. He follows Langa through the office, uncaring that her colleagues are witnessing his vulnerable declarations in which he exposes the wishes of his heart. Lazola says, “I’ve spent months now thinking you hated me and trying to work out how to win your heart” (147). Langa’s rejection of Lazola (much like Elizabeth’s rejection of Darcy) leads to contemplation and self-reflection. In the end, Lazola confesses to Langa:

We’ve had a rocky start and that was because I’m a difficult man. But that ends now; this is my vow. I’ve never been in love before and I’ve had to learn to open

my heart. I am here now and I'm yours. I will spend the rest of my days showing you how important you are to me. You challenge and excite me and I can't wait to start our lives, our love, together. (149)

Lazola, like Darcy, must become a different man in order to win Langa. While still charismatic and powerful, Lazola has been "properly humbled" by Langa and learns to be more open and vulnerable (Austen 284).

### **Lerato Matsaneng: *Love on the Menu***

The second romance that I would like to discuss is called *Love on the Menu*, written by Lerato Matsaneng. The story's heroine is Lebo Mokoena. Lebo is an entertainment journalist at a local newspaper. She wants to start her own catering business with her mother and aunt. At a party she is introduced to local businessman Molemo Tladi. Lebo asks Molemo whether he would be willing to mentor her as she tries to start her business. Soon Molemo and Lebo discover that they are attracted to one another. However, Lebo suspects that Molemo has been bragging to his friends about the intimate details of their relationship and calls it off. Molemo must eventually force Lebo into a room long enough to explain that there has been a misunderstanding after which the two are reunited.

Lerato Matsaneng is a former journalist who now works as an independent marketing and communications consultant. *Love on the Menu* is her first published novel. As with Louise Make, I asked Matsaneng some questions about the genre of romance and the influence of *Pride and Prejudice* on the genre. For Matsaneng, the influence of Austen and *Pride and Prejudice* is indirect, "I do see some similarities in Jane Austen's novels to current day novels, in that at the root of it all, despite the era you are in – all young women (mainly

because the books are written from this perspective) all want to be loved by someone worthy of their love.” In *Love on the Menu*, I would like to explore the similarities in the development of the hero and heroine compared to *Pride and Prejudice*.

In the following extract from *Love on the Menu*, Lebo calls Molemo to arrange a meeting to discuss the next steps in their mentoring plan:

He left Lebo with very little choice in the matter. She needed his help and would therefore have to do as he said.

‘Not a problem,’ Lebo answered. She would do whatever it took to get her business off the ground.

‘Perfect. Tomorrow night at Katzy’s in Rosebank, 8pm. Can you get there on your own?’

‘Yes, I actually live in Rosebank, so that’s perfect for me.’

‘Great, see you then. Good night,’ Molemo said and ended the call.

Lebo couldn’t believe the arrogance he’d displayed in setting up the meeting – he hadn’t even asked if she was available! But maybe that was what was needed to survive in business: to be arrogant and aggressive.

She vowed to work on her own arrogance, but chuckled at the idea of ever managing to be as arrogant as Molemo Tladi. (Matsaneng 25-26)

There are a lot of similarities between this extract and *Five-Star Seduction* above. Once again, we have a hero who is arrogant and aggressive. Molemo’s ‘beastly form’ is not just a result of his arrogance, though. He also has the reputation of being a ladies man, a fact which Lebo’s friend Tebogo warns her about, and this will cause the rift between him and

Lebo. Also as in *Five-Star Seduction*, the heroine does not respond in a typical manner to Molemo's arrogance. Rather than take offence to it, Lebo laughs it off. She even thinks about emulating Molemo's arrogance. Here too, Molemo's arrogance is qualified by the statement, "maybe that was what was needed to survive in business: to be arrogant and aggressive". Matsaneng characterises Molemo's arrogance as a mask that he puts on to protect himself rather than as a characteristic of who he really is:

Molemo was a successful young man, and had learnt that in order to be respected at that young age, with all that responsibility, he has to put up a hard and somewhat arrogant face. This is a typical mask that people put up in order to protect themselves. Does not mean that is who they truly are. But once he found someone who made him comfortable enough, he took off the mask and allowed himself to be who he really was.

This could be compared to McCann's idea that Darcy's arrogance shows itself when he is in uncomfortable situations, "at Pemberley, where setting and Elizabeth's company are congenial to him, the forbidding manner falls away, thereby revealing it to be a polite form of indignation. At Pemberley, with those he cares for, he can be his true self" (72).

In terms of physical description, Molemo, is "tall, clean-shaven, dark and attractive . . . She was taken aback by just how handsome he was, with big, brown eyes and full lips. He was well-built, with broad shoulders, and looked very secure in himself with his relaxed demeanour" (Matsaneng 16). Once again, as with Lazola, Molemo is "tall", "dark", and "attractive", "with broad shoulders". There is a combination of masculine power and sensuality in the language used for this description. Matsaneng give a little more detail than Make does in telling us that Molemo is "clean-shaven" and has "big brown eyes". Both Lazola and Molemo are tall and carry an air of confidence with them, much like Darcy.

Matsaneng goes as far as to state that Molemo is “very secure in himself with his relaxed demeanour” to make it clear that he is quite confident. Despite the obvious masculinity conveyed by the description, his “big brown eyes” and “full lips” also convey gentleness in Molemo. Matsaneng, like Make, therefore lays the groundwork in this physical description for the hero’s transformation to a thoughtful lover. Matsaneng, like Austen, conveys a great deal about her hero’s characterisation in the way in which his appearance is described.

Lebo takes Molemo’s overbearing personality good-naturedly, even when he imposes it on her, “Molemo had a habit of stating his requests, rather than asking them. It made him seem arrogant, and Lebo didn’t know whether to kiss him or slap him when he did that” (65). In this novel, however, unlike *Five-Star Seduction* above, Lebo and Molemo enter into a mentor-mentee relationship. When Lebo and Molemo meet for the second time to discuss her progress as an entrepreneur, Lebo is late for the meeting due to a deadline that she had to meet at the newspaper where she works full time. Molemo reprimands her, “[t]he most important thing in business is to be professional at all times. The minute you realise you’re running late, you should contact whoever you’re meeting – not ten minutes into your meeting” (38). Lebo at first wants to protest, but quickly backs down and feels embarrassed, after which Molemo responds with sympathy. Molemo, like Lazola, is a self-made man. Although he has joined and taken over the business his father started, he has earned a degree, and was made to work his way up through the company ranks. His credentials as a mentor is thus earned rather than assigned solely due to his sex or status. This, as with Lazola, is meant to inspire respect in the reader, as it indicates Molemo’s intelligence and business acumen.

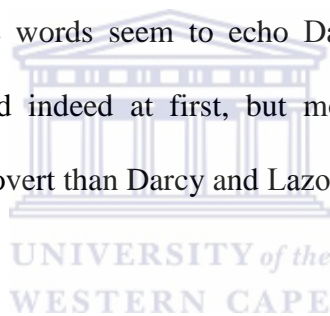
Matsaneng feels that Lebo grows into her strength after being mentored by Molemo. I suggest that Lebo grows in insight and confidence rather than strength. Her ambition is what leads her to Molemo, and she handles the stresses of running her own business with the same composure than she does making a deadline at the newspaper. For Matsaneng, the growth of

the heroine is more important than the growth of the hero in the romance novel, “his story wasn’t about growth as much as Lebo’s was”. Matsaneng’s focus on the growth of the heroine does have some correlation in *Pride and Prejudice*. For while Darcy’s transformation is the more drastic one, Elizabeth’s transformation is the one the reader is allowed to experience. Elizabeth begins the novel by being offended by Darcy. Once her prejudice is established she is determined to be offended by everything he says, and to offend him in turn. Once Elizabeth reads and rereads his letter, her awakening begins. She begins to see how blind she has been in misjudging Wickham and Darcy. Her visit to Pemberley creates a material change in her opinion of Darcy, and she admits, at the end, that she has “long been most heartily ashamed” of her behaviour (283). The power dynamic between Molemo and Lebo is not a typical mentor-mentee relationship. Matsaneng suggests that “the mentor-mentee relationship was over-shadowed by the relationship that developed.” As soon as Molemo and Lebo enter into a relationship, Molemo’s advice and guidance is less ‘formalised’ and becomes the help of a caring boyfriend. Molemo, rather than just imposing his authority over Lebo, is genuinely interested in helping her empower herself and her family through her ventures as an entrepreneur. After two quite formal meetings, Molemo suggests that they spend a Saturday afternoon together. They have lunch, and while Lebo has the opportunity to get some very practical advice from Molemo, they also share personal stories with one another. The relationship becomes less formalised, with personal and professional conversations intertwining. He recommends her for an event planning job at his company, even though she has no formal experience in event planning.

While Lebo is accommodating with Molemo’s arrogance, she does not give over complete control of their relationship. She stands up to Molemo when necessary, and walks away from the relationship when she feels that he has crossed a boundary. Here, too, free indirect style is woven into the narrative while Lebo considers her decisions with regard to

Molemo, “Lebo was feeling guilty about how things had turned out between the two of them. Maybe she’d overreacted about everything. Maybe if she had let him explain properly what had happened, they would have sorted things out” (126). The use of free indirect discourse functions to signal to the reader how conflicted the heroine is about her decision to break up with Molemo. Because the reader has been given clues about Molemo’s personality, doubt already exists that he would be able to so callously hurt Lebo. By showing Lebo’s uncertainty in her decision to completely let go of Molemo without allowing him to explain, the reader’s doubt is strengthened, thereby also strengthening the possibility that Molemo will be vindicated. Lebo does not give in to these thoughts and feelings, even though Molemo repeatedly approaches her to apologise. For Matsaneng, it is important that the hero prove ‘worthy’ of the heroine’s love. Darcy’s worthiness of Elizabeth’s love is signalled to the reader when it is revealed that he has been the instrument of bringing about the wedding between Wickham and Lydia, thus saving the family from scandalous ruin. In *Love on the Menu*, this is signalled when Molemo facilitates a reunion between Lebo and Kgotso. Kgotso and Lebo are childhood friends and were previously in a relationship. Lebo and Molemo’s breakup had occurred because Kgotso overheard Molemo telling his friend that he and Lebo were in a relationship. Hurt because he had been hoping to win Lebo back, Kgotso overreacts and punches Molemo, then drunkenly calls Lebo to let her know that Molemo is bragging about having taken her to bed. For Molemo to forgive Kgotso’s actions, and read past the anger in order to see that Kgotso is reacting out of hurt is a signal to the reader that he is mature, forgiving and caring – worthy of the heroine’s love. Despite this, Lebo only gives in to Molemo when he humbles himself before her, displaying the unsure nervousness that Darcy shows when he proposes to Elizabeth, just as Lazola has done as well. In his final profession of love, Molemo “was speaking a lot of things all at once, not taking a second to breathe, and just went on and on”, Lebo has to tell him to slow down and make more sense

(147). He “closed his eyes, took a deep breath and began” before getting muddled, after which, “Molemo punched the palm of his left hand with his right hand” in frustration (147). Molemo apologises again for the mistakes he has made, “I’m sorry for treating you like one of those other women. I want you in my life, I need you. I want to laugh with you and help you make all your dreams come true. I want to talk to you about things I can’t share even with my closest friend. You are the one for me, Lebo. Please give us another chance” (148). Molemo has to bare himself before Lebo before she will agree to take him back. Molemo, like Lazola and Darcy, gets a lesson in humility from his heroine. He also has to make it clear that she is special and unique – the only woman who could inspire such a transformation in him, “[b]efore I met you, I thought I had it all and knew it all. But you came and changed the way I saw things” (147). These words seem to echo Darcy’s proclamation to Elizabeth, “[y]ou taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous” (Austen 284). Molemo’s transformation is less overt than Darcy and Lazola’s, but no less humbling.



### **The modern romance hero**

In comparing Lazola and Molemo, it seems immediately obvious that both have been characterised as alpha males. This is a very central element to romance novels. Romance writer Mary Jo Putney says, “[a] romance can survive a bland or even a bitchy heroine, but it cannot succeed with a weak hero” (quoted in Clawson 468). The hero’s often stereotypical masculinity is usually made up of a combination of sexual magnetism, a powerful physique, an arrogant, domineering personality and a high-powered, high-paying career. The hero’s masculinity plays a very significant role in the plot development. Not only is the powerful hero attractive to the heroine (and the reader), it makes the heroine’s ultimate ‘taming’ of the hero that much more satisfying. Lazola and Molemo begin the novels as arrogant and cynical

about women and love. Langa and Lebo teach them humility, and lead them to believe in the power of everlasting love. This is of course one of the most satisfying plot developments of *Pride and Prejudice*: that Elizabeth Bennet, who is not as beautiful as Jane or as rich as Miss Bingley, should through the power of her charming wit and intelligence, win over a man of such rank and fortune as Mr Darcy. This has played a significant role in the enduring popularity of *Pride and Prejudice* and has significantly influenced the conventions of modern romance novels.

When considering Darcy's attractiveness to modern romance authors compared to other Austen heroes, it is worth mentioning that *Pride and Prejudice* has perhaps the biggest presence in popular culture compared to any of Austen's other novels. It is often featured on lists of most loved books in English literature, and has inspired numerous film, television and theatre adaptations, as well as countless 'spin-off' novels. *Pride and Prejudice* therefore has a further reach than Austen's other novels due to being her most well-known novel. One of the most important aspects to note when discussing Darcy's appeal as a romance hero is that he is Austen's richest hero. Women's desire for mates with access to social and financial resources has been well documented.<sup>5</sup> Both Lazola and Molemo are successful businessmen. Their access to resources is made obvious in various ways during the course of *Five-Star Seduction* and *Love on the Menu*, both through the narrator explicitly saying that they are rich, and also through mention of expensive status symbols. Lazola's wealth, for example, is made obvious whenever Langa has to meet him at his five-star hotel, where he permanently resides in the penthouse suite. Although the reader knows that he is rich, his powerful, domineering personality is reinforced more often than is his wealth. Molemo, on the other hand, drives an ivory Range Rover, lives on a "fancy golf estate in Johannesburg" (15), drinks only Johnny Walker Gold (28), has a Louis Vuitton wallet (17), and wears a Rolex

---

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Buss and Schmidt 224.

(32). His wealth is repeatedly reinforced to the reader. While none of Austen's other heroes are facing poverty, they also cannot compete with Darcy when it comes to financial resources. According to Janice Radway, this preoccupation with the material is a staple of romance writing:

if the story's setting is contemporary, brand-name appliances, popular furniture styles, and trendy accessories . . . typically populate the heroine's apartment . . . [these] descriptions assert tacitly that the imaginary world of the novel is as real as the reader's world because it is filled with the same, solid teeming profusion of commodities. (194)

While these descriptions undoubtedly establish realism in the world of the novel, I would suggest that these descriptions serve a second purpose which I discuss briefly earlier in the chapter – to satisfy an aspirational need in the reader. The readers that the romance novels are aimed at – readers of *True Love* and *Drum* magazines, are the growing black middle class. The Sapphire guidelines describe these readers as:

- proudly black, dynamic, ambitious, enlightened, mature and sexy
- seeks empowerment through self-development, relationship advice, career guidance and spiritual inspiration
- respects and honours her cultural traditions
- aspires to live a successful, fulfilling and dynamic life in a country that continuously presents her with interesting challenges and opportunities
- generates her own income and seeks financial security and independence, to realise her desires and enjoy her many choices as a consumer

In 2013 an article on the UN's African Renewal Magazine page placed the number of black middle class citizens in South Africa at 4.2 million (Benjamin). According to the

article, this black middle class are, “showing flashes of middle class life: buying new cars, modern electronics, mobile phones, designer dresses and houses”. This conspicuous consumption serves as a measure of success. The quiet good taste that Darcy displays is inadequate for the black romance hero aimed at an audience so obviously concerned with status. This black middle class audience, then, also has some share in shaping the ideals of the modern romance hero as the author must accommodate these aspirational fantasies within a realistic setting.

In her “Plan of the novel based on hints from various quarters” Jane Austen delineates what she does not want to write about. The “hints from various quarters” comprised clichéd characters and scenarios in the writing of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which Austen does not want to repeat in her writing. The villain, described as a “totally unprincipled and heart-less young man, desperately in love with the Heroine, and pursuing her with unrelenting passion” sounds like Sir Hargrave Pollexfen, who kidnaps Harriet in Richardson’s *Sir Charles Grandson* in order to force her to marry him (231). I have previously discussed Austen’s aversion for characters that are “all perfection” as is her hero in “Plan of the novel” (231). Austen deliberately veers away from these conventions in novel writing in order to create characters and stories that are realistic and believable, and also unique. While Austen is undoubtedly influenced by the writing of Richardson, Burney and Edgeworth, as I discuss in chapter one, Austen’s innovation in realist writing of creating complex characters ensures that she is not re-using clichés. The use of free indirect discourse and the epistolary mode allows Austen to go much further in her complex characterisation than Richardson, Burney or Edgeworth managed to do before her. The fine attention that Austen pays to her characters ensures that she does not recreate stereotypes. Darcy has, however, influenced the stereotype of the modern romance hero, and I suggest that the

authors that I discuss in this chapter recreate the stereotype that exists because of Austen's original. This is a stereotype that has endured for more than two hundred years.

Although Make and Matsaneng appreciated how the guidelines shaped their writing, they felt restricted by the guidelines set by Sapphire Press, although to different extents. Both understood the commercial importance of writing within the conventions of romance. Make would have liked to create unconventional characters:

I'll admit that it did frustrate me at times to get excited about a slightly unusual character or situation (e.g., an overweight heroine going healthy; or a couple where the man is significantly younger than the woman) only to be told it would suit "chick lit" better than a Sapphire . . . I understood, though, that those decisions are a tightrope walk: more leeway could be exciting, but how far before it's too far? I might love the idea of witnessing an unpopular character-type overcoming a struggle like that, but it still has to sell. Sapphire was too new for risks like that, I think.

Matsaneng found it a little easier. When asked whether she thinks the guidelines were restrictive she replied, "[y]es in the beginning I did. However you soon realise that you aren't writing for yourself but for a wide audience and thus, you need to amend some of your content to suit your audience. It wasn't too compromising, but it allowed me to practice some restraint." It is interesting to note that while Make seems keener on variety in her characters, when writing within the conventions of romance, she creates a hero that is much more closely aligned with the 'dad vs cad' stereotype which is so popular in romance, and which resembles Darcy. So while both Make and Matsaneng find the Sapphire guidelines restrictive, they are also very aware of why the conventions exist.

Both Make and Matsaneng are very clear on the kinds of characters they wanted to create. I have argued that Austen's Darcy has influenced the way that modern romance heroes are imagined. The question which next needs to be answered then, is why Darcy, apart from the appeal of his wealth? Why not any one of Jane Austen's other heroes? From my discussion in the first chapter of this thesis on the authors that influenced Jane Austen, I suggest that Darcy offers the most attractive mix of the characteristics Grandison, Delvile and Hervey present to us. While Darcy is as morally active as Grandison, he is not as static as Richardson's hero, and far less pompous. Austen presents to us in Darcy a flawed hero, as Burney does with Delvile. Yet Darcy's reasoning throughout *Pride and Prejudice* remains sound. He admits his mistakes and overcomes them while maintaining a controlled and authoritative manner. This is in contrast to Delvile who seems to lose control and depend solely on Cecilia for guidance. Darcy is dynamic enough to learn from his mistakes, like Edgeworth's Clarence Hervey. Yet rather than misjudging a situation out of selfishness and ignorance, as Hervey does, Darcy's mistakes are made out of a sense of moral obligation, which is more easily forgiven. Austen uses the epistolary mode and free indirect discourse to guide the reader's opinion of Darcy carefully, from the initial impression of him as an arrogant aristocrat to accepting him as a thoughtful lover. In doing this Austen departs from Richardson's insistence on an exemplary hero constrained from change by his conduct book role. Younger and perhaps more heroic than Mr Knightley, more emotionally mature and less impetuous than Wentworth, Darcy seems to offer a mix of characteristics designed to appeal to a female audience more than two hundred years after his creation. He is rich, handsome, devoted to his family and friends, loyal and generous (231). He also offers to female readers the ultimate fantasy – the idea that a man could change who he is in order to be worthy of his heroine's love. He is certainly not "all perfection", but perhaps this is part of his charm.

## CONCLUSION

The idea of the hero is a complex one, one that has been the subject of revision and academic criticism since the inception of writing. Through every literary age the ideals of the hero are refigured. The literary texts that I discuss in this thesis are shaped by the ideas of the Enlightenment, Romanticism and conventions of Sentimental literature. In chapter one I discuss how Jane Austen's predecessors Samuel Richardson, Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth construct their heroes in relation to these literary ideals. Samuel Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison is a model of perfection, exemplary in all he does. Yet Sir Charles begins the novel fully formed, with very little room for character development. Although Richardson does attempt to complicate his character slightly, this is not entirely successful and Sir Charles often does not escape the label of pomposity as he goes about his beneficent errands, dispensing advice and criticising what he thinks is wrong behaviour. Although Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth attempt to complicate the hero, they succeed only to a limited extent. Both authors are hampered by the fact that the novels they write attempt to be didactic. While Delvile does to some extent learn to break free from his dependence on his parents' approval, his retreat to the Romantic conventions of the hero make him unreliably passionate and emotional. And while Clarence Hervey begins the novel espousing Romantic ideas, he is duly humbled and in the end retrieves Enlightenment conventions. Burney and Edgeworth are critical of Romantic conceptions of the hero. However Austen, while sceptical of the excesses of the Romantic ideal of the hero, draws on the Romantic focus on the exploration of the complexity of the inward life of the hero. My reading of this differs from that of critics such as Butler who read Austen as rejecting Romantic ideas.

In chapter two I use the idea of setting to discuss the ways in which Austen attempts to give her hero more complexity. Using Pemberley as a complex metaphor for Darcy's characterisation, I discuss how Austen draws on Romantic ideas of vastness and variety, and on Enlightenment ideas of order and harmony to invite a multi-faceted reading of Darcy's character. I discuss and extend Charles McCann's argument that Darcy's personality seems to be influenced by uncomfortable situations, and that it is at Pemberley that he can be his true self – thus accounting for the drastic changes in personality that some critics find unconvincing. I use this argument to counter Kenneth Moler's suggestion that Darcy lapses into a model of Sir Charles Grandison. I go on to discuss how Austen uses the language of picturesque landscape design to further plot and characterisation and how she uses the significance of setting to give specific scenes added meaning. I extend the argument of setting as a metaphor for character to include Mr Bennet and Longbourn, arguing that the ailing stasis at Longbourn is a metaphor for Mr. Bennet's failures in fatherhood as a result of his constant retreat from his family and his insistence on treating even serious situations ironically, and that this comparison of the two estates is significant in shaping Elizabeth's changing perception of the hero.

In chapter three I offer some comparison between three of Austen's heroes: Mr Knightley, Darcy and Captain Wentworth. I discuss Austen's use of the epistolary mode and free indirect discourse to complicate these characters. I disagree with Julie L Epstein's argument that Austen abandons the epistolary mode in favour of free indirect discourse to convey "psychological or moral conflict" (404). I show how Austen uses both of these forms to convey character complexity. I discuss how each of these three heroes in some way speak against Lord Chesterfield's ideals of masculinity in his *Letters to his Son*. Although Austen offers us flawed heroes, the narrative techniques she employs engages the reader's understanding and esteem for these heroes.

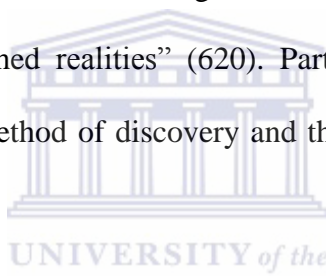
Chapter four of this thesis discusses the way in which I believe Darcy has influenced the conventions of the modern romance hero. I discuss how the generic plots of Harlequin romance novels resemble the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*. I choose two locally published romance novels to demonstrate how pervasive the stereotypical construction of the romance hero has become. One of the most popular stereotypes in romance heroes is the transition from ‘cad to dad’ which sees the romance hero transforming from an arrogant ‘beast’ to a gentle lover, much like Darcy’s transformation in *Pride and Prejudice*. Using Austen’s technique of imbuing physical description with innate characteristics the authors of these romance novels begin to construct a masculinity in their heroes that is both powerful and capable of gentleness. This negotiation of masculinity is important in a patriarchal society such as South Africa, and is also important in order for the hero’s final confession of love to the heroine to be considered sincere. Austen’s innovation in the realist mode saw her breaking away from the conventions of her predecessors to create complex characters free from conduct book modelling. Although these contemporary romance novels aspire to the realist mode in which Austen is so adept, they do adapt their novels to accommodate the aspirational fantasies of their readers. I include in my discussion opinions from the authors regarding the extent to which they are influenced by Austen. While Louise Make notes a direct influence, for Lerato Matsaneng the influence is indirect as she does not admit to an influence but uses elements of the Darcy stereotype in her characterisation of her hero. Finally, while the Sapphire romances are no longer in print, I note that a similar construction of masculinity and focus on romance occurs in soap operas, thus some of these ideas are being perpetuated in another medium.

Cynthia Griffin proposes that *Pride and Prejudice*:

may be seen as an experiment in the art of developing reality in terms of many points of view. . . The real triumph of this new conception of reality, however, is

the subtlety with which it allows Austen to define her characters. She has come to understand that character cannot be presented as an unvarying 'object.' Each person plays many roles. He is as many different people as there are people with whom he comes into contact. People are neither uniformly good nor bad. Darcy may be boorish in a social gathering, but this illuminates only one of the many roles which he plays in life. Elizabeth's (and our) understanding of his complete character can come only after examining a multiplicity of the roles he plays. He may be a good friend, a generous landlord, and a solicitous brother - despite the fact that he is an odious dancing partner. (49 – 50)

Levine, similarly, quotes Lukacs in stating that realism "is a method of discovery, not of representation of pre-established realities" (620). Part of Austen's contribution to the realist novel, I suggest, is this method of discovery and the way in which it unfolds from a multitude of viewpoints.



Bakhtin's view on the development of the novel is that:

The novel is the only developing genre and therefore it reflects more deeply, more essentially, more sensitively and rapidly, reality itself in the process of its unfolding. Only that which is itself developing can comprehend development as a process. The novel has become the leading hero in the drama of literary development in our time precisely because it best of all reflects tendencies of a new world still in the making; it is after all, the only genre born of this new world and in total affinity with it. (7)

Bakhtin's ideas of the novel as a genre embody the possibilities for change rather than fixity. This is a view espoused by Austen, which I have explored in this thesis. Like the genre of the novel itself, Austen's heroes are presented as changing, rather than as models of

behaviour. There seems to be a close correlation between Austen's representations of her heroes, in particular, Mr Darcy, and her adaptations and innovations in relation to the genre of the novel. Bakhtin's metaphoric use of the term 'hero' in his reading of the development of the genre of the novel is interesting in light of my argument that Austen's experiments in narrating the complex inner lives of her heroes contributes to the development of the genre of the novel.

Word count: 59 839



## WORKS CITED

- Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. United States of America: Heinle & Heinle, 1999. Print.
- Addison, Graeme. "New Agenda for Women's Magazines". *Journal of Marketing* 9. 4 (2003): 24-28. Web. Sabinet Online. 26 November 2015.
- Anderson, Walter E. "Plot, Character, Speech and Place in *Pride and Prejudice*", *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 30.3, Jane Austen 1775-1975. JSTOR. Web. 7 May 2011.
- Austen, Jane. *Catharine and Other Writings*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.
- . *Emma*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1996. Print.
- . *Persuasion*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1998. Print.
- . *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1996. Print
- . *Selected Letters*. London: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.
- . *Northanger Abbey*. London: Penguin Popular Classics, 1995. Print.
- Austen-Leigh, James Edward. *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*. London: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.
- Bakhtin, M.M. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Ed. Michael Holist, Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Ball, Charles. *Samuel Richardson's Theory of Fiction*. The Hague: Mouton & Co NV Publishers, 1971. Print.
- Batey, Mavis. "The Picturesque: An overview." *Garden History* 22.2, *The Picturesque* (Winter, 1994): 121-132. JSTOR. Web. 14 October 2015.
- Bennet, James R. "Doating on you Faults and All: Mr George Knightley". *Studies in the Novel*, 5.2 (Summer 1973): 248-50. JSTOR. Web. 2 October 2014.

- Berlant, Lauren. Review. *Modern Philology* 84.3 (February 1987): 346–50. JSTOR. Web. 8 November 2015.
- Biko, Steve. *I Write What I Like*. Ed. Aelred Stubbs CR. Great Britain: Heineman, 1978. Print.
- Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. “Looking at the Landscape in Jane Austen.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 21.4, *Nineteenth Century* (Autumn, 1981): 605-23. JSTOR. Web. 15 September 2015.
- Bonaparte, Felicia. “Conjuring Possibilities: Reading and Misreading Texts in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*”. *Studies in the Novel* 37.2 (Summer 2005): 141–61. JSTOR. Web. 23 July 2014.
- Bradbrook, Frank W. *Jane Austen and her Predecessors*. Oxford: Cambridge University Press, 1966. Print.
- Brontë, Charlotte. Comments on Jane Austen. *Jane Austen: Critical Assessments*. Ed. Ian Littlewood. London: Helm Information, 1998. 427-29. Print
- Burgan, Mary A. “Mr Bennet and the Failures of Fatherhood in Jane Austen’s Novels”, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 74.4 (October 1975). JSTOR. Web. 30 June 2014.
- Burney, Fanny. *Cecilia*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press. 1999. Print.
- . *Evelina*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press. 1999. Print.
- Burney, Frances. *Journals and Letters*. ed, Peter Sabor and Lars E Troide. London: Penguin Classics, 2001. Print.
- Buss, David M and Schmitt, David P. “Sexual Strategies Theory: An Evolutionary Perspective on Human Mating.” *Psychological Review* 100.2 (1993): 204–32. EBSCO. Web. 18 June 2015.
- Butler, Marilyn. *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*. London: Clarendon Press, 1975. Print.

- . *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1981. Print.
- Calhoun, Craig. *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Ed. Craig Calhoun. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992. Print.
- Chapman, RW. *Jane Austen's Letters*. London: Oxford University Press, 1952. Print.
- Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope. *Lord Chesterfield's Letters*. London: Oxford University Press, 1998. Print.
- Chesterton, G.K. Jane Austen's Knowledge of Men. *Jane Austen: Critical Assessments*. Ed. Ian Littlewood. London: Helm Information, 1998. 438. Print
- Clawson, Laura. "Cowboys and Schoolteachers: Gender in Romance Novels, Secular and Christian." *Sociological Perspectives* 48.4 (Winter 2005): 461–79. JSTOR. Web. 9 October 2014.
- Cox, A and Fisher, M. "Man Change Thyself: Hero versus Heroine Development in Harlequin Romance Novels." *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology* 4.4 (2010): 305–16. EBSCO. Web. 22 April 2011.
- De Waal, Mandy. "Nollybooks Opens the Romance of Reading for a New Generation of SA Readers". *The Daily Maverick*, 12 January 2011, N. pag. Web. 11 June 2015.
- Donnelly, Deidre. "Globalised Girlhood: The Teaching of Femininity in *Cosmopolitan* and *True Love*". *Global Media Journal – African Edition* 2.1 (2008): 32–52. Web. Sabinet Online, 26 November 2015.
- Doody, Margaret Anne. *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988. Print.
- . "George Eliot and the Eighteenth-Century Novel." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 35.3 (December, 1980): 260-291. JSTOR. Web. 17 June 2011
- . Introduction. *Cecilia*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print.

- Durr, Benjamin. "A Toast to South Africa's Black Middle Class". *Africa Renewal Online*, December 2013. Web. 10 November 2015.
- Eason, Sarah. "Henry Tilney: Queer Hero of *Northanger Abbey*". *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 34.1 (2013): N. pag. Persuasions Online. Web. 19 November 2015.
- Eddleman, Stephanie M. "Henry Tilney: Austen's Feminized Hero?" *Persuasions: the Jane Austen Journal* 32 (2010): pp 68-72. Persuasions Online. Web. 19 November 2015.
- Edgeworth, Maria. *Belinda*. London: Oxford University Press, 1994. Print.
- Eike, Ann M. "An Investigation of the Market for Paperback Romances". *Journal of Cultural Economics* 10.1 (June 1986): 25–37. JSTOR. Web. 9 October 2014.
- Epstein, Julia L. "Jane Austen's Juvenilia and the Female Epistolary Tradition." *Papers on Language and Literature* 21.4 (Fall 1985): 399-416. EBSCO Host. Web. 17 June 2011.
- Ferber, Michael. *The Cambridge Introduction to British Romantic Poetry*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Print.
- Flockemann, Miki. "Watching Soap Opera." *Senses of Culture: South African Studies* Eds. Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael. Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2000. 141-154. Print.
- "Fundza Literary Trust". Editorial. Ngopulse.org. N.page. N.d. Web. 8 November 2015.
- Gilbert, Sandra M and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984. Print.
- Graham, Peter W. "Henry Tilney: Portrait of the Hero as Beta Male". *Persuasions: the Jane Austen Journal* 31.1 (2010): N. pag. Persuasions Online. Web. 19 November 2015.
- Griffin, Cynthia. "The Development of Realism in Jane Austen's Early Novels." *ELH* 30.1 (March 1963): 36-52. JSTOR. Web. 25 November 2015.

- Hamilton, Patricia L. "Monkey Business: Lord Orville and the Limits of Politeness in Frances Burney's *Evelina*". *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 19.4 (Summer 2007): 416–40. EBSCO. Web. 29 April 2012.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. London: Arnold, 2000. Print.
- Hinnant, Charles H. "Jane Austen's "Wild Imagination": Romance and the Courtship Plot in the Six Canonical Novels". *Narrative* 14.3 (Oct, 2006:) 296 – 390. JSTOR. Web. 13 August 2015.
- Hogarth, William. 1753. *The Analysis of Beauty*. Digital Repository Art History, N. pag. Web. 13 October 2015.
- Hopkins, Annette. "Jane Austen the Critic." *Modern Language Association* 40.2 (June 1925): 398-425. JSTOR. Web. 17 May 2011.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Routledge, 1983. Print.
- Johnson, Samuel. *The Rambler, no. 4*. Behold the Stars. Web. 18 August 2015.
- . *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary*. Ed. Jack Lynch. London: Atlantic Books, 2004. Print.
- Kinkead-Weekes, Mark. *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist*. London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1973. Print.
- Kirkpatrick, Kathryn. Introduction. *Belinda*. London: Oxford University Press, 1994. Print.
- Knight, Charles A. "Irony and Mr Knightley". *Studies in the Novel* 2.2, *British Neo-Classical Novel* (Summer 1970): 185–93. JSTOR. Web. 2 October 2014.
- Knoepfmacher, U. C. "The Importance of Being Frank: Character and Letter-Writing in Emma." *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900* 7.4 Nineteenth Century (Autumn, 1967): 639-658. JSTOR. Web. 2 October 2014.

- Knox-Shaw, Peter. *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment*. London: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print.
- Kramp, Michael. *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2007. Print.
- Lascelles, Mary. *Jane Austen and her Art*. London: Oxford University Press, 1979. Print.
- Lee, Linda J. "Guilty Pleasures: Reading Romance Novels as Reworked Fairy Tales. Marvels & Tales", *Erotic Tales* 22.1 (2008): 52–66. JSTOR. Web. 9 October 2015.
- Levine, George. "The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley." *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Ed. Michael McKeon. Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Print.
- Litz, A. Walton. "The Picturesque in *Pride and Prejudice*." *Persuasions* 1 (1979) 13-15, 20-24. *Persuasions Online*. Web. 16 October 2015.
- Mabuse, Nkopile and Wither, Emily. "New Wave of Chick lit has Romance – but no Sex". *Edition.cnn.com*. Inside Africa, 16 February 2011, N. pag. Web. 10 June 2015.
- Make, Louise. *Five-Star Seduction*. Cape Town: Kwela Books. 2011. Print.
- . Email interview. 25 May 2015.
- Marshall, David. "The Problem of the Picturesque." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35.3 (Spring 2002): 413-37. Project Muse. Web. 15 September 2015.
- Matsaneng, Lerato. *Love on the Menu*. Cape Town: Kwela Books. 2011. Print.
- . Email interview. 6 June 2015.
- McCann, Charles J. "Setting and Character in *Pride and Prejudice*." *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 19.1 (June, 1964): 65-75. JSTOR. Web. 7 May 2011.
- McGirr, Elaine. 2007. "Manly Lessons: Sir Charles Grandison, The Rake, And The Man Of Sentiment". *Studies in the Novel* 39.3 (Fall 2007). Web. 7 July 2012.

- McKeon, Michael. "Subjectivity, Character, Development." *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Ed, Michael McKeon. Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. 485-491. Print.
- Modleski, Tania. "The Disappearing Act: A study of Harlequin Romances". *Signs* 5.3 (Spring 1980): 435–48. JSTOR. Web. 21 May 2015.
- Moler, Kenneth. "*Pride and Prejudice*: Jane Austen's "Patrician Hero."'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 7.3, Restoration and Century (Summer, 1967): 491-508. JSTOR. Web. 6 May 2011.
- Morris, Pam. *Realism*. Great Britain: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- Mullan, John. *What Matters in Jane Austen?*, London: Bloomsbury, 2012. Print.
- Outram, Dorinda. *The Enlightenment*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013. Print.
- Pagden, Anthony. *The Enlightenment and Why it Still Matters*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.
- Radway, Janice A. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*. London: Verso, 1984. Print.
- Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. Introduction. *The Postcolonial Jane Austen*. Eds. You-me Park and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Ranuga, Thomas K. "Frantz Fanon and Black Consciousness in Azania (South Africa)". *Phylon* (1960-) 47.3. (3rd Quarter, 1986): 182-191. JSTOR. Web. 9 November 2015
- Richardson, Samuel. *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*. Blackmask Online. Web. 2001.
- "Romance Writers Organisation of South Africa". ROSA. N. pag. N.d. Web. 8 November 2015.
- Sabor, Peter and Lars E Troide. Introduction. *Frances Burney: Journals and Letters*. London: Penguin Books, 2001. Print.

- Sapphire Press *Manuscript Guidelines*. Kwela Books Webpage. Web. 5 March 2015.
- Schweizer, Bernard and Robert A Segal. *Critical Insights: The Hero's Quest*. Massachusetts: Salem Press, 2013. Print.
- Southam, Brian, ed. *Jane Austen's Sir Charles Grandison*. Oxford: Clarendon Press: New York: Oxford University Press, 1980. Print.
- Tanner, Tony. Appendix: Introduction. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Penguin Books, 2003. Print.
- . Introduction. *Pride and Prejudice*. London: Penguin Classics, 1972. Print.
- . *Jane Austen*. London: Macmillan Education, 1986. Print.
- Ten Hermself, Henrietta. "The Villain-Hero in *Pamela* and *Pride and Prejudice*." *College English* 23.2 (November, 1961): 104-108. JSTOR. Web. 5 May 2011.
- Tobin-McClain, Lee. "Paranormal Romance: Secrets of the Female Fantastic". *Journal of the Fantastic Arts* 11.3 (2000): 294-306. JSTOR. Web. 30 July 2015.
- Todd, Janet. *Jane Austen in Context*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.
- Todd, Janet. *Sensibility*. New York: Methuen & Co, 1986. Print.
- Townsend, Dabney. "The Picturesque". *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55.4 (Autumn 1997). JSTOR. Web. 11 July 2014.
- Waldron, Mary. "Men of Sense and Silly Wives: The Confusions of Mr Knightley." *Studies in the Novel* 28.2 (Summer 1996). Web. 2 October 2014.
- Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*. London: The Hogarth Press, 1987. Print.
- Weisser, Susan Ostrov. *The Glass Slipper: Women and Love Stories*. USA: Rutgers University Press, 1993. Print.
- Wiesenfarth, Joseph. *An Errand of Form: An Assay Of Jane Austen's Art*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1967. Print.

- Wilson, Jennifer Preston. ““One has got all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it”: The Development of Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*”. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal*, 25.1 (Winter 2004): N. pag. Persuasions Online. Web. 9 November 2015.
- Wilson, Margaret Madrigal. “The Hero and the Other Man in Jane Austen’s Novels”. *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* No 18 (1996): N. pag. Persuasions Online. Web. 19 November 2015.
- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. 10th Edition. University Avenue, Oxford: Project Gutenberg, 2002: N. pag. Web. 14 November 2015.
- Woodworth, Megan. “If a man dared act for himself: Family romance and independence in Frances Burney’s *Cecilia*.” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 22.2 (Winter 2009–10). Web. 28 May 2012.
- Woolf, Virginia. Unsigned Review. *Jane Austen: Critical Assessments*. Ed. Ian Littlewood. London: Helm Information, 1998. 439-42. Print
- Wordsworth, William. *Lyrical Ballads. Second edition 1800*. Project Gutenberg, 2005, N. pag. Web. 20 November 2015.
- . *Wordsworth’s Poetical Works Volume 2*. Ed. William Knight. 1896. Project Gutenberg, 2004, N. pag. Web. 20 November 2015.

## APPENDIX A

Questions and answers – Louise Make:

1. *Have you ever read a Jane Austen novel? If so, which one?*

Oh, yes! A couple, actually. My favourite will always be *Pride and Prejudice* . . .

Because of my relentless crush on Fitzwilliam Darcy, yes.

2. *If you have read a Jane Austen novel, do you see any similarities between her novels and romance novels?*

Absolutely. I don't know if this is personal preference speaking more than any sort of expert opinion, but Ms Austen wrote exactly *my* kind of romance.

Many stories today focus on “fluff”: fairly simple characters in flashy, trendy worlds, living out clichés. I love a romance that surprises the main characters with serious obstacles and forces them to examine their actions and beliefs, and trigger inner growth. The romance novels I choose today are that sort; and that is what I enjoyed experiencing with Elizabeth and Mr Darcy.

Jane Austen had a way of balancing fantastical passion and emotion with the reality of relevant challenges and a consistently justified journey (as opposed to convenient coincidence continuously chucking characters together). It's easy to be entertained by a light, easy story – believable love, however, requires a full exploration of its highs and lows.

3. *Do you read a lot of romance novels? What do you like about the romance genre? Why do you think it's so popular?*

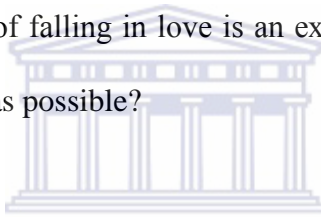
I love reading romance. I love “unlikely love” most: watching characters that might not be society's concept of popular/perfect, or might not be the expected kind of

match, find each other. I was very shy myself as a young girl, and I think it's that girl in me that loves seeing characters she identifies with being chosen and adored.

In general, I think the simple answer is that readers love the escape romance provides. People are going through a lot these days and are more stressed than ever before. Romance is a quick escape into a world where you know things are going to work out and everyone is guaranteed happiness, reader included.

More complex motivations would include variations of my personal example: readers enjoying a fantasy in which someone like them in whatever way, is chosen and cherished. Love is a powerful and uplifting emotion; experiencing it – even (especially?) vicariously – never grows old.

Also, the *process* of falling in love is an exciting one. Who wouldn't want to relive that as many times as possible?



4. *Five-Star Seduction* is written mostly in third-person narration as prescribed by the Sapphire Press guidelines. Are you satisfied that this allowed you to do everything you wanted with the characters?

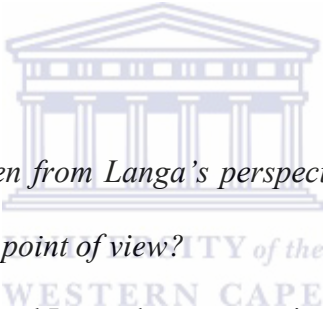
I've written stories in both first- and third-person . . . and to this day can't choose one over the other as a personal preference. Each version has its pros and cons.

I would have chosen to write *Five-Star Seduction* in third-person even if the guidelines had allowed me to choose. The stipulated word-count limit meant I had to make my kind of love journey happen within a fairly short novel. The best thing about doing this in third-person is that I got to hover over all the characters in any given scene rather than being locked in one person's thoughts/feelings. More information bounces around when everyone gets to pitch in on the scene.

I also liked the hints of mystery and confusion I got to create in third-person. First-person narrating encourages me to explain characters' inner workings more. In third-person, it was easier to accept what Langa told us without over-exploring her mind and heart. It also made it easier to get to know Lazola from the outside, from her perspective – and get to watch from her perspective as he got to know her.

When falling in love, we don't always think straight and definitely don't know all the inner workings of the person we're falling for. This leads to assumptions, misunderstandings and occasional judgements to overcome – all of which add dimension to an otherwise beautiful and thrilling story.

Third-person Sapphire novels allowed me all this. I'm *definitely* happy with that.

- 
5. *Most of the novel is written from Langa's perspective. Why did you choose to show the reader mostly Langa's point of view?*

Lazola is a difficult man. And Langa has never prioritised love before.

So, I had a heroine falling (in spite of herself) for a man who is complex and intimidating. I wanted to add to the sense of precariousness by not letting the reader know what he was feeling. We've all been there: wishing we could sneak a peek inside the person we're falling for, and (because we can't tell) hoping upon hope they like us back.

Putting all Lazola's thoughts out there on the page would have reduced the suspense to simply waiting 'til the end when he would tell Langa her misconceptions were way off base. It's simply not as exciting if you know all along which of her judgements are spot-on and which are way off.

6. *In Five-Star Seduction, the first scene of the novel has Langa and Lazola talking on the phone. Lazola comes across as arrogant and rude in this first scene. Why did you choose to portray him like this?*

I wanted to make two things clear as early as possible:

1. We have a very assertive alpha male type hero; and
2. Langa is a woman strong enough hold her own by his side, never cowering in his shadow.

The phone call allowed this perfectly in a few ways:

The first thing he asks her is how she got his direct number. This tells us he's not usually easy to reach, which also means he's an important and private man. He is irritated by whatever trick she must have pulled to get his number, possibly her timing as well (he might be busy) . . . but also is being forced to acknowledge this woman's guts and resourcefulness.

And, having worked sales jobs, I know how harsh people can be when it comes to cold calls. Immediate line cuts to name-calling are all within the realm of possibility in this situation. Lazola conveyed his irritation, but still listened – so, the scene got to show her capabilities, but also a fairness in him. She'd grabbed his attention within minutes.

7. *Was there anything or anyone in particular that inspired the character of Lazola?*

I just love alpha males, so Lazola was a work of pure instinct at the time. Now, however, remembering my crush on the seemingly arrogant Mr Darcy, I think they're actually very similar.

Both judge their heroines quite harshly upon meeting them. Darcy looks down on Elizabeth and her family's social standing. Lazola accuses Langa of using instant

seduction to secure a contract with him. Interestingly, because he is also new to love, he hurts her in the process of just being himself. By the time he realises he wants way more than sex from her, she has begun cutting him out of her life - forcing him to step out of his impenetrable armour and begin a focused and relentless seduction that demonstrates his sincerity and commitment. Similar to Darcy's dedicated pursuit of Elizabeth.

8. *Lazola is an incredibly successful man. He seems entirely in control in all of the interactions with Langa. Do you think that Langa changes him? Makes him softer?*

Without a doubt. They grow together.

Langa has never made love a major priority before their paths crossing; she's in love with her career (a little too much, according to those who know her). And Lazola has been tough and in charge since his late teens when his father passed away. His responsibilities piled higher and higher as he matured, I'm sure. By the time he meets Langa, business has been his entire adult life and he has spent many years giving orders and being the one his family leaned on.

At the beginning of their relationship, he reacts to her more as a businessman than an emotional man. He immediately assumes she responded to him the way she did (when they first kissed) because she wanted something in exchange – the contract. Even when he starts understanding how deep his feelings for her truly are, he still messes up. He hurts her by putting work first at her most vulnerable times. A man used to coming and going as he pleases and having employees obey without complaint, is bound to make a few mistakes in his first forays into love.

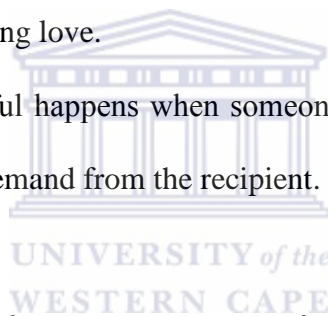
But he learns to grow. He learns to actively prioritise her needs - because his happiness centres on hers.

One of my most important love beliefs is that we should never set out to change each other. That is a stunted and selfish way of approaching love. So, I try to create characters that grow with lessons that make them better people and, as a result, better lovers.

Langa doesn't demand that Lazola change. She weighs up her feelings and his repeated behaviour and draws a line. She sets up boundaries because she isn't happy with the sex-only relationship she thinks he wants.

So, the change doesn't come about because she demanded a different Lazola or forced anything. She simply walked away when she felt he wasn't honouring her worth. Lazola grew as a man when this boundary taught him a few lessons he needed to learn about demonstrating love.

Something beautiful happens when someone's change is a freely offered gift from them rather than a demand from the recipient.



9. *The Sapphire Press guidelines were quite specific about some aspects of what they wanted in a manuscript. Did you find these guidelines restricting?*

Extremely, to tell the truth. As a completely new writer, I appreciated solid guidelines that kept me on track. I also fully respected the need for rules that would cater to that very specific niche market.

That said, I felt it was all a bit limiting. The main characters, for example, felt a little . . . cloned. A little too similar in the stories I read. I'll admit that it did frustrate me at times to get excited about a slightly unusual character or situation (eg, an overweight heroine going healthy; or a couple where the man is significantly younger than the woman) only to be told it would suit "chick lit" better than a Sapphire.

My understanding is that Sapphires are books featuring Black couples targeted at Black readers. My other understanding is that there are a range of Black people in a range of relationships within that definition. A girl with a muffin top, learning to love herself and accept love from her dream prince is not just chick lit. It's life - and can be wonderfully romantic and inspiring.

I understood, though, that those decisions are a tightrope walk: more leeway could be exciting, but how far before it's too far? I might love the idea of witnessing an unpopular character-type overcoming a struggle like that, but it still has to sell. Sapphire was too new for risks like that, I think.

*10. If you could have disregarded the guidelines, would you have written anything differently?*

PLENTY. The interesting thing about human beings is how diverse we are. Like I said, even within a niche target group like "Black South African reader", we have innumerable different people who would love to see even just a hint of themselves in the hero and heroines they loved.

Something like specifying a successful, career-building heroine is not the only kind of inspiration we have to offer readers. A woman who is tenacious and innovative, no matter her financial struggles, is also inspirational. It's okay to have them look and live differently – and show them to be good and strong in different settings.

Many formerly strict imprints have expanded, though. So, there is always hope for diversity with growth in ranges like Sapphire.

25 May 2015

## APPENDIX B

Questions and answers – Lerato Matsaneng:

1. *Have you ever read a Jane Austen novel? If so, which one?*

The only Jane Austen novel I have read was *Pride & Prejudice* – only because I felt like a bit of a “loser” writer for not having read any of her work.

2. *If you have read a Jane Austen novel, do you see any similarities between her novels and romance novels?*

I think romance novels are subjective and often are a reflection of the writer’s experiences and circumstances. I think romance novels have evolved over time, from the age when young women were “readying” themselves to find the right man to love them to an age where young women are bold enough to turn away love they believe isn’t worthy of them. The novels are reflective of the societies we live in. I do see some similarities in the Jane Austen’s novels to current day novels, in that at the root of it all, despite the era you are in – all young women (mainly because the books are written from this perspective) all want to be loved by someone worthy of their love.

3. *Do you read a lot of romance novels? What do you like about the romance genre? Why do you think it’s so popular?*

Not as many as I used to. I like that there is no formula to finding the perfect love and that no matter who you are, what your orientation is – finding love is at the heart of it all. Being happy enough to be yourself and be loved just the way you are. And that’s what makes them so popular, ’cause everyone can relate to that.

4. *Love on the Menu is written mostly in third-person narration as prescribed by the Sapphire Press guidelines. Are you satisfied that this allowed you to do everything you wanted with the characters?*

Yes I am. I think that as a first time writer, it's very easy to get carried away with the words, characters and situations. I think the guidelines helped reign in the book and allow it to blossom within the perimeters. I think they made writing the book that much more challenging and exciting.

5. *Most of the novel is written from Lebo's perspective. Why did you choose to show the reader mostly Lebo's point of view?*

As part of the guidelines by Sapphire Press, I had to write the book from the perspective of the main character. But also because the focus of the book was about Lebo, beyond finding love, it was about Lebo finding herself. Moving from being a journalist to being a businesswoman. Molemo was more established in his career and was at a bit of a plateau in his career and his story wasn't about growth as much as Lebo's was.

6. *In Love on the Menu, Lebo and Molemo meet because Lebo wants to start a catering company and she wants Molemo to monitor her. Was the decision to create a mentor/mentee relationship between the two main characters deliberate?*

Yes it was. It was a typical story of the hero-syndrome, where the victim (Lebo) falls for her hero/savior (Molemo). You will see that the mentor-mentee relationship was over-shadowed by the relationship that developed.

7. *Lebo isn't a typical mentee, she's impressed by Molemo but not intimidated. Was that intentional?*

I think that Lebo was a bold young woman but her role as a journalist limited her ability to be who she was. Once she started taking the reins on her life, she was fully

able to be who she was – a strong bold young woman. And once Molemo helped give her the kick-start she needed she started growing into her own. I liked that, because we see a more empowered, stronger and even stubborn version of who she really was.

8. *Initially Molemo comes across as somewhat arrogant, but soon the readers (and Lebo) discover that he's actually a nice guy. Why did you decide to portray him this way?*

Molemo was a successful young man, and had learnt that in order to be respected at that young age, with all that responsibility, he has to put up a hard and somewhat arrogant face. This is a typical mask that people put up in order to protect themselves. Doesn't mean that is who they truly are. But once he found someone who made him comfortable enough, he took off the mask and allowed himself to be who he really was. But also, when things went bad with Lebo, he was also very quick to put the mask back on to protect himself.

9. *The Sapphire Press guidelines were quite specific about some aspects of what they wanted in a manuscript. Did you find these guidelines restricting?*

Yes in the beginning I did. However you soon realise that you aren't writing for yourself but for a wide audience and thus, you need to amend some of your content to suit your audience. It wasn't too compromising, but it allowed me to practice some restraint.

10. *If you could have disregarded the guidelines, would you have written anything differently?*

Yes but not as good. Like I said, it was challenging to stick to the guidelines – but a good challenging because it allowed me to better tailor the content and put myself in my readers' shoes. I love the final product. It's my best work yet.

6 June 2015