

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES: POPULAR CULTURE AND THE RE-IMAGINATION OF AUSTEN'S CLASSIC

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This research study attempts to analyse Seth Grahame-Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* in order to identify the influence of popular culture in the re-imagination of Jane Austen's 18th century classic, *Pride and Prejudice*. Today, popular culture recognises Jane Austen as a self-sustained brand that has become a mainstream icon, beyond the domain of academics and classicists. Her captivating stories have surpassed the boundaries of 'the novel', inspiring many artistic creations such as cinematic works in the form of adaptations, prequels, sequels and spin-offs, mash-up literature, fan-fiction and comic literature. Belonging to the genre of mash-up literature, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* recreates Austen's novel in an apocalyptic world infested with Zombie armies that provoke both men and women to master weaponry and the art of fighting to ensure their survival. This research study will analyse how *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* recreates Austen's world by its re-imagination of the social setting, gender constructions, class structures and the creation of intertextuality across other adaptations and literary genres, using the concepts of High culture and Low culture by Walter Benjamin and other Feminist, Marxist and Popular Cultural theoretical frameworks. Although *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* has been adapted to a comic book and a movie, this research study will focus on the interpretation of the novel. This research study aspires to produce an understanding of how popular culture has enhanced the accessibility to literary texts and influenced the manner in which modern readers interact with the older text.

Key words: Popular culture, Austen, adaptation

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