

Anna Szirák – “Who wrote this?": The Anxiety of Voice, Point-of-View, and Vlog as a Mental Space in *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*

Bio: Anna Szirák is a first-year MA student of British Studies at the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Debrecen. Her BA thesis focused on female sexuality and doubles in Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*, and she continues her research in this area. A revised chapter of her thesis has been accepted for publication.

Abstract

More than just a catchy title, *pride* and *prejudice* are key themes of Jane Austen's most well-known and arguably most beloved novel. These flaws, which characterize Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy, drive the story in all aspects and must be overcome for the lovers to find their way to each other. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, a 2012 vlog series adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, problematizes these themes on a generic level. The microcosm of the novel, which consists of the closed-up space of country life and Elizabeth's prejudice as a character flaw, is mapped out on the very genre of its most recent adaptation: the video blog. Examining vlog as a meaningful medium, this research argues that the series thematizes personal bias and interpretation through creating a closed-up mental space in which the storytelling can occur. As Lizzie Bennet narrates herself and those around her in an essentially biased fashion, she is challenged by others appearing in the video diaries, resulting in an anxiety of storytelling which makes dynamic agents of the characters and allows them to engage in a struggle for voice and representation. This breakdown of point-of-view is also closely connected to the *Bildung* of Lizzie, Darcy, and even Lydia Bennet.

Through the close examination of three instances in which characters enter a struggle for voice, this paper finds that since the format dictates that all point-of-views must be heard and revealed

in order for the romance plot to reach its conclusion, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* creates a unique merging of plot, narration, and medium, and as such, comes to be the essential 21st century adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.