þÿ B r i d g e r t o n : A S t u d y o f C h r i s V a n D u s e n s A d a p t a t i o n o Duke and I

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Bridgerton:

A Study of Chris Van Dusen's Adaptation of Julia Quinn's *The Duke and I*

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1. Introduction

The anthology *Pop Perception* contains a chapter revealingly entitled, "*Bridgerton* Is the Regency Fantasy We Did Not Know We Needed". In this essay, Ella Ostrowski discusses the Netflix series *Bridgerton*, created by Chris Van Dusen, in positive terms, as a TV show that has been hailed by audiences, and she is not the only one to praise it. The series has indeed been highly acclaimed by critics. In the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Richard Roeper indeed calls the first season of *Bridgerton* "an unqualified triumph". Liz Shannon Miller writes in *Collider*: "Turn your nose up at it, if you like. But you'll miss out on some of the year's most enjoyable television yet." On the website *Decider*, Meghan O'Keefe suggests that "*Bridgerton* is a swoon-inducing treat that will leave you hot, bothered, and begging for more".[1] "Triumph," "the year's most enjoyable television", "swoon-inducing" – all these terms are representative of the success that *Bridgerton* encountered upon its release, and of the effect that it has had on its viewers. As Julie Anne Taddeo describes in her article "The *Bridgerton* Effect", the TV show is "more than a popular TV series: it has become an 'experience'" (4).

If *Bridgerton* seems to enjoy widespread support among reviewers, the show has also become popular as an object of study for literary scholars. Academics have indeed done a lot of research on *Bridgerton* from various angles, including colour-blindness and colour-blind casting (Cantu; Hanus; Nakayama and Halualani; Posti), chastity cult and romanticism (Senfield; Maulani), feminism and gender performance (Orellana; Azeharie et al.; Creamer; Naseh), the use of narration (McCarthy), historical accuracy (Dietrich; Curzon), and the female gaze (Coles; Davisson and Hunting). These are themes that deserve meticulous attention, but it is arresting that only the show came under intense scrutiny, whereas *Bridgerton* season 1 is actually adapted from a novel written by Julia Quinn, *The Duke and I* (2000). There are very few studies of *Bridgerton* in the field of adaptation studies, and very few articles on the novel.

This dissertation aspires to fill this scholarly gap by studying *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* within the framework of adaptation studies. In order to do so, themes in the novel and its adaptation will be compared via close-reading and close-viewing of some passages in both media. The aim is to analyse how *The Duke and I* has been adapted for the screen, which themes recur in the novel and the TV show, and which choices have been made for the purpose of adaptation. The first chapter will provide a background to the novel and its adaptation by

[1] This paragraph quotes reviews compiled on the page "*Bridgerton* Critic Reviews" by the website *Metacritic*.

introducing a short biography of their respective authors and a summary of their story (section 1.1). Chapter 1 will also reveal the context of publication of both works (popular culture and the Netflix industry) (section 1.2), situate them within their genre (section 1.3) and attempt to explain their success (section 1.4). Chapter 2 will then define the term "adaptation" before this dissertation focuses on the choices which were made by production designers to create a *Bridgerton* world on screen (chapter 3), including set location (section 3.1), costumes and props (section 3.2), music (section 3.3), characters (section 3.4) and narration (section 3.5). Afterwards, passages from the novel and scenes from the TV show will be discussed and analysed through close-reading and close-viewing (chapter 4); these discussions are organized around the main themes. Chapter 5 will finally conclude this dissertation.

1.1. Julia Quinn and Chris Van Dusen's Works

Bridgerton originally is a collection of books written by Julia Pottinger, better known under the penname Julia Quinn. As stated on the author's website (*Julia Quinn*), Quinn was born in 1970 and graduated from Harvard Radcliffe College with a degree in Art History. She started to attend the Yale School of Medicine, but quit after a few months to become a full-time writer. She began her literary career at the age of twenty-four with her debut novel *Splendid* (1995), but really rose to prominence with the *Bridgerton* collection. She started her series of books with *The Duke and I*, which was first published in 2000. She then added seven other novels to the collection: *The Viscount Who Loved Me* (2000), *An Offer From a Gentleman* (2001), *Romancing Mister Bridgerton* (2002), *To Sir Phillip, With Love* (2003), *When He Was Wicked* (2004), *It's in His Kiss* (2005), *On the Way to the Wedding* (2006). The title of the collection refers to the name of the London family the books focus on. Each book tells the story of a Bridgerton sibling, and each child is named in alphabetical order, from the eldest to the youngest: Anthony, Benedict, Colin, Daphne, Eloise, Francesca, Gregory, and Hyacinth. The first novel of the collection is *The Duke and I* (this is the book on which this dissertation focuses); it follows the story of Daphne, the fourth child of the family. The following novels then tell the story of the other children in alphabetical order, starting with Anthony (volume 2) and then going on with Benedict (volume 3), Colin (volume 4), Eloise (volume 5), etc.

Quinn's collection has achieved great success. The books were already well received when they were first published. According to the author's website, *The Duke and I* spent three consecutive weeks on the *New York Times Extended* bestseller list, two weeks on the *Publishers Weekly* bestseller list, and five on the *USA Today* bestseller list (*Julia Quinn*). The collection's

sales nevertheless made rapid progress with the release of the first season of the Netflix adaptation *Bridgerton* in December 2020. In March 2021, the eight novels of the collection were simultaneously on the *New York Times* list (*Julia Quinn*). As Quinn's website further states, her novels have been translated into 42 languages and over 20 million copies have been printed in the United States alone. Quinn also added other books to the *Bridgerton* collection; she wrote the epilogue *The Bridgertons: Happily Ever After* (2013), including Violet's story (the mother of the Bridgerton family), the prequel collection *Rokesby*, a series of four novels published from 2016 onwards, and two anthologies of four stories each, *The Further Observations of Lady Whistledown* and *Lady Whistledown Strikes Back* (*Julia Quinn*). In May 2023, Quinn also published the novel *Queen Charlotte* (2023) – a prequel to the *Bridgerton* series of books – in collaboration with Shonda Rhimes, the executive producer of the Netflix series. This book is based on the Netflix spin-off mini-series *Queen Charlotte* (2023), created by Rhimes as well (Quinn, "Queen Charlotte").

Shonda Rhimes is the founder of the storytelling company Shondaland. This company launched famous TV series such as *Grey's Anatomy*, *How to Get Away With Murder* and *Bridgerton*. In 2017, Shondaland went into partnership with Netflix and now exclusively produces for this streaming platform. It is in this context that *Bridgerton* was created: the TV series is Shondaland's first production for Netflix (Rhimes, "Who We Are"). The creator, showrunner and executive producer of the first season is Chris Van Dusen. As stated on Quinn's website, Netflix premiered the first season of *Bridgerton* in December 2020 (*Julia Quinn*). As mentioned above, the first season is based on Quinn's first *Bridgerton* novel, *The Duke and I*. The author's website further claims that since then, a second season has been released in March 2022, this season being the adaptation of Quinn's *The Viscount Who Loved Me.* Netflix also recently premiered a third season in two parts, the first part of which came out in May 2024 and the second part in June 2024 (*Julia Quinn*). This third season is centred on Colin, and therefore corresponds to the fourth book in the collection, *Romancing Mister Bridgerton*. The production seems to have skipped Benedict's story, recounted in the third novel, *An Offer From a Gentleman*; however, it is still possible that a later season might focus on him.

Both *The Duke and I*, and its adaptation, the first season of *Bridgerton,* are set in the high London society during the Regency period. As will be argued in section 3, the Regency era is, in this dissertation, understood in its loose acceptation, which covers a large portion of the Georgian Era marked by the influence of the Prince Regent in society and culture (Kloester 1). *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* season 1 focus on Daphne as she enters the social season to find a husband, but her marriage prospects quickly seem to be wrecked. In the novel, this is due

to the fact that Lady Whistledown destroys her reputation in her gossip column, while in the TV series, it happens because Anthony frightens all of Daphne's suitors away. Daphne despairs at her situation until she meets Simon Basset, the new Duke of Hastings. Simon, a well-off man from the upper class, is irritated because he is coveted by all the single ladies who are old enough to find a husband. After meeting Daphne, he provides a solution to solve both his and Daphne's problems: they will form a fake attachment to make people surmise that they have found their match. Their plan initially seems to work; women leave Simon alone because they think that he has found his new duchess, and Daphne again has a lot of suitors as Simon's supposed interest in her makes her appealing in other men's eyes once again. However, their situation becomes complicated when they become attracted to each other and kiss in a garden. Simon's duty is to marry Daphne to prevent her reputation from being ruined. Simon at first refuses to marry her but finally accepts on one condition: Daphne has to accept that he will never give her a child. The reason for this refusal is that he made a vow to his father never to give him an heir. Simon is indeed devoured by a hatred for his father; the latter rejected Simon when he was a child because of his stammer. However, Simon does not provide context to Daphne, leading her to suppose that Simon is infertile. Initially, after the wedding, they both enjoy a happy honeymoon period, and they have a lot of sexual intercourse during which Simon systematically uses the withdrawal method to avoid any possibility that Daphne might become pregnant. Daphne, who is innocent at first, eventually understands that Simon does this on purpose. This leads to the most problematic scene in both the novel and the series: the moment when, during sex, Daphne positions herself on top of Simon and prevents him from withdrawing. Simon is shocked and clarifies why he refused to give her a child. After a moment of tension, the couple is finally reconciled and Simon decides that he is ready to learn to live in happiness rather than let himself be driven by hatred.

1.2. Popular Culture and the Netflix Industry

The Duke and I, as well as its adaptation *Bridgerton* season 1, belong to popular culture in a number of ways that are worth examining as they reveal the context of creation and publication of *The Duke and I*, one of which is mass production; this idea also enlightens the context of production of *Bridgerton* by the Netflix industry. In his book *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, media and cultural studies specialist John Storey gives some definitions of popular culture. First, it can be linked to the notion of "popularity", in the sense of being favoured and liked by many people. He says that popularity can be verified by "examin[ing] sales of books,

sales of CDs and DVDS" (5). This means that the popularity of a work can be checked via its symbolic capital – that is, as sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues in *Choses Dites*, "le capital fondé sur la connaissance et la reconnaissance" which might be compared to "[la] réputation, renommée, gloire". In other words, the symbolic capital of a novel refers to its prestige acquired through recognition and reputation. *The Duke and I* enjoyed, especially after the release of its screen adaptation, international prestige. The novel was reissued several times; the edition used for this dissertation is already the sixth reprint of *The Duke and I*. The TV series also "reached 82 million households in its first 28 days online and was Netflix's #1 show in 76 countries" (Quinn, *Julia Quinn*).

Popular culture is also often linked to "mass culture". Storey argues that popular culture is "a hopelessly commercial culture. It is mass produced for mass consumption" (8). If book sales are considered, it can clearly be stated that *The Duke and I* has been massively produced and consumed. Moreover, Storey claims that "the texts and practices of popular culture are seen as forms of public fantasy. Popular culture is understood as a collective dream world" (9). This is linked to the idea of escapism. In her article, Valentini quotes Van Dusen's words from an interview in which he says: "I want [audiences] to be able to escape, to be transported to another time and place and live with these people [from *Bridgerton*]" ("Get to Know"). *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* try to speak to as many people as possible around the globe and therefore use strategies to achieve international fame and be financially profitable. Mass production and international reputation are what Netflix, the streaming platform used to broadcast *Bridgerton*, seeks to achieve as well.

Netflix is an on-demand mainstream media company originating from the United States. As Lora Yan Chen explains in her article "The Development of the North American Film Industry in 2018", the company was founded in 1997 as a DVD rental service with a monthly subscription system. Netflix went from rental service to streaming business in 2007 and expanded to Europe and the rest of the world in 2012 (43). Today, Netflix still functions on a monthly subscription basis, allowing viewers to gain access to films and TV series from traditional TV companies through copyright transactions, and it has also developed its own production company (Yan Chen 43). As Romil Sharma argues: "[i]n recent years, the streaming service has drifted away from studio output deals and non-exclusive content, placing emphasis instead on originals and exclusive titles" (4). Netflix nowadays produces a lot of original films and series, such as *House of Cards*, *Orange Is the New Black*, and *Bridgerton*. Yan Chen also claims that "2018 was also an important year for Netflix to innovate in producing original content and media expressions" (44). As writer and editor Phil Nickinson claims, Netflix

recorded around 260 million global subscriptions by the end of 2023, outperforming competing streaming platforms such as Amazon Prime Video (about 200 million subscribers worldwide) and Disney+ (about 112 million memberships).

Netflix has become so central to streaming that one can speak of a Netflix industry. Some researchers also mention "the Netflix effect" (Sharma) or "the Netflix revolution" (Ruiz). In any case, it seems that Netflix has developed its own style, and this is interesting so as to understand some of the choices made by Shondaland for the production of *Bridgerton*. Indeed, Netflix, as a mass-production company whose main objective is to increase the number of subscriptions by offering a large range of quality content, uses four main strategies (Ruiz 288-89). These are essential to analysing *Bridgerton*.

First, the platform relies on global broadcasting. Netflix is indeed available in 190 countries (Ruiz 289). Moreover, Sharma explains that "Netflix strives to design a mass-market service by compiling multiple niche programs with distinct target demographics" (25). Actually, Netflix tries to reach a global audience with its large program library. Each subscriber has access to this library and can decide what they want to watch and when. This allows viewers to have access to content from all around the world, based on their own preferences (Sharma 25-26). As already mentioned, *Bridgerton* reached a huge number of households in the first days of its release and was Netflix's most viewed show in a lot of countries (Quinn, *Julia Quinn*).

Another strategy for the platform has been to develop a hybrid business model between internet, cinema, and television with the internet as its main medium (Ruiz 282-83). Indeed, Netflix borrows characteristics from the cinema and the television industry, but it also manages to differentiate itself from it. Netflix distinguishes itself from traditional television in the way it broadcasts its series. The platform is ad-free in most countries (even if some countries such as France or the United States also offer standard accounts with ads) and it relinquished the traditional weekly model, whereby single episodes are broadcast once a week; instead, Netflix popularized the all-at-once dropping (Sharma 18-19), meaning that entire seasons – or parts of seasons – of Netflix series are released at once. This was the case of the first season of *Bridgerton*. The eight episodes were broadcast the same day, leading the show to be massively watched around the globe in a short period of time (Quinn, *Julia Quinn*).

This is linked to the third strategy: the Netflix brand leads the audience to experience "a new way of consuming cinema and television which centres on the decisions, recommendations and habits of the viewer" (Ruiz 277-78, my translation). The subscriber is free to watch what they want when they want it. They can also watch the show or movie as they wish (play, pause, binge-watch all the episodes of a season) (Ruiz 289). A bit more than three years after its release,

Bridgerton season 1 is still available on the platform and people can decide to rewatch the show when they want.

The last strategy used by Netflix is the production of its own movies and TV shows. By the end of 2023, Netflix had more than 3600 original titles in its library (including films, specials and series) (Kasey Moore), so that "it is no longer just distributing or displaying third-party contents. Netflix banks on producing, distributing and displaying its own content" (Ruiz 289, my translation). *Bridgerton* is an example of a production for Netflix (Rhimes, "Who We Are"). Together, all these strategies are helpful to understand the choices that have been made concerning the production of *Bridgerton* such as colour-blind casting, and the development of subplots around some secondary characters (Marina Thompson, Eloise Bridgerton, Benedict Bridgerton). This will be expanded on in chapter 5, when I discuss the creation of a '*Bridgerton* world'.

1.3. Regency Romance: Influence of Austen and Heyer

In her article "*Bridgerton* author Julia Quinn", Alison Flood quotes an interview with Julia Quinn:

> 'People look down on romance novels,' says Julia Quinn. 'We're the ugly stepchild of the publishing industry […]. I dream big, I do […]. But nobody had ever done it, nobody had ever shown any signs of wanting to [adapt Regency romances for the screen]. And not just my books, but the genre as a whole. If somebody wanted to do a period piece, they wanted to do Jane Austen again'.

Two main points stand out in this interview. First, Quinn situates her novels in the romance genre, and more specifically in the Regency romance genre. Then, she mentions that the popularity of the genre rests upon Jane Austen's oeuvre. The relevance of these two facts will be discussed in this section.

The Duke and I and its screen adaptation *Bridgerton* season 1 belong to the genre of the Regency romance, that is, romance set during the Regency period. As Jennifer Kloester explains, the Regency era in a strict sense lasted nine years from 1811 to 1820 and refers to the period during which George, Prince of Wales, became Regent due to his father's illness before he was proclaimed King George IV (1). Then, Kloester adds that "the term 'Regency' is frequently used to describe the period of English history between the years 1780 and 1830,

because the society and culture during these years were undeniably marked by the influence of the man who would become George IV" (1). The term "Regency" is here used in its broad sense. It therefore refers to this "era of change and unrest as well as one of glittering social occasions, celebrations and extraordinary achievement in art and literature" (Kloester 1). The Regency era is therefore a short period of time, but it has become an important part of Western cultural memory, and various authors revisit this period and set their stories in this era.

The most famous author of Regency novels is Jane Austen (1775-1817), best known for her ironic and satirical novels of manners, such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and *Emma* (1815). Jane Austen is so famous that her works have given rise to a "Jane Austen legacy", or a "Jane Austen industry". In her essay "Austen Cults and Cultures", Claudia Johnson states that "Austen has [not been] a mere novelist about whom one might talk dispassionately, but a commercial phenomenon and a cultural figure, at once formidable and non-threatening" (232). To describe Austen's importance as a cultural figure, Johnson even speaks about "Janeitism". Due to its popularity, Austen's oeuvre can also be considered to belong to popular culture. This might be a reason why some academics are sometimes hesitant to include Austen's works in the canon. As Brian Southam explains, "[t]he enduring popularity of Austen's books can be seen in the numerous film and television adaptations of her work".

If Austen is a model for writers interested in the Regency style as she wrote ironic novels of manner during this period, the pioneer of the Regency romance genre is often considered to be Georgette Heyer. As Kelly Faircloth explains in her article "The Regency Romance", Heyer (1902-1974) wrote more than fifty books over her lifetime, the majority of which are historical romances set in the Regency era. According to Faircloth, "[Heyer] described her style as 'a mixture of Johnson and Austen'". Heyer published her first Regency novel, *Regency Buck*, in 1935 (Rayner and Wilkins 5). Since then, she has influenced many Regency romance writers. Faircloth distinguishes between two types of influence, namely Regency as style and Regency as setting: the Regency style "is packaged more like a category romance", which would be shorter and more conservative than Regency as a setting (Faircloth). Faircloth continues: "[t]hen you have the Regency as a setting, where everything goes. […] Lots of spinsters and bluestockings and capable-but-innocent misses facing off with sexy, powerful men". Julia Quinn's novels rather belong to this second category. Faircloth claims that "Julia Quinn ramped up the humor and imbedded her protagonists in a loving family loaded with sequel opportunities". In this understanding of Regency as a setting, authors set their story in this era but feel free to revisit the period. Historical inaccuracy is no longer sought after, as long as the

readers get immersed in the Regency period. According to Faircloth, Nico Rosso calls this phenomenon "Planet Regency", that is "a place with its own set of rules and customs […] that varies from author to author".

1.4. The "*Bridgerton* Effect" and Success

With Austen and Heyer as "mothers" of the Regency novel, *The Duke and I*, and more particularly its Netflix adaptation, also built their own success. This stands out of the numbers given in the previous sections. *Bridgerton*'s popularity can be explained by several factors, including those already discussed: namely, the success of Regency romances, the Netflix effect and the show's partaking in popular culture. In this vein, Gutiérrez suggests that "[t]he Austenian atmosphere, socialite's [sic] gossips, sexiness and beautiful saloons are some of the ingredients of this new magical potion Netflix algorithms have cooked in collaboration with Shondaland" (19). In this quotation, Netflix's algorithms are claimed to be part of the success. Netflix indeed uses algorithms which collect information about what its viewers like, so as to create a series which could be successful among them (Gutiérrez 20). Netflix also does a lot of advertising on the internet and on their social media pages (Gutiérrez 20).

In line with the above statement that *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* use Regency as a setting, the authors are free to revisit the genre of the Regency romance as they wish. As Gutiérrez writes, "both Quinn and Rhimes are allowed some room to speak up their minds and introduce more modern claims and concerns such as female sexuality, feminism or a more inclusive perspective of society in terms of race". Similarly, in her article "Binge-Worthy *Bridgerton* Is a Netflix Hit", Caitlin Staffanson argues that, "[t]hough there are rigid gender roles in this show, there are subtle references to female empowerment surrounding the members of the Bridgerton family and Lady Whistledown. These subtle hints of female empowerment [give] this 19th century-based show a 21st century feel" (9). Quinn herself confirms this contemporary feel. In an interview with Faircloth, she states that "[Regency] is modern enough that the way that [people] saw the world [in the 19th century] was not so fundamentally different than we do […]. You are able to take characters who are more fundamentally modern and much more similar to us and put them in sort of a faraway fairy tale-ish setting" (Faircloth). Thus, even though *Bridgerton* is set two centuries ago, its contemporary feel and the fact that 19th-century issues are still essential today allow for a sense of identification that resonates with twenty-first century audiences.

Bridgerton has also had considerable academic attention and commercial success. As Julie Anne Taddeo suggests, *Bridgerton* introduces a "multitude of issues to analyse" such as colour-blind casting, the authenticity of Regency history depicted on-screen, female sexuality and consent (4). The show has become so famous that Taddeo speaks of the "*Bridgerton* effect". This refers to the fact that *Bridgerton* is not only watched, but also experienced (4): events on the show have been created, products linked to the series have been sold, and people are looking for a *Bridgerton* lifestyle. For example, the "Queen's Ball: A *Bridgerton* Experience" event took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and offered fans the opportunity to take part in a *Bridgerton* ball with costumes, champagne, a queen (Taddeo 4), modelled after the Jane Austen Festival ("Jane Austen Festival"). On *Tudum*, a website created by Netflix for fans, Ariana Romero recently announced that the *Bridgerton* production company decided to offer a fan couple a *Bridgerton*-inspired wedding. Several trends also emerged following the release of the show: these included interior design trends featuring sleigh beds, pastel colours, Roman blinds, and flower patterns (Millie Hurst), as well as fashion trends such as the reappearance of empire waist dresses, corsets, opera gloves, puff sleeves, pearl jewellery, or headbands (Abby Hepworth).

While *Bridgerton* was a substantial commercial success, some critics and scholars also published negative reviews on the show. In his article "*Bridgerton* Brings Steamy Romance to Netflix but Plays a Weak Hand", Brian Lowry claimed that *Bridgerton* "plays a weak hand, turning Julia Quinn's novels about a 19th-century London family into a handsome but tedious snooze – think 'Masterpiece Theater,' only with more sex and nudity". Lowry thus criticizes the use of Regency as a setting, arguing that that the show only produces another predictable, sex-filled romance. Aja Romano also suggests that "*Bridgerton* tries to put a fresh perspective on historical romance, but it forgets to be interesting" ("Netflix"). Romano claims that *Bridgerton* uses techniques such as a fake dating and a marriage of convenience to keep its viewers interested but, in the end, the show is nothing more than "shallow characters, conniving matchmakers, and turgid sex scenes" ("Netflix"). However, this dissertation will argue that despite these negative reviews, *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* are not shallow and predictable. It will indeed be demonstrated that Daphne and Simon's relationship is not a simple love story, but it involves complex feelings and hidden intentions.

2. What Is Adaptation?

In their book *A Theory of Adaptation*, Linda Hutcheon and Siobhan O'Flynn claim that "art is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories" (2). If this is true for intertextuality, this quotation especially applies to adaptation. Adaptation is pervasive today in literature and on screen. While authors more often adapt what is regarded as high literature such as Shakespeare's, or the Brontë sisters' works, popular culture has in the twenty-first century also been the object of adaptation; this is the case of *Bridgerton*.

Defining adaptation is not an easy task. In a general sense, adaptations can be seen as "'palimpsestuous' works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts. […] When we call a work an adaptation, we openly announce its overt relationship to another work or works" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 6). In *Adaptation and Appropriation*, Julie Sanders defines adaptation as "a transpositional practice" (22). An original work is transposed into another for different purposes such as "offering commentary on a source text […] by offering a revised point of view from the 'original', adding hypothetical motivation or voicing what the text silences or marginalizes" (Sanders 23). Sanders adds that an adaptation can also "continue a simpler attempt to make texts 'relevant' or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships via the processes of proximation and updating" (23). As will be argued, all these purposes are involved in the adaptation of *The Duke and I*.

While this definition tends to view adaptation as a product (the transposition from another work), Hutcheon and O'Flynn distinguish two other interpretations of adaptation: it can also be a "*process of creation*" as "the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation", and "a *process of reception*" in which case "adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works" (8, emphasis in original). This dissertation is mostly interested in *Bridgerton* as a product of adaptation, as this research is a comparative study of *The Duke and I* and its adaptation. The process of creation as well as the intertextual references are not entirely left aside in the interpretation, but the dissertation especially performs a close-reading and close-viewing of both versions. Moreover, the adaptation is here also considered as an "autonomous [work] that can be interpreted and valued as such" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 6). The aim is therefore not to focus on fidelity or proximity with the source text as a criterion of success, but rather to analyse the adaptation in comparison to the original work.

In her book, Sanders also distinguishes adaptation from appropriation. This is essential because "[a]n adaptation most often signals a relationship with an informing source text either

through its title or through more embedded references" (35), while appropriation "frequently effects a more decisive journey away from the informing text into a wholly new cultural product" (35). *Bridgerton* can be regarded as an adaptation as it maintains a clear connection with *The Duke and I* through its title and by reproducing passages from the original work in the TV show. By contrast, Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* is an example of appropriation as it loosely revisits Austen's *Pride and Pride*. Moreover, Deborah Cartmell identifies three categories of adaptation: transposition (the faithful transposition of a work into another), commentary (the original work is modified in the adaptation) and analogy (tending towards appropriation, the original text is used as an inspiration for the adaptation) (24). *Bridgerton* can be said to be the product of transposition, while also including some commentary.

Transpositions seek to transform an original text into a new genre, or sometimes relocate the texts in another culture or time (Sanders 25). In the case of *Bridgerton*, Van Dusen adapts a novel published in 2000 into a contemporary TV show. A bit more than 20 years separates both works, so that passages from the novel have to be adapted to more modern claims (Gutiérrez 22). While the story takes place in the Regency era, Van Dusen indeed decided to add contemporary elements such as modern music (Ariana Grande, Billie Eilish, Taylor Swift) and colour-blind casting. However, this kind of transposition moves towards commentary as it becomes "more culturally loaded […] by means of alteration or addition" (Sanders 26-27). In *Bridgerton*, Van Dusen makes discernible some of the facts that the novel represses. For example, the character of Eloise, who is not quite visible in the first volumes of the series of books, has been developed and serves as a critic of Regency standards. Daphne is also often presented as a much more assertive female protagonist than in the novel. As Gutiérrez argues, "Netflix's *Bridgerton* show seems to take silver fork novels' heroines and bring their braveness further to an extent that it would become even scandalous for Jane Austen herself" (23).

Regency adaptation can also be considered as a special case; *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* can be regarded as appropriations of history. As Linda Troost argues: "[t]he nineteenth-century novel has been a staple of twentieth-century entertainment" (75). Appropriation can indeed involve "the author or playwright or filmmaker […] consciously appropriating the known facts of a particular event or of a particular life in order to shape their fiction or work of art" (Sanders 177); this is the case of Quinn and then Van Dusen. As Gutiérrez claims, "Julia Quinn's adaptation for the streaming business provides the audience with bits of sexiness, audacity, gossip and tension that make an entertainment good out of this historical romance. […] Jane Austen's long shade seems to keep on inspiring us in modern times when seeking for some fresher adventures" (24). Quinn herself points out in an interview that she has

"gotten dinged by the historical accuracy police. So in some ways, I was fearful – if you do that, are you denying real things that happened? But you know what? This is already romantic fantasy" (Flood). This is linked to Linda Troost's idea of "fusion adaptations". According to her, fusion adaptations are a mix of Hollywood style (films taking many liberties with historical facts) and heritage style (British television series granting much importance to historical authenticity) (76-78). Troost further adds that "when a great wave of Austen adaptations appeared, British life and values had changed a great deal. […] What mattered [then] was an ability to connect with a broad range of viewers, tell a good story and show compelling images" (82).

Adaptation can also be compared to translation. As Hutcheon and O'Flynn argue, "[t]ransposition to another medium, or even moving within the same one, always means change or, in the language of the new media, 'reformatting'" (16). In the case of *Bridgerton*, an original novel has been adapted into a TV show. It implies an adaptation to a different medium, a "form of intersemiotic [transposition] from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for example, images)" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 16). In other words, the adaptation of *The Duke and I* implies a move from telling to showing, from text to screen. Hutcheon and O'Flynn add that "[w]hen theorists talk of adaptation from print to performance media, the emphasis is usually on the visual, on the move from imagination to actual ocular perception. But the aural is just as important as the visual to this move" (40). While a novel involves imagination on the part of the reader as the story is written but not shown, a film or a TV show has to transpose this written material onto the screen. While a novel implies "description, narration, and represented thoughts", a screen adaptation must transcode this "into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images" (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 40). Of course, a film or a TV show also has its own codes. Series use soundtracks mixing voice-overs, music and noises (Hutcheon and O'Flynn 40). As Brian McFarlane claims:

> It is clear that, in responding to the stimuli offered by film, viewers must take cognizance of linguistic codes (including, for instance, the accents and tones of voice […]), to non-linguistic codes (in matters of musical and other sound effects), to visual codes (we don't merely look; we see and interpret what we see), and to cultural codes that have to do with, say, costume and décor. (20)

Screen narratives also involve shots and angles, distances from the camera, and editing (McFarlane 20). In analysing *Bridgerton* as a product of adaptation, film study and close-viewing are therefore essential to spot the techniques used to create meaning.

To conclude, adaptation can entail changes at various levels. At a paratextual level, adaptation involves changes or retentions in relation to production designs, costumes, choice of actors, to cite but a few examples. This is what the next chapter will focus on. Moreover, changes can occur at the story level, as themes, subplots and dialogues can be modified. To keep a clear focus, this dissertation will carry out a thematic analysis around the romantic plot involving the characters of Daphne and Simon.

3. Creating the *Bridgerton* World

Besides adapting the story from a novel to a series, production designers and art direction have to create the *Bridgerton* world; this involves choices concerning set location, props, costumes and make-up, sound, characters and narration. This chapter will analyse the work done by production designers and art directors to "create the visual look" of the series (Ryan and Lenos 101), based on what is mentioned (or not) in the novel.

3.1. Set Location

As Kyle Deguzman argues, set designers "[create] the visual environment where the story takes place" ("Production Design"). Moreover, "[t]he choice of location or the design of the set is an active agent in creating meaning. Sets are often constructed with thematic ends in mind" (Ryan and Lenos 101). In the novel, little is said about location. For example, in chapter 1, the reader is introduced to Daphne, who says she has done two seasons in London already (13) and the house is referred to as "Bridgerton House" (22). The reader knows that the story occurs in the Regency era through the social events taking place, and the chronicles of Lady Whistledown at the beginning of each chapter, which are dated 1813. *Bridgerton*'s art directors therefore had to make choices concerning the representation of the story world on screen. In this section, the beginning of the series will be close-viewed, as it sets the tone for the entire show.

The opening scene of *Bridgerton* immediately locates the story in time and space. The first episode opens on an extreme wide, aerial shot presenting "London" from the sky. Then, the camera enters the city and films a street:

Figure 1. Opening shot presenting London. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:24)

The long shot shows people entirely in their surroundings, tending towards "impersonality and objectivity" (Ryan and Lenos 48). The viewer distinguishes people dressed in an old-fashioned way, and the horse-drawn carriages situate the show firmly in the past. Luke Dietrich indeed suggests that "[f]rom the moment one begins to view *Bridgerton* Season 1, they [viewers] can easily identify and understand the general setting of the show" (112). As the camera travels through the streets, an extradiegetic voice-off – that of Lady Whistledown, the author of a scandal sheet – is heard as she says: "Grosvenor Square, 1813. Dearest reader, the time has come to place our bets for the upcoming social season" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:40-00:00:47). It is interesting that the viewer is addressed as "Reader". This happens because Lady Whistledown is reading from her sheet, thereby becoming the narrator of the story, but also being an intradiegetic character. This includes the viewer in the story world, as they become readers of the column just as the other characters. While this phenomenon will be further discussed in the section about narration, it can already be argued that thanks to the mention of the year and the social season, the viewer knows the show takes place during the Regency era.

In the opening scenes, set location is also instrumental in presenting the main families in the show. In the next shot, Lady Whistledown hails the viewer, addressed to as Reader, to "consider the household of the Baron Featherington" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:47-00:00:49) and the camera captures the latter's house:

Figure 2. The Featheringtons' House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:49)

Set location clearly helps to situate the Featheringtons as a family from a lower rank, compared to some of the aristocratic characters in the show. The symmetry of the house and the lack of colours on the façade make the house appear sober and this sobriety might be interpreted as representative of the Featheringtons, who belong to the lowest rank in the peerage – the conferring of titles (Kloester 7-8). Indeed, Lady Whistledown refers to the head of the

Featheringtons as a baron. In the peerage, the title of Baron is the lowest ranked and "was the most commonly held rank in the peerage" (Kloester 10). As costume designer Ellen Mirojnick claims in an interview with Radhika Seth for *Vogue*, "[t]he Featheringtons are new money". The lack of ornaments – such as flowers – on the façade of the house might illustrate the Featheringtons' limited wealth.

After the shot of the house, the camera zooms in on the door of the Featheringtons, thereby continuing to depict the family's status:

Figure 3. The door of the Featherington House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:51)

Figure 4. Zoom on the door ornament. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:51)

The first still shows that the wall around the door is crumbling. Again, this might hint at the family's modest fortune. Then, in zooming in on the door ornament, two children facing each other can be distinguished. These children seem to try to embrace one another, and yet, they look in opposite directions. This might be interpreted as a symbol of the family's lack of cohesion; Lady Featherington indeed disregards her daughters as is shown by the next scene

inside the house in which she implicitly accuses her daughter, Prudence, of being too fat to fit into the corset ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:55-00:01:09). What is more, Lady Whistledown describes the Featherington daughters as "three misses foisted upon the marriage market like sorrowful sows by their tasteless, tactless mama" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:00:51-00:01:05). Lady Featherington wants to arrange her daughters' marriage, as she foists them "upon the marriage market" for their own good, but she also disregards her daughters' wishes. For example, Portia denies Penelope's request to "sit the season out" and "delay" her debut on the marriage market for a year ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:11:58-00:12:28).

In the next scene, the viewer is introduced to the Bridgertons and the depiction of their house is also meaningful. While the house is symmetrical, as is that of the Featheringtons, there are here far more ornaments, especially flowers:

Figure 5. The Bridgertons' House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:01:11)

On the house, one can distinguish a violet flower; this flower is called glycine or wisteria. As the editorial director of the botanical website *Petal Republic*, Andrew Gaumond, claims, the wisteria is a symbol often associated with noble families. Purple flowers are used by higher-ranked families to show their wealth and it is associated with good breeding (Gaumond). Violet Bridgerton, the mother of the family, is indeed a "widowed viscountess" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:01:13), which means that she is higher ranked than Lady Featherington. The title of viscount "was the fourth ranking title in the peerage" (Kloester 10). Gaumond then adds that the wisteria, with its intertwined branches, also symbolizes strong love. The façade of the house already gives the sense that the Bridgertons are much more united than the Featheringtons and are of a higher rank. This idea is reinforced by the camera's zoom in on the door:

Figure 6. The door of the Bridgerton House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:01:13)

On the ornament of the door, one can distinguish a bee. As Alford explains, "[bees] represent power, community, and hard-working focus. This fits with the posh Bridgertons, who, as impossibly good-looking pillars of the London social scene, hold considerable influence". These interpretations are also supported by Lady Whistledown, who presents the Bridgertons as a "shockingly prolific family, noted for its bounty of perfectly handsome sons and perfectly beautiful daughters" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:01:10-00:01:28). The reflection in the doorknob also seems to be meaningful. It shows a large house surrounded by property, and therefore indicates wealth. This is a representation of the *Bridgerton* world; the camera in fact announces that the show will be about prosperous families living lavishly. Moreover, as the camera steps into the various households, the viewer is invited to enter this world and to become one of its members. This effect is reinforced by Lady Whistledown's voice, as she describes the families while she enters the households. Simon Gallagher indeed claims that "Lady Whistledown's true mission is cutting through the facades by revealing all of the scandals and the hypocrisy of those who appear one way but contradict their image with their behavior". As Lady Whistledown describes the Bridgertons as "perfect", the family is pictured as running around to get ready while Eloise is complaining about her outfit and ends up yelling at Daphne in a rather rude way ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:01:28-00:01:54). This illustrates that the show will be about gossips too, and that the characters' manners when they are in society are merely a façade. Moreover, as mentioned above, Lady Whistledown shares the gossips with the viewer and addresses them as "Readers", so that the viewer becomes a member of the ton – "the fashionable society" ("Ton"). The opening scene therefore clearly sets the tone for the rest of the show and the viewers immediately immerse themselves in this universe.

3.2. Costumes and Props

As Ryan and Lenos assert, "[p]rops and costumes should also be considered part of the meaning-making repertoire of art directors and production designers" (105). Costumes and props play an important role in *Bridgerton*. They help establish the Regency style. Indeed, as Deguzman claims, set props are "key indicator[s] as to when and where a story is taking place" ("Movie Prop"), but they can also add depth to characters by "[becoming] synonymous with a character's identity" ("Movie Prop"). Deguzman further states that "[c]ostumes can say a lot about a character, where they come from, their social status, their personality, and their profession" ("Production Design").

Clothes already play a major role in describing the Bridgertons and the Featheringtons in *The Duke and I*. The reader knows, for example, that Daphne wears "pale satin" gloves and a "wispy silk" dress (164). Daphne's hair is also said to be styled "so that one thick lock fell over her shoulder, curling seductively at the top of her breast" (45). These elements participate in making Daphne look like a Regency woman, wearing dresses and having period hairstyles. The fact that Daphne wears gowns made of rich fabric such as silk also demonstrates that she comes from the upper class. Satin fabric "graced the opulent costumes of nobility [especially from Louis XIV's reign onwards] […], exuding a sense of aristocratic luxury" ("Satin"). The description of Daphne's gown contrasts with the description of the Featheringtons' clothes. Lady Featherington's daughters are described as "a trio […] all of whom were dressed in monstrously fussy frocks, replete with tucks and flounces, and of course, heaps and heaps of lace" (63). The Featheringtons therefore seem to have a poor fashion sense. Their "fussy" dresses with "heaps and heaps" of fabric seem much less sophisticated than Daphne's, as the Featheringtons overdo it. Moreover, Penelope Featherington, the youngest daughter, is said to be wearing "an orangey gown which [does] nothing for her complexion" (65). As for men's clothing, Daphne once says that current fashions prescribe "snug breeches" (56), the ancient word for the trousers coming "just below the knee" ("Breech"). All these references help to build the characters and make the reader imagine the world they live in.

In the TV show, costumes are also essential to build the *Bridgerton* world. In the previous section, it was argued that insects are associated with both families: the bee for the Bridgertons and the butterfly for the Featheringtons. In an interview, the show's director for hair and make-up, Marc Pilcher, reveals that "[t]he Bridgertons have a bee which appears on certain parts of their costumes, and for the Featheringtons, it's butterflies. We have a few [tiny] hair

decorations that reflect this as well and we pop them in now and again" (Alford). This is illustrated in the following figure featuring the Featherington daughters:

Figure 7. Lady Featherington's three daughters. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:18:12)

On the right side of the image stands Penelope Featherington, the youngest daughter. She wears a yellow dress whose upper part has the shape of a butterfly. This still is representative of the show because Penelope is more often than not pictured wearing yellow dresses, while her sisters mostly wear green. Just as in the novel, they also wear fussy dresses with a lot of frills. In an interview with *Vogue*, costume designer Ellen Mirojnick points out that "[Lady Featherington] sets the tone for [her daughters] as a family and their colour palette is overly citrus because she wants those girls to be seen. […] They're bolder, brighter and more brazen than everyone else, and everything is overly embellished" (Seth).

In the series, the Featheringtons are purposely contrasted with the Bridgertons. At the beginning of the show, the Bridgerton women often wear white or pale blue dresses:

Figure 8. Lady Bridgerton entering a ball with Anthony and Daphne. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:18:47)

Here, Daphne and her mother wear white dresses, made of a tulle veil and gemstones. Their costumes are more refined; they are more subtle and elegant due to their simplicity and the fact that the colours are less bright than these of the Featheringtons. White is also a colour symbolizing purity, innocence and perfection (Olesen). In her interview, Mirojnick further argues that the Bridgertons are "the prominent family of the social season so [costume designers] wanted their color palette to be powdery — these pale blues, silvers, and greens that feel like whispers of color" (Seth). This illustrates how colours add depths to characters. Moreover, the Bridgertons also often wear blue; this colour is appropriate for them as it is the colour of trust and loyalty (Olesen).

Men's clothing in the show also create meaning. This idea can be explored via the suits of Anthony Bridgerton and Simon Basset:

Figure 9. One of Anthony's costumes. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:24:44)

Since Anthony is the eldest brother, he has become the head of the family after his father's death. He often wears classic black or dark blue suits, with a drape around his neck. This makes him look thorough and neat, which he has to be, given his position and social status. On the other hand, Simon is pictured in a different way:

Figure 10. One of Simon's costumes. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:24:28)

Simon wears red or black waistcoats and coats and often wraps no drape around his neck. As Mirojnick states in an interview with Tomris Laffly, the colours and shape of Simon's costumes give him "a swagger […] [Simon]'s unlike any other man in the whole show. There was a certain je ne sais [quoi] about him: handsome, mysterious, unavailable". His suits often portray him as a seducer, which matches with his reputation for being a rake, as will be discussed in section 4.

Generally speaking, costume designers were able to create the *Bridgerton* world through a varied use of costumes. As Mirojnick explains in the interview with Seth, she and her fellow designers "got a flavor of [the Regency period] and then it was about looking at the different silhouettes and shapes while knowing that this had to be aspirational, as opposed to historically accurate". She further gives an example of a choice which was made to be "aspirational"; costume designers "paid a lot of attention to the scooped necklines and how they fit the bust […]. This show is sexy, fun and far more accessible than your average restrained period drama and it's important for the openness of the necklines to reflect that". Costume designers were able to give the costumes a period style to help the viewer enter the Regency world, and simultaneously made the clothes modern enough to appeal to a contemporary audience.

If costumes add meaning, the props also tend to represent the characters in Van Dusen's version. This is striking when the sitting rooms of the Featheringtons and the Bridgertons are compared. The sitting room of the Featheringtons is in the same vein as their costumes:

Figure 11. Sitting room of the Featherington House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:11:00)

In the Featheringtons' interior, the decoration leans towards the baroque: tables and sofa legs are ornamented, gold is used. Green and yellow dominate, which makes the interior look a bit fussy. Just as with the clothes, the use of a citrus colour palette represents the Featheringtons' desire to be seen. The interior of the house is extravagant just as their dresses. Meaning is also added through food; the Featheringtons' table is adorned with mandarins. As Mirojnick's fellow costume designer, John Glazer, explains in an interview, they "entered [the characters' worlds] with food […] [The] Featheringtons [are] acidic fruits: oranges, lime, citrus. We called them the Versace family, lots of gold and gild" (Laffly, square brackets in original). This fits the description of the costumes. In the Bridgerton House, the sitting room is much more refined:

Figure 12. Sitting room of the Bridgerton House. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:26:56)

The props are more sophisticated because of the curved lines, and simple tables and chairs legs. The interior is also lighter thanks to the use of pale blue and white. Again, the food corresponds to the family; when the camera zooms in on the Bridgertons' table, it shows cakes and tea. As

Glazer declares, art directors chose "[m]acarons, topped with confection sugar [to represent the Bridgertons]. We thought of them like a Tiffany box" (Laffly). A Tiffany box is a turquoise-blue box adorned with a white satin ribbon. This box often symbolizes love and has become the trademark of Tiffany & Co., making it immediately recognizable ("The Tiffany Blue Box"). This fits with the Bridgertons, a wealthy family whose members love each other. The props therefore replicate the family's social status and values; the Bridgertons are a sweet family with good tastes.

3.3. Music: Special Covers and Scores

As Ryan and Lenos argue, "[f]ilms are meant as much to be heard as to be seen, although the primacy of the visual experience often makes us forget that we are hearing sounds that are essential for conveying information, constructing characters, producing emotional effects, and creating meaning" (90). In *Bridgerton*, emotional effects and meaning are especially conveyed by music. *The Duke and I* refers to music in at least one significant scene. In chapter 5, the narrator says that an orchestra is making noise while preparing to perform and then "struck the first notes of a waltz" (78). In the Regency era, music was indeed performed by an orchestra which played classical music. In her book, Kristine Hughes mentions that "[d]ances changed very little during the nineteenth century, with country dances, the quadrille, polka [or Galop] and waltz being the mainstays" (205). In *Bridgerton*, liberties were taken with the original text and more generally, with the Regency era.

In the show, contemporary songs appear with classical arrangements. Dietrich suggests that "renditions of popular songs can be heard throughout the course of season 1. […] Using modern songs in a setting that resembles an older time period, Shonda Rhimes can make the show more engaging and relatable for audiences" (115). On several occasions, the viewer can hear intradiegetic music in the background of the show; this implies renditions of famous popular songs. At the first ball hosted by Lady Danbury in episode 1, people dance on a rendition of "Thank U, Next" by Ariana Grande, created by Vitamin String Quartet ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:17:31-00:20:42). Another example is the music on which Daphne and Simon dance at the end of episode 2; this song is a classical version of "In My Blood" by Shawn Mendes also arranged by Vitamin String Quartet ("Shock and Delight" 00:53:17-00:55:51).

These covers have another purpose than being modern enough for audiences; they also help to "evoke reactions in audiences appropriate to the events depicted" (Ryan and Lenos 90). Along with renditions of pop songs, Kris Bowers, another composer for the show, created theme

songs – music "specifically written and composed to introduce and represent a film, television show" (Deguzman, "Theme Song") – and scores to represent characters; these songs are traditional classical music. In an interview with Jazz Tangcay, he claims that for Simon and Daphne's theme, "[composers] used a Ravel piano [piece] and that set off a light bulb in [Bowers'] head as far as having it be classical but with a slightly modern approach, and still romantic". While their theme has to be romantic, it also has to evolve, just as their relationship does. Bowers further states that:

> In the beginning, [Daphne and Simon's theme] has this mysterious, somewhat longing feeling to it. It's very dramatic, romantic and a bit darker. By the middle of the season, it starts to feel ambivalent when she discovers the truth behind what the Duke has told her. It feels ambiguous or unsettled. Towards the end, it's triumphant, warm and much more optimistic, especially in the very last scene. (Tangcay)

For example, in the first episode after their encounter, Daphne and Simon dance together after they make a pact to feign a courtship on "We Could Form an Attachment" by Bowers, a music evoking passion and longing, with the violin and drum beats ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:51:23-00:54:24).

While the examples above are intradiegetic sounds as the characters dance to the music which is heard in the soundtrack, extradiegetic music – sounds outside the world of the story (Ryan and Lenos 90) – is also used to create meaning. Extradiegetic songs appear at specific moments to add meaning to the events. For example, in episode 7, extradiegetic music appears in the scene in which Simon and Daphne are tense because Simon explains he made a vow never to give his father an heir ("Oceans Apart" 00:38:30-00:39:21). Bowers wrote "Miserable Together, Happy Apart" for the scene, a soft score evoking melancholy and sadness from the viewer through its slow tempo, as well as violin and piano notes. At the very end of the series, when Simon decides that he will live a happy life and start a family with Daphne, the music "A Grand Finish" is again romantic and optimistic ("After the Rain" 00:58:51-01:01:03). It involves a more rhythmic melody with violin, piano and drum beats, allowing the viewer to feel joy and hope.

3.4. Bringing Characters to Life

In the novel, as well as in the series, choices were made concerning characters too, starting with their names. In Quinn's *The Duke and I*, the names given to the characters are indeed meaningful. There are three main families: the Bridgertons, the Featheringtons and the Bassets (also dukedom of Hastings). Other characters involved in the story are Lady Whistledown, Lady Danbury and Nigel Berbrooke. First, the name Bridgerton can be interpreted as "to overcome the ton"; "to bridge over" means "to overcome" and the name ends with the word "ton", which might refer to the way high, influential society is named in the nineteenth century. In the novel, Daphne Bridgerton repeatedly defies society's conventions and ends up imposing her will. Then there are the Featheringtons. In chapter 4, Lady Danbury describes Lady Featherington as "feathers for brains" (66), a reference to the expression "to be featherbrain" which means to be a foolish person. The daughters of Lady Featherington are not described in a very positive way either; for example, Philipa is said to be "as dumb as a post" (25), and Penelope is described as "cloaked in baby fat" (65) and as "not terribly attractive" (66). Another name which is meaningful in the novel is that of Lady Whistledown. To "blown the whistle on" means "to report", and Lady Whistledown writes gossip and scandals down in a column. The word "down" might also refer to the fact that Lady Whistledown is bringing people "down", by destroying their reputations in her column. All the names from *The Duke and I* have been kept in Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*.

In terms of appearance and personality, Daphne is quite different in the novel and the TV show. In Quinn's version, Daphne is described as not unattractive but not dazzlingly beautiful (14). She has thick, chestnut hair and deep chocolate brown eyes (19). She is "funny and kind and a quick wit" (13), but men are not interested in her because they see her as a friend. It is said that "[men] adored her, or so they said, because she was so easy to talk to, and she always seemed to understand how a man felt" (13). As a result, Daphne has already been through two social seasons but has not married yet, while she has reached "marriageable age" (13-14). This contrasts with the character in *Bridgerton*. In the series, Daphne is played by the English actress Phoebe Dynevor; she has light auburn hair and green-brown eyes. At the beginning of episode 1, she is presented to the Queen, and the latter calls her "flawless" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:05:44-00:07:03). Lady Whistledown also writes that Daphne is the "season's Incomparable […] [and] a 'diamond of the first water'" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:10:47-00:10:55). Far from being unattractive, Daphne is in this version desired by

all men. The reason why she later needs Simon's help to have suitors back is that Anthony frightened them away.

Simon, on the other hand, is more faithful to the novel, even though he underwent some changes too. In *The Duke and I*, Simon is described as "tall and athletic, with thick dark hair" (19) and his eyes are "pale blue" (146). Simon also has a stutter which he masters as he grows old, but which comes back with strong emotions like anger (10-11). Simon is also "determined", "smart" and "damned stubborn" (7). Rumours about him say that he is a "rake" and a "hellion", "quite unsuitable for a young lady" (18). Still, Simon has earned the reputation of "a man to be reckoned with" (19) and is "called 'supremely confident,' 'heartstoppingly handsome,' and 'the perfect specimen of English manhood.' Men wanted his opinion on any number of topics. The women swooned at his feet" (35). In *Bridgerton*, adult Simon is played by Regé-Jean Page, a mixed-race actor of English and Zimbabwean descent. He has brown hair and brown eyes. In this version, Simon also has a stutter as a child, but as he becomes older, he masters it much better than in the novel. The viewer indeed does not see Simon stammer a lot compared to the novel. About his reputation, Daphne says of him: "Presumptuous? Clearly. Arrogant? Most definitely. You are a rake… through and through" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:39:26-00:39:51). Lady Whistledown also calls him "the season's most eligible and most uncatchable rake" ("Shock and Delight" 00:03:53-00:03:59). While his appearance slightly differs in both versions, the Duke of Hastings has the same reputation and personality in the novel and the TV show.

The portraying of Black people in *Bridgerton* is characteristic of Shonda Rhimes's predilection for colour-blind casting; this was also the case in *Queen Charlotte* and *Scandal*. Several Black actors have been cast to play characters from the novel. This is the case of Simon, who is darker-skinned than the character in the book, about whom it is assumed that he is white because of his blue eyes (however, there is no reference to his skin colour in the book). Other characters being played by Black actors involve Lady Danbury (who is portrayed by Adjoa Andoh), and added characters such as Marina Thompson (Ruby Barker) and Queen Charlotte (Golda Rosheuvel). This colour-blind casting has opened up debates about historical accuracy. On the one hand, Dietrich argues that "the Duke of Hasting, Simon Basset, [is] portrayed by a black male, a position of power that was dominated by white males in Regent England" (113). However, as *Bridgerton*'s historical expert Hannah Grieg suggests in an interview with journalist Valentina Valentini, English society in the nineteenth century "[was] more diverse than most of us probably presume […]. From a historian's point of view, a London society should have a mixture of people from around the world of different races and backgrounds in a

way that period dramas haven't adequately represented" ("Everything"). Valentini then explains that according to Greig, "*Bridgerton* pushes the envelope of what race relations looked like in Regency London by introducing the idea of people of color in high social ranks where they wouldn't necessarily be expected" ("Everything"). Moreover, historians argue that the real Queen Charlotte, the wife of King George III, was dark-skinned. As Van Dusen claims, "[when] I created the character of Queen Charlotte […] I was aware of the historical theories of the actual Queen Charlotte's African ancestry. She was, some historians argue, a descendant of a Black branch of the Portuguese royal family, England's very first queen of color" ("*Bridgerton* Showrunner"). Be it historically accurate or not, the choice for colour-blind casting is another means to "adapt and recognize the significance of modern culture and standards" (Dietrich 114).

As Hutcheon and O'Flynn argue, "in the process of dramatization there is inevitably a certain amount of re-accentuation and refocusing of themes, characters, and plot" (40). This is what happens in *Bridgerton*. In *The Duke and I*, the story focuses on Daphne and Simon, and the other characters make appearances mainly to further their relationship. However, in Van Dusen's version, plots about secondary characters have been developed, so that the viewer gets stories about Daphne's brothers and sisters, which do not exist in the novel. This is the case of Anthony, Eloise and Benedict's expanded subplots, which serve various purposes. In *Bridgerton* season 1, Anthony, played by Jonathan Bailey, has a relationship with an opera singer called Siena Rosso (Sabrina Bartlett). He is pictured as torn between his responsibilities as the head of the family and his love for her. This is illustrated in an exchange between Anthony and Siena. After having sex with Siena, Anthony puts his clothes back on to go to a ball with his sister. Siena complains about this and Anthony replies:

> ANTHONY. Someone must guard my poor sister from the bucks and pinks, ensure her virtue remains free of any kind of defilement.
> SIENA. Daphne is fortunate. Every woman is not afforded such gallant protection.
> ANTHONY. Every woman is not a lady. ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:16:32-00:16:47)

At first, Anthony refers to men as "bucks", thereby comparing them to a male goat "on account of being lascivious" ("Buck"); he also calls them "pinks", a pink being a "dandy", "a member of an elite" ("Pink"). This passage could be argued to speak to Anthony's hypocrisy. Indeed, he wants to protect his sister from "bucks and pinks" like Simon, and yet, he has an affair outside

of marriage with a woman that he has no intention of marrying, thereby being a lascivious dandy himself. Moreover, being of a lower rank, Siena implies that she will never afford "such gallant protection". She is for now kept by Anthony, but the moment he decides to stop his affair with her, she is left with no standing and no money to provide for herself. Anthony "reminds" her of her position in society when he replies that "every woman is not a lady". Being of a lower rank and without title, Siena is not considered a Lady. Women were called ladies when they came from an upper-class family and were the daughters of parents bestowing a title of baron, viscount, earl, marquis or duke (Kloester 9). Moreover, since Anthony is the eldest son and the head of the family, his duty is to find a wife who would make a good viscountess to take care of the house and give Anthony an heir. Kloester argues that "[a]n eldest son with a title and expectations of a considerable inheritance usually had a wide choice of potential wives and it was expected that he would marry for the good of the family" (57). This again shows that Anthony's relationship with Siena is merely an affair, and that he has no intention of marrying her. In this case, the addition of a subplot and a character serve to portray Anthony as torn between his feelings and his duties, and it also speaks to his hypocrisy.

Eloise and Benedict's subplots serve a similar purpose: they address current issues such as the sexist conventions of a patriarchal system; they also bring up urgent matters such as homosexuality and sexual freedom. Eloise is a minor character in *The Duke and I*; she is often merely referred to as one of Daphne's siblings. However, in the series, Eloise (Claudia Jessie) becomes an important protagonist and allows Van Dusen to discuss the issue of gender roles. As Payton Creamer suggests, "Eloise is the most forward thinking, assertive, feminist character. Her storyline consists mainly of praising the female writer, Lady Whistledown, criticizing the patriarchal system, and rejecting the gender roles society tries to enforce on her" (5). For example, she says in episode 2: "[H]aving a nice face and hair is not an accomplishment! You know what is an accomplishment? Attending university! If I were a man, I could do that, you know!" ("Shock and Delight" 00:06:53-00:07:01). As for Benedict (Luke Thompson), he appears in the show as an artist and his storyline allows Van Dusen to address the LGBTQIA+ community thanks to his outings. Benedict indeed stumbles upon two men having sex, one of whom is Henry Granville, the artist who invited Benedict to his parties. As Creamer claims, "the only queer couple is hidden with the clear intention of hoping to not be seen. This shows the audience that being LGBTQ+ is shunned in all areas of society, and not only at the high class events" (6). At the same party, Benedict also has a threesome with two women – Genevieve Delacroix, the modiste, and Lucy Granville, Henry's wife –, thereby depicting him

as a libertine. These events do not take place in *The Duke and I*, in which Henry, Lucy and Genevieve do not even exist.

Hutcheon and O'Flynn also claim that "transposition to another medium, or even moving within the same one, always means change or, in the language of the new media, 'reformatting.' And there will always be both gains and losses" (16). Through transposition, *Bridgerton* gained some characters and subplots which do not exist in the novel. Queen Charlotte and Marina Thompson were already mentioned. The Queen has an important role in the show because she decides which woman will lead the social season ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:04:11-00:05:39), and people have to get her approval to marry ("The Duke and I" 00:29:23-00:32:52). Van Dusen claims that he purposely decided to depict the Queen, "the most powerful person in this world" as a woman of colour ("*Bridgerton* showrunner"). He then adds that "[t]he construct for [the *Bridgerton*] world was born. It meant that the color of your skin would not determine whether you were high-born or low-born" ("*Bridgerton* showrunner"). Marina Thompson is another secondary character in the series; she is a cousin of the Featheringtons. She arrives in the family for the social season, but Lady Featherington soon discovers that Marina is pregnant. She therefore tries to find Marina a husband to prevent her from having her reputation destroyed. Marina even tries to seduce Colin Bridgerton, but her plan is thwarted by Lady Whistledown – who is in fact Penelope Featherington – as she reveals Marina's secret in her column. This subplot helps to show Penelope's love for Colin, which is developed in seasons 2 and 3. It also brings up the theme of betrayal and societal pressure.

Other subplots and characters have been added for the purposes of the scenario; this is the case of Lord Archibald Featherington, Alice and Will Mondrich, and Prince Friedrich. In *The Duke and I*, Lady Featherington is pictured as a widow (65). However, in *Bridgerton* season 1, she is married to Lord Archibald Featherington, and the latter is still alive at the beginning of the show. This character makes a connection with the second season; Lord Featherington likes gambling and is murdered by men after cheating to win a bet. Lise Gillet points out that Lord Featherington's death allows to start the plot about the financial troubles Lady Featherington finds herself in season 2. It enables the viewer to feel sympathy for her, who has to take care of her daughters, but also deal with her husband's debts. Other secondary characters missing from the novel are Will Mondrich and his wife Alice. They are friends with Simon and give him advice throughout the show, while in *The Duke and I*, Simon is not depicted as having friends. This enhances Simon's characterization; in truth, he is not an egocentric dandy, as gossips stipulate. In fact, Simon is often lost and needs his friends to make the right decisions. This subplot therefore explores the theme of friendship and prejudice. This also tends to

eroticize the black body, as Will and Simon are often pictured shirtless, competing on a boxing ring. Moreover, at the end of the show, Will has financial problems and is offered a large amount of money if he lets his opponent on the boxing ring win. Will has to choose between his pride and his desire to provide for his family. He finally decides to lose the watch, therefore putting his family before his dignity, which brings up the theme of family. Prince Friedrich has also a role to play in the series; he proposes to Daphne, who could become a princess, but she refuses because she is in love with Simon. This character allows therefore to explore the theme of love; Daphne listens to her heart instead of opting for a high rank in society.

3.5. Narration and Point of View

3.5.1. Narrating *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton*

According to Porter Abbott, narration is the "process of telling […] the story" (39). Story and narration would thereby be two different units; while a story is fixed and refers to the sequence of events, narration can vary, as a story can be narrated in different ways. The narrator is therefore an important part of the narrating process; it is the person telling the story. Abbott further claims that "[t]wo aspects of narration that always have significant consequences are the sensibility of the narrator and his or her distance from the action" (42). The first aspect refers to the personality of the narrator, while the second is similar to Genette's notions of homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrators. Genette distinguishes "two types of narrative; one with the narrator absent from the story he tells […], the other with the narrator present as a character in the story he tells […]. I call the first type, for obvious reasons, *heterodiegetic*, and the second type *homodiegetic*" (244-45, emphasis in original).

The main narrator of *The Duke and I* is a heterodiegetic narrator telling the story about Daphne and Simon. When analysing the figure of the narrator, it is essential to distinguish between reflector and narrator. Genette indeed argues that there is often a "regrettable confusion between what I call here *mood* and *voice*, a confusion between the question *who is the character whose point of view orients the narrative perspective?* and the very different question *who is the narrator?*" (186, emphasis in original). In the novel, the characters whose points of view orient the narrative are Daphne and Simon; as for the narrator, it might be noted that he or she is an omniscient narrator telling the story in the third person. This is linked to Genette's concept of "zero focalization", as the narrator knows more than the characters. The narrator is able to "enter the minds" of its character, but also adds sometimes information that the characters do not know. Even though the narrator has access to the thoughts or feelings of the characters, the story is usually told from Simon or Daphne's point of view. They are therefore the reflectors.

Quinn also uses a particular narrative technique to allow her narrator to access the minds of the characters; she uses free indirect discourse, which is defined by Mieke Bal as a "procedure […], in which the narrating party approximates as closely as possible the character's own words without letting it speak directly" (159). This type of discourse might be illustrated by a passage from chapter 1 in which Daphne and her mother, Violet Bridgerton, discuss the new issue of Lady Whistledown's column. Violet Bridgerton is upset because Lady Whistledown wrote unattractive words about Daphne and the latter reflects upon marriage. She thinks, "[s]he wanted to marry, truly she did, and she wasn't even holding out for a true love match. But was it really too much to hope for a husband for whom one had at least some affection?" (13, emphasis in original). The narrator quotes Daphne's thoughts in the third person. The question here is a question Daphne asks herself, and the narrator reports it faithfully in the third person. Daphne is thereby the reflector, but her voice is blended with that of the narrator.

Using third-person narration and free indirect discourse allows the narrator to achieve several purposes. By entering the minds of several characters and presenting the same scene through different perspectives, the narrator confronts different points of view, thereby allowing the reader to become a witness of the events and to make his own judgement. As Manfred Jahn suggests:

> Normally, the narrator is the functional agent who verbalizes the story's nonverbal matter […] and establishes communication with the addressee. However, once exposition, comment, and narratorial intervention are dispensed within the interest of directness, the figural text appears to be determined by the filtering and coloring devices of the reflector's mind, while the reader, seeing the storyworld through the reflector's eyes, becomes a witness rather than the narrator's communicative addressee. (96)

This is interesting when discussing key passages from *The Duke and I*, such as, as will be discussed below, the kiss scene, or the rape scene. The reader perceives the events through Daphne and Simon's perspectives, thereby being able to know what these characters think and feel. Moreover, the reader realizes some characters are sometimes mistaken in their assumptions; this might enable the former to immerse themselves in the story world and feel sympathy for, or better understand some characters.

Even though the media is different, *Bridgerton* also involves narration. As Ryan and Lenos argue, "[m]any movies are life stories. The illusion of film is that you believe you see

selected moments in someone's life. […] And the process of telling the life story by selecting moments and constructing images to capture them is narration" (110). This applies to the series as well. In *Bridgerton*, the narration is mostly visual, as it unfolds through various narrative techniques such as camera shots and angles and production design choices. Screenwriters also use focalization; on screen, stories are often "character-centered. They tell a story from the perspective of one prominent human figure who is the focus of the narrative" (Ryan and Lenos 113). This is the case of *Bridgerton*, in which the story focuses on Daphne and Simon, even though the show also pictures the lives of other secondary characters such as Eloise, Anthony and Benedict. Yet, to narrate a story on screen "is not just to depict a character undergoing experiences; it is also to paint the background and the social setting in which the character operates" (Ryan and Lenos 113). The beginning of the show which was analysed in a previous section is representative of this. The viewer quickly understands that the story is partly about Daphne's "debut" in society, but the setting of the show and her social background are also shown.

3.5.2. Lady Whistledown: A Special Case of Narration

In *The Duke and I*, the beginning of each chapter opens with an issue from Lady Whistledown's column, in which she tells gossips about several characters from the story. Lady Whistledown is therefore a homodiegetic narrator. She is a character from the story world herself; in the fourth volume of the collection, titled *Romancing Mister Bridgerton*, the reader learns that the author of the column is Penelope Featherington. Her column also has an essential role to create the *Bridgerton* world. Indeed, she directly addresses the reader:

> *The Bridgertons are by far the most prolific family in the upper echelons of society. Such industriousness on the part of the viscountess and the late viscount is commendable, although one can find only banality in their choice of names for their children. […] Ah, Gentle Reader, your devoted Author wishes that that were the case amid all large families…* (12-13, italics in original)

This passage illustrates Lady Whistledown's personality and voice. Her tone might be described as cutting and frank, and she does not hold back her opinions. People describe her column as "a curious mix of commentary, social news, scathing insult, and the occasional compliment. […] The ton declared themselves scandalized, but they were secretly fascinated" (16). Moreover, she addresses the "Gentle Reader" of her column, which implies in fact that there

are two addressees – a person to whom "the words are directed" ("Addressee"); there are indeed the characters of the story who receive the column and read it in the story world, but there is also the reader. The readers of the book thereby become characters of the story, as they gain access to the gossips, and are able to form their opinion and judge the other characters.

In *Bridgerton*, Lady Whistledown also appears as a homodiegetic narrator of the story through the use of a voice-over. Lady Whistledown's extradiegetic voice is heard off-screen at different times of the story. Lady Whistledown's identity, whose voice-over is portrayed by Julie Andrews, is revealed at the end of the season; it is the pseudonym of Penelope Featherington (Nicola Coughlan), who writes anonymously. Lady Whistledown's voice is used to tell the viewer what she writes in her gossip column, and also gives further meaning to the shots it coincides with. For example, when Daphne is called "Flawless" by the Queen at the beginning of the show ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:06:53), Lady Whistledown says: "But as we know, the brighter a lady shines, the faster she may burn" (00:07:20-00:07:25). She thereby already announces Daphne's future scandal, as she will kiss Simon in a garden. The voice-over has therefore the same purpose as the issues which appear at the beginning of each chapter of the novel in the shape of small articles; Lady Whistledown gives her opinions on some characters and criticizes their actions in a cutting tone.

In *Bridgerton*, it is also crucial that Lady Whistledown addresses the viewers as "Gentle Readers". As discussed above, this is a way for the viewer to enter the world of the show, and to become part of the story. In addition, as Ryan and Lenos point out:

> [N]arratives often operate from distinct, definable points of view. […] The point of view from which a story is told is the ideological, emotional, and intellectual position from which [the viewer] see events in a film. It obliges [the viewer] to see the world in a particular way by portraying events in a manner that is infused with the point of view of the filmmakers, their assumptions about the world. (124)

It could be argued that the story is told from Lady Whistledown's point of view. Gallagher suggests that "[t]he whole salacious undercurrent of *Bridgerton*'s ton paints a picture that absolutely everyone has either a scandal behind them or some sort of secret they do not wish for others to pry into". Through her column, Lady Whistledown reveals the scandals, thereby exposing characters and making sure that they are judged. She indeed often invites the viewer

to think about the actions of the characters, and to form their own opinions. This idea will be illustrated below, during the discussion of the rape scene.

Lady Whistledown also seems to symbolize contradicting ideas in both works: she might be interpreted as a figure embodying Regency society's strict conventions, but at the same time she might be considered as a critic of these rules. Lady Whistledown denounces people involved in scandals in her column. As Erin McCarthy argues, "Lady Whistledown and her society papers hold the power to influence everyone's action in the Ton, including the Queen of England herself. She has the power to spread strategic lies and truths to create and destroy reputations" (206). Just as society's conventions shape people's lives, Lady Whistledown is able to influence the way people live. However, Lady Whistledown also uses irony, which might hint at the fact that she does not always agree with these rules. An example of this is when she says in the novel that "it is a truth universally acknowledged that a married man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of an heir" (337). This quotation is similar to the sentence from *Pride and Prejudice*, "[i]t is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (3). This quotation by Jane Austen is typical of her ironic style. As Sumathi and Alexander claim, "[t]he sentence itself means that people assume that a well-to-do young man should be on the look-out for a suitable wife [while it is] quite likely that [women] in the neighborhood of this young man are desirous of having such a husband" (119-120). The sentence is therefore ironical, as the narrator says something which appears to mean something, while it means the opposite. When Lady Whistledown says that everyone knows a well-to-do married man wants an heir, this is ironic too, because the actual meaning is rather that every married woman wants a child. This is especially ironic in Daphne and Simon's situation; Simon is a well-to-do married man at some point, but he refuses to have an heir. Lady Whistledown's critical tone might therefore hint at the fact that she finds some speculations or conventions absurd, and uses irony to agree with society's etiquette, whereas she means the opposite.

4. Adaptation at Story Level

In this section, central passages from the novel will be close-viewed and compared to similar scenes from the TV show. The analysis will be organized around the main themes, which Nicholas Marsh defines as "a subject which interests the writer, and which is discussed in the text or portrayed in it in some way" (1). Inside each theme, several passages are interesting to consider because they are "full of complexity like [the reader/viewer's] experience of life itself" (Marsh 2). These complex passages are often called "crises" – a moment in a story in which there is a "sudden event", and in which "the big issues are portrayed most openly and forcefully" (Marsh 2). For this dissertation, it would be too time-consuming a task to look at every single theme in the novel and its adaptation, and at every single crisis illustrating a theme; the close-reading and close-viewing are therefore limited to passages which further either Daphne and Simon's personality, or their relationship.

4.1. Family: Loving vs Uncaring Family

Family is a crucial theme in the novel. *The Duke and I* indeed contains several crises illustrating the theme of family, and this is the case of the first passage the reader encounters when starting the novel. *The Duke and I* opens with a prologue showing a flashback to Simon's youth. Simon is four years old and he has not spoken a word since his birth. His father becomes angry at this inability to speak and threatens to hit him if he does not. Simon decides to react against his father's violence:

> 'Don't you h-h-h-h-h-h-h--' The duke's face turned deathly pale. 'What is he saying?' Simon attempted the sentence again. 'D-d-d-d-d-d-d--' 'My God,' the duke breathed, horrified. 'He's a moron.' […] 'Hastings is going to go to a half-wit,' the duke moaned. 'All those years of praying for an heir, and now it's all for ruin. I should have let the title go to my cousin.' He turned back to his son, who was sniffling and wiping his eyes, trying to appear strong for his father. 'I can't even look at him,' he gasped. (6)

This passage starts with Simon trying to speak as his father intends to hit him. However, when he starts uttering words, he seems to stutter, which his father misinterprets as intellectual disability. Simon's inability to express himself eloquently is unacceptable for his father, and it disgusts the latter to such an extent that he "can't even look at him". Simon is affected by his

father's words and starts crying. This passage is crucial in the story because it leads Simon to make a solemn vow at the age of eleven: "If he couldn't be the son his father wanted, then by God, he'd be the *exact opposite*…" (11, emphasis in original). By making this vow, Simon promises to live his entire life without ever marrying and having an heir so that the title disappears. This is linked to another pervasive theme in the novel: the theme of hatred. As will be discussed later, Simon's hatred for his father often gets the upper hand over love. These passages illustrate Simon's family dynamics. They depict the Duke as a father in whose view title is the most important thing; a title which should remain in the hands of prestigious relatives, and not in those of a son who has learning difficulties. The theme of family is here associated with violence, rejection, and hatred.

This first quotation introducing Simon's background is strikingly contrasted in the novel with a passage about Daphne's family, placed right afterwards in the next chapter. Chapter 1 indeed introduces the Bridgerton family. Daphne and her mother Violet discover a chronicle in a scandal sheet written by a Lady Whistledown about the new Duke of Hastings, namely Simon. They discuss his reputation and Daphne's age. She is in her early twenties, and enters society for the third time (13-14). Daphne claims that her age "volleys back and forth between being so young that [she] cannot even meet [her brother] Anthony's friends and being so old that [Violet] despair[s] of [Daphne] ever contracting a good marriage" (18). Daphne is soon to be called a spinster according to society's norms and Violet says to her that she hopes she will one day have children. Daphne thinks about this:

> Her mother could be overly inquisitive, and her father had been more interested in hounds and hunting than he'd been in society affairs, but theirs had been a warm marriage, filled with love, laughter, and children. 'I could do a great deal worse than follow your example, Mother,' she murmured. (19)

Daphne complains about her parents' habits, but she is happy because her parents had a loving marriage. She even wants to follow her mother's example and have her own loving family. While Simon, an only child, only knew rejection and violence, Daphne grew up in a nurturing family, with many siblings. Here, a stark contrast is established with Simon's background, as depicted in the previous chapter. Later in the novel, Simon and Daphne talk at a ball. Daphne is surprised to learn that Simon never wants to marry and asks him about his title. Simon asks her if it is worth trying to find a suitable match and attending many balls and she replies: "'I want a husband. I want a family. It's not so silly when you think about it. I'm fourth of eight

children. All I know are large families. I shouldn't know how to exist outside of one'" (83). Daphne wants for herself what she had as a child, while Simon is categorically opposed to the idea of having a family of his own. Through free indirect discourse, the narrator then expresses Simon's thoughts: "He would never marry, never sire a child, and that was all she wanted out of life" (84). Simon and Daphne have opposite desires for their futures. These passages show that what each character knows as a child influences their life choices and their values. Family is at this point presented as something warm and cheerful when associated with Daphne, but destructive when linked to Simon's childhood.

Tom Verica, the director of the second episode of Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, uses the same juxtaposing technique as in the novel, working with Simon's flashback, but associating it with another scene which is not in *The Duke and I*. These two scenes follow on from each other but not in the same order as in the novel; the first indeed depicts Daphne's family and the second shows Simon's background. In the first scene, Anthony, Daphne's eldest brother, fights with Simon in a boxing ring because he refuses to let Simon court his sister, knowing his poor reputation. In this scene, Anthony says to Simon:

> ANTHONY. Are you courting my sister?
> SIMON. Should I not be courting your sister?
> ANTHONY. No. And I can think of dozens of reasons why, starting with, 'She is my sister,' and ending with, 'She is already engaged to be married,' and then perhaps circling back to, 'She is my sister.' […] You are and have long been a good friend. The best, really. But this is my sister. Think of all that we have shared as friends. It is furthest from my intentions to offend you, but surely you can understand that family must come before all else! ("Shock and Delight" 00:13:17-00:14:27)

Anthony explains why he does not want Simon to be courting his sister: he wants to protect her. He significantly says: "surely you can understand that family must come before all else", assuming that Simon understands why he wants to protect Daphne. Anthony is ready to fight his best friend and end their friendship if Simon intends to compromise his sister. However, Anthony is also presented as sexist and unreasonable. He wants to protect his sister, but at the same time, he asserts his superiority as the head of the Bridgerton family and disregards Daphne's wishes. This is a major difference with the novel. In *The Duke and I*, Anthony learns about Simon and Daphne's pact to fake a courtship in chapter 7, and he accepts it on one

condition: if Simon dishonours Daphne, he will kill him (116). In Van Dusen's adaptation, however, Anthony does not give Daphne the same freedom. He refuses to let her be courted by Simon and even decides that she is to marry Nigel Berbrooke, even if she absolutely disagrees. In both versions, Anthony comes across as a protective brother, but in the series, he behaves in a much more conservative way, ignoring Daphne's desires. The viewer understands that, by contemporary standards, Daphne's family is not perfect as one might think.

During the fight, the camera shifts from Anthony to Simon, allowing the viewer to follow the interaction between both characters. Anthony tries to hit Simon but fails. He is angry and says to Simon that the latter can surely understand why he, Anthony, wants to protect his sister from him:

Figure 13. Anthony confronting Simon. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Shock and Delight" 00:14:28)

Anthony stands in the foreground and therefore stands in focus. The tight medium shot emphasizes the interaction between him and Simon by allowing the viewer to see their environment: Anthony is with Simon on a boxing ring and they are fighting each other. Yet, at the same time, the camera is close enough to show the expression on Anthony's face and the viewer can see that he is angry. In the still, Anthony wears a white shirt with a blue waistcoat; as discussed earlier in this dissertation, these are colours associated with the Bridgertons. Olesen explains that light blue usually stands for loyalty and security. However, when it is dark, blue can have another meaning: it might signify conservatism and responsibility (Olesen). The fact that Anthony's white shirt is covered by a dark blue waistcoat might hint at the fact that his duties as the head of the family get the upper hand over his love for his sister. Moreover, the use of a soft key light – a key light being the main source of light shining on a subject (Ryan and Lenos 271) – diminishes shadows on Anthony's face, so that his intentions appear quite transparent. There is also a back light, a type of light that is "placed behind the subject so that

it faces the camera and helps to separate the subject from the background" ("Ultimate Guide to Film Terms"). The still is representative of Anthony in the scene, because when he appears onto the screen during the fight, he usually comes into view with this soft key light on his face and the back light creating shadows in the background. In fact, the back light comes from a window with a grid pattern, which looks like the bars of a prison. This might by a sign that Anthony feels 'imprisoned' by society, which pushes him to fulfil his duty as the head of the family and arrange his sister's marriage, instead of listening to her desires. At the same time, these lights form a contrast with the large dark space in the background on the entire left-hand side of the screen. As Ryan and Lenos argue, noir lighting can "create a sense of immersion in a world of dubious morality, in which one can lose one's identity […]. Dark images […] can also be used to create emotional effects […] [and portray] a character's unhappiness as he leaves behind someone he loves" (95-97). The black space behind Anthony in the whole scene might therefore symbolize his dark side. He only responds to his duty as he is ready to marry his sister off to a man whom she does not like. Another interpretation is that this black space represents Anthony's unhappiness. It may express his struggle to behave as a good brother and at the same time, to do what is best for his family. In any case, if these comments are but one avenue for interpretation, the black space draws the viewer's attention to Anthony's face, which depicts his anger.

Just after Anthony says that family comes first, the camera shifts to Simon's face through a reverse angle shot:

Figure 14. Simon remembering his youth. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Shock and Delight" 00:14:32)

Simon comes in focus again as he stands in the foreground, but this image contrasts with Anthony's shot. The film director here uses a medium close-up shot, showing Simon from the shoulders, thereby moving closer to his face to focus on his emotions, contrary to Anthony's

still which depicted his upper body, and therefore more of the background, through the tight medium shot. However, while the camera moves to show Simon's face, back lighting is used but, this time, without the key light as in Anthony's still. The hard backlight comes from a single window as in Anthony's still, but because of the absence of a key light, Simon's face is slightly blacked out. As Ryan and Lenos claim, "[t]he use of back lighting is appropriate to a story of duplicity, treachery, and betrayal […] Filmmakers […] create striking lighting contrasts using either background light or back light, both of which have the effect of blackening out the human figure" (94-95). Due to the back lighting, Simon is in the shadows and it makes the scene appear dramatic. This technique is used throughout the scene, mainly when Simon appears onto the screen. The use of back lighting and the fact that Simon stands in the dark might hint at the fact that he feels trapped in his life. He has been rejected by his father and he cuts himself off from the outside world, and even from his own desires. Moreover, in this shot, Simon is shirtless. This contrasts with Anthony's civil clothes and it may represent Simon's vulnerability as he is "naked" in front of a shadow, but it might also be a symbol for his inner animal instincts, since Simon is devoured by a hatred for his father he cannot control. Another interpretation is that the shot eroticizes the black body by showing Simon shirtless, with his prominent muscles visible. This shot nonetheless seems to put Simon in the role of the victim, and the viewer tends to feel sympathy for him, while Anthony behaves as an overprotective brother, thereby hurting his sister.

Just as in the novel, the series then uses a flashback from Simon's youth, corresponding to the passage analysed from the novel. After hearing Anthony's words about family, Simon remembers his youth and the camera shifts to a young boy aged four:

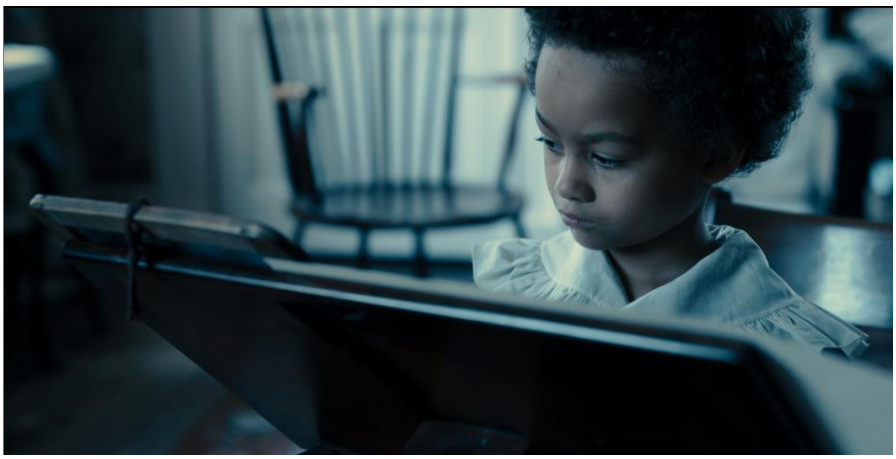

Figure 15. Simon as a child. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Shock and Delight" 00:14:35)

The series here combines two dissimilar shots: in the previous shot, Simon's face was standing in the dark due to a back light, while in this shot, a fill light – light shining from the side which is used to control the density of shadows (Ryan and Lenos 95, 271) – illuminates the left side of Simon's face and creates shadows on the other side. If both stills are put side by side, it is as if adult Simon was looking down on young Simon, and the transition reinforces and helps to understand the emotions that Simon feels. Even though adult Simon is hidden by a shadow, one can still discern pity and anger on his face. However, the shadow entirely covers him, as if he was devoured by it. This shadow also looks menacing and may be interpreted as the shadow of his father. On the other hand, young Simon still stands in the light, even if a shadow falls on the right-hand side of his back, covering a part of his face. This reinforces the idea that the shadow is that of Simon's father, who figuratively casts a shadow over the life of his son. In the next shot, the viewer indeed discovers that the Duke stands behind young Simon on his left-hand side.

In this scene, the Duke of Hastings complains about the fact that Simon has not spoken a word yet. The nurse defends him by saying that he is good in his letters as he can write out the alphabet perfectly, but the Duke is not pleased and he takes a hairbrush to hit Simon:

> SIMON. No. […] D-- D-- D-- D-- Do… n-- n-- n-- not…
> DUKE OF HASTINGS. What is he doing? He's an imbecile. […] He is an idiot! My God! Do you know how precarious of a situation we are in, boy? We have been granted this line. The monarchy itself has declared it. But it will only remain ours so long as we remain extraordinary. The Hastings name cannot land in the quivering hands of a half-wit! Get him out of my sight. This boy is dead to me. ("Shock and Delight" 00:14:48-00:15:53)

Simon speaks for the first time and has difficulties expressing himself in front of the Duke. This scene is crucial because, as in the novel, it leads Simon to feel a deep hatred for his father and to live his life in the exact opposite way to what his father wanted. Before this flashback, Anthony claims that Simon can understand that "family must come before all else". After this scene, the viewer perceives that Simon cannot understand this because, according to his father, title comes before all else. When Simon's father realizes that his son cannot speak intelligibly and concludes that he is "an imbecile", he rejects him to protect the Hastings name. Just as in the novel, there is a contrast between Simon's and Daphne's backgrounds. While Daphne has brothers ready to fight for her sake, Simon was rejected by his father and only knew violence.

In both cases, family is represented either as cheerful and supportive, or as something causing pain and grief. However, the effect is different in the series. Van Dusen's *Bridgerton* contrasts Daphne's and Simon's families even more starkly. In the series, Anthony assumes the role of the protective brother and, even if he acts in a conservative way, he tries to prevent his sister from being courted by whom he considers to be a rake. Moreover, Simon's father declares Simon dead to him and the contrast between Anthony placing his family first and the Duke throwing out his son for not being perfect emphasizes the importance both characters grant to family.

4.2. The Power of Love: Defying Societal Pressure

In *The Duke and I*, society puts people under pressure. The ton expects people to conform to the norm and behave according to supposedly universally acknowledged rules. Characters in the novel are consequently always prey to scandals, and sometimes harassment. This is the case of Simon and Daphne. In chapter 5, Daphne and Simon are dancing together. They discuss their situation: Daphne wants to marry but she does not find a suitable match because men see her as a good friend. Simon, on the other hand, vows never to marry, but he is bothered by ambitious mothers trying to marry off their daughters:

> They were both trapped, Simon realized. Trapped by their society's conventions and expectations. And that's when an idea popped into his mind. […] 'Here is my plan,' Simon continued, his voice low and intense. 'We shall pretend to have developed a tendre for each other. I won't have quite so many debutantes thrown in my direction because it will be perceived that I am no longer available.' […] 'Well, then, what do I gain?' 'For one thing, your mother will stop dragging you from man to man if she thinks you have secured my interest.' […] 'Secondly,' he continued, 'men are always more interested in a woman if they think other men are interested.' 'Meaning?' 'Meaning, […] if all the world thinks I intend to make you my duchess, all of those men who see you as nothing more than an affable friend will begin to view you in a new light.' (84-88)

As Simon and Daphne feel "trapped by society's conventions", he has an idea that might release them from societal pressure. Together, they come up with a plan: they will dupe society by faking an attachment. This passage illustrates the power society has on people. Simon and

Daphne feel as if they have no other choice but to feign an interest in each other to get out of their situation. However, they end up precisely in the situation that they wanted to avoid. At the beginning, their ruse indeed proves to be efficient and unfolds as planned, but if Simon and Daphne can trick society, they come to be trapped by something with much more power: love. Simon and Daphne's plan introduces the theme of love, which will be discussed later in this dissertation. As will be argued, love seems to have great power in the novel. The novel's blurb even states that "love ignores every rule". Love is here personified, and presented as controlling people and ignoring every rule, implying society's conventions too. Simon and Daphne's pact is therefore ironic because Simon's aim is not to have to marry but this pact is what leads him to marry Daphne, whereas Daphne's purpose is to have a horde of suitors at her door so that she can pick one but when she is courted by many suitors, she only wants to marry Simon.

In the series, characters are under societal pressure too. Just as in the novel, Daphne and Simon decide to fake a courtship because they feel "trapped" by society's conventions. The idea of being trapped, which is blurted out by Simon, recurs in the TV show through various motifs such as the grid pattern during Anthony and Simon's fight in the episode "Shock and Delight", as discussed earlier. Daphne and Simon also illustrate the theme of societal pressure in the garden at the Vauxhall ball. Daphne has a fight with Nigel Berbrooke, the man she is supposed to marry, and, as he tries to compromise her by kissing her, she hits him in the face. Simon witnesses the scene and comes to help her. She admits that she has no choice but to marry Berbrooke as she has no other suitor. She says that, unlike Simon, she cannot "simply declare [she] does not wish to marry" ("Diamond of the First Water" 50:32). Moreover, Lady Whistledown is in the process of destroying her reputation by writing about her in her scandal sheet. Simon is also upset by Lady Whistledown, who wrote about his vow never to marry and challenged ambitious mothers to "claim [him] as their prize" ("Diamond of the First Water" 50:49). Simon is objectified; Lady Whistledown compares him to a trophy that young women may win at the end of the social season. However, Simon has an idea to trick Lady Whistledown, which echoes his plan in the novel:

> SIMON. Perhaps there is an answer… to our collective Lady Whistledown issue. We could pretend to form an attachment. With you on my arm, the world will believe I've finally found my duchess. Every presumptuous mother in town will leave me alone, and every suitor will be looking at you. You must know men are always interested in a woman when they believe another, particularly a duke, to be interested as well.

DAPHNE. You presume Lady Whistledown--

SIMON. I presume she'll deem us to be what we are. Me, unavailable. You… desirable. ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:51:15-00:52:26)

As in the novel, Simon and Daphne decide to form a fake attachment to release themselves from society's pressure. However, if Simon wants to avoid ambitious mothers as in *The Duke and I*, Daphne's role is slightly different. At the beginning of the series, Daphne has a lot of suitors, after being called "flawless" by the Queen ("Diamond of the First Water" 6:49). However, Anthony acts as an overprotective brother and he scares all of Daphne's suitors away. Her plan with Simon is supposed to help her have a horde of men back on her porch and find a suitable match. In this passage, it is also clear that Lady Whistledown represents normative society and especially its pressure on the characters. As will be discussed later in the dissertation, she has the power to destroy Simon's and Daphne's reputations by writing about them in a scandal sheet, when they do not follow conventions. While in the novel Daphne and Simon discuss how trapped they are by society's conventions, they complain in the series about their "Lady Whistledown issue". Social pressure is here embodied in Lady Whistledown.

Moreover, it is significant in the series that Simon and Daphne develop their plan in a garden at Vauxhall. In her book *Bridgerton's England*, historian Antonia Hicks describes that the set is actually located in the Stowe Landscape Garden in Buckingham, but the Vauxhall Gardens were recreated for the series at Stowe (23). The choice of this setting is not coincidental. Hicks claims that "[t]he climax to the opening episode of *Bridgerton* is set in London's famous Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens. It had been the place for reverie since the 1660s […] [W]ith five acres of gardens, there was the opportunity for romantic walks away from society's prying eyes" (22). In Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, as in the novel, gardens indeed seem to act as a symbol of freedom, a place hidden from society. When the characters are in a garden, they are far from people's eyes and they are able to obey their desires. However, despite the sense of seclusion that allows for the expression of desires, gardens are man-made spaces and are therefore a product of civilization. As Michael David Waters claims in his essay "The Garden in Victorian Literature", "gardens could properly be regarded as special cases [of natural spaces], since they are assemblages of plants and trees, and as their designs are imposed rather than naturally occurring" (175). This applies to the gardens in *Bridgerton* as these are cultivated as well, just as society shapes people with its conventions. As Daphne and Simon are in the garden at Vauxhall, the latter explains to her how the plan to trick Lady Whistledown might work:

Figure 16. Simon developing his ruse in the garden. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:51:22)

A medium shot is used to capture both Simon's speech and body language, as well as his surroundings. Simon is placed on the left side of the image, while the right side features a large negative space; that is, as Deguzman explains, the space surrounding the subject in focus ("Composition"). Simon stands in focus and his superiority is asserted by his position in the foreground of the screen. The viewer can also see on his face his interest for the plan. Around him, the negative space features the garden which is, in this scene, not well organized as it would be in a French garden, for example. Nature has kept its wilderness, it appears untamed and, just as nature grows the way it wants, so Simon and Daphne decide to reassert themselves over society's control.

In the next scene, film techniques are used to show that the ruse might be as successful as it is dangerous for both characters. As Simon finishes explaining his plan to Daphne, the camera transitions to them entering the dancefloor as they hold hands, while people are looking at them. The camera then captures a crowd shot with two people standing out among the crowd:

Figure 17. People looking at Daphne and Simon. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:51:35)

On the man's face, a certain interest is perceptible, while the woman looks pompous and unhappy. Even though the other people in the background are not clearly visible because of the tilt-shift focus, they all seem to be turned towards Daphne and Simon and are interested by their entry together. The viewer realizes that the facial expressions of the man and the woman in the foreground are representative of those of the crowd in the background: men desire Daphne as she steps onto the dancefloor with Simon, and women are bitter because Daphne has caught the attention of the Duke, which means that he is no longer available. This shows that Daphne and Simon's plan is working. Just as Simon predicted, all the men see Daphne as a desirable lady and every woman knows that Simon is no longer a "prize" that they might win.

If Simon and Daphne's plan seems to work, the next scene allows the viewer to think that their fake attachment might become real. As Simon and Daphne prepare to dance, he tells her: "[s]tare into my eyes. Here. Closer. If this is to work, we must appear madly in love" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:52:46-00:52:58). Simon uses the word "appear"; however, as they start dancing, the viewer understands that simply "appearing" will be complicated. The fake couple is featured through a medium shot, which captures the proximity between Daphne and Simon and focuses on the interaction between them. Both characters seem to be attracted to each other:

Figure 18. Daphne and Simon dancing together. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:53:22)

Daphne looks right into Simon's eyes, as part of their plan, but the camera offers a profile shot. Daphne is facing Simon and the shot features them very close to each other. The fact that part of their faces is hidden, and the use of a hard light to create shadows on their faces, may indicate that even if the characters are pretending to fake an attachment, they might be hiding deeper feelings or intentions. As video producer David Goodman argues in his article "Cinematography Techniques": "[a] dual profile can be a way of joining characters

together […] But when it comes to simple, dramatic flattening, profile framing can be used to great effect to veil the identities and emotions of your onscreen subjects". The profile shot indeed creates mystery around the character's feelings. Moreover, the entire background is blurred, giving the impression that the characters are lost in their dance and that everything that happens around them is unimportant. The viewer can also distinguish exploding fireworks in the background, which may represent the characters' outburst of passion. This idea is reinforced by the intradiegetic music "We Could Form an Attachment" by Bowers playing in the background which evokes passion and longing through the use of violin and drum beats ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:51:23-00:54:24). Just as in the novel – based on the filming techniques and the expectations that come with the romance genre – it becomes clear that Simon and Daphne's plan might not unfold as they think. They are able to trick Lady Whistledown, whose voice is heard at the end of Simon and Daphne's dance as she speaks about their union in her chronicle ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:53:47-00:54:28); however, they might not be able to trick love itself.

4.3. Love and Desire against Hatred and Manipulation

In the novel as in the TV show, love can be associated with strong sexual desire, or be bound to its opposite: hatred. As is argued in what follows, love and desire are also symbolized by the garden, and are explored via feelings such as need, which sometimes lead to manipulation.

First, there is often a tension between love and one's personal need, and the characters have to make a choice: either they choose to satisfy their own desires, or they decide to listen to their love. In chapter 9, Simon and Daphne start to maintain a sense of distance because their plan is successful and it is time for Daphne to find a suitable match. At Lady Trowbridge's ball, however, even if Daphne is surrounded by suitors, she only thinks of Simon. She is relieved when she sees that he has come, allegedly because he was bored (152). They talk, come to speak of Simon's father, and he gets upset. Daphne suggests going to the terrace to get some fresh air. Then, an electric tension grows between Daphne and Simon; she looks at the garden and invites him to follow her:

> Daphne felt something wild and wicked take hold. 'Let's walk in the garden,' she said softly […] And she thought—what if she kissed him? What if she pulled him into the garden and tilted her head up and felt his lips touch hers? Would he realize how much she loved him? How much he could grow to love her? And

> maybe—just maybe he'd realize how happy she made him. Then maybe he'd stop talking about how determined he was to avoid marriage. […] [Simon speaking] 'Don't do this, Daphne.' (161-63)

Daphne asks herself how much Simon can "grow to love her". The verb "to grow" is metaphorically used to refer to the changing nature of love, and Daphne hopes Simon's love can grow like a flower or a plant would. This expression forms an association between the wilderness of the garden – the plants in a garden grow – and the desire that both characters begin to feel. Daphne also asks herself if, by kissing Simon, he would realize "how much she loved him". The novel speaks about love, but Daphne exploits Simon's decency as she pulls him into the garden and kisses him. Just after she feels something changing within her, she indeed forces Simon to follow her deeper into the garden:

> The desperation in Simon's voice told her everything she needed to know. He wanted her. He desired her. He was mad for her. […] "I'm going for a walk in the garden," she announced. "You may come if you wish." As she walked away – slowly, so that he might catch up with her – she heard him mutter a heartfelt curse, then she heard his footsteps shortening the distance between them. […] "For the love of God, woman, will you listen to me?" His hand closed hard around her wrist, whirling her around. […] She smiled the smile of a woman who knows she is wanted. "Then leave." "You know I can't. I can't leave you out in the garden unprotected. Someone could try to take advantage of you." […] And so, although she knew it was not his intention, she let herself be drawn to him, slowly moving closer until they were but a foot apart. Simon's breathing grew shallow. "Don't do this, Daphne." (162-63)

Simon tries to stop Daphne and follows her because it is not safe for her to be alone. However, he knows that he cannot control his desire for her and Daphne knows it too. She walks slowly so that he can catch up with her, and when he reaches her, she smiles victoriously because she knows Simon desires her and is about to give in. It could therefore be argued that Daphne manipulates him. She denies him the choice never to marry in order to fulfil her own wish to marry him; this does not fit the definition of love. Earlier in the novel, Daphne could seem to love Simon as she thinks in chapter 6 that "she'd be a fool if she didn't fall in love with him"

(102). However, her wish to marry Simon leads her to be selfish and flout Simon's own wishes. Daphne's own desire seems to prevail over love in this passage.

Daphne and Simon also seem to lose themselves in the garden, leading Daphne to experience a sudden change. This moment is essential in the story because at this point, Daphne's and Simon's lives change radically as Daphne contemplates her future. Just as Daphne realizes she is alone with Simon outside, she is said to feel "something wild and wicked take hold" (161). This "wild and wicked" thing can be interpreted in different ways. It is possible that Daphne decides that she has reached a moment in her life when she has to find a husband, and she sees an opportunity to become Simon's wife if she kisses him. The "something wild and wicked" might be power growing in her, as she takes the reins of her own life. The growing power may also be interpreted differently, as a power bestowed by a force originally outside of Daphne, a force that bewitches her. This idea finds support in the setting of the garden. John R. Knott, in an essay about the garden in Milton's poems, discusses the use of the term "wilderness" to refer to nature. He claims that before the nineteenth century, people used to see wilderness as desert, but "it was [also] imagined as […] a disorderly place where we can easily lose our way and are likely to be threatened by wild beasts, outlaws, or savages, even demons" (70). Natural places have often been associated with enchantment, places where demons can play with humans' souls (think of the forest in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). In *The Duke and I*, it is even mentioned that: "in Lady Trowbridge's garden, there were trees and flowers, shrubs and hedges – dark corners where a couple could lose themselves" (161). It is possible that Daphne, in the garden, is charmed by something wild that she cannot control, leading her to metaphorically lose herself and to abandon her values for a kiss.

The fact that Daphne is said to be bewitched by "something wild and wicked" also raises the question of responsibility. The novel indeed seems to deny, or downplay, Daphne's guilt in seducing Simon. After kissing the latter, Daphne does attempt to take some responsibility for her actions: when Anthony discovers them together and starts fighting Simon a few pages later, she tries to tell Anthony that she initiated the kiss: "'In case no one recalls, I'm the one who—' She stopped in mid-sentence. There was no point in speaking. Neither man was listening to her" (170-71). The novel does not depict her saying that she is responsible for what happened. The society of which Daphne and Simon are part heavily frowns upon affectionate gestures between unmarried people, and a woman's reputation can be "destroyed by a single kiss" (164), as Lady Whistledown proclaims in her chronicle. In the novel, characters also repeatedly refer to the fact that Daphne is soon to be considered a spinster. If she becomes one, she will no longer be able to find a husband because she will be considered "too old" by society. Daphne's

urge to find a husband leads her to seduce Simon to have what she wants. As will be discussed in this dissertation, the same happens later in the novel when Daphne rapes Simon. She first feels something powerful take hold, and then, after she abuses Simon, she denies any responsibility for her actions and shifts the blame onto him. Even if Daphne seduces Simon to secure herself a husband, she might be held responsible for manipulating him.

In Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, love and desire are pervasive too. Just as in the novel, a tension exists between love and desire and characters also tend to satisfy their own wishes, sometimes by means of manipulation. In the fourth episode, Daphne goes out on the terrace at Lady Trowbridge's ball because she needs some air after Prince Friedrich, the Queen's nephew, tries to ask for her hand. She sees Simon and feels dizzy. Simon comes to say goodbye because he is leaving London. He asks Daphne if she will be happy and if the prince is the perfect man for her. Daphne becomes angry at him for asking her this and runs into the garden. Simon follows her because it is not safe for her to be alone; he asks her to come back to the party but she does not stop. He takes her by the arm and kisses her. He then moves backwards and apologizes but Daphne kisses him again ("An Affair of Honour" 00:33:59-00:36:31):

Figure 19. Daphne and Simon kissing. Still from *Bridgerton* ("An Affair of Honour" 00:36:55)

Unlike in the novel, the kissing scene between Daphne and Simon is not described with words. However, the sense of urge and manipulation are found in the filming techniques. In figure 19, the characters are standing in the dark. This and the fact that their faces are hidden may entail a sense of immorality, as their motives are concealed. Moreover, the colours of the clothes may reveal the characters' feelings. Daphne always wears white or blue clothes, but at this ball, she wears a black ribbon with a black shawl. The colour black can be associated with power (Olesen). The fact that Daphne's usual purity becomes covered with black spots might suggest that she feels powerful as she is taking control of her life at this crucial moment. Another

possible interpretation is that, as in the novel, "something wild and wicked" takes hold of her and gives her growing power. Black can indeed be associated with "images of death, misfortune, and evil spirits" (Olesen). Moreover, Daphne's glove shows her holding Simon, which can be a sign of her having a hold on him. In any case, Daphne knows the risks that she is taking by walking alone in the garden with Simon. When she discusses the ruse with Simon in the first episode, she already acknowledges that if she is seen alone with two men, she "will be compromised", and she adds: "I suppose if someone were to find me here, it would be one way out of marrying [Berbrooke]" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:50:08-00:50:32). Thus, in Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, the notion of manipulation is more implicit. Daphne's behaviour can be interpreted as manipulative through the film techniques as she does not explicitly say at this stage that she wants Simon to follow her so that she can kiss him. She only confesses to this in episode 5 when Simon admits his feelings for her and she tells him: "Why do you think I went into that garden?" ("The Duke and I" 00:52:08-00:52:23). Just as in the novel, Daphne seems to satisfy her own desire to marry Simon, as she is aware that he would have to marry her if they were to be seen alone in the garden.

If Daphne seems to deliberately lure Simon into the garden in both versions, Daphne nevertheless takes responsibility for her actions in Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*. Before the kissing scene, Daphne and Simon argue about Daphne's decision to marry the Prince. Daphne becomes angry and says: "How dare you question my choices? They are my choices to make, not yours" ("An Affair of Honour" 00:35:05-00:35:13). Daphne is aware that she has to make choices and insists that no one can question them. In addition, when Anthony brings Daphne home after the kiss, he begins reassuring her:

> ANTHONY. I want you to know I am not angry with you. I do not blame you for what transpired.
> DAPHNE. Do not treat me like a child. I did this.
> ANTHONY. [Simon] took advantage of you.
> DAPHNE. No less than I took liberties with him. […] You think that just because I am a woman, I am incapable of making my own choices? Is that it, brother? Do you even care that Simon has dishonoured me, as you say, or is it your own male pride that you seek to satisfy? ("An Affair of Honour" 00:43:27-00:43:40)

Daphne acknowledges her responsibilities in taking liberties with Simon. She appears as an assertive female protagonist and confronts her brother who once again acts both as an

overprotective brother and as the conservative head of the family. She questions Anthony's behaviour as a male chauvinist, which echoes his previous similar representation on the boxing ring when fighting Simon. Anthony was ready to marry off his sister to a man she did not love and now, he is ready to kill a man who, according to him, dishonoured the family, even if he is the one that Daphne wants to marry. Daphne's behaviour seems at odds with the Regency society's morals, since, as Catherine Curzon explains in her book *Inside the World of Bridgerton,* "[t]hough a young lady might well have ambitions beyond marriage, it wasn't considered proper for her to voice them, let alone pursue them. She needn't trouble her pretty head with ideas of a career or any of that nonsense". However, Van Dusen's choice is understandable as it makes Daphne much more likeable and recognizable for twenty-first century viewers. It also helps to create a character who is not afraid to bear the consequences of her own actions and who takes her future into her own hands. Just as in the novel, Daphne is afraid to become a spinster and knows that she has to find a husband before she becomes too old. In a previous episode, she complains about the fact that Lady Whistledown has declared her "ineligible" ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:31:52) and confides her worries to Anthony:

> DAPHNE. And what of my duty? You have no idea what it is to be a woman… what it might feel like to have one's entire life reduced to a single moment. This is all I have been raised for. This… is all I am. I have no other value. If I am unable to find a husband, I shall be worthless. ("Diamond of the First Water" 00:43:27-00:43:40)

Society's pressure can again be said to influence Daphne. She is aware that her duty is to find a suitable husband, and that if she does not, she will end up a spinster her whole life. She tells her brother that her entire life can be reduced to a single moment, and this is what happens during the kissing scene: either Simon marries her and she will be valuable, or he refuses and thereby destroys her life, leaving her with a poor reputation.

If, in the previous passages, society's pressure and Daphne's own desire prevail over love, sexual desire seems strong too in the novel. Daphne's plan to seduce Simon works. She leads him into a dark corner in the garden and they start kissing:

> Despite his composed demeanor, despite all of his promises to Anthony, he burned for her. When he saw her across a crowded room, his skin grew hot, and when he saw her in his dreams, he went up in flames. […] And so kissing her

> became a matter of self-preservation. It was simple. If he did not kiss her now, if he did not consume her, he would die. […] When his lips finally covered hers, he was not gentle. He was not cruel, but the pulse of his blood was too ragged, too urgent, and his kiss was that of a starving lover, not that of a gentle suitor. (165-66)

This passage uses several metaphors to describe Simon's sexual desire. First, Simon is said to "burn" for Daphne, meaning that he deeply desires her. Then, it is said that Simon's skin "grows hot" and that when he thinks about her, he "goes up in flames". The use of verbs like "growing" or "going up" can refer to him getting an erection. The metaphors with words such as "hot" and "flames" might also refer to ejaculation, as he reaches sexual climax. The metaphor of Simon being consumed by a fire can mirror his desire to "consume" Daphne lest he himself be consumed by his desire. When he is finally able to do so, Simon's desire becomes even more violent. The pulse of his blood is said to be uneven, and his kiss is that of a starving lover. Sexual desire is here destructive, causing Simon to feel pain as his desire is associated with a ragged pulse and starvation. When Simon speaks about "self-preservation", he might be seen as selfish just like Daphne. Simon is indeed aware of what happens to women who are compromised by a man before being married. Simon has no intention to marry Daphne and yet, he kisses her as a matter of "self-preservation". Simon seems to care for Daphne, as he tries to preserve her at the beginning of the passage, knowing that he will never marry her. There is nevertheless a tension between his feelings and his desire for her, which becomes too strong so that he kisses her and disregards the possible consequences. Desire can be powerful and can burn someone from the inside, and it seems to be dangerous as it becomes uncontrollable.

As shown in the above analysis, the novel features metaphors for Simon's sexual desire. In the series, these metaphors are visually transcoded onto the screen. The way both characters frantically hold and kiss each other, pressing their bodies against each other's, suggests the notion of need:

Figure 20. Daphne and Simon in the garden. Still from Bridgerton ("An Affair of Honour" 00:36:41)

Simon here grabs hold of Daphne's buttocks; the way he holds her and makes her dress ride up translates his consuming desire for her. She, for her part, arches her back, which indicates that she is giving in to Simon. Moreover, Simon usually wears black clothes, involving a sense of darkness, and entailing secrecy for his dark past and the way he leads his life, driven by his hatred for his father. However, in the kissing scene, Simon wears red. Red is the colour associated with sexuality and it signifies deep passion (Olesen), which suggests that he gives himself in to passion and follows his desire for Daphne. In the background of figure 20, the viewer can also distinguish wisteria. This flower recurs in the TV show and is associated either with family or passion. As already discussed in the setting part, the wisteria is a flower linked to the Bridgertons. However, this flower can also be associated with strong desire. As Gaumond explains, the wisteria was used in the nineteenth century as a symbol of "overwhelming desire and passion. […] In particular, the Wisteria was considered to say 'I cling to you' as it would cling to the branches of other trees". The presence of this symbol is essential because Daphne and Simon cling to each other when they kiss. This flower reinforces the idea of overwhelming desire, already described in the novel. However, the novel and the TV show differ in one important respect when it comes to this kiss; in Quinn's *The Duke and I*, Daphne initiates the kiss while in the TV show, Simon kisses Daphne first. This makes the TV show this time more conservative than the novel.

As already discussed in the previous section, the garden offers a moment of freedom for its visitors. This is also true for Daphne and Simon during the kiss scene in *The Duke and I*. However, both characters seem this time to take too many liberties and they have to face the consequences of their actions. Anthony discovers the kiss and, as the head of the family, he tries

to restore order. He asks Simon to marry Daphne, but Simon refuses. As both men start to fight, Daphne falls into a wild bush:

> [Anthony and Simon] suddenly rolled over in a quick flipping motion, clipping Daphne in the knees and sending her sprawling into the hedge. […] While Anthony stood by helpless, Simon reached into the tangled bramble of the hedge […] 'I can't get you completely loose,' he said. 'Your dress will tear.' She nodded, the movement jerky. 'I don't care,' she gasped. 'It's already ruined.' (168-69)

Daphne's fall into the hedge might be interpreted as her "fall" as a woman. In the nineteenth century, women were expected to remain chaste until marriage, and those who gave in to sexual activities were called "fallen" ("A History of the Fallen Woman"). In the novel, if people had word of the kiss, "the future would have been bleak [for Daphne]. No family would have wanted her to marry their son and no man would have considered her a suitable bride" (Curzon). Moreover, the bush might be interpreted as a symbol of society. Society forbids women from taking too many liberties and, as Daphne kisses Simon, she commits a sin. As a result, Daphne comes back under society's control and is punished for her loss of chastity. In the end, Simon tries to get Daphne out of the hedge, but he cannot get her "completely loose". Daphne, as a woman, cannot escape from society's conventions. Her dress begins to tear and she replies that "[i]t's already ruined". Here, Daphne speaks about her dress, but she might also imply that her reputation is ruined. As for Simon, as will be developed in the last paragraphs of this section, he is punished by society too as Anthony tries to make up for Daphne and Simon's sin by asking the latter to marry Daphne. This is a sign that even if the garden provides a period of respite, society is not that far away and reminds people of the consequences of their acts.

In the TV show, Daphne and Simon are also allowed to kiss because they are in a garden, but the garden is not that separated from society. As can be observed in figure 20, the garden features trimmed arched bushes forming a maze. The maze setting can be a sign that Daphne and Simon are losing their ways in this garden, just as in the novel. In her article "The Garden and the Scene of Power", Laura Verdi quotes from Santarcangeli's *Il Libro dei Labirinti* that already in the antiquity, both natural and artificial mazes were devised as "tortuous paths on which, without a guide, it was easy to lose one's way" (366). The garden in the TV series seems to be slightly different from the book's. Daphne indeed does not fall into a wild bush, and the metaphor with the fallen woman is not reproduced in Van Dusen's version. Daphne and Simon

are in a maze instead, and the hedges are trimmed and well organized. This might be a sign that society has control over the garden, as it is maintained by people. Daphne and Simon's moment of freedom is therefore dangerous because society's eyes are not so far away. Daphne and Simon will be seen by Cressida Cowper, Daphne's rival, as she says – in a condescending voice and with a triumphant appearance – when Daphne comes back to the ballroom: "Daphne, you look unwell. Did you catch a chill in the garden?" ("An Affair of Honour" 00:38:52-00:38:56). Even if Simon and Daphne are able to surrender to passion in the garden, society is still watching them and at the end of the scene, Cressida's comment leads the viewer to surmise that both characters will have to face the consequences of their actions.

In the novel, if desire seems to be very powerful, sometimes even more than love, another emotion can also take the upper hand: hatred. The opposition between love and hatred is another major theme and the characters repeatedly face choices between them: either they obey their feelings and decide to choose love, or their hatred is too big and it prevails over everything. As mentioned earlier, when Daphne and Simon are kissing, Anthony arrives and discovers them. He becomes angry at Simon and punches him. As Anthony manages to control his anger, he asks Simon to marry Daphne. However, Simon refuses:

> And he was about to do the most dishonorable thing he'd ever done in his life. When Anthony finished with his violence, finished with his fury, and finally demanded that Simon marry his sister, Simon was going to say no. […] 'I can't marry you, Daff.' 'Can't or won't?' Anthony demanded. 'Both.' […] [Anthony speaking] 'I'll see you at dawn.' […] Simon just closed his eye and sighed. By this time tomorrow he'd be dead, because he sure as hell wasn't going to raise a pistol at Anthony, and he rather doubted that Anthony's temper would have cooled enough for him to shoot into the air. And yet—in a bizarre, pathetic sort of way, he would be getting what he'd always wanted out of life. He'd have his final revenge against his father. (171-73)

Even if Simon knows it is "dishonorable" to refuse to marry Daphne, he cannot agree to it; he had rather have "his final revenge against his father" by dying without an heir, with the consequence that the title would go extinct. Anthony even asks Simon if he "can't or won't" marry Daphne and Simon answers "Both". The use of negated "can" and "will" is interesting. These auxiliaries can indeed have different meanings depending on the context of enunciation. Here, "can" might be interpreted as what linguists call a "dynamic modal", which "involves

ascribing an ability or capacity to the subject participant of a clause" (Van linden 12). This (in)ability can be "participant-inherent", meaning that the ability comes from the agent, or can be "participant-imposed" and therefore "determined by the local circumstances" (Van linden 14). In view of the narrative context in *The Duke and I*, "can't" is rather to be interpreted as a participant-imposed dynamic modal. What Simon actually means when he says that he cannot marry Daphne is, "I can't marry you because the circumstances hamper me from doing this, that is, I made a vow to my father never to marry". Yet, by saying that he "can't" *and* "won't" marry Daphne, Simon adds another meaning to his refusal. The most plausible interpretation of "won't" here is to assign the modal a "deontic" meaning, which "has traditionally been associated with the notions of permission and obligation" (Van linden 16) or which may "express the degree of desirability for an agent to carry out a certain action" (Van linden 17). It is the second definition which is relevant to the situation, with the additional nuance that the "degree of desirability" hinges on Simon's lack of *willingness* to carry out the action. When Simon replies that he "won't" marry Daphne, he means that he finds marriage undesirable as it goes against his convictions. Since Simon refuses to marry Daphne anyway, Anthony says he will see Simon at dawn, meaning that he asks him to fight a duel and Simon agrees to it. He also admits that if he had to marry someone, "it would be you [Daphne]. But […] I could never give you what you want" (175), namely a family. He refuses a chance of happiness with the woman he loves and had rather die in a duel than give up on the vow he made to his father. In *The Duke and I*, love, and especially desire, seems to change people; it has a great power in destroying characters, or in leading them to make their darker side to spring back up. However, even if love can be powerful, Simon's hatred for his father seems to prevail over love.

The power of hatred against that of love is reproduced in Van Dusen's *Bridgerton* too. As in the novel, while Daphne and Simon are kissing, Anthony discovers them. He becomes angry at Simon and punches him:

> ANTHONY. Bastard! You will marry her. […]
> SIMON. I cannot marry her.
> ANTHONY. You have defiled her innocence, and now you refuse her hand? […]
> SIMON. I cannot marry her.
> ANTHONY. Then you leave me no choice. I must demand satisfaction. […]
> SIMON. I understand. I shall see you at dawn.
> DAPHNE. I do not understand. You would rather die than marry me?
> SIMON. I am truly sorry. ("An Affair of Honour" 00:37:08-00:38:12)

Just as in Quinn's version, Simon says that he cannot marry Daphne and repeats it. Negated "can" is here again to be interpreted as a dynamic modal implying an ability (or here, inability) to do something. The modal auxiliary is also participant-imposed as the inability is determined by the local circumstances. What Simon implies is that he cannot marry Daphne because of the vow he made to his father never to marry and have a child. However, the difference here is that Simon does not use the modal auxiliary "won't". Simon keeps repeating that he cannot marry Daphne, but the omission of the deontic modal "won't" leaves Simon's refusal ambiguous since he never says it is undesirable for him to marry Daphne. However, Daphne interprets his refusal in a deontic way. She is shocked by the fact that he had rather die than marry her and she therefore thinks that he cannot marry her because he does not wish to. She interprets his refusal as an indirect speech act, that is, as a polite way of expressing his absence of willingness to marry her, even if he never said he did not want to marry her (see Tunca's "Unscrambling" for a similar interpretation of modality, based on another work). As a result, Anthony asks Simon to fight a duel at dawn and Simon accepts it. Simon is entirely driven by the hatred he bears for his father. As in the novel, he refuses to marry the woman he desires to respect the vow he made never to have a child. Love seems to be powerful and leads characters to obey their desires rather than reason. However, at this stage hatred prevails, leading Simon to disregard his love for Daphne.

4.4. Marriage: Deception, Love and Friendship

As discussed in previous sections, marriage is crucial for women. As Kloester argues, "[m]arriage was a vital issue for upper-class Regency women. It offered the possibility of a degree of freedom and independence that was not generally available to them as single women and could also save them from the stigma of spinsterhood" (76). This is why the plot is set during the London Season, it is an opportune period for Daphne who tries to find a suitable husband. As Kloester further explains, "[i]n upper-class circles the main marriage mart was London during the Season, where the constant round of social events and activities provided ample opportunity to mingle with eligible men and find a suitable partner for an unmarried daughter" (76). Marriage is therefore considered as a purpose in life for young women. In *The Duke and I* and its adaptation, marriage is also a crucial theme, and it is either associated with sacrifice and deception, or with friendship, innocence and love.

In the novel, marriage is sometimes linked to deception. After the kissing scene in the garden, Anthony and Simon prepare to fight a duel. However, right before they shoot, Daphne arrives on a horse and prevents it. She speaks alone with Simon for a moment and asks him to marry her. At first, he refuses, but then, she says:

> '*You have to*.' […] 'I mean that we were seen.' 'By whom?'[, Simon asks.] 'Macclesfield.' Simon relaxed visibly. 'He won't talk.' 'But there were others!' Daphne bit her lip. It wasn't necessarily a lie. There might have been others. In fact, there probably were others. 'Whom?' 'I don't know,' she admitted. 'But I've heard rumblings. By tomorrow it will be all over London.' (188, emphasis in original)

In this passage, Daphne lies about the fact that she and Simon were seen kissing. She really wants to marry Simon; as she confessed to Colin, she "can convince [Simon] to marry [her] before anyone even pulls out a gun" (183). At first, she says that Simon "has to" marry her. She uses a dynamic modal to express the necessity of marriage given the circumstances; they were seen. However, the verbs and adjectives she uses make it clear that she is lying. First, she bits her lip, a sign of unease. Then she says that it is "not necessarily a lie". The use of this adverb suggests that "what has been said […] is not true in all respects or without qualification" ("Not Necessarily"). Then, Daphne adds that there "might have been others". This modal auxiliary might be interpreted as an "epistemic modal", as it involves the speaker's estimation of a situation in terms of likelihood (Van Linden 20). Daphne admits that it is possible that Simon and her were discovered together in the garden, but she has no idea whether someone really saw them or not. Therefore, when she asserts that they were seen and that she has "heard rumblings", she is deceiving Simon. Furthermore, Simon also lies to Daphne in this passage. Simon accepts to marry her to save her reputation, but before they marry, he warns her: "'I can't have children.' There. He'd done it. And it was almost the truth. […] 'How do you know?' she interrupted […] 'I just do.' 'But—' 'I cannot have children,' he repeated cruelly. 'You need to understand that.'" (191-192). Just as when Simon claimed that he could not marry Daphne in the previous section, he again uses twice the dynamic modal "cannot" to let Daphne believe that he is unable to have children – and therefore infertile – while he simply does not desire to have children because of the vow he made to his father. Simon even admits that he deceives Daphne when he says that it is almost the truth.

In Van Dusen's version, Daphne and Simon's marriage is based on deception too, but also on sacrifice. In the series, Anthony and Simon prepare to fight the duel as well. Daphne arrives in the middle of it just as Anthony shoots. She asks a moment alone with Simon and she tells him that they were seen in the garden by Cressida Cowper. In this version, Daphne does not lie. It was argued in the previous section that Cressida implied she saw Daphne in the garden with Simon. This is confirmed in episode 5 when Cressida says to Daphne: "I am almost certain I saw the two of you in the gardens at the Trowbridge ball. No chaperone in sight" ("The Duke and I" 00:13:31-00:13:50). In *Bridgerton*, Simon is the one who deceives the other before marriage. As Daphne tells him that if he does not marry her, she "shall be ruined", Simon replies:

> SIMON. Daphne, I cannot. […] You must know, if we were to wed… I can never give you children. It is your dream to be a mother, is it not? To have a household full of love and laughter, like the one you have known all your life? You deserve nothing less. You deserve everything your heart desires. But I cannot provide it for you. Nor could I ever ask such a sacrifice. ("An Affair of Honor" 00:55:50-00:57:08)

Simon again uses the dynamic modal auxiliary "cannot" expressing inability. By saying "I cannot provide [children] for you", Simon implies that he is not able to have children. Daphne is therefore deceived into thinking that Simon is infertile. This scene allows the viewer to feel much more sympathy for Daphne than in the novel. At this point, marrying Simon is her only chance to save herself from the condition of a spinster, but Simon knows it is Daphne's dream to have a large family. This is why he says he cannot "ask such a sacrifice". What Simon means is that he is unable to ask Daphne to choose him over her dream to have a large family. This might be a sign that Simon cares for her. However, Simon's hatred for his father is stronger than any other feeling, and he refuses to break his vow never to have children.

If marriage is at first built on deception in *The Duke and I*, friendship is featured as the pillar of a happy marriage. Daphne and Simon's relationship is fragile after the duel. They decide to get married, but then, they do not see each other for several days (201). Two days before the wedding, Simon calls upon Daphne at Bridgerton House. Daphne is nervous to see him again and thinks about their relationship:

> She had never felt nervous at seeing Simon before. In fact, that had been possibly the most remarkable aspect of their friendship. […] First and foremost, Simon had been her friend, and Daphne knew that the easy, happy feeling she'd experienced whenever he was near was not something to be taken for granted. She was confident that they would find their way back to that sense of comfort and companionship. (202)

This passage illustrates the fact that Daphne and Simon's relationship is first based on friendship. Friendship seems to be a much quieter feeling than, as discussed above, desire and love. It is here associated with peacefulness, since it is an "easy, happy feeling" which brings a "sense of comfort". Simon feels the same way. When he arrives at Bridgerton House, and gives Daphne her engagement ring, he is released to see this makes her happy: "He hadn't realized how much it meant to him that she liked the ring until that very moment. He hated that he felt so nervous around her when they'd been such easy friends for the past few weeks" (205). Again, friendship is opposed to nervousness. At the end of their discussion, Daphne and Simon laugh and both are glad to see that their bond is "like it used to be" (207). This might allow the reader to imagine that their marriage can be a happy one through friendship. In addition to that, during their wedding, Simon and Daphne have a moment of complicity as they "burst into laughter" (214) when they start kissing. Hyacinth also says that "[i]f they're laughing now, they'll probably be laughing forever" (215). This might be interpreted as a sign that their friendship is restored, and that through companionship, their union can be more than a marriage of convenience; it can become a love marriage too.

In *Bridgerton*, the theme of friendship as the foundation of marriage is even more distinct. At the end of the duel scene, Simon and Daphne decide to get married. However, they are afraid that Cressida might reveal their kiss, and they ask a special licence to the Queen to marry more quickly. Before the latter, they have to prove that the reason why they want to marry so rapidly is that they are in love. Daphne starts confiding her affections for Simon but he stops her:

> DAPHNE. It is only that we love each other so very much. […] You see, Your Majesty, it was love at first sight.
> SIMON. It was not, Your Majesty. […] [R]omance was entirely out of the question for both of us. But in so removing it, we found something far greater. We found friendship. […] To meet a beautiful woman is one thing, but to meet

> your best friend in the most beautiful of women is something entirely apart. And it is my sincere apologies, I must say it took the prince coming along for me to realize I did not want Miss Bridgerton to only be my friend. I wanted her to be my wife. I want her to be my wife. ("The Duke and I" 00:30:17-00:32:19)

Here, two feelings are opposed: love, namely passion, and friendship. Love is associated with prohibition. Since the beginning of the show, characters have to repress their attraction for each other, and as argued above, were punished for giving in to passion after the kiss. However, a feeling "far greater" than love and desire exists; this is friendship. Simon wants to marry Daphne primarily because she is his best friend. At the end of his speech, Simon says that he wanted Daphne to be his wife, and then corrects himself by saying that he wants her to be his wife. Using the present tense instead of the past might be a way for him to assert his current desire to marry Daphne. With the extradiegetic, romantic music playing in the background with notes of violin and piano, the viewer also understands that Simon is not merely putting on an act for the Queen; he reveals what he really feels for Daphne as his voice is full of emotion. Hailey Coles suggests that Simon "loves Daphne because she is his best friend […] This highlights just how important the development of the characters outside of their attraction and desire for each other is in the series and continues long after they are married" (25). It was previously argued in this dissertation that love and desire can be powerful, but here, friendship seems to be the greatest feeling.

4.5. Domestic Violence and Rape

A specific scene from both the novel and the series, in which Daphne may be said to rape Simon, became the subject of controversy. This section will focus on domestic violence, informed consent and the rape scene in *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton*.

In *The Duke and I*, there is a trigger for the rape: Daphne indeed forces herself on Simon after she learns that he is not infertile, but intentionally withdraws. In chapter 15, Daphne talks to Mrs Colson about Clyvedon and the former duke, Simon's father. Mrs Colson explains that the latter was not a loving husband to Simon's mother because people believed she could not give him a child. Then, Mrs Colson says: "It's not always the woman who is barren. Sometimes it's the man's fault, you know. […] Well, I said to [Simon's mother] what my mother said to me. A womb won't quicken without strong, healthy seed" (247). At first, Daphne does not react

to this, but later in the day, Simon and she have sexual intercourse and she realizes Simon ejaculates on the sheets at the edge of the bed:

> Daphne's eyes flew open. She almost gasped. *A womb won't quicken without strong, healthy seed.* Daphne hadn't given a thought to Mrs. Colson's words when the housekeeper had uttered the saying that afternoon. […] Simon opened a sleepy eye. 'What's wrong?' She said nothing, just stared at the wet spot on the other side of the bed. His seed. (259, emphasis in original)

Daphne is shocked because, thanks to Mrs Colson, she finally realizes that Simon ejaculates outside of her because he wants to avoid making her pregnant. Daphne's ignorance can be explained by the fact that Regency society was based on a myth of purity – that is, as Samantha Senfield argues, a "collective mindset that the value of a woman is based on her purity or status of 'virginity'" (273). Senfield further claims that "[i]n purity culture, no one would speak of [sex] at all. In fact, it would be strictly avoided to preserve [a woman's] sexual purity as much as possible. […] Lady Bridgerton knows what is to come on Daphne's wedding day, yet still refuses to explain sex to her" (280-81). In chapter 13, Lady Bridgerton remains vague about what is about to be performed during the marital act. She mentions that the marriage "must be consumed" and the fact that it can be painful, but she never says what Daphne will have to do (210-12). This leads Daphne to remain ignorant about how to conceive a child and to think that Simon is barren. Her mother's and Simon's deception later causes her to become angry when she realizes the truth about how a child is conceived.

In Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, the rape scene is also triggered by Daphne's realization that Simon lied to her about the fact that he could not have children. The passage in which Mrs Colson explains that "[a] womb cannot quicken without strong, healthy seed" has been reproduced in the TV show ("Swish" 00:37:16-00:37:52). Later in the same episode, Daphne and Simon have sexual intercourse and Simon withdraws in a handkerchief. Daphne observes him as he does this and seems to be worried. She then looks at the handkerchief:

Figure 21. Daphne realizing why Simon ejaculates outside of her. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Swish" 00:44:38)

The use of a deep focus – a technique allowing two objects to be in focus at the same time (Ryan and Lenos 66) – allows both Daphne and the handkerchief to stand in focus. The background of the image is slightly blurred so that the viewer first sees Daphne, and then, as they follow her gaze, they discover the handkerchief. The blurred image might be interpreted as Daphne's disorientation as she faces the truth. She is starting to understand how a child is really conceived. She then rushes to her maid, Rose, and asks her to explain how a woman comes to be with child. Rose wants to ask her whether her mother explained it to her, but Daphne says: "My mother told me nothing. Please. No embarrassment. Explain it to me, precisely" ("Swish" 00:44:55-00:45:19). While Rose starts to explain everything to Daphne, her voice fades out and the camera transitions to Daphne and Simon eating together around a table before focusing on Daphne:

Figure 22. Daphne shocked during supper. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Swish" 00:45:31)

Before the camera stops on Daphne, Simon is shown speaking to her but his voice is muffled. This is a way to put the viewer in Daphne's place. She is shocked by the revelation Rose has just made and she feels completely lost. The camera shows her trying to remain stone-faced, but her throat is moving as if to stop herself from crying. Moreover, the medium shot features Daphne at the other end of the table, which creates a sense of distance from Simon. Daphne appears quite small compared to the dish in front of her. This might hint at the fact that she feels small too, as she is embarrassed by her former ignorance, and the fact she has been deceived by her husband and mother.

In *The Duke and I*, the rape passage is much more problematic than in the series; this is partly due to how the events unfold. In the novel, Daphne sees Simon's seed on the bed, but she does not postpone the confrontation. She immediately asks Simon what this is. Seeing that he does not reply, she says that he lied to her. Simon denies this by stating that she knew he could not have children before they married, but Daphne goes on:

> 'But don't try to make this about me,' she continued hotly. 'I'm not the one who lied. You said you can't have children, but the truth is you just *won't* have them.' […] 'I will never have children,' he hissed. '*Never*. Do you understand?' 'No.' He felt rage rising within him, roiling in his stomach, pressing against his skin until he thought he would burst. […] 'My father,' Simon said, desperately fighting for control, 'was not a loving man.' Daphne's eyes held his. '[…] The only thing that mattered to him was blood. Blood and the title […] Simon suddenly smiled. It was a cruel, hard expression, one she'd never seen on his face before. 'But Hastings dies with me,' he said. […] 'After I die, the title becomes extinct. And I for one couldn't be h-happier.' (261-64, emphasis in original)

This passage echoes that of the kiss. Earlier in this dissertation, it was argued that "can't" implies that the agent is not able to do something because of the circumstances, while "won't" refers to the agent's lack of willingness to do something. This distinction is here confirmed by Daphne as she says that there is a difference between both modals. Indeed, Simon uses "will" in a manner similar to the above scene, as the word is also a deontic modal expressing unwillingness (Van Linden 17). Daphne feels deceived by Simon, but he then tries to explain his choice by telling her how his father behaved towards him. Again, this passage confirms what has been mentioned earlier: Simon did not want to marry Daphne because he knew he was

unwilling to give her children, due to the vow he made to his father to have the title die with him.

If the rape passage is much more problematic in the novel, it is also due to the circumstances in which it happens. After their argument, Simon goes to a bar and comes home drunk. Daphne helps him to go to bed and they fall asleep. Then, Daphne wakes up and realizes Simon is aroused:

> He shifted restlessly, and Daphne felt the strangest, most intoxicating surge of power. He was in her control, she realized. He was asleep, and probably still more than a little bit drunk, and she could do whatever she wanted with him. She could *have* whatever she wanted. […] She moved atop him, pressing her hands against his shoulders as she straddled him. […] 'I'm going to—I can't—' His eyes pinned upon her with a strange, pleading sort of look, and he made a feeble attempt to pull away. Daphne bore down on him with all her might. […] She planted her hands underneath him, using all of her strength to hold him against her. She would not lose him this time. She would not lose this chance. […] He saw the expression of pure ecstasy on her face, and then he suddenly realized—she had done this on purpose. She had planned this. Daphne had aroused him in his sleep, taken advantage of him while he was still slightly intoxicated, and held him to her while he poured his seed into her. (285-87, emphasis in original)

In the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the United Kingdom Parliament defines sexual assault as an offence committed by someone who sexually touches another person without the latter's consent (2). Through the technique of free indirect discourse, the reader is given access to Daphne's and Simon's thoughts. Here, Daphne realizes that Simon is drunk and asleep, and that she can take advantage of him. When she admits that she can have whatever she wants from him, the reader understands that she means his seed. However, the sexual assault goes a step further when Daphne moves atop Simon and prevents him from withdrawing by using all her strength, while Simon showed clear signs of distress; indeed, he could not finish his sentences and his stammer seems to spring back up, he looked at Daphne with a pleading look, and he tried to break free. This passage can also be linked to that of the kiss. Again, Daphne feels a surge of power growing in her. She manipulates Simon as she admits that he is under her control. This burst of power comes at a time when Daphne takes control of her life; if she succeeds, she might have the child she wants. She does not want to "lose this chance". She intentionally forces

Simon to ejaculate inside her. At the end of the passage, Simon realizes what happened and acknowledges that he has been assaulted. The event is concluded with Simon's perspective, as he asserts that Daphne "had planned this". In an interview, Quinn claims that "that's probably the only scene that comes close to something of non-consent. But at the time [the book was published], not a single person really said anything" (Flood). Quinn seems to deny the fact that the passage is a sexual assault and justifies this based on the fact that when the book was published, no one paid attention to it. However, I would argue that the scene does not simply "[come] close to [...] non-consent"; it *is* an act perpetrated without the partner's non-consent.

In Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, the marital rape scene is depicted quite differently from the novel, starting with the unfolding of the scene. As already explained, when Daphne learns about Simon's deception, she does not confront him. The result is that when she rapes Simon, Daphne does not know why he lied to her about the fact that he could not have children. However, the notion of power as Daphne imagines that she can have what she wants from Simon has been transcoded differently onto the screen. After the supper scene, Daphne is depicted in bed and Simon joins her. He kisses her but she pretends to be asleep. The next day, Daphne goes about her business in town with the villagers and does not see Simon. At the end of the day, Simon finally finds Daphne in a room and asks her if she is "ready for bed". To this, she answers "I believe I am" (47:31-47:46). The camera then shows the couple as they walk towards the bedroom:

Figure 23. Daphne and Simon going to bed. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Swish" 00:47:59)

Simon and Daphne are filmed crossing a hallway. They pass a window alternating shaft of light and shadow. The use of a fill light coming from the right side of the image creates shadow on the left side of both characters. As Ryan and Lenos argue in another context, "[b]y using a minimal fill light […], the filmmakers augment the feeling of menace and danger in the world

of the two characters" (94). As part of their face is in the shadow, this also evokes a world of duplicity and hidden motives. This idea is reinforced by the colours used for both characters. Daphne's side of the image seems to be covered by a blue filter, and she wears blue as well. This colour was argued to represent purity, and it might here symbolize that Daphne is acting innocent, since she hides her true intentions to Simon. Another interpretation is that blue acquires another meaning; it might be associated with coolness. As colour expert Kate Smith explains, "[o]veruse of blue can feel cold and impersonal, and even unfriendly" ("Blue"). The props used in the scene include Greek marble statues, also associated with conservatism and coolness; Daphne herself appears as a Greek statue with the shawl covering her. In truth, this might hint at the fact that Daphne's emotions are cooled and she is ready to get her revenge for Simon's deception. When both characters enter the bedroom, she immediately flings herself on him and arouses him ("Swish" 00:48:08). Simon, on the other hand, is covered by a red shirt. While red is often a symbol of passion, it can also be associated with violence, aggression, and danger (Smith, "Red"). Moreover, the shirt is adorned with tribal animal motifs which evoke hunting. This might lead the viewer to think of him as a hunter luring Daphne to bed to obey his primitive instincts. However, a more plausible hypothesis is that he is in danger since he is about to become Daphne's prey and be assaulted by her.

In Van Dusen's *Bridgerton*, the circumstances of the rape scene are also different from the novel, so that the scene has been made more viewer-friendly. In the series, Simon is not drunk and asleep. As already mentioned, Daphne arouses Simon when they enter the bedroom. Simon lies on top of Daphne and they start having sex. Then, Daphne pushes Simon and rolls over him to dominate him. After a short time, Simon feels he is about to climax, and says "wait" twice, but the latter stays atop him. As a result, Simon unwillingly ejaculates inside her. At this moment, Daphne looks down on Simon:

Figure 24. Daphne sexually assaulting Simon. Still from *Bridgerton* ("Swish" 00:49:36)

Daphne knows Simon is ready to climax, but she stays on top of him and prevents him from withdrawing. Daphne literally and metaphorically looks down on Simon. First, a low angle shot – a camera angle pointing upward ("Low Angle Shot") – is used to show Daphne's superior position compared to Simon's. The use of a low-angle shot is also a way to empower characters ("Low Angle Shot"); Daphne's dominating position conveys her power. However, Daphne can also be said to look down on Simon as she ignores his wish not to climax inside her. Even if Simon was consenting at the beginning of the act, the end of the scene features an act of non-consent. On the other hand, unlike in the novel, Daphne does not know at this moment the reason why Simon refuses to give her children. The discussion about Simon's vow happens in the next episode as both characters speak of his refusal to give Daphne a child:

> DAPHNE. Why will you not unfold yourself to me? […]
> SIMON. Because I swore a long time ago that I would never sire a child.
> DAPHNE. I do not understand.
> SIMON. My father cared more about the continuation of the Hastings line than anything in the world. More than my mother. More than me. And so I made a vow that his efforts would be in vain, that the line would die with me. ("Oceans Apart" 00:39:01-00:39:57)

By postponing this discussion, Van Dusen makes sure that Daphne is not aware of the vow Simon made to his father never to have a child when she assaults him. She rapes him, but she does not deny him his free will not to have an heir as she does not know this. The fact that Daphne sexually assaulted Simon because she felt betrayed is therefore emphasized, but it should not excuse her crime. This and the fact that Simon was conscious during the scene seem to make it less shocking than in the novel, but the scene still depicts a rape.

While *The Duke and I* features a rape, it could be argued that little is done with the resolution of this crime. Marion Hallet claims that the show "at least has the merit of rekindling discussions about consent and marital rape (it is a pity that neither the series, nor the novel gives its own characters the opportunity to speak about it)" (my translation). Indeed, in the novel, Simon immediately confronts Daphne after the sexual assault, but they do not speak of it for a long time:

> His eyes widened and fixed on hers. 'How could you?' […] 'You knew. You knew th-that that I-I-I—' But she had just curled up in a little ball, her knees

> tucked against her chest, obviously determined not to lose a single drop of him. Simon swore viciously as he yanked himself to his feet. He opened his mouth to pour invective over her, to castigate her for betraying him, for taking advantage of him, but his throat tightened, and his tongue swelled, and he couldn't even begin a word, much less finish one. […] 'Y-y-y-you did this!' 'Did what?' Daphne cried, pulling a sheet around her. 'Simon, stop this. What did I do that was so wrong? You wanted me. You know you wanted me.' 'Th-th-this!' he burst out, pointing at his throat. Then he pointed toward her abdomen. 'Th-th-that.' Then, unable to bear the sight of her any longer, he stormed from the room. (287-289)

This passage highlights the fact that Simon is shocked by the assault. He cannot speak any more and his stammer springs back up as a sign of his trauma. The fact that Simon is unable to speak might also hint at the fact that the novel silences him, just as the sexual assault is silenced. Simon is not allowed to blame Daphne for her crime, which he refers to as "that" and seems to be more preoccupied by the resurgence of his stammer as he holds her responsible for "this". Simon never says out loud what he thought some lines before: that she took advantage of him. In addition, many action verbs are attributed to Simon, most of which denote violence. Simon "yank[s]" to his feet, which is a quite "sudden vigorous" way to stand up ("Yank"). He then tries to "pour invective over" Daphne, which is to be understood as the figurative flood of invective "as in a stream" ("Pour"). Simon also wants to "castigate" Daphne, entailing a sense of "punishment" ("Castigate"), and he "jab[s]" his finger at her; this action refers to an "abrupt blow" ("Jab"). Besides, Simon "burst[s] out", which means that he releases his emotions "suddenly", "after long repression" ("Burst"). Finally, he "storm[s] from" the room, meaning that he rushes out "with violence" ("Storm"). All these verbs clearly illustrate that Simon is boiling with rage; even if he cannot find the words to say that Daphne assaulted him, his anger is reproduced in his actions. Moreover, after the assault, Simon leaves the room and then leaves a note to Daphne saying that he has some business to attend in another estate (289). When he comes back one chapter later because Daphne believes she is with child, they only discuss the fact that she was mistaken about the pregnancy and that she is not expecting. They also talk about Simon's vow and finally decide that he will stop living his life in the shadow of his father. However, they never speak of the assault again.

In the novel, while Simon does not blame Daphne out loud for her crime, the latter refuses to take responsibility for her behaviour. As stands out from the passage above, Daphne

thinks she did nothing wrong as Simon "wanted [her]" (288). The same happens a few pages later when she thinks about the scene again:

> She wasn't ashamed of her actions. She supposed she should be, but she wasn't. She hadn't planned it. […] Daphne wasn't quite sure how it had happened, but one moment she was above him, and the next she'd realized that he wasn't going to withdraw in time, and she'd made certain he *couldn't*... Or maybe— She closed her eyes. Tight. Maybe it had happened the other way. Maybe she *had* taken advantage of more than the moment, maybe she had taken advantage of *him*. She just didn't know. (290-91, emphasis in original)

The novel here allows Daphne to wonder whether she is responsible for her crime. Through free indirect discourse, the narrator depicts Daphne's thoughts from her viewpoint. This is what Paul Simpson calls "category B narrative in Reflector mode" – a third-person narrative involving an omniscient narrator who moves into the mind of a character (51). Moreover, Simpson distinguishes between three shadings: positive (basically deontic, narrative foregrounding a character's desires, opinions or obligations (51)), negative (often epistemic, shows the character's bewilderment, estrangement and uncertainty (53)), and neutral (marked by a complete absence of modality, asserting tone (55)). The passage above can therefore be said to be primarily showing features typical of a positive shading, but then becomes negative. At the beginning, Daphne indeed gives her opinion on what happened with Simon: she is not "ashamed", and she "hadn't planned it". This contrasts with the previous passage in which the narrator describes the scene from Simon's point of view, saying that "[Simon] suddenly realized — Daphne had done this on purpose. She had planned this." (287). However, epistemic expressions and adverbs are then used to depict Daphne's uncertainty. When she says that she is not "quite sure" how the scene happened, or that "she just [doesn't] know", the narrator clearly pictures Daphne's self-doubt; she tries to affirm that she did not force Simon to ejaculate inside her on purpose, but she cannot help thinking about the possibility that this might be the case (see Tunca's "Poetics" for a similar interpretation of viewpoint and modality, based on another work). This is also reinforced by the use of the epistemic adverb "maybe". When Daphne claims that she took "advantage of" Simon, the use of an epistemic adverb highlights her "lack of confidence in the truth of [the] proposition expressed" (Simpson 44). Daphne is, at the end, left uncertain about the unfolding of the events; just as for the kiss, the novel thereby allows her to deny any responsibility for her actions.

In *Bridgerton*, it seems that Daphne's rape is also silenced. This dissertation previously argued that Van Dusen changed Quinn's script to make the scene less shocking to its viewer. As Romano argues, "the creative team [of *Bridgerton*] changed some details to make [the sexual assault scene] less rapey" ("Netflix"); however, she adds that "that just makes it unclear to me whether the creative team realized that the scene they left in the storyline was still non-consensual" ("Netflix"). After the rape, Simon realizes that Daphne prevented him from withdrawing on purpose. They then start to argue, echoing the scene in the novel:

> SIMON. Daphne. [She does not respond] Daphne. Daphne! Wh-Wh-What… What did you do? […] How could you?
> DAPHNE. How could I? How could *I*? You lied to me. […] I trusted you more than anyone in this world, and you took advantage. You seized an opportunity. And so I did the very same.
> SIMON. I told you I cannot give you children.
> DAPHNE. "Cannot" and "will not" are two entirely different things. You chose this for yourself. You chose to lie to me.
> SIMON. I did not lie. I thought you were prepared. I thought you understood how a child came to be.
> DAPHNE. You took my future from me, the one thing I wanted more than anything. You knew. You knew that becoming a mother one day, to have a family of my own one day, you knew that was all I ever wanted. ("Swish" 00:49:40-00:50:38)

This passage first questions the nature of Daphne's act when Simon asks her what she did. However, Daphne does not answer and directly shifts the blame onto Simon. As Romano explains: "the show then focuses on [Daphne's] betrayal and rage […]. It's clearly intended to spell out the intricacies of informed consent, but none of Simon's duplicity justifies the way Daphne pulls his secret — and, to be clear, his semen — out of him" ("*Bridgerton*"). The series indeed seems to emphasize Simon's betrayal, thereby turning a blind eye to Daphne's rape. In this version, she similarly stresses the difference between the modals "cannot" and "will not", the former entailing inability and the latter lack of willingness. Daphne also justifies her act on the basis that she did the same thing as Simon, as he deceived her; but Daphne's lack of awareness about sexual matters "does not justify a moment of nonconsensual sex" (Romano, "*Bridgerton*"). Daphne's crime is also challenged by Lady Whistledown. At the end of the

episode, the latter's voice is heard. She first refers to the scandal involving Marina Thompson, a cousin of the Featheringtons who became pregnant outside of marriage. However, the camera then shows Simon in his bed, and Daphne in another, rolled into a ball as in the novel, while Lady Whistledown says: "Desperate times may call for desperate measures, but I would wager many will think her actions beyond the pale. Perhaps she thought it her only option, or perhaps she knows no shame. But I ask you, can the ends ever justify such wretched means?" ("Swish" 00:53:27-00:53:57). This speech allows the viewer to become part of the gossip; they are appointed as judges of the situation and are left wondering about Daphne's actions. Daphne feels "no shame" and denies any responsibility for her actions by shifting the blame onto Simon, but Lady Whistledown, the figure representing justice, comes to restore order and invites the viewer to question Daphne's crime.

4.6. Happiness over Hatred

Happiness and hatred are recurring themes in the novel; they are also opposed in the last passages of *The Duke and I*. After the rape scene, Simon goes to another estate and Daphne is left alone. As her menstruation is late, she thinks she is pregnant and sends a letter to Simon. The latter comes back to see her, but when he arrives, Daphne has her period. Simon admits that he did not leave Daphne because she took advantage of him, but because his stammer resurfaced and he hated himself for that. Simon again expresses his hatred for his father:

> 'I hate [my father], Daphne. I h-h-h—' She moved her hands to his cheeks and turned his face to hers, forcing him to meet her steady gaze. 'That's all right,' she said. 'It sounds as if he was a horrid man. But you have to let it go.' 'I can't.' 'You *can*. It's all right to have anger, but you can't let that be the ruling factor in your life. […] You think you're getting your revenge, but you're really just letting [your father] control you from the grave. […] At some point you've got to leave him behind and live your own life. You've got to let go of the anger and—' Simon shook his head, and his eyes looked lost and hopeless. 'Don't ask me to do that. […] Why do you think I learned to speak properly? What do you think drove me? It was anger. […]' [Daphne replies,] 'I was shown love,' she whispered. 'I knew nothing but love and devotion when I was growing up. Trust me, it makes everything easier.' (315-17)

In this passage, love and anger are clearly opposed. At the beginning of the passage, Daphne invites Simon to "let [his hatred] go" to which Simon replies he cannot. This is the third time Simon uses this modal in reference to his vow; the first one was when he said he could not marry Daphne, and the second one was the time he refused to have children. However, this dynamic modal acquires a new meaning. While it was used by Simon to deceive Daphne into believing that the inability was due to unwillingness, or was physical, Simon makes it clear that his helplessness is this time emotional. What Simon means is that he is not sure he is emotionally capable to let his anger go. However, Daphne emphasizes that he "*can*". He already broke his vow once as he married her, he is therefore able to prioritize his love for her. Moreover, she does not completely reject hatred; it is normal to feel anger sometimes. Nevertheless, it should not get the upper hand over love and happiness. In this passage, hatred can also be interpreted as the embodiment of Simon's father. When Daphne says Simon's father controls him "from the grave", she accentuates the fact that Simon has been dictated by his anger towards his father for his whole life. Hatred becomes a ghostlike figure ruling Simon as he seems to be possessed by it. When Daphne invites him to "let go of the anger", this might hint at the fact that Simon has to make his mourning and let the ghost rest in peace. Simon at first refuses, but Daphne opposes hatred to love as she exhibits her own situation: love made her progress, as she grew up in a loving family, and this feeling is much more powerful. Simon can decide to be happy if he stops being driven by hatred. This passage is a decisive moment in Daphne and Simon's relationship.

In *The Duke and I*, love eventually prevails over hatred. In the last chapter, Simon admits his love for Daphne. He then says he wants to show her how much he loves her and takes her to their bedroom. They start having sexual intercourse:

> 'I love you,' he said. 'Oh, God, how I love you.' Then he plunged deeper. Daphne's eyes fluttered open as he resumed his rhythm. 'Simon?' she asked, her voice tinged with touch of urgency. 'Are you sure?' They both knew what she meant. Simon nodded. 'I don't want you to do this just for me,' she said. 'It has to be for you, too.' The strangest lump formed in his throat—it was nothing like his stutters, nothing like his stammers. It was, he realized, nothing but love. Tears stabbed at his eyes, and he nodded, utterly unable to speak. He plunged forward, exploding within her. (327)

This passage is meaningful because Simon finally decides to live a happy life. By ejaculating in Daphne, he shows her that his love for her is greater than his hatred for his father. As Emira Benaya Fatharani argues, "[w]hen having sex, Simon no longer pulls himself up when he reaches his climax. […] This proves that he has succeeded in aborting his one last oath, which is not to have children" (247). He is ready to live his life driven by happiness and have children with the woman he loves. Moreover, while desire was often associated to selfishness as characters tended to fulfil their own wishes, love is here about consent and altruism. Daphne makes sure that Simon is ready to give her a child because he wants it, and not just because she does. In addition, love seems to be very powerful. Simon's stammer often comes back when he is angry, but here, he seems to feel a "lump" in his throat, which is nothing like his stammer. This could be a sign that Simon finally overcomes his stammer through love. When he finally ejaculates inside Daphne, this might be interpreted as an outburst of passion, as Simon rids himself of his anger and commits himself to love.

In *Bridgerton*, love is also opposed to hatred, but Simon seems at first to be beyond redemption. After the rape scene, Simon and Daphne's marriage falls apart. In episode 7, they have a discussion about the fact that Simon refuses to have children. Simon explains this is due to the vow he made to his father and Daphne replies:

> DAPHNE. Let me be certain I understand. You will neither have children, nor the happiness we could have together, because you promised your father you would not? […]
> SIMON. It cannot be undone.
> DAPHNE. […] If your hatred for your father outweighs any affection that you might bear towards me then you are right. It cannot be undone. ("Oceans Apart" 00:40:00-00:41:14)

Daphne clearly opposes happiness and hatred. Simon says that his vow "cannot be undone". Just as in the novel, he uses the dynamic modal "cannot" to express his inability, making it clear that he is emotionally unable to break his promise. However, Daphne does not invite him to let it go; instead, she confirms what Simon said. She implicitly asks Simon if his hatred for his father is more powerful than his love for her; if this is the case, the vow indeed "cannot be undone". This might be a sign that Daphne understands how deeply affected Simon is by his anger. She realizes that nothing can heal him of this, not even his love for her, and that Simon is beyond redemption. This is accentuated by the extradiegetic music "Miserable Together,

Happy Apart", a song created by Bowers for the scene; a soft score evoking melancholy and sadness through its slow tempo, as well as the use of violin and piano notes. Daphne also seems to lose hope as she concludes that they should wait until they know if her menstruation arrives to decide how they "are to spend the rest of [their] lives, miserable together or perfectly happy apart" ("Oceans Apart" 00:41:17-00:41:58). This is a reference to what Simon told her at the beginning of the episode; if Daphne is with child, he will comply with "his duty" and support them both, and if she is not, then they shall live apart (13:18-13:41). At the end of the episode, Daphne's menstruation comes, which means that hatred prevails as both characters decide to live separate lives.

Later in the show, Daphne regains hope and invites Simon to let the anger go and choose happiness instead. This unfolds in the last episode. Daphne and Simon have to host a ball and pretend their marriage is fine before they separate. They go on the dancefloor and initiate the dance, but it starts to rain and everyone besides them leave the ball:

> DAPHNE. I know why you made that vow to your father. I found the letters you wrote to him as a child, and I read them.
> SIMON. Daphne—
> DAPHNE. Just because something is not perfect… does not make it any less worthy of love. Your father made you believe otherwise. […] I love all of you. Even the parts that you believe are too dark and too shameful. Every scar. Every flaw. Every imperfection. I love you. You may think you are too damaged and too broken to ever allow yourself to be happy, but you can choose differently, Simon. You can choose to love me as much as I love you. That should not be up to anyone else. That cannot be up to anyone else. It can only be up to you. ("After the Rain" 00:54:37-00:56:21)

Love and hatred are opposed. Daphne at first shows Simon that hatred is destructive. Simon's father was unable to love his son because he despised the fact that Simon could not speak eloquently. His anger for his son's imperfection led him to hate all of his son and to reject him. Daphne, on the contrary, loves Simon and she is therefore able to understand his anger and to accept "[e]very imperfection". Happiness is therefore presented as a choice, and Daphne accentuates the fact that this choice "should not be up to anyone else". Here, "should" might be interpreted as a "deontic modal"; what Daphne means is that no one is granted permission to make the choice between love and hatred in Simon's place, not even his father. She then says

that this “cannot be up to anyone else”, thereby adding a “dynamic meaning”. Daphne makes it clear that no one is able to make the choice in Simon’s place neither; he is the only one who can do it, and the ability is here rather emotional than physical. Simon has a chance of redemption; he can choose to love Daphne, but he has to understand that he is not “too broken” for this first. By leaving Simon alone at the end of the scene, Daphne shows unconditional love. She trusts Simon to take the right decision and gives him some space to decide for himself. It is also significant that the scene takes place on a chequerboard floor. Because of the rain, everyone leaves the ball; only Daphne and Simon stay under it:

Figure 25. Daphne and Simon staying under the rain. Still from *Bridgerton* (“After the Rain” 00:49:36)

The floor pattern is essential because this hints at the fact that Daphne and Simon are playing their marriage. Indeed, during the wedding ceremony, Daphne and Simon stand on a chequerboard floor similar to the one on the still. As Melissa Wiley argues, “[t]he repeated floor pattern seemingly foreshadows their decision to uphold their vows to each other and continue to work on their marriage instead of going their separate ways, as the pair had discussed previously”. The setting might also be a sign that Daphne and Simon are playing their last move. Along the show, Daphne and Simon make choices regarding society’s expectations, personal vows and own desires. Now, they must make an ultimate choice; either they save their marriage and live happily together, or they live separate lives because of their anger. As both characters stand on the chequerboard, they could also be interpreted as pawns in the game society plays. Simon and Daphne’s lives have been ruled by society’s conventions. If they end the game, they will be free from society. Now they stand together, they can also restore order in their marriage, and establish their own rules to be happy. This interpretation is reinforced by the rain. The rain could be said to “wash” the characters of their misunderstandings and difficulties. This becomes a symbol of renewal as this moment is decisive in Daphne and Simon’s marriage. The choice

they will make now is key to how their future together will unfold. There is also a reference to the expressions "every cloud has a silver lining", or "after the storm comes the calm" in the title of the episode "After the Rain". This might symbolize the fact that even though Daphne and Simon faced difficulties, they are still able to learn from them and improve their marriage.

At the end of *Bridgerton*, love seems to prevail over hatred. After the rain scene, Daphne goes to her bedroom. Simon joins her there later:

> SIMON. I do not want to be alone. I know that now. But what I do not know is how to be the man you need me to be… the man you truly deserve. I do not know how to do this. […]
> DAPHNE. I know you do. You stay. You stay, and we get through this… together. If you do this, if we do this, then—
> SIMON. Then nothing else will matter. ("After the Rain" 00:58:08-00:58:51)

Simon here opens up to Daphne. Simon finally admits that he fears loneliness, surely because he has already been rejected by his father. He is also worried because he does not know how to be the man Daphne needs. It might be argued that Simon recognizes the fact that he was driven by his hatred for his father, thereby being the opposite of what his father wanted him to be. He wants to change and become the man Daphne "deserves" instead. Simon therefore expresses his doubts and at the same time seems ready to let the hatred go and live happily. Daphne also seems to have changed; while she put her own desires before Simon's welfare in the previous scenes, she is now listening to him. Daphne was angry and forced Simon to climax inside her, but she is now able to understand his fears and accept his flaws, so that her love becomes genuine and unconditional. When she says that she wants to "get through this", she means that she wants to "reach the end" of their undertaking ("To Go Through") and be happy with Simon. By saying that "nothing else will matter", Simon also illustrates the fact that both characters forgive each other for their previous deceptions and are able to devote themselves to love. This is reinforced by the extradiegetic music "A Grand Finish" ("After the Rain" 00:58:51-01:01:03), a romantic and optimistic score which involves a rhythmic melody with violin, piano and drum beats, allowing the viewer to feel joy and hope. Moreover, in the next scene, Simon accepts to have sexual intercourse with Daphne for the first time after the rape scene and he voluntarily ejaculates inside Daphne. This is a sign that he chooses to give himself a chance of happiness and abandons the vow he made to his father. He finally chooses love over hatred.

5. Conclusion

This dissertation has aimed to contribute to filling in the scholarly gap in the field of adaptation studies on *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton*. This dissertation first engaged in a visual analysis of *Bridgerton*, before entering a thematic analysis of Quinn and Van Dusen's works. The aim was to see how production designers and art directors created the *Bridgerton* world, based on what is mentioned or not in the novel. In the book, the literary world is mainly built by means of descriptions, whereas in a TV show, these descriptions have to be transcoded visually onto the screen; this can be done through production design. First, it was claimed that set location immediately sets the tone for the show by depicting an idealized Regency world. Besides setting, costumes also play an important part in creating the *Bridgerton* world, as they help to shape the personalities of the most prominent families in the show. This effect is reinforced by props and colours as well. At sound level, it was argued that contemporary songs with classical arrangements and classical theme songs contribute to the general mood of the show and deepen the meaning of scenes by using different tempos and melodies. Characterization is also an essential process, and *Bridgerton* successfully adapted the characters from *The Duke and I* for the screen; this is partly due to the choice of actors, and more specifically to Van Dusen's decision to opt for colour-blind casting, as well as his emphasis on subplots and secondary characters. Moreover, the camera shots and production design choices, along with the use of a voice-over help to narrate the story, and effectively replace the narrative techniques used in the novel (such as heterodiegetic narration and zero focalization through the use of free indirect discourse).

Then, the focus on Daphne and Simon has shown how relationships can evolve in a multitude of ways. In order to close-read and close-view scenes from both works, several methods were used. The interpretation of passages from *The Duke and I* and its adaptation was based on content analysis. This allowed to discover how the passages highlight the theme which is discussed on the basis of what characters say or think (see below). Moreover, this dissertation sometimes engaged in stylistic analysis, which is the interpretation of metaphors and word choices, and their connotations. Film analysis was also used to study stills from the show and see how composition, camera work, editing, colours and lighting add meaning to particular scenes. Throughout this study, the close-reading and close-viewing of crises from the novel and the series allowed to showcase six central themes developed around Daphne and Simon's relationship: family, societal pressure, love and desire, marriage, domestic violence and happiness against hatred. Moreover, these themes were usually explored in various ways.

Family was associated with contrasting feelings in both versions. First of all, in the book's opening chapter, family is indeed a symbol of love for Daphne. This contrasts with the prologue showing Simon's background, in which the reader discovers that family is rather linked to violence and hatred. In *Bridgerton*, film analysis revealed that a similar juxtaposing technique is used with the same effect. A scene picturing Simon's youth is placed right after a scene in which he fights with Anthony on a boxing ring. This allows for the depiction of Anthony as a protective brother, which contrasts with Simon's childhood, during which his father rejected him. However, the theme of family was also expanded to duty and society's pressures, as Anthony is shown as sexist and unreasonable when he disregards his sister's wishes. This illustrates that by contemporary standards, Daphne's family is not as perfect as one might think, contrary to what Lady Whistledown lets the viewers think at the beginning of the show. This is also a key moment in Simon's storyline in both works because the viewers understand why Simon does not want to have children or marry, and they have access to more information than Daphne, thereby leading to dramatic irony. This is a narrative technique that creates anticipation and suspense; as Turdimatova Madinakhan Ravshanovna argues, the viewer or reader follows the story "to discover how the character will react when he or she learns the truth of the situation" (334).

The next theme that was examined, societal pressure, was primarily illustrated by the plan Daphne and Simon prepare to dupe the ton. This theme was also discussed at the same time as the theme of love. Through content analysis, it was demonstrated that Daphne and Simon, while they successfully dupe society by devising a plan together, come to be trapped by something with much more power: love. This idea was reinforced by the novel's blurb, stating that "love ignores every rule"; the power of love suggested by this sentence was transcoded visually in *Bridgerton* through a medium profile shot on Daphne and Simon with fireworks in the background symbolizing passion. Moreover, the analysis showed the importance of setting in the TV show: Daphne and Simon indeed develop their plan in a garden, which is a recurring motif throughout the show. When the characters are in a garden, they are far from people's eyes and they are able to obey their desires. The motif of the garden also appears in the discussion of the kiss scene in both Quinn's and Van Dusen's versions.

The opposition of two powers, society and love, intimates how characters face life's opportunities. In the next section, this dissertation claimed that Daphne might have encouraged Simon to kiss her in both versions because she is under societal pressure. This shows how characters respond to the tension between love and their personal needs, and which choices they make. In the case of the kiss scene, Daphne decides to take control of her life and deceives

Simon, thereby putting aside the feelings she might have for him and listening to her own wishes. This love theme was also investigated by way of other subthemes such as responsibility and desire. While the novel seems to deny, or downplay, Daphne's responsibility in seducing Simon by silencing her, the TV show pictures her as an assertive female protagonist who is not afraid to bear the consequences of her own actions. A stylistic analysis also showed that metaphors are used in the novel to depict desire as something destructive and dangerous, while in the adaptation, these metaphors were visually transcoded onto the screen through body language, colour, and the wisteria motif. The stylistic analysis of another passage, and especially the discussion of the modals "cannot" and "won't", also highlighted the fact that Simon's hatred for his father prevails over his feelings for Daphne, as he deceives her and decides not to break the vow he made never to marry. The fact that love is associated with different feelings, which are sometimes even contradictory, clearly demonstrates that Daphne and Simon are complex characters torn between their emotions, personal vows, and expectations.

This is also the case with the theme of marriage, which is linked in *The Duke and I* and *Bridgerton* to deception, but also love and friendship. The dissertation examined how Daphne lies to Simon to force him to marry her, while Simon similarly plays on the diverse meanings of "cannot" to deceive her. However, marriage is also related to friendship, as the latter is described in both works as the best foundation for a happy marriage. This enables the readers and viewers to expect Daphne and Simon to finally forgive and understand each other as friends would, which happens at the end of the story.

Deception was also the basis for the analysis of the theme of domestic violence in Quinn and Van Dusen's works; it is a triggering factor leading to the most problematic scene in the story, the moment when Daphne sexually assaults Simon. It was argued that the way the events are presented in *Bridgerton*, as opposed to *The Duke and I*, make the scene appear less problematic, even though the act depicted remains non-consensual. The rape scene was also approached with the consequences of the action as well as the notion of responsibility. In the novel, words are also used to express trauma while Simon himself is silenced. Words also allow Daphne to deny any responsibility for her actions. In the TV show, the question of responsibility is raised by Lady Whistledown's extradiegetic voice, allowing Daphne to be judged for her actions.

Finally, the end of the novel and the TV show was discussed in light of two opposing themes: happiness and hatred. The discussion first contrasted these two emotions, as Simon has to make a choice between his hatred for his father and his feelings for Daphne. The analysis of lexical connotations and metaphors in the novel and the series indicated that Simon is driven

by hatred but has a chance to live happily if he decides to let his anger go. This dissertation showed that the final sex scene during which Simon ejaculates inside Daphne might be a metaphor for Simon's desire to have children with Daphne and his overcoming his trauma, so that love prevails in the end.

To conclude, the analysis has shown the complexities of adult relationships; moreover, it has been argued that the use of oppositions in both the novel and the TV show helps to grasp the contradictory feelings people can experience while growing up. Lowry claimed that *Bridgerton* "plays a weak hand, turning Julia Quinn's novels about a 19th-century London family into a handsome but tedious snooze". I would rather say that *Bridgerton* went all in and won the pot. The adaptation is indeed full of the plot twists that the reader treasured in *The Duke and I* and manages to explore the main themes in sometimes different, yet still effective ways. Moreover, this study has shown that Daphne and Simon are by no means "shallow characters" (Romano, "Netflix"); their relationship sometimes takes unexpected turns, and depicts real-life problems. Romano claimed that *Bridgerton* "forgets to be interesting" ("Netflix"), I would rather say that *The Duke and I* and its adaptation interestingly provide the readers and viewers with an unforgettable memory.

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