

Adaptation as Revision: Transforming Representations of the Female Life
Experience from Canonical Literature to Contemporary Hollywood Teen
Film

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Abstract

Adaptation as revision is a relatively new idea in adaptation theory. It addresses adaptation as a process of reimagination, whereby filmmakers reinterpret literary texts and re-author them, giving new meanings in contemporary contexts. Many teen film adaptations from the 1990s onwards revise and transform depictions of female life from canonical literature into contemporary teen contexts. They adopt stylistic and narrative tropes of the teen film genre, creating adaptations that are linked to the literature that preceded them but that also function as contemporary teen films. As the 1990s, 2000s and early 2010s encapsulate the third feminist wave, the narratives represented in many literary teen film adaptations of these periods address social and political concerns of third wave feminism. This thesis will explore the stylistic and narrative ways select teen film adaptations from the 1990s onwards reimagine representations of gender politics, female friendships, costumes and makeovers to present third wave feminist narratives. As third wave feminism is full of contradictions in terms of what constitutes empowerment and oppression, this thesis will argue that select literary teen film adaptations represent third wave feminist narratives that simultaneously empower and compromise the freedoms of teen girl figures.

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Paige Tucker 29 September 2020

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Introduction

If contemporary adaptations of literary texts have taught us anything, it is that cinema is just as fixated with adaptation as it has ever been. Since its early years, cinema has depended on the adaptation of short stories, novels and plays for its material (Sinyard 2013, pp. vii–viii). Recent cinematic releases such as Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* (2019) (an adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's novel) show that filmmakers and audiences are still fascinated with the way adapters deal with the written word.

In the early years of cinema, many adaptations showed fidelity to the language, settings, characters, costumes and plots of their source texts. One of the first films adapted from literature was Georges Méliès' *Cinderella* (1899). The film was adapted from Charles Perrault's version of the traditional fairy tale. The adaptation presents Cinderella's transformation, her time at the ball, the fitting of her infamous slipper and her wedding to the prince, following the narrative points of Perrault's tale. The story is faithful to the characters, costumes and plots depicted in Perrault's tale, but the film was made during the silent film years, meaning that the film is without spoken dialogue and subtitles from the original tale. Without dialogue, viewers miss out on important speeches from the original narrative, like the declaration of love between Cinderella and the prince. This is an instance where the film does not show entire fidelity to the original text, as at the time the film was produced, sound technology was not available for use. Georges Méliès's adaptation relies entirely on visualising the narrative. It may be different from the original text, relying on actions, gestures, costumes, scene decoration and editing to tell Cinderella's story, but the narrative visualised still conveys all the essential character and plot events needed to deliver an accurate rendition of the beloved tale.

In the case of adapting texts some hundred years old, filmmakers will often present stories with a contemporary twist to revitalise the narrative. For instance, Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* presents two alternative endings. One ending sees Jo March kiss Professor Bhaer and open their school, as depicted in the original novel. The other shows Jo publishing her novel, negotiating her compensation as a writer, and discussing her choice to leave her main character an unmarried woman. It is also hinted in this ending that Jo has not married. Including this new ending in her adaptation is Gerwig's way of representing the feminist ideologies of contemporary culture. Like contemporary

women, Jo does not need to marry in order to have money or be happy. Gerwig intercuts these ending scenes, making it difficult to distinguish which path Jo really follows. The ending to *Little Women* is open to interpretation, and contemporary viewers get to decide for themselves which path Jo follows.

Some of the most fascinating contemporary adaptations are those that re-interpret canonical literature in a contemporary context. These adaptations contemporise a text's language, settings, characters, costumes and plots so that instead of creating a faithful adaptation that presents versions of the past, narratives are adapted to represent versions of contemporary life. This is not the norm with adaptation, as many adaptations seek to represent versions of the past with the use of period setting and period costume.

Some of these contemporised adaptations transform canonical literature into teen narratives. In her book *Teen film: a critical introduction*, Catherine Driscoll (2011) explores the origins of the teen film. She states that the teen film emerged in the 1950s when the idea of the teenager first emerged (Driscoll 2011, p. 9). In the 1950s, teen films garnered teen audiences who finally had screen content specifically targeted at them¹. In the 1980s, the teen films of John Hughes, such as *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986), firmly established the teen film genre as a popular and lucrative genre that could convey insightful narratives about teenagers coming of age. The teen film genre then saw a boom in production during the 1990s. Over 50 teen films were made during this decade (IMDB 2020). Many were conventional romantic comedies, but there were also dramas, horrors and thrillers. The 1990s is a distinctive decade for the teen film genre, as many canonical literary texts were adapted into teen films. These films offered teen-based versions of canonical literature, where protagonists were transformed into contemporary teenagers. Although only a few 90s teen films were literary adaptations, the literary teen film became its own distinct subset of the genre. A possible reason why teen films and literary adaptations were fused together may have something to do with

¹ *Rock around the Clock* (1956) is an early example of a 50s teen film. It presents rock and rollers making it big in the music industry. It capitalised off the success of the rock and roll genre, as it was inspired by the song of the same name by Bill Haley and His Comets (Driscoll 2011, p. 38). In the 1960s, many teen films presented narratives set at the beach, where adolescent romance was explored. Beach teen films of the 1960s include *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (1961) and *Beach Party* (1963). The genre developed throughout the 1970s, when teen films began to present narratives with explicit sexual connotations. Films like *Grease* (1978) tackled issues surrounding virginity and teen pregnancy.

the individual success of each genre. In the 90s, many period adaptations of canonical literature were released, garnering praise and large audiences. Shakespearean adaptations were prominent, with *Hamlet* (1990), *Othello* (1995), *Titus* (1999), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999), *Twelfth Night* (1996), *Much Ado about Nothing* (1993) and *Richard III* (1995) all being released in cinemas. Jane Austen adaptations were also popular. The BBC produced the TV series *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), and *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Persuasion* (1995) and *Emma* (1996) were adapted into films.

By fusing the highly successful adaptation and teen genres together, 1990s filmmakers created a sub-genre of adaptations that engaged not only lovers of canonical literature but also teen audiences. The first critically successful literary teen film adaptation² was Amy Heckerling's *Clueless* (1995), an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma* (2017). *Clueless* was an immense commercial success. It earned \$77.3 million worldwide and brought in an extra \$26 million in video/DVD rentals (Davis 2006, p. 53). The film's success paved the way for more contemporary adaptations of canonical literature to be made (Davis 2006, p. 53), as filmmakers began to see the potential for further development of the literary teen film. The success of *Clueless* proved that the genre was viable because there was an audience who wanted to see canonical literature retold in a contemporary context. After the release of teen-oriented *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), the genre exploded in 1999. George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* (2003) was adapted into *Drive Me Crazy* (1999) and *She's All That* (1999). Pierre Choderlos de Laclos's *Les liaisons dangereuses* (2008) was adapted into *Cruel Intentions* (1999), Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was adapted into *Never Been Kissed* (1999) and his *The Taming of the Shrew* (2004) was adapted into *10 Things I Hate about You* (1999). The popularity of the genre exceeded the 1990s and ran into the 2000s and 2010s, with films such as *O* (2001), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, *She's The Man* (2006), an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and *Easy A* (2010), an adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (2016), being released in cinemas.

Through adapting narrative and character, literary teen film adaptations tell their own individual stories of love and growing up. As they are representations of contemporary

² *Just One of the Guys* (1985) is an earlier example of the literary teen film, as it presents a girl masquerading as a boy, following the narrative of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

teen life, these films address contemporary social and political issues surrounding sexism, female sexual agency and individual identity. Linda Hutcheon is a prominent figure in adaptation studies. She argues that links between film adaptations and their literary sources are existent, but mainly only observable if the viewer has prior knowledge of the text, as “we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation” (Hutcheon, L 2012, p. 8).

Teen film adaptations of canonical literature incorporate thematic elements from their sources, as well as stylistic and narrative conventions of the teen genre, creating the sub-genre of literary teen film. Although literary adaptation is not considered a film genre by many, it has been theorised that literary adaptations could form a genre because there are conventions and markers that many literary adaptations have. Leitch (2008, p. 106) proposes that literary adaptation is a genre, as it has its own rules, procedures and textual markers that determine the shape the adaptation takes. These include period setting, period music, listing the name of the author of the source text in titles, featuring the adapted text on screen (whether that be a character writing/reading the text or presenting the text in the opening or closing sequence), and using intertitles establishing time and place (Leitch 2008, pp. 111–113). Many of these rules, markers and procedures are evident in literary adaptations, and so it is possible to form a literary adaptation genre. Gerwig’s *Little Women* illustrates how adaptations have markers and rules that establish them as adaptations, as it begins with a shot of Louisa May Alcott’s novel. Autumn de Wilde’s *Emma* (2020) is another contemporary example, presenting the opening line of Jane Austen’s novel at the start of the film. Literary teen film adaptations are also part of the literary adaptation genre if they signal that they are adapted from a previous literary work. *10 Things I Hate about You* signifies that it is an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, as it references William Shakespeare and the characters and settings depicted in his play. *Cruel Intentions* begins with titles saying, “Suggested by the novel, *Les liaisons dangereuses*, by Choderlos de Laclos” (*Cruel Intentions* 1999). *Easy A* announces that it is an adaptation, as the protagonist, Olive, reads *The Scarlet Letter* at school. However, the teen films *She’s All That* and *Clueless* do not announce that they are adaptations. They do, however, tell stories that closely parallel the plots and characters of *Pygmalion* and *Emma*, respectively. With so many

similarities between them and their sources, *She's All That* and *Clueless* should be considered part of the literary teen film sub-genre.

The process of adaptation “always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation” (Hutcheon, L 2012, p. 8) of a literary text. But adaptation is never just the process of creating a new work from a pre-existing work. Film adaptation must modify itself to meet contingencies such as production limitations, budgets, markets and audiences. The fact that adaptation must meet such contingencies demonstrates that as well as being adapted *from* something, adaptation involves adapting *to* something. Film adaptations are adapted *from* literature, meaning that they adapt *from* the characters, costumes and plots depicted in text, but adaptation also involves adapting *to* budgets, audiences and technologies.

As well as adapting to budgets and technologies, literary teen film adaptations often adapt their narratives to reflect the social and political values of the time periods they are representing. In the case of 90s literary teen film adaptations of canonical literature, representations of female life are often drastically changed to reflect 90s third wave feminism. As such, deeply oppressed female figures from canonical literature are often transformed into teenage girls who possess a sense of independence. This helps not only to represent third wave feminist values but to engage contemporary audiences.

To further explore how some literary teen film adaptations are products of third wave feminism, it will be useful to understand the specific values, modes of oppression and ways of activism feminists engaged in during that time. I will now provide a brief examination of third wave feminism, so that I can compare it with its representation in various literary teen adaptations, highlighting any elements that represent third wave feminism.

A brief examination of third wave feminism

In mainstream society, feminism has been categorised in three waves. People began using the word ‘wave’ in 1968 when the *New York Times* published an article by Martha Weinman Lear titled ‘The second feminist wave’ (1968). She explored how feminism had again become an issue, and activists had called it the second feminist wave. The first wave of feminism was retroactively named so that it could be linked to second wave

feminism. The wave metaphor, as used by Lear, gives the impression that feminism ebbs and flows. The term also indicates that feminism is sequential. Like waves, feminism gradually forms peaks for a time, and then regresses, making way for another wave to form. The term also distinguishes different eras, generations and feminist activities. The first wave encompasses 1826–1920, the second wave covers the 1960s–1980s, and the third wave comprises the 1990s–2010s. A fourth wave of feminism has been theorised, but it is not universally acknowledged by feminists. Fourth wave feminism is said to have begun in 2012 as the product of the internet, as Ray (2018, p. 114) states, “digitally mediated transnational feminism is heralding the onset of a fourth wave of the feminist movement”. Fourth wave feminists wield “digital tools of communication” (Ray 2018, p. 115) and organise and promote campaigns with speed to the masses (2018, p. 115). This new way of activism through digital communication has “transformed our interaction capabilities and [has] to some degree overshadowed the traditional means of protest” (Ray 2018, p. 120). Like the first, second and third waves, fourth wave feminism will most likely be recognised by feminists once it has passed.

Whilst the wave metaphor succinctly categorises feminism and feminist activity throughout history, it does have limitations. The metaphor can be reductive, as it gives the impression that each wave of feminism has its own unique agenda. In fact, there is a strong continuity in feminism, as various waves have built upon the work of previous waves and focused on the same issues. Some feminist activities are also omitted from the feminist waves if they do not fit into the strict timeline. The 1930s and 1940s are absent from the wave categories, but these eras saw women determined to enter the work force to support themselves and their families during the Depression years (LeGates 2001, p. 282). Moments like these are individual fragments of feminism that are not paid enough attention by historians, scholars, the media and contemporary feminists.

The third wave of feminism from the 1990s, 2000s and early 2010s is often associated with issues of individual identity rather than political processes and reforms. Fernandes (2010, p. 99) states that “Dominant narratives of third wave feminism tend to focus on three central paradigms—multicultural inclusion, identity politics, and intersectionality”. The third wave of feminism looked to empower the individual by celebrating diversity in race and sexuality. Third wave feminism was also full of contradictions. Some feminists

of this wave sought to re-claim femininity as empowering (Munford 2004, p. 148), yet other feminists of the wave saw femininity as destabilising to female liberation, as makeup and fashion “nod to patriarchy” (Schuster 2017, pp. 649-650). Third wave feminism also re-visited the ideals of past feminist waves and reconsidered how they impacted on women of their time. They re-evaluated the ideals surrounding female sexuality and re-introduced “the ideal of sexual liberation into a feminist discourse that many believe came, by the 1980s, to prioritize gender equality over sexual autonomy and to view sexual desire as problematic” (Snyder-Hall 2010, p. 258).

Popular culture played a significant role in spreading feminist messages (Zeisler 2008, p. 6) and representing feminist ideologies in the 1990s, and is, therefore, part of the makeup of 1990s third wave feminism. Popular culture allowed 90s feminists to present empowered women on screen and in music who supported their own feminist ideals. This will be explored with reference to pop culture feminists, such as the Riot Grrrls, in chapter 1. The prevalence of empowered female figures in 90s pop culture suggests that issues of feminism were alive in the minds of society. However, the feminist messages communicated through pop culture were not entirely political and popular culture did not explicitly encourage political activism. Pop culture encouraged engagement with a type of watered-down feminism that focused on the self, rather than political reforms and public policy.

Third wave feminism in the literary teen film adaptation

Many 90s literary teen film adaptations bear the ideals of third wave feminism. They do so by presenting teen girl figures who are empowered to make their own decisions in life. These empowered teen girl figures value their independence and freedom to express their political and social beliefs; they regard their female friendships as essential to their lives; they have the ability to display their economic value; and they often have fun transforming themselves through feminine activities like makeovers. This mirrors feminist ideologies stressing the importance for young women to find and use their own political voices, to look to their female friends for support rather than to heterosexual romances, to exercise their economic value as they wish and to reclaim the overtly feminine as empowering.

Some teen girl figures are not entirely free to rule their own lives and make their own decisions without outside influence, however. Teen girl figures from select literary teen film adaptations are often shown to be oppressed by patriarchal ideals and capitalist institutions.

The genre of the literary teen film adaptation can covertly oppress young female figures. These films are usually romantic comedies like the texts they are based on (Davis 2006, p. 53), and the romances that are presented are often built upon patriarchal ideals. The narratives of romantic comedies are mostly conservative³, presenting stories where girl meets boy, boy makes bet/agreement behind girl's back to improve or date her, girl and boy fall in love, bets/agreements are revealed, boy and girl break up, boy and girl reconcile (Davis 2006, p. 53). These relationships represent conventional gender norms by often conveying that men fulfil women's lives. Romantic comedies can covertly convey the patriarchal ideal that women are dependent on men for companionship, personal development and fulfilment. This highlights that the impact of the patriarchy is alive and well in select literary teen film adaptations.

As well as patriarchal forces, the lives of some teen girls in literary teen adaptations are covertly oppressed by capitalism and ideals of consumption, as consumption and capitalism spread false messages about feminism and agency. This influences the ways teen girls express their individuality and power, as social forces compel them to act in ways that benefit larger social and political institutions rather than themselves.

Theoretical framework: adaptation theory

While this thesis will focus on how select teen film adaptations of canonical literature represent third wave feminism, I will be using the theoretical framework of adaptation to analyse them. By using this framework, I will be able to show how teen film adaptations of canonical literature are adapted *from* literature and are adapted to reflect the values of contemporary society. I will also refer to literary teen film adaptation as a genre, as this classification encapsulates the body of work I will be analysing.

³ I am using the term 'conservative' to describe romantic comedies because the term highlights the paradigm of the genre to represent narratives that centre on traditional heterosexual romantic relationships.

My analysis of the literary teen film genre will be framed by the idea of adaptation as revision. This idea addresses adaptation as a process of reimagination, whereby “Adaptors are ‘revising readers’ who enact their interpretations, not through criticism, but by altering the material text itself through quotation, allusion and plagiarism” (Bryant 2013, p. 50). This idea relates specifically to the literary teen film adaptation genre, as filmmakers reimagine narratives, characters and other thematic elements from literature, creating new stories for contemporary contexts. New teen-oriented narratives convey new third wave feminist meanings, reflecting the theory in adaptation as revision that “adaptors generate new versions of the text and thereby re-author the work, giving it new meaning in new contexts” (Bryant 2013, p. 48).

Adaptation is perhaps the most thoroughly critiqued film genre, as “it is the one that most persistently preoccupies the theorist, the critic, the reviewer, the buff, and the ordinary filmgoer alike” (McFarlane 2007, p. 15). Much of the scholarship that examines the adaptation genre addresses fidelity discourse, and the idea that adaptations are seen as derivative or secondary to their literary originals (Hutcheon, L 2012, p. 2).

Fidelity discourse offers some insight into adaption theory. Fidelity discourse prioritises audience opinion alongside scholars, as reviewers and everyday film goers form the bulk of fidelity discourse. Fidelity is based on the assumption that a story can maintain integrity through its retelling. Fidelity discourse compares an adaptation with its source, considering how well an adaptation retells a narrative from a literary text. In fidelity discourse, adaptations that show fidelity to their originals are thought to keep the integrity of the original literary work intact. These adaptations are often praised for keeping the author’s created world alive and delivering faithful narratives to fans of the original work. On the other hand, cinematic adaptations that deviate from their sources are often frowned upon for not showing fidelity and not satisfying the desires of original fans. What fidelity discourse fails to consider is that because “[a]daptations are a synergy between the desire for sameness and reproduction on the one hand, and, on the other, the acknowledgement of difference” (Hayward 2000, p. 6), fidelity is almost impossible to entirely achieve. The prominence of adaptation in Western culture is thought by Linda Hutcheon to support Walter Benjamin’s insight that “storytelling is always the art of repeating stories” (cited in Hutcheon, L 2012, p. 2). However, adaptations cannot just repeat stories in the same ways they have always been told. If

adaptation did not involve revising and reinterpreting certain aspects of a literary text to make it different to its original, the same story would be brought to the screen, and nothing new would be presented to audiences. There needs to be some originality in adapted works to attract new viewers to the narrative and, subsequently, the cinema.

Fidelity discourse can also be reductive, as it oversimplifies adaptation theory into a series of personal beliefs and opinions discussed by viewers. With such a focus on subjective opinions, fidelity discourse does not provide sufficient exploration of the intricacies of adaptation and does not allow people the opportunity to properly understand or judge adaptation. As McFarlane (2007, p. 15) has noted, fidelity discourse “is a wholly inappropriate and unhelpful criterion for either understanding or judgment” of an adaptation, as “every reading of a literary text is a highly individual act of cognition and interpretation” (2007, p. 15). As the reading of a literary text is highly personal, it is futile for fans of the original work to expect an entirely faithful film adaptation. This is because screenwriters and filmmakers will have their own unique interpretations of the literary work, which are not always the same as those of various readers (McFarlane 2007, p. 15).

Instead of focusing on fidelity discourse, there are more worthwhile ways to discuss how and why adaptations are made. Hodgkins (2013, p. 11), for instance, re-conceptualises “literary and filmic texts as affective economies that communicate with each other, and with audiences”. By thinking of adaptation in this way, Hodgkins bypasses notions of fidelity, and focuses on more insightful processes by which literary texts are adapted to film. For Hodgkins (2013, p. 28), affect in adaptation discourse is worth exploring as “[i]t is always there, grounding our responses to artistic texts, both original and adaptive alike, shaping how we understand and assess them”.

George Bluestone, in 1968, was one of the first to open up a more progressive conversation about how we should try to understand and judge adaptation. Bluestone attempted to explore adaptation theory in a way that avoided the tendency to dissect all the convergences and divergences of a film adaptation to measure its success. He refers to the adaptation process as the “mutational process” (Bluestone 1968, p. 5), and claims that comments that compare how well a film adaptation recreates a text’s tone and spirit do not offer much insight into the process of mutation (1968, p. 5). Bluestone takes a much more philosophical approach to investigating adaptation. Focusing on the

formal and aesthetic qualities of each medium, he states, “changes are *inevitable* the moment one abandons the linguistic for the visual medium” (Bluestone 1968, p. 5). Bluestone examines *Wuthering Heights* (1939), exploring how the film depicts the intricacies of Emily Brontë’s writing. While he claims that the film’s depiction of Heathcliff as a lovesick stableboy, rather than a demon, makes the events of the novel comprehensible to a 20th century audience (Bluestone 1968, p. 113), his efforts to offer a new and insightful perspective on adaptation theory fall short. He notes that the cinema cannot retain Brontë’s metaphors or her allusions (Bluestone 1968, p. 113), and states that “In abandoning language for the visual image, the film leaves behind the author’s most characteristic signature, her style” (1968, p. 113). Bluestone seems to perceive the film adaptation as inferior to the novel because it loses Brontë’s voice. This illustrates that “although Bluestone ostensibly rejects the analytical template of fidelity criticism, he reaffirms, in practice, its underlying assumption that literary precursors are inevitably superior to their cinematic adaptations” (Hodgkins 2013, p. 16).

The idea that literary adaptations are secondary derivatives of previous works is rarely mentioned in contemporary adaptation theory, as many scholars steer away from making judgements about whether adaptations are derivative. Adaptations can be described as creative appropriations that acknowledge the reordering of a previous work and have an intertextual engagement with that previous work (Hutcheon, L 2012, p. 9). They may follow the literature that preceded them, but they are not inferior to their originals. As Linda Hutcheon (2012, p. 9) states, “an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative—a work that is second without being secondary”. As the mediums of film and written language differ in style and function, it would be inappropriate to condemn one as a derivative of the other. Each medium can do things differently from the other, and so they hold too many differences to be judged by one another. One of the most significant differences between literature and film is that while literature tells stories through the written word, film visualises narratives and uses sound technology to tell stories. What should be addressed in adaptation scholarship are the ways that film adaptations deal with the written word, for instance, the visual ways in which adapters bring written words to life on screen, and the reasons behind a screenwriter and filmmaker’s decision to omit certain plot points and magnify others. This method of investigating adaptation gives a better insight into its methods, techniques and processes.

One way to better understand the processes of taking a literary text and adapting it for the screen is to look at screenwriting and its poetics, as this can shed some light on how written material is taken from the page to the screen. The poetics of screenwriting is not about providing a set of rules for the craft; it is “about understanding the actual practices of how [films] are written, and the institutions, individuals and beliefs that lie behind them” (MacDonald 2013, p. 2). Macdonald (2013) created the concept of ‘the screen idea’ to define the practice of screenwriting. The screen idea “is a term which names what is being striven for, even while that goal cannot be seen or shared exactly” (Macdonald 2013, p. 4).

The concept of ‘the screen idea’ is a collective idea formed by those involved in the Screen Idea Work Group, including the screenwriter, producer, director and editor (just to name a few) (Macdonald 2013, p. 11). However, the screen idea is not entirely the same for each person (Macdonald 2013, p. 5). The screen idea is also not fixed or changeless. As the screenwork develops, so too does the screen idea (Macdonald 2013, p. 4). The development of the screen idea can be observed by looking at a screenplay, as it “is one record of the shared screen idea, re-drafted in stages as the collaboration proceeds, a location for, and partial description of that shared idea” (Macdonald 2013, p. 5).

This concept of the screen idea enables a more complex understanding of adaptation from page to screen. There would be a similar screen idea and Screen Idea Work Group for the adaptation of literature to film, where people from literature, including authors, literary agents and publishers, may collaborate with screenwriters, producers and directors to develop a screenplay and contribute to the development of a literary adaptation from the initial stages of screenwriting and pre-production, to production and post-production, including editing and distribution. What the Screen Idea Work Group ends up creating are artworks that are in excess of their precursors. These finished films are in excess of the literary texts that came before them because these film adaptations use images, mise-en-scène, editing and sound, not just written language, to tell narratives (Hayward 2000, p. 6).

The screenplay “is a working document full of potentialities rather than specifics” (Macdonald 2013, p. 20), and it “is intended to be rewritten by its reader, both in the imagination and later in the physical sense” (2013, p. 20). Like the reader of a

screenplay, the viewer of a finished film also rewrites the film with their imagination by giving meaning to the film based on their own unique ideas and interpretations of what they have seen, and these interpretations can be different to how those from the Screen Idea Work Group saw their own work. Further examination of the processes of adapting a written text to the screen will allow us to learn more about the challenges of adaptation, how it functions as a genre, the ways in which adaptation is changing and how adaptation happens.

This thesis specifically investigates how select teen film adaptations of canonical literature deal with the written word, and how they use thematic and stylistic conventions of the teen genre to adapt the written word into contemporary contexts, creating new teen narratives that convey third wave feminist meanings. As well as exploring adaptation as revision, I discuss other aspects of adaptation, including how some members of the Screen Idea Work Group make literary narratives cinematic and how teen films can be in excess of their literary originals by making literary moments cinematic.

Thesis structure

This thesis explores how stylistic and thematic elements of select literature are adapted in their respective teen film adaptations, and how these changes work to represent third wave feminist narratives.

In this thesis, I argue that some teen film adaptations of canonical literature represent versions of third wave feminism that simultaneously empower and compromise the freedoms of teen girl figures. I use case studies of canonical literature to highlight how representations of female life from the past show them oppressed by the patriarchy, social norms, politics and culture of their times, and I compare these representations with contemporary literary teen film adaptations to explore how contemporary teen girl figures are presented with more freedoms and possibilities in life. However, I claim that, as portrayed in these adaptations, their lives are still oppressed by patriarchal and capitalist ideologies.

My thesis focuses on William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, originally published around 1590, Pierre Choderlos de Laclos's *Les liaisons dangereuses*, originally

published in 1782, Jane Austen's *Emma*, originally published in 1815, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, originally published in 1850, and George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, originally published around 1913. I have selected these literary texts because each represents a female-centred narrative and presents its female protagonist as a deeply oppressed figure who is governed by the patriarchy. These narratives do not overemphasise the influence of the patriarchy on female life. They present worlds where it is business as usual to have men dominate and govern women. In comparison to these literary texts, I discuss their respective 90s teen film adaptations. I discuss *Clueless*, *10 Things I Hate about You*, *Cruel Intentions* and *She's All That*, as each presents its central teen girl figure as autonomous, reflecting third wave feminist ideologies of female empowerment, strength, intelligence and independence. I also discuss the literary teen film adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter*, *Easy A*. Even though *Easy A* is not a 90s film, it was made during the final years of third wave feminism and bears the same third wave feminist ideals that are represented in these 1990s literary teen films, specifically, female sexual agency. Each of the female protagonists in these teen films is shown to be empowered, but they are not entirely free to rule their lives without patriarchal and capitalist influences dictating aspects of their lives.

Each of my chapters focuses on one narrative convention of the teen genre: the depiction of pop culture, relationships, shopping, and makeovers. In each chapter, I explore the overt ways in which feminist ideals are represented, but I also explore the covert ways in which the patriarchy and capitalist institutions are shown to influence the lives of contemporary female figures.

Chapter 1 introduces the idea that 1990s contemporary teen film adaptations of canonical literature are products of third wave feminism. The ideologies of 1990s third wave feminism will be discussed and problematised, as third wave feminism in mainstream society focuses more on the commercialisation of girl power than on politics. I discuss how feminist pop culture spread awareness of feminism in the 1990s and communicated feminist ideologies, and I draw on a range of pop culture examples to illustrate this, including the feminist punk rock music subset the Riot Grrrls. I also explore consumer feminism from the 1990s and address how at this time feminism became fully commercialised. As part of this discussion, I explore how the Spice Girls, an English pop girl band, helped commodify feminism. I also explore the tensions between

the commodification of third wave feminism and its overt political forms by examining the depiction of feminist popular culture in a select number of literary teen film adaptations. I provide case studies of canonical literature to highlight how female life was depicted prior to feminism. These texts include *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Les liaisons dangereuses*, as they present societies that are governed by the patriarchy. Women are shown to be oppressed and subjugated in these societies. These representations will then be compared to that in their respective teen film adaptations. I also discuss Andi Zeisler's work, which explores the relationship between pop culture and third wave feminism, focusing specifically on her ideas regarding marketplace feminism. This will be in order to explore the notion that, in contemporary culture, marketplace feminism can be detrimental to active, political feminism⁴. I provide case studies of the teen film adaptations *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions*, comparing representations of female life from their sources. Most importantly, I highlight the ways that their teen girl figures are shown to engage in marketplace feminism through popular culture. I have chosen to use these teen films as case studies because they represent their female figures as young girls who appear to be challenging patriarchal views and striving for feminism. However, there is more to this representation: I explore how the female teen figures in these films do not entirely represent political feminism.

In chapter 2, I analyse representations of female platonic relationships in canonical literary works and compare these representations to their contemporary literary teen film adaptations as a way to highlight how the feminist sensibility of sisterhood is emphasised as essential in contemporary cinema. Through my case studies of the literary texts *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Les liaisons dangereuses*, I explore how female relationships can be plagued with envy and competition for men. I also analyse *Emma* and explore how the text portrays the nature of female relationships as being dependent on social place and status. I have selected these literary texts as they represent some of the most poisonous female relationships in canonical literature. I also discuss how their respective contemporary teen film adaptations, *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Clueless*, represent female relationships as essential to their teen girl characters' fulfilment, and how this helps validate feminist ideals surrounding

⁴ I am using my own term 'political feminism' to describe a type of feminism that has active outcomes in legislation and public policy.

sisterhood. I have chosen to explore these films as female relationships are central to the narratives and are often presented in a positive light. While there are also portrayals of girls in conflict in these films, their conflicts are minor to the main narrative and are generally resolved throughout the films. As well as provide case studies of canonical literature and their teen film adaptations to support my claim that female friendships are represented as essential to contemporary female life, I also refer to examples of post 1990s teen films like *Lady Bird* (2017), *Booksmart* (2019) and *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (2005) to highlight that female friendships are consistently shown to be essential in contemporary cinema. I use a case study of *Cruel Intentions* to illustrate that although contemporary cinema readily presents female relationships as essential, some contemporary screen culture can intensely problematise how young women engage with one another. I have chosen to use a case study of *Cruel Intentions* in this discussion as the film explicitly pits its female characters against one another. I also focus on the representation of heterosexual romances in literary texts and their teen film adaptations, and I explore how these relationships can dominate female figures. I explore this idea and how it re-enforces patriarchal ideals of male domination, as women and girls are shown to be dependent on men for companionship. This representation can undercut feminist ideals surrounding the value of independence from men.

Chapter 3 explores how the costumes from select canonical literary works are transformed in their teen film adaptations. Most importantly, I illustrate how these costumes represent notions of female social value and inform gender performance. I discuss Judith Butler's (1988) work on gender performance and introduce my claim that some female literary characters from canonical literature are shown performing their gender by conforming their bodies to meet the historical expectation that women should be wives and mothers. I also focus on Naomi Wolf's (1990) work on the beauty myth and explore how female figures from literature are also shown performing their gender by being 'beautiful'. I provide case studies of the texts *Emma*, *Pygmalion* and *The Scarlet Letter* to illustrate these ideas. I have chosen these literary texts because each of them places value on beauty, but they also define womanhood by female physiology. This chapter also explores Wolf's idea that beauty is socially and culturally coded by politics and culture. I pay special attention to her idea that, in contemporary culture, female gender performance is exclusively enacted by attaining physical beauty through

consumption. While this chapter will discuss how representations of contemporary gender performance support the feminist ideologies of female economic value and personal agency, it will also explore how the need to shop in order to select costume and achieve beauty can oppress teen girl figures. I relate these ideas to the films *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A*, as each of these films represents shopping and beauty as fun, but they concurrently perpetuate the idea that beauty is a necessity for female life that is only achievable through shopping. I also reference post 90s films that represent shopping as essential to contemporary female gender performance, such as *Mean Girls* (2004) and *Just Go With It* (2011). These films help illustrate that shopping is consistently linked to beauty and female life. This chapter also discusses how each teen film's costume designer uses costume to represent characters and establish personalities and archetypes. I also explore how the representations of costume and beauty in these literary teen film adaptations strengthens capitalism and endorses the messages of the beauty myth.

Chapter 4 looks at the stylistic and thematic ways in which makeover sequences are adapted from select canonical literary texts to their teen film adaptations. I examine how makeovers are shown to be degrading and unsuccessful for female figures from the literary texts *Emma*, *Pygmalion* and *The Scarlet Letter*. I use these texts as case studies because, while they are all explicit makeover narratives, each makeover is different. In comparison to this, I argue that the makeovers depicted in the contemporary teen film adaptations *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A* are presented as empowering because they are shown in ways that exude joyfulness and suggest a future of prosperity. I also discuss the Cinderella makeover, and compare its tone and visualisation with the makeovers represented in the teen film adaptations I focus this chapter on. This is done to illustrate how teen film makeovers mirror and deviate from it in different ways. I am focusing on these teen films because their makeover sequences are prominent recreations of the Cinderella makeover, and their makeover sequences are synonymous with the contemporary teen film genre. I also discuss how each teen film's cinematographers, editors and set decorators work to create makeover sequences. I also consider the representation of girls embracing overt femininity through their makeovers and claim that this representation is linked to female empowerment and feminism. To explore the inherent contradictions of third wave feminism, I also discuss how the desire to reach a level of overt femininity through makeovers is really a girl's desire to adhere

to the beauty ideals of the patriarchy and gain the approval of the male gaze. I once more explore the beauty myth, but in this chapter, I focus on how the beauty myth gives men power and renders women powerless. I also explore how the desire to embody overt femininity can be dangerous, as the pressure to embody patriarchal expectations can sometimes lead to girls creating inauthentic versions of themselves through their makeovers.

Chapter 1: Representing third wave feminism through pop culture: transforming submissive woman figures into girl power figures

Much of the female-centred pop culture of the 1990s is infused with notions of girl power. The phrase 'girl power' is a cultural expression born in 90s third wave feminism that denotes female empowerment, encourages confidence and celebrates independence. Although the phrase is synonymous with the Spice Girls, it is credited to the Riot Grrrl punk band Bikini Kill who published a zine called *Girl Power* in 1991 (Spiers 2015, p. 14). This phrase corresponds to the 1990s literary teen films I am focusing on in this chapter, as they present their teen female characters as girl power figures.

Pop culture can be a fickle term to define, as it can have multiple definitions. Pop culture is defined by Storey (2018, p. 5) as "culture that is widely favoured or well liked by many people", "the culture that is left over after we have decided what is high culture" (2018, p. 5), a "mass-produced commercial culture" (2018, p. 6), and, finally, as "the culture that originates from 'the people'" (2018, p. 9). Fashion, music, film, television, art and slang are just a few examples of pop culture.

Pop culture has the ability to inform the public on politics and social norms of the specific contexts it represents, as its representations of life indicate what the core values and social beliefs are during those periods of time. This demonstrates that although popular culture may seem frivolous it can actually be insightful, as it "informs our understanding of political issues that on first glance seem to have nothing to do with pop culture; it also makes us see how something meant as pure entertainment can have everything to do with politics" (Zeisler 2008, p. 7).

During the 1990s, third wave feminist discourse was prevalent in the social and cultural consciousness of society, as it was represented in much of the decade's popular culture. It is evident that many teen film adaptations of canonical literature were shaped by third wave feminism, as many female teen figures in these films engage in feminist rhetoric and embody third wave feminist values. Many films, television shows and musical groups from the 1990s presented versions of third wave feminism where women and girls were strong, independent, powerful and intelligent.

Many literary teen film adaptations also represent examples of pop culture in their narratives. These pop culture examples help to firmly establish cultural context, and many have an association with third wave feminism. Therefore, many literary teen film adaptations draw on pop culture references that are underpinned by third wave feminist concepts and values to help represent third wave feminist narratives.

Popular culture cannot always represent the realities of society. This is because the producers of pop culture represent subjective interpretations of society, its politics and social values. Furthermore, audiences of pop culture also interpret the works subjectively. 1990s teen film adaptations of canonical literature are examples of pop culture that do not entirely represent the realities of the time period they represent. They represent superficial aspects of the 90s, such as fashion, but they do not represent the nuances of its social and cultural contexts, specifically third wave feminism. Therefore, as works of pop culture, literary teen film adaptations only represent subjective versions of the 90s and its social and political contexts.

Often times, pop culture, like film, TV and music, represents versions of feminism that depict the commodification of the social movement. The 1990s saw the commodification of girl power as “marketplace feminism” (Zeisler 2016, p. xiii). Marketplace feminism represents feminism as an identity that is constructed through the consumption of the feminist brand, which includes music, literature and fashion. It also conveys that the feminist identity is not entirely concerned with politics. Nevertheless, the representation of marketplace feminism in pop culture is still valuable to consider, as it shows that pop culture helps spread feminist messages, even if those messages do not promote explicit feminist activism.

In this chapter, I will argue that while some literary teen film adaptations appear to present feminist characters, they actually present a highly commodified version of feminism that does not represent the realities of feminism or promote feminist activism.

This chapter analyses *The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare and *Les liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos. *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Les liaisons dangereuses* are two texts that have been considerably changed through the text to screen adaptation process. *The Taming of the Shrew* represents its female figures as submissive wives who are governed by the patriarchy through the cultural custom of

marriage, and *Les liaisons dangereuses* represents its female figures as the subjects of men who suffer by their hand. As the female characters presented in these literary texts abide by the rules governed by the patriarchy, these texts represent female oppression and male domination. The female characters at the heart of these narratives lack the freedom to chart their own paths in life, as pleasing the patriarchy through marriage and companionship is presented as the only suitable future for them.

I also explore how their respective teen film adaptations, *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions*, revise and reimagine the gender politics depicted in their literary originals to represent third wave feminist ideologies, and how the girls in these teen films are represented as autonomous girl power figures. However, there is more to this representation. The girls in these literary teen film adaptations do not participate in feminist activism to achieve political outcomes. Instead, they construct identities as feminist because of the pop culture they engage in, including clothes and music. These films show that pop culture can misinform the public on what feminism is and what being a feminist is all about.

Many 1990s literary teen film adaptations do not make explicit political statements. These films tackle politics implicitly by dressing up stories of oppression and limitation as glossy tales of teen female life. They predominately tell stories about white, middle class, heterosexual girls navigating teen hardships at home and school. The lives of teen female figures are shown to be glossy because their pop culture interests represent fun and enjoyment. Many of the literary texts these teen films are adapted from do not idealise female life, and since they predate feminism, oppression is more obvious. Such canonical works present unvarnished versions of female life where female figures are oppressed by prevailing patriarchal forces that dictate their social and political freedoms.

In early modern England, marriage combined materialistic and romantic values and was predominantly controlled by fathers and/or groomsmen (Schneider 2002, p. 240). Dowries and other financial propositions were organised between men during this time. Women essentially were goods men could trade for money. Women had no personal sovereignty and had no choice but to abide by these deals made by men in line with prevailing patriarchal forces. Through such transactions, women lost their autonomy and became part of a man's property rights. This invokes a social hierarchy where men rule

over women, where women are their property, and where women must submit to men's rule. This social hierarchy and these marital roles are represented in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The Taming of the Shrew represents Italy in the 16th century, when marriage was a form of womanly submission. Shakespeare represents marriage as a social institution motivated by male dominance. Petruchio is a wealthy landowner who recently inherited his father's land. He desires more money and more land, and so he proposes a marriage deal with Baptista Minola, the wealthy father of Katherine and Bianca. With the promise of marriage, whoever marries the ladies will come into his land and receive a dowry. Baptista and Petruchio agree that Petruchio will marry the elder daughter, Katherine, who is not desired by any other man because of her shrewish reputation. She is depicted as an aggressive, feisty, sharp-tongued woman, prone to violent outbursts. Some critics have argued that Katherine's shrewish behaviour is a defence mechanism to combat a misogynistic world (Brown 1995, p. 285). Her shrewish behaviour is her attempt to scare off potential suitors and masters. Elizabeth Hutcheon (2011, p. 324), states "As an outspoken woman, she poses a threat to the patriarchal structures that enclose her".

Shakespeare represents a misogynistic world predominately through Petruchio. Shakespeare's male protagonist is more problematic than Katherine, as he bullies her, and "his tactics with Katherine can be read as gratuitously severe" (Brown 1995, p. 286). He is shown throughout the play hitting and physically battering Katherine for her disobedient behaviour. He also makes a marriage bond with Baptista prior to first meeting Katherine, and he assures Baptista that Katherine has agreed to the union, despite her having made objections in private. This highlights that Petruchio's desire for marriage is only motivated by a desire for more money and power, rather than by love. Petruchio asserts his dominance over Katherine on their wedding day by wearing "mad attire" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 66). He also proclaims at the end of the service that Katherine is his "goods" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 69), his "household stuff" (2004, p. 69), his "anything" (2004, p. 69). This show of dominance highlights that Petruchio sees Katherine only as his property. He owns her and can subject her to whatever he wishes without consequence. This is further shown when Petruchio starves Katherine, stating that the food they are given is not good enough for her. By starving Katherine, Petruchio purposely attempts to weaken her body and mind, making it easier to tame her wild

nature. He continues to assert his male dominance, threatening to end their travels to Baptista's house when Katherine refutes that the moon, which he states "goodly shines" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 89), is actually the sun. Only when she succumbs to his view and states "be it moon, or sun, or what you please" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 89) do they continue their journey to Padua.

At the play's conclusion, Katherine presents herself as a changed woman. She refers to Petruchio as "thy lord, thy king, thy governor" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 100). Her words indicate that Petruchio "hast tamed a curst shrow" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 101), yet her declaration of submission is not as straightforward as it seems. Katherine's proclamation can be read as an autonomous act (Hutcheon, E 2011, p. 331). Katherine presents herself as a changed woman, in that her speech presents a woman who calls attention to women's weaknesses and arraigns them for attempts at rebellion. She states that she is "ashamed" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 101), that women "offer war where they should kneel for peace" (2004, p. 101) and are meant "to serve, love and obey" (2004, p. 101). It is as if she adopts her husband's ideals as a form of survival, and she appears to have made the decision to be subservient to her husband's wishes. Despite her proposed autonomy, Katherine is still represented as a submissive wife who has to leave her eccentricities and values behind. Through Petruchio's attempts to tame Katherine, he appropriates her identity for his own pleasure, and this is apparent in the way he calls her Kate, instead of Katherine (Hutcheon, E 2011, p. 326). By the end of the play, Katherine is without "a self-generated identity" (Hutcheon, E 2011, p. 326), and is instead Petruchio's "fanciful creation" (2011, p. 326). Katherine becomes Petruchio's creation as he moulds her into a submissive and docile wife. As a result, Katherine loses her own identity. She is no longer the shrew who rebelled against men who wished to tame her. Katherine is shown to be oppressed by Petruchio, a representative of the patriarchy who dictates how Katherine speaks and conducts herself. Shakespeare makes it clear that Katherine yields her rebellious shrewishness to please her husband and survive the misogynistic world she was born into.

Similarly, *Les liaisons dangereuses* represents a gender hierarchy where women are the subjects of men. Laclos represents 18th century France and depicts male characters who possess immense social and political power over his female characters. The novel presents the power men hold over women through its male protagonist, the Vicomte de

Valmont. Valmont is a rich French aristocrat and a known libertine, meaning he is free to take what he wants without consideration for consequence or consent. To him, the most important thing is “the bliss of gratified desire!” (Laclos 2008, p. 15). He hopes that it is granted to him, for the sake of his pleasure and “peace of mind” (Laclos 2008, p. 15). He aims to destroy the lives and livelihoods of women, knowing that if their sexual behaviour were to be revealed, they would be thrown out of good society. Being a rich and privileged man, the Vicomte is aware of his superiority and can openly talk about his sexual escapades without concern for consequence. To Valmont, the easiest women to seduce and destroy are those who are virtuous, as he states that women of easy virtue are “so bad at defending themselves” (Laclos 2008, p. 15).

At the beginning of the novel, Valmont details his desire to seduce and destroy the most virtuous woman he could find, Madame de Tourvel. Tourvel is a judge’s wife, good natured, and devoted to her religion. As Tourvel is aware of Valmont’s indiscretions, he acts in the hope of winning over her affection, masquerading as a good Christian, attending mass and helping the sick. At the same time, Valmont manipulates the innocent Cécile Volanges, a young girl who has been taken out of a convent by her mother so that she may wed a respectable French aristocrat.

Valmont displays his dominance over Cécile, bedding her in a manner that resembles rape. After sneaking into Cécile’s room, he attempts to seduce her. However, his advances are not accepted, as Cécile “concentrated her whole attention and efforts on protecting herself from being kissed” (Laclos 2008, p. 203). In response to Cécile’s unwillingness to consent, Valmont physically restricts her from escaping, and although she cries, Valmont questions the authenticity of her tears, later writing, “I’m not certain whether they were true or false” (Laclos 2008, p. 205). He looks favourably onto their experience, writing “we did not part until mutual satisfaction had been achieved” (Laclos 2008, p. 205), yet Cécile’s sadness and shame are later detailed in a letter, where she writes that she feels “dreadfully upset and miserable” (2008, p. 205). In this instance, Cécile is made the subject of Valmont’s desires, and he uses his male dominance to force himself onto her.

After Valmont succeeds in conquering Cécile, Madame de Tourvel proclaims her reluctant love for him. He courts her, and in doing so, Tourvel breaks the sacred rules of her marriage and religion. Valmont writes, “I’ve conquered her, she’s mine, completely

mine, she has granted me everything I want" (Laclos 2008, p. 276), highlighting that Valmont sees Tourvel as his subject. Madame de Tourvel also sees herself as Valmont's possession, as she writes, "my whole existence belongs to someone else and that other person is Monsieur de Valmont" (Laclos 2008, p. 288). She dedicates her life to him, writing, "I have ruined myself for him, he has become the centre of all my thoughts, feelings, and actions" (Laclos 2008, p. 288). When Valmont abandons her, she discloses to her good friend that she feels "death in my soul" (Laclos 2008, p. 304). Valmont sees women as his subjects, and through his display of male dominance, he is shown to make women his victims. Tourvel's sorrow leads to her death, and through Valmont's coercion of Cécile, her arranged marriage is broken off and she returns to the convent in shame to become a nun.

Even the Marquise de Merteuil, Valmont's co-conspirator, becomes a victim of the patriarchy. In many ways, she shares Valmont's masculine characteristics. She has a "hard intelligence, aggressive sexuality, desire for mastery" (McAlpin 2009, p. 16). Although she acts like the men around her, her womanhood makes her vulnerable to consequence. The Marquise must hide her sexual behaviour, because it would be inappropriate for a French aristocratic woman to behave like a male libertine. The imbalance of power between men and women is apparent when Valmont and the Marquise are outed for their behaviour. Chevalier Danceny seeks personal vengeance on Valmont for his treatment of Cécile, resulting in Valmont's death. In death, Valmont avoids further punishment from society. The Marquise, however, is punished for her sexual behaviour by society. She is publicly shunned, a lawsuit is made against her, she becomes bankrupt, loses her husband's estate, and flees to Holland to live in isolation. She also contracts smallpox and her once beautiful face becomes scarred. Her punishment may not result in death, but it is mercilessly carried out by a patriarchal society.

However, Laclos does not glorify a social hierarchy that sees men dominate women. The fact that Valmont and all of his conquests are destroyed by the novel's conclusion suggests that *Les liaisons dangereuses* is an anti-libertine narrative. The novel conveys that nothing good can come from a man using his social power at the expense of women, and that men and women should reside on equal ground in society and politics. Despite this feminist interpretation, the society that the novel represents privileges men

over women, and women are continually made the subjects of men. Women like Madame de Tourvel, Cécile and the Marquise have no tangible freedoms in life and are forced into being controlled and governed by an oppressive patriarchal society.

The third wave of feminism in the 1990s, with ideals of girl power, contrasts greatly to the world of Laclos's *Les liaisons dangereuses*. Feminism and ideals of girl power dominated the third wave of feminism in the 1990s. As teen girl audiences became one of the most powerful demographics (Karlyn 2009, p. 177), and film and television programming began featuring teen girl protagonists (2009, p. 177), attitudes of independence, confidence and empowerment among young women was mirrored in popular culture. New phrases (such as 'girl power') were also being formulated (Karlyn 2009, p. 177), and blaring in our headphones were girls and girl groups like Christina Aguilera and TLC spreading messages of independence, confidence and empowerment to young girls. Girl power became a prominent phrase in pop culture, and became a household term (Hains 2004, p.2).

Many teen girl protagonists of 90s film and television were represented as girl power figures, as they embodied girl power traits of confidence, independence and strength. Shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and *The Powerpuff Girls* (1998-) presented girl power figures, as their female characters were shown 'kicking butt' in positions of power and responsibility. *Sex and the City* (1998-2004) presented girl power figures for mature audiences, as their female characters were presented as sexually autonomous women prospering in their chosen careers. 1990s girl power figures in pop culture asserted the message that women rule and are capable of remarkable things. Girl power figures encouraged women and girls to speak up and stick together when rebelling against the institutions and ideals that infringe upon their social and political freedoms.

The Riot Grrrls were prominent girl power figures in the 90s music scene. Riot Grrrl was a women's collective, formed in the 1990s grunge music scene, that supported the performances of female musicians and provided "social commentary on the position of females in society" (Strong 2011, p. 404). They encouraged women to support one another, spoke openly about the female body and taboos like incest and rape, encouraged women and girls to express their anger at the treatment and victimisation they experience due to their gender, and some branded the words 'Slut' and 'Whore' on

their torsos, arms and legs in a show of protest against gender conceptions (Strong 2011, p. 404). As well as music, the subset produced zines, poetry, internet sites, manifestos and collages, which sent “radical messages without sugar-coating” (Riordan 2001, p. 287).

Many young women began their feminist activities through the Riot Grrrls, as “Riot Grrrl messages are overtly political, and many young feminists with a Riot Grrrl sensibility engage in grassroots activism via their cultural production” (Riordan 2001, p. 286). The messages of Riot Grrrls “inspire young women to take action against patriarchal capitalist institutions that may constrain them” (Riordan 2001, p. 287) by participating as content creators, voicing their own opinions and telling their personal stories of rape and oppression. The Riot Grrrls contributed immensely to third wave feminism, as they gave women and girls the opportunity to find and use their political voices.

Girl power figures were also represented in select literary teen film adaptations. Kat Stratford (Julia Stiles) is emphasised in the film *10 Things I Hate about You* as a girl power figure. The film emphasises that Kat possesses many characteristics of a feminist. She is shown to be an intelligent, stubborn young woman who tackles the patriarchy. She is unafraid to question why her school syllabus includes Ernest Hemingway, “an abusive alcoholic misogynist who squandered half his life hanging around Picasso, trying to nail his leftovers” (*10 Things I Hate about You* 1999), when they could be reading the literary works of female writers such as Charlotte Brontë. Kat is against traditional courting rituals that see men pursue women—she rips prom posters from the school walls and rejects Patrick’s invitation because prom is a “stupid tradition” (*10 Things I Hate About You* 1999). She is also ruthless about protecting her body from unwanted attention (Kat once kicked a boy in the testicles for trying to grope her in the lunch line). Unlike the film’s literary original, property rights are not presented in the film. There is an exchange of money between the male characters, which is used to take girls out on dates, but this plot detail does not subject Kat to the rule of a man. Unlike her literary counterpart, Kat’s personality never changes. She remains a feisty, opinionated young woman throughout the film. Kat is emphasised as a contemporary girl power figure who fights the patriarchy and is not disciplined for her outspokenness.

Cruel Intentions also emphasises Annette Hargrove (Reese Witherspoon) as a girl power figure. Annette is the teen version of Madame de Tourvel. She is presented as a writer

published in *Seventeen Magazine*. Her piece is a manifesto, detailing her desire to remain a virgin until marriage. The magazine is not known for its feminist content, but the film's depiction of *Seventeen Magazine* as a pop culture entity that brings attention to female desire and sexual behaviour illustrates how third wave feminism from the 1990s onwards emphasises support and nonjudgment of sexuality (Cocca 2014, p. 98). The film's depiction of female sexuality as a topic in public discourse is a stark contrast to the original novel, where female sexuality was not a topic that could be openly discussed without fear of social demise. Through Annette's connection with *Seventeen Magazine*, *Cruel Intentions* presents the character as a girl power figure who mirrors the sentiments of third wave feminism. Annette is presented as a girl power figure of the third wave because she contributes to the public discourse on female sexuality and is vocal about her beliefs, her body and her sexual autonomy. Annette is also emphasised as a girl power figure because instead of falling into deep despair and dying like Madame de Tourvel, she brings justice to Sebastian (Ryan Phillippe) by revealing Kathryn's (Sarah Michelle Gellar) lies and malice.

Although films like *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions* represent female characters who are emphasised as 'girl power' because they embody feminist ideals, the brand of feminism they present is actually highly commodified.

Girl pop culture does not necessarily encourage collective feminist activity; rather, it perpetuates a form of commodified feminism known as marketplace feminism. Andi Zeisler formulated the term 'marketplace feminism' and describes it as a type of watered-down feminism that is "decontextualized" (2016, p. xiii) and "depoliticized" (2016, p. xiii). It positions feminism "as a cool, fun, accessible identity that anyone can adopt" (Zeisler 2016, p. xiii). Although hooks (2015, p. 28) states that "feminism is neither a lifestyle nor a ready-made identity or role one can step into", marketplace feminism actually constructs ready-made feminist identities that girls can assimilate, and all that is needed is the possession of goods from the feminist brand. An example of a product from the feminist brand is Katy Perry's perfume, *Killer Queen*, which she described as 'feminist' (Zeisler 2016, p. xiii). Former men's magazine *Maxim* is also an example of pop culture that fits into the feminist brand, as after a female editor was appointed to the magazine and its target audience changed to attract female readers, *The Daily Beast* branded the magazine as "Your New Feminist Bible" (Zeisler 2016, p.

xiii). Marketplace feminism is an iteration of feminism “about purchasing commodities in the form of concert tickets, CDs, Doc. Martens, Fluevogs, and so on to be a part of the girl power trend” (Riordan 2001, p. 294). Instead of working to solve feminist issues like the gender pay gap, people brand themselves as feminists through consumer goods, as the effects of marketplace feminism show that “The fight for gender equality has transmogrified from a collective goal to a consumer brand” (Zeisler 2016, p. xv). This illustrates that the feminist identity is no more than a commodification of feminism.

The Spice Girls are arguably the most celebrated pop culture phenomenon of the 1990s. They sang upbeat pop songs that commercialised girl culture and girl power. They belted the lyrics “I’ll tell you what I want, what I really, really want” (Beckham et al. 1996) and “Take or leave it, cause we’ve always got each other” (Beckham et al. 1997), encouraging women and girls to exercise power in their lives and stick together. Although the Spice Girls helped popularise girl power, they were not entirely beneficial to feminism, as they are “The most evident example of the commodification of girl power” (Riordan 2001, p. 290). Instead of being instigators for other girls and women to join the political movements enacted by feminists, the Spice Girls commodified feminism by becoming a brand people could buy into. The girl band demonstrates that girl power became “reified into tangible commodities bought and sold most notably by entertainment corporations” (Riordan 2001, p. 289). The Spice Girls released a book called *Girl Power!* and launched a magazine called *Spice*. They also signed a deal with PepsiCo to launch a soft drink for their Generation Next campaign (Driscoll 1999, p. 184). Young girls may think they are engaging with explicit feminist politics by buying and reading their book, *Girl Power!*, and by drinking a Pepsi, but these examples show that the Spice Girls used their cultural status to encourage consumerism, rather than feminism. As well as making merchandising deals, the Spice Girls commodified feminism by releasing their own lines of stationery, toys (Spice Dolls and Spice Phones), lunch boxes, bags, purses, hair accessories, clothes, mugs, keyrings, cosmetics and nail art.

By commodifying the girl power ideology, the Spice Girls spread awareness of feminism and the basic principles associated with it. This is evident by the millions of fans who embraced their girl-positive lyrics and strong personas (Hains 2004, p. 2). However, commodification waters down the potency of political feminism. Feminism is undercut and subjugated when commodified, as “when something becomes commodified, it is

first co-opted, and co-optation tends to neutralise the radical potential of messages” (Riordan 2001, p. 295). Feminism’s political potency is diluted so that commodification overshadows feminist work (Riordan 2001, p. 294). The Spice Girls used their cultural image as girl power figures to encourage consumerism, and nothing more. In doing so, they stole the focus away from more explicit active feminism.

It may feel empowering to immerse yourself in this “mainstream, celebrity, consumer embrace of feminism” (Zeisler 2016, p. xiii), but feminism is about more than branding ourselves as feminists because of the popular culture and feminist narratives we identify with and consume. The sense of empowerment we feel through pop culture and marketplace feminism does not enable political change to be enacted, as it does not offer “an opportunity for girls to transcend individual consumption to enact collective change in social relations” (Riordan 2001, p. 280). Marketplace feminism centres too much on the individual, and this destabilises political feminism, which is really only achievable by collectives of people. It is counterintuitive for people to engage in commodified girl power rhetoric through pop culture, as it “does not dramatically change the social conditions of women’s and girls’ lives” (Riordan 2001, p. 294). Marketplace feminism distracts people from achieving political work, and as a result, “we are letting a glossy, feel-good feminism pull focus away from deeply entrenched forms of inequality” (Zeisler 2016, p. xv). Feminism goes beyond the individual, and only with a true focus on achieving gender equality with collective activism, rather than individual empowerment, can feminism do its proper work. After all, “feminist movements have always been, and still must be, about changing systems and reforming patriarchal power structures” (Douglas 2016, p. 13), not about buying from the feminist brand.

As outlined above, 1990s feminism is characterised partly by its tension between its radical forms of feminism, such as Riot Grrrls, and its commercialisation through style and attitudes through the Spice Girls. 1990s teen film adaptations of canonical literature offer useful case studies for exploring this tension. *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions* bear the ideals that mark third wave feminism through their female characters, but there is more to their representations. The girl figures from each of these films hold a significant connection with popular culture. They engage in ‘feminist’ pop culture, and this engagement is shown to help them step into the feminist identity. This

representation reflects marketplace feminism, as empowerment is achieved through the consumption of pop culture, and this empowerment stops at the individual level.

Although *10 Things I Hate about You* promotes Kat's representation as a girl power figure, her identity as a feminist is constructed by her interests in pop culture rather than her political activity. It seems as though the filmmakers were aware that pop culture can be connected to feminism, as Kat is predominately shown to be a girl power figure because she is interested in feminist pop culture. Each time she is shown engaging in one of her pop culture interests, her depiction as a girl power figure is emphasised. She is portrayed as a member of the feminist music subset Riot Grrrl, as she appears at an underground music club called Club Skunk. She is also shown discussing her desire to start her own rock band. Kat is also shown reading and purchasing the works of female writers like Sylvia Plath and Simone de Beauvoir, and she rebels against traditional patriarchal conceptions of femininity. Kat's appearance coincides with the punk rock Riot Grrrls. Rather than dressing like the girls in *Cosmopolitan* magazine, she styles herself in dark clothes with camo prints and Doc Martens.

Kat's appearance contrasts with other 1990s girl power figures, specifically those who dress to seek the male gaze. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is renowned for presenting a contemporary girl power figure. Buffy's proficiencies 'kicking butt' can feel empowering to watch, as they "simultaneously soothe and sustain, inspire and incite the compulsion to feminist activism" (Pender 2016, p. 52). Although this representation may seem feminist, feminism is undercut by the way patriarchal gender conceptions of female beauty are rigorously inflicted on the character. Buffy is presented in tight, pastel-coloured clothes that highlight her slender figure and bust. She also wears high-heeled shoes, and during her battles, manages to keep her long blonde hair looking sleek and stylish. The reason for Buffy's appearance lies in the show's target audience. The series was initially targeted at a male teenage audience (Riordan 2001, p. 292), suggesting that the reason why Buffy appears in a highly feminine and sexualised way is to attract the male gaze. Buffy's sexualised and highly feminine appearance was intentional and reflects normative ideals of femininity that overlap "with longstanding, patriarchal, mainstream suggestions of what girls *should* look like" (Hains 2004, p. 7).

Kat's appearance rejects standards of femininity and the male gaze. Kat may be a rebel because of her style, and she may enjoy feminist music groups and female authors, but

this does not make her a feminist figure. Instead of campaigning on the streets and tackling politics, Kat's identity as a feminist is constructed through pop culture. Kat engages in marketplace feminism rather than political feminism. While Kat is shown to be an empowered girl, she is only shown to be empowered on the individual level. She does not strive for political change, and so she never surpasses marketplace feminism to reach a status as a feminist. Kat is restricted by marketplace feminism from achieving political change because her engagement with pop culture distracts her from seeing the political issues that many women face. The film also suggests that, because of this distraction, Kat has no desire to go out into the world and campaign for equal rights. *10 Things I Hate about You* represents a strong female character, but this characterisation is hollow when we realise that the film represents a commodified version of feminism that conveys the feminist identity is bought and not concerned with political reforms and public policy.

While *Cruel Intentions* also emphasises Annette as a girl power figure, she is only engaging in marketplace feminism. Annette may be vocal about her beliefs on female sexual autonomy, but she is encouraged to express herself as a consumer. *Seventeen Magazine*, with its female-centric content on sexuality, presents a feminist identity for Annette to step into, thus reflecting marketplace feminism. While Annette's manifesto empowers her, the film makes it clear that this empowerment stops at Annette. There is no indication that Annette's writing has contributed to feminist discussions, and none of the film's characters respond to her manifesto in a positive way. Kathryn and Sebastian only debate Annette for her beliefs. Annette does not surpass marketplace feminism to execute political change. Marketplace feminism blinds Annette to the realities of feminism, and so she is unable to surpass commodified feminism and contribute to political discussions and engage in activities that focus on achieving gender equality. Annette's article is an individual achievement rather than an attempt to improve the collective female life experience. Annette is restricted by marketplace feminism, as she has no palpable desire to write a piece in the name of collective action or empowerment.

Depictions of feminism and girl power in *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions* seem to support feminism, as they highlight how contemporary girls live with more freedoms and liberties than the women depicted in their literary originals. However,

upon deeper inspection of the feminist narratives represented in these films, it becomes clear that they actually present versions of feminism that are commodified. In these films, focus is placed not on politics but on pure consumption and the construction of feminist identities. These teen films present feminist rhetoric and girl power ideologies on the surface, but they actually represent a highly commodified feminism that does not represent the realities of feminism or promote feminist activism that goes beyond individual consumption and empowerment. In this way, the teen girl figures in these films are oppressed because they are blinded by marketplace feminism to consume, rather than work together to achieve equality.

Chapter 2: Transforming relationships from text to screen: representing the feminist ideal of sisterhood and challenging feminism through heterosexual romances

A key concern of feminism throughout its various waves is that of female comradery. During the third wave of feminism, women were finding more ways to fight for women's rights, ones that did not necessarily involve political activism. Feminists drew on notions of comradery to band together when rebelling against the issues that hinder their lives. As demonstrated by the Riot Grrrls, whose most common message was for "girls to come together and support one another" (Riordan 2001, p. 288), feminism was also achieved through female support systems like friendships. Feminists of the 1990s declared friendships "to be both an antecedent of radicalization and an outcome of feminist awareness" (Rose & Roades 1987, p. 243). This highlights that female friendships, support and activism are closely connected in third wave feminist discourse.

Representations of girls in some literary teen film adaptations can reflect feminist ideals. In select literary teen films, girl figures may not get involved in feminist activism as a collective, but they are often shown supporting and helping one another through life's struggles. This representation helps present female friendships as positive, conveying the third wave feminist ideal that sisterhoods are imperative to contemporary female life. This is a revision and reimagination of the female friendships represented in the literary texts they are adapted from. In many canonical texts, women are presented as rivals who conflict over their positions in social, romantic and familial relationships. Conflicts often arise from differing social positions and competition for men, feeding into the antiquated stereotype that women cannot get along with other women.

As many literary teen film adaptations are also romantic comedies, heterosexual romances are central to their narratives. Heterosexual romances often sit alongside female friendships, both being seen as essential to contemporary female life, but heterosexual romances can minimise female friendships when they are shown to provide girls with sincere companionship that girls cannot find in other girls. This is often represented when girls are in conflict with one another.

In this chapter, I argue that select teen film adaptations of canonical literature support ideals of female comradery by presenting female friendships as essential to the

fulfilment of contemporary female life. However, select teen film adaptations can contradict such ideals when girls are shown to be in conflict with one another and depend on heterosexual romance for genuine support. A failure of female comradery is not only an outcome of the patriarchy, however, as teen girls are often shown to be in conflict because of other social and personal factors. The representation of the patriarchy in select teen films is still a covert way that teen film adaptations communicate traditional patriarchal ideals of male dominance that oppress girl figures.

This chapter will discuss the female relationships depicted in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Emma* and *Les liaisons dangereuses*. Not all female characters in these literary texts conflict with one another, but there is at least one example in each text of a female relationship that is prone to quarrelling or hostility. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, Katherine and Bianca are rivals in romantic and familial relationships. In *Emma*, the protagonist isolates her friends because of differences in social position as well as romantic rivalry. *Les liaisons dangereuses* represents a female friendship between Cécile Volanges and the Marquise Merteuil that is poisonous and vengeful. I will then discuss these texts' respective teen film adaptations: *Clueless*, *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions*.

Clueless and *10 Things I Hate about You* radically change the female relationships depicted in their literary originals, as they emphasise the necessity for female support systems and place female friendships at the centre of their narratives, showing that these friendships are fundamental to the lives of their female figures. This representation reflects third wave feminism from the 1990s, which rejected "beliefs that women's friendships were insignificant" (Rose & Roades 1987, p. 243). The female friendships depicted in these films are not without conflict, however; conflicts and disagreements between girls are shown in *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Clueless*. These representations slightly undercut the films' feminist messages, but as these conflicts are resolved in ways which bring the girls closer together, the importance of sisterhood is not negated. *Cruel Intentions* deviates entirely from presenting positive female friendships, staying true to its literary original by presenting female relationships that are strained, confrontational and incapable of improving. *Cruel Intentions* wholeheartedly undercuts the ideology of sisterhood by portraying girls manipulating and deceiving one another.

Clueless, *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions* also present young teen girls who are concerned with love and romance. In these films, heterosexual romantic relationships can challenge feminism and the value it places on sisterhood, as romantic relationships highlight traditional gender roles and strengthen the notion that women are dependent on men.

The female lives depicted in many canonical texts are mostly represented as solitary and internal. Women are shown to be isolated from other women, and their relationships are presented as unsupportive and toxic, especially in narratives where females occupy different social positions and are presented as rivals. This is evident in William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

The play presents a sisterhood between Katherine and Bianca that is strained, confrontational and riddled with envy and competition for men. Whilst Katherine is considered abrasive and aggressive, her younger sister, Bianca, is obedient and docile. For these qualities, Bianca has numerous admirers, including Hortensio, Gremio and Lucentio. Each man becomes beguiled by Bianca's sweetness, and all wish to marry her. The play presents Bianca and Katherine competing for the affection of men, as Katherine displays her envy of Bianca for her admirers.

Katherine is aware of Bianca's charm and the effect it has on men, and because she has no suitors of her own, she shows her jealousy through violent acts. Katherine ties her sister's hands behind her back and demands to know "Whom thou lov'st best" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 48). When Bianca cannot choose, it offends Katherine, who states, "Her silence flouts me, and I'll be revenged" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 48). Katherine retaliates with violence, slapping Bianca across the face.

The sisters are also pitted against one another in regard to their relationship with their father. Katherine believes that Baptista holds a deeper affection for Bianca, stating, "She is your treasure, she must have a husband" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 49). Katherine believes that, because Baptista loves Bianca more, he will arrange Bianca's wedding and leave Katherine an unmarried woman to "lead apes in hell" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 49). Katherine and Bianca are sisters by blood, but they are isolated from one another and are presented as rivals. Their relationship never improves, despite the fact that they both become married women and occupy the same social role.

Jane Austen's *Emma* presents a narrative where female friendships have strict social conditions. *Emma* presents female bonding through marriage and highlights that marriage was a vital part of a woman's social existence because it guaranteed her social respect and community. The representation of female characters in *Emma* supports the idea that, during England's 18th and 19th century, "Marriage was often the only acceptable future" (Hall 2017, p. 37) for women. Emma perpetuates this marriage ideal, as she takes it upon herself to ensure that her friends are married to the rich and well-stationed gentlemen of Highbury. Emma asserts that Harriet Smith, a poor orphan and therefore unsuitable for the gentlemen of Highbury, should marry above her station. Despite Harriet's genuine interest in local farmer Robert Martin, Emma forces Harriet to refuse his proposal because he is not rich enough or of the right social standing. His home, at Abbey Mill Farm, is described by Emma as part of a society that is "illiterate and vulgar" (Austen 2017, p. 41). Emma outlines the conditions of their friendship by asserting that Mr Martin's social position would hinder Harriet's own social status and their friendship, stating, "You would have thrown yourself out of all good society. I must have given you up" (Austen 2017, p. 41).

Emma also illustrates what happens when a woman does not fit into the conventional role of wife, and shows that, by not marrying at all, women lose their communities and friends. Hetty Bates is presented as an old friend to Emma, her father and their neighbour Mr Knightley. After the death of her father and brother, a single Miss Bates and her mother live off the charity of others. She is presented as the town's pitiful spinster. She has lost everything, and because she is unmarried, will sink deeper into poverty. Whilst Miss Bates does not loathe her low social station or speak with ill will about herself or her life, her low social standing is shown to weaken her friendship with Emma. Emma believes "what is good and what is ridiculous are more unfortunately blended in her" (Austen 2017, p. 288). Mr Knightley addresses Emma's prejudices, stating, "She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to, and, if she lives to old age, must probably sink more. Her situation should secure your compassion" (Austen 2017, p. 288). Emma is shown to reject Hetty's friendship because she does not want to be associated with Hetty's low social status. Therefore, *Emma* presents female friendships as being the outcome of shared social positions, and shows that when women occupy different social standings, friendship is improper.

Les liaisons dangereuses represents female friendships as destructive, as the novel presents a narrative where women deceive other women to get what they want. The novel presents this through the friendship between the Marquise de Merteuil and Cécile de Volanges. When Merteuil is notified that Madame de Volanges has secretly arranged Cécile's wedding to the Comte de Gercourt, Merteuil sees it as an opportunity to use the innocent 15-year-old girl to seek revenge against her ex-lover, who cheated on and abandoned her. Merteuil hopes to use "his ridiculous prejudice in favour of convent-bred girls" (Laclos 2008, p. 12) against him, and devises a plan with her companion, the Vicomte de Valmont, to seduce the innocent Cécile and bed her before Gercourt is given the chance. Merteuil hopes that through this affair Gercourt will "become the talk of Paris" (Laclos 2008, p. 12). Merteuil gains the trust of Cécile by acting as an older, wiser teacher who educates her on the ways of life in French aristocratic society. When Cécile falls in love with her music instructor, Monsieur Danceny, Merteuil and Valmont pretend to help the two young lovers, but only to advance their plans of seduction and revenge. The pair orchestrate scenarios for Cécile and Danceny to communicate and meet up in secret. This is mostly through the sharing of love letters written to each other, but they also make a duplicate key to Cécile's room, which Danceny can use. Despite her immoral intentions, Merteuil seems to feel a sense of affection towards Cécile, as she states, "The child is adorable and I'm quite infatuated" (Laclos 2008, p. 41). However, her selfishness and her true disregard for Cécile are highlighted when it is revealed that Merteuil has taken Danceny as her lover. This situates the women as romantic rivals, though Danceny does not choose one woman over the other. Female friendships are represented as poisonous through the depiction of Merteuil and Cécile, as Merteuil's manipulation results in the direct collapse of Cécile's life. The novel conveys that female friendships are destructive, and that women are proficient at manipulating other women.

The relationships shared between female characters in many contemporary films "offer alternatives to women's complete dependence on men" (Hollinger 1998, p. 236–237). The value placed on female friendships, rather than romantic heterosexual romance, supports feminist notions that women can live independent from men. By the mid 1990s, the female friendship film had developed into its own cinematic form "that presents female bonding as a useful means of social integration" (Hollinger 1998, p. 208). In contemporary teen films, girls support each other "through the teaching of

female wisdom or the granting of a sympathetic ear” (Hollinger 1998, p. 8). In turn, “women in these works aid and sustain each other” (Hollinger 1998, 2011, p. 8). These representations convey that in the place of romance, female friendships can provide women with a sense of unity and support.

In contemporary cinema, female friendships are subtly shown to be entered into to meet the needs of an individual, showing that “The ideology of ‘sisterhood’ emphasized the power of women’s friendships to transform and validate the self” (Rose & Roades 1987, p. 243). Many teen film adaptations of canonical literature transform female literary figures from isolated rivals into supportive teenagers who help validate and support each other. Literary teen film adaptations such as *Clueless* and *10 Things I Hate about You* show that whilst female friendships satisfy the needs of a collective, they do so by first satisfying the needs of individuals. With the support of other girls, teen girl figures are able to live knowing that whatever trials and tribulations they experience, they will not suffer alone. Knowing they are safe and supported, they can unite with other girls and provide much needed help and support to them.

10 Things I Hate about You represents a positive female friendship that ensures individual social survival. *10 Things I Hate about You* represents female friendship as an essential part of Kat’s social existence. The film emphasises Kat’s unlikability, as she is described by her school peers as a “heinous bitch” (*10 Things I Hate about You* 1999). Although Kat reserves the social position as outsider by her own accord, her friendship with Mandella (Susan May Pratt), another high school girl who identifies with the ‘alternative’ subcultures, provides her with companionship. They share an affinity for literature, unconventional attire (Kat wears unfeminine clothing, and Mandella has a chic Elizabethan sense of style), and—their most marked similarity and point of connection—an interest in the female punk music scene. Through their friendship, Kat and Mandella support one another, and their kinship enables them to have active social lives. Even though they both identify as alternative high schoolers and avoid most of the social circles at school to their own accord, their friendship prevents them from wallowing in social isolation. Kat and Mandella’s friendship is essential to their lives as it validates their sense of self and fulfils their most basic need for companionship. This supports the ideology that female friendships are entered into to meet the needs of an individual.

Female friendships that mirror Kat and Mandella's relationship are represented in many contemporary teen films. *Lady Bird* is distinct from other female-centred teen films, as it is anti-fashion and anti-makeover, but like *10 Things I Hate about You*, the film highlights that female friendships have a collective dimension. The film represents a pair of female best friends who, like Kat and Mandella, support one another through their friendship and cultural pursuits. *Booksmart* is another contemporary example of a positive female friendship film that mirrors Kat and Mandella's friendship, as it presents a pair of female best friends who are outsiders, yet with a friendship that sustains their social lives.

The necessity of female support systems is also represented in *Clueless*. *Clueless* represents female friendships as crucial to the entire narrative, as the friendship of Cher (Alicia Silverstone) and Dionne (Stacey Dash) is shown to be essential to Cher's fulfilment. Cher and Dionne predominately bond over their shared interest in girl culture, specifically, fashion and celebrity culture. They share a deep affection for designer labels and striking fashion accessories, such as Dionne's wide-brimmed multicoloured hat, which Cher associates with Dr Seuss. They lounge poolside, watch the films of Christian Slater, and refer to one another as "girlfriend" (*Clueless* 1995).

Although part of the narrative of *Clueless* features girls trying to partner up with boys, the film "challenges the conventional notion of women being largely passive and dependent on men" (Berridge 2016, p. 18), and is "indicative of [writer/director] Heckerling's contribution to the teen genre, placing female perspectives, concerns, and relationships at the center of her work" (2016, p. 18). Cher is interested in her love life but, to a greater extent, she is interested in "friendships, family, cultural pursuits, self-improvement, and personal happiness" (Marghitu & Alexander 2016, p. 177). She may seek out romance, but Cher's loyalties are always shown to lie with Dionne. Cher seeks the counsel of Dionne throughout the film, first at school after receiving her grades. When Cher realises her true love for Josh (Paul Rudd), deeming herself "totally clueless" (*Clueless* 1995), she decides that she needs a makeover of the "soul" (*Clueless* 1995). Cher's point of reference when considering what makes someone a good person is her friends, because they "were really good in different ways" (*Clueless* 1995). She states that Dionne and her boyfriend, Murray (Donald Faison), are "so considerate of one another" (*Clueless* 1995), leading her to realise that in order to be a better person, she has to follow Dionne's example and consider others. As a result, she volunteers to bring

in donations for the Pismo Beach Disaster Relief. Cher uses her friendship with Dionne to fulfil her individual needs. Cher is validated by Dionne and fulfilled by her support and friendship. With the help of Dionne, Cher is shown to fulfil her longing to live a more meaningful life, showing that, for Cher, female friendships are an essential part of her life.

Cher's friendship with Dionne is mirrored in the contemporary teen film *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*. Like Cher and Dionne, the girls in this teen film depend on each other for support, and their friendship facilitates each girl's inner growth. Like *Clueless*, *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* also highlights that each girl's true loyalty lies with her friends, as the girls never abandon one another for love or other influences outside their friendship. This teen film follows the convention of contemporary cinema to represent girls as vital supporters in each other's lives.

Although these case studies show that contemporary cinema readily presents female friendships as positive, fulfilling and supportive, there are still screen depictions of teen girls in conflict with one another. Contemporary representations of female friendships can still be susceptible to conflict, and problems often arise when girls compete for the attention of boys and popularity. *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Clueless* represent girls in conflict with one another, but true to third wave feminist ideals of sisterhood and support, the conflicts presented do not define the characters or their narratives.

10 Things I Hate about You represents a sisterhood between Kat and Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) that is at first hostile but then develops into a supportive bond. Like the sisters in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Kat and Bianca's relationship is tense. "Bianca's relationship with Kat remains antagonistic through most of the film" (Bertucci 2014, p. 421), and this is shown to be due to their differing social positions. Whilst Kat angrily rejects all social customs, Bianca is hungry for gratification and interest from the opposite sex. Her main mission in the film is to date Joey (Andrew Keegan), a self-obsessed underwear model. Bianca's selfishness is highlighted in the film, as she lies to Cameron (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) about her intent with him and agrees to set Kat up on a date she believes will ultimately fail. This is all done to evade her father's rule that she may only date when Kat does. As the film progresses, it "begins to explore the possibility of a female solidarity" (Bertucci 2014, p. 421).

A change is marked in their relationship when Kat confides in Bianca that she dated Joey in 9th grade, lost her virginity to him, and was later dumped when she realised she was not ready to have sex again. This show of trust resolves the question that spurred most of their squabbling: Why does Kat refuse to date? This is the root of their antagonism, as Kat's decision inadvertently prevents Bianca from dating. After revealing this information, Bianca and Kat begin to act in ways to protect and support one another. Kat agrees to go to the school dance so that Bianca can go, and at the school dance, Bianca knocks Joey to the ground in retaliation for his past actions stating, "that's for my sister" (*10 Things I Hate about You* 1999). After this dance, the girls are shown living more contentedly with one another. Bianca even asks Kat to go sailing with her. As Kat and Bianca restore their relationship, *10 Things I Hate about You* follows the norm of many contemporary teen films to represent girls as essential supporters in each other's lives. This character development also highlights that it is not the sisters' hostility that defines the film's narrative but their bond.

Clueless represents a female friendship that, although mostly beneficial, does have its times of weakness. Just like *Emma*, *Clueless* portrays social place as a key determinant of friendship. Through this representation, the film addresses the issue of girls not getting along with other girls, conveying that it is usually due to competition for boys and social place. Cher and Tai (Brittany Murphy) are part of a world in which cliques define people's status. There are constant depictions of social groups, each holding a distinct place in the school's social hierarchy. Bronson Alcott High School is made up of the AV club, the Persian mafia, the 'Loadies' and the popular boys, who also form part of Cher's gang. Each group has a highly selective process for accepting members, which mirrors the highly selective social system of Highbury. When Tai assimilates from her social poverty to Cher's high social status, she takes over Cher's social power. Cher's jealousy is heightened when Tai expresses her interest in pursuing a romance with Josh. This declaration sparks a quarrel, in which Cher states that Tai would not "mesh well" (*Clueless* 1995) with Josh, his being an adult college student completely outside their teen world. Tai reacts, stating, "Why am I even listening to you to begin with? You're a virgin who can't drive" (*Clueless* 1995). Tai labels Cher's opinion as unfounded because of Cher's lack of romantic experience, which earlier in the film, was a statement made without judgement. Shortly after their falling out, the girls reconcile, stating that their unsupportiveness of each other sent them down a "shame spiral" (*Clueless* 1995). The

girls make it evident that their friendship is deeply important to them, and that they are only happy when they have a strong alliance.

Some teen films challenge the importance of female support systems and comradery by presenting instances where conflicts cannot be reconciled. Such representations are not exclusive to 90s teen films, however, as there is a history of girls not getting along in the wider teen film genre. Driscoll (2011) traces representations of female animosity to the 1980s. She argues that the teen films of John Hughes represent relationships between girls that are “generally negative or peripheral” (Driscoll 2011, p. 57). Female characters in his films can sometimes get along with one another, like Claire (Molly Ringwald) and Allison (Ally Sheedy) in *The Breakfast Club* (1985), but usually Hughes’s female protagonists are loners like Samantha Baker (Molly Ringwald) in *Sixteen Candles* (1984), or share significant friendships with boys, like Andie Walsh (Molly Ringwald) in *Pretty in Pink* (1986). Although Andie does share a female friendship with Iona (Annie Potts), an adult woman she works for, this pair of friends are not each other’s peers, and their friendship does not detract from the fact that Andie is antagonised by the girls at her school.

These types of adverse relationships between girls amplified in the 1990s, as manipulative female friendship films emerged (Hollinger 1998, p. 208). Manipulative female friendship films were created as a backlash against feminism (Hollinger 1998, p. 207). In these films, the strength of female friendships comes into question as, more often than not, female friendships break down and cannot be repaired. Manipulative female friendship films reflect sexist stereotypes that girls cannot get along with other girls, usually because they rival each other in romance, social position or appearance. Manipulative female friendship films eschew the convention in pro-female friendship films that presents “relationships between women as a source of strength that helps them to cope with the problems they face in the larger society” (Hollinger 1998, p. 212). They do so by blaming “all of women’s problems on other women” (Hollinger 1998, p. 212). Films such as *The Craft* (1996) and *Jawbreaker* (1999) are examples of manipulative female friendship films as they present their female characters as Queen Bee wannabees who compete with other girls and blame their shortcomings and mistakes on each other.

One of the most problematic representations of female friendships in contemporary cinema is depicted in *Cruel Intentions*, as the conflict that sets the female characters apart is never resolved, nor is there any effort to resolve it. As the girl figures in the film treat one another so poorly it borders on being heartless, *Cruel Intentions* is a prominent example of a 90s manipulative female friendship film. *Cruel Intentions* represents female friendships as fake and devious, reflecting the manipulative female friendship film that “portrays a destructive female relationship that mocks the possibility of women’s forming the bonds of loyalty and affection that characterise other female friendship portrayals” (Hollinger 1998, p. 207). The film stays true to the narrative of its literary original, in that the narrative sees the Merteuil figure, Kathryn, seek the help of Sebastian to seduce the young and impressionable Cecile (Selma Blair). Kathryn is the ultimate teen mean girl whose hope, as depicted in the novel, is to take revenge on her ex-lover, Court Reynolds, who now has eyes for Cecile. Kathryn blames Cecile for Court’s past affair, deciding that revenge will be taken out on her, instead of him. Kathryn bonds with Cecile by imitating a genuine friend. She pretends to be someone with whom Cecile can voice her deep feelings and talk openly about relationships. Although Cecile sees Kathryn as a true friend, Kathryn’s dislike of Cecile is highlighted as she calls her a “fucking idiot” (*Cruel Intentions* 1999). Cecile learns kissing techniques from Kathryn, and even confides in her about her late-night tryst with Sebastian. Kathryn is purely imitating a friend to achieve her own malicious goal, and this is shown when Kathryn tells Cecile, “My advice is to sleep with as many people as possible” (*Cruel Intentions* 1999). Kathryn knows that if this behaviour were to be made public, Cecile’s life would be ruined, and her desire for revenge would be satisfied.

Kathryn manipulates Cecile to fulfil her own malevolent plans but, unlike the novel, this leads directly to Cecile’s retaliation, and Kathryn’s downfall. When Sebastian dies, leaving his journal to Annette, she and Cecile plan to reveal Kathryn’s true nature. Annette employs Kathryn’s own tactics, pretending to be a sympathetic ear in order to hide her true intentions. She presents herself as a school peer Kathryn can voice her sorrow and pain to; as Annette tells her, “I’m here if you need a friend” (*Cruel Intentions* 1999). The truth is that Annette plans to hand out copies of Sebastian’s journal around school to bring Kathryn’s malice to light. Cecile is the figure who hands Kathryn her own copy, marking the end of Kathryn’s reign. Although the depiction of Annette and Cecile

working together mirrors the sentiments of female comradery⁵, the fact that they destroy Kathryn, another girl, strengthens the film's anti-female friendship message that women need "to beware of and fear one another" (Hollinger 1998, p. 207). *Cruel Intentions* mocks the possibility for girls to share supportive relationships with one another by showing Kathryn, Cecile and Annette masquerading as friends, while plotting to destroy one another's lives.

Manipulative female friendship films "often rejuvenate antiquated stereotypical representations of female relationships from woman's films of the 1930s and 1940s" (Hollinger 1998, p. 207). Rather than presenting female friendships as alternatives to romance and family life, manipulative female friendship films "reaffirm strongly the primary importance of husband and family in women's lives" (Hollinger 1998, p. 212). These romantic relationships highlight antiquated gender roles and strengthen the notion that women are dependent on men for acceptance and fulfilment.

In the teen film genre, endings are usually marked as happy when girls enter into heterosexual relationships. There is nothing overtly oppressive in such endings, as the teen girl usually makes the decision to enter into a relationship for genuine love, but many teen films suggest that girls are dependent on men for romantic companionship. The representation of heterosexual romances in these films undercut feminist ideals surrounding the value and importance of sisterhood and independence from men.

In *10 Things I Hate about You*, Kat's father dictates the love lives of his daughters, banning dating and normal teenage activities. The teenage boys at Kat's school also dictate her and her sister's relationships. The boys succeed in freeing Bianca for a relationship only by tricking Kat into developing genuine feelings for Patrick (Heath Ledger). When Kat learns of their scheme, she breaks up with Patrick, but she suffers with feelings of unease and sadness. Rather than lean on the support of her sister and friend, Kat sinks into sadness. To heal her sorrow, the film presents Kat seeking reconciliation with Patrick, thus showing Kat's dependence on him. She extends an olive branch when she delivers a speech to class, detailing all the things she hates about Patrick in the form of a Shakespearean sonnet. This speech mirrors Katherine's own speech of submission, not by its wording, but by what it represents. Katherine's speech

⁵ In that the girls work together to solve an issue that hinders them.

marks her turn from a wild shrew to a tamed woman who gives up her sovereignty, submitting to her husband's rule. Kat's emotional speech details her disappointment in Patrick, yet she emphasises her love for him, and she conveys that although Patrick has wronged her, she forgives him. Patrick does not apologise for his wrongdoings, and rather than accepting responsibility for his actions, the blame and torment fall onto an innocent Kat. Kat's speech shows that she is dependent on him, because without his forgiveness, she cannot rid herself of the shame and sadness that is the result of Patrick's behaviour. The pair, like their literary counterparts, solidify their union, and display Kat's dependence on Patrick with a kiss⁶.

In *Clueless*, Cher and Josh's relationship is founded on the idea that Josh protects Cher. Their relationship begins just as the film concludes, and there is, therefore, no falling out or reclamation of love. Josh's position as Cher's protector is highlighted after Cher is saddened by the accusation that she is ruining her father's lawsuit. Josh sticks up for her, highlighting that he fights Cher's battles. Josh is also shown to have control over Cher's autonomy, as he takes it away from her during their first kiss. After Josh confesses his true affection for Cher, Cher attempts to playfully hit his shoulder but is instead caught in his arms and kissed. The fact that he initiates their romance signifies, again, that he has control over Cher's autonomy. As they kiss, Cher's voice-over states, "Well, you can guess what happened next" (*Clueless* 1995), and the scene changes to show a bride and groom standing at an altar. After a moment of silence, Cher states, "As If! I'm only sixteen and this is California, not Kentucky" (*Clueless* 1995), pointing out that unlike their adult literary counterparts, Cher and Josh are not getting married. A future wedding is implied, as Cher catches the bride's bouquet and kisses Josh whilst holding the flowers. This scene mirrors Emma and Mr Knightley's union, and conveys that, like Emma, Cher will depend on Josh's protection and guidance in her future.

Cruel Intentions suggests that girls are dependent on heterosexual romances because heterosexual relationships provide girls with true support and ensure girls live contentedly. *Cruel Intentions* prioritises romance over friendship, as instead of supporting the other victims of Sebastian and Kathryn's games when the truth is revealed, Annette is shown driving Sebastian's car from the scene. This is a significant

⁶ In the play, the kiss is not visualised, but after Katherine's speech, Petruchio exclaims "kiss me, Kate" (Shakespeare 2004, p. 101).

moment in the film because it shows Annette idealising Sebastian and their relationship. Being absent for the reveal of Sebastian and Kathryn's past indiscretions, Annette overlooks the pain Sebastian caused. This keeps Annette's image of Sebastian as her misunderstood love alive in her mind. As Annette drives Sebastian's beloved car into the sunset, she is symbolically with him. The sunset can be seen to represent a new beginning for Annette, but it also conveys that Annette and Sebastian's love is everlasting, and Annette will always depend on it for comfort.

The positive female friendships depicted in the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this chapter support notions of feminism and the importance of sisterhood and comradeship. However, as female friendships can be susceptible to conflict, and heterosexual romances can also be represented as intrinsic to female life, the value of sisterhood is undermined. By presenting heterosexual romances in a positive light, the teen films I have discussed in this chapter support traditional patriarchal ideologies that assert that women are reliant on men to provide them with genuine companionship and happiness. However, as these representations occur simultaneously, they convey that strength through sisterhood and the need for male support are not mutually exclusive. These films show that girls can support each other and reflect feminism, but at the same time, they can also be dependent on the support they receive through their romantic heterosexual relationships.

Chapter 3: Costume adaptation from text to screen: representing gender performance and social value through costume

When adapting a literary text that is set centuries in the past into a contemporary teen film, one of the most noticeable stylistic changes is costumes. Costumes, and the emphasis that is placed on them, function in many canonical works of literature and their teen film adaptations to represent social and cultural conceptions of the figures of woman and girl. When costumes are adapted from literary text to teen film adaptation, they highlight how representations of female social value and gender conceptions have transformed through time and context. They also function as markers of female social value, economic value and inform gender performance.

Female figures from many canonical literary works, as well as teen girl figures in contemporary teen film adaptations, live within tight social constraints where their costumes must coincide with conventional conceptions of the female gender. The costumes presented in canonical literature highlight, in particular, female physiology, fertility and nurturing ability, signifying that female gender performance was enacted by stepping into the domestic identity. Some costumes depicted in canonical literature also highlight women's positions in the workforce. Costuming in contemporary literary teen film adaptations is still gendering, but it constructs and signifies female gender in significantly different ways.

The costumes depicted in some literary teen film adaptations highlight female economic value and signify that contemporary female gender performances are often enacted through consumerism. There are feminist connotations to this contemporary gender performance, because when girls perform their gender through consumption, they are expressing their individual economic value. This method of gender performance is not always straightforward, however. Gender performances can be rendered ineffective if girls are unable to shop because of a lack of economic value. Capitalist institutions, like consumerism, also convey that consumption is the path to becoming 'beautiful'. Beauty, as defined by the beauty myth (Wolf 1990), is a central characteristic and defining quality of the female gender. In believing this myth, women are influenced to perform their gender through consumerism, which suggests consumption is their path to beauty. However, there is more to this idea of beauty, and although there are connotations to

feminism through this form of gender performance, consumption and the beauty myth actually undermine female freedoms. In believing this capitalist ideal and engaging in this type of gender performance, teen girls' shopping is not an entirely autonomous activity; they shop because they have to attain beauty in order to be seen as female.

In this chapter, I argue that while it can be empowering to see teen girl figures initiating gender performance through consumption and earning social value through their costumes, girls are also influenced by capitalist forces, like the beauty myth, when deciding what to wear, which means they are not entirely using their agency to dress themselves and demonstrate their identity.

This chapter analyses Jane Austen's *Emma*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, as each text uses costume to highlight a woman's conditioned social role. Their use of costume, and its function, will then be compared to that in contemporary teen film adaptations of these works. In these literary works, beauty is shown to be crafted with costume, as beauty norms are intricately related to the way costumes are signified. In *The Scarlet Letter* and *Pygmalion*, costume is described in great detail. The colours, patterns, garment silhouettes, fabrics and threads are described in meticulous detail. This is done to highlight the value of a woman's appearance, and the importance of women appearing in ways that coincide with beauty ideals.

This chapter also analyses these texts' teen film adaptations, *Clueless*, *Easy A* and *She's All That*, and the changes in how costuming is signified from canonical literary text to teen screen adaptation. These films similarly present costume as essential to representing female social value. In contrast to written novels and play scripts, cinema visualises costume, and so it is an explicit element of any film.

The costumes depicted in *Pygmalion* highlight the position of women in the workforce, and they show that beauty directly impacts a woman's suitability for employment. In *Emma*, costumes are not described in as much detail. There are mentions of garments, but their descriptions are not as nuanced as for the costumes depicted in *The Scarlet Letter* and *Pygmalion*. This is not a lapse in the narrative, however. The lack of importance placed on the costumes in *Emma* indicates that, in its time, looking

‘beautiful’ was not the ultimate virtue of female life. The novel’s representation of the virtues of female life will be discussed further in my analysis of the novel.

Costumes are but one part of gender performance. In these literary works, physiology, behaviour and gestures also form part of gender performance. In *The Scarlet Letter*, motherhood is shown to make Hester ‘woman’, and in *Pygmalion* and *Emma*, being wives and/or mothers is shown to define women as their gender. In being represented as ‘beautiful’ and domestic, the female figures in these select texts are depicted living conventional female lives and performing their gender. Depending on how successfully these performances reflect gender conceptions, these female figures are either attributed with social value, or it is taken away.

Clueless, *She’s All That* and *Easy A* are teen film adaptations of canonical literature that revise depictions of female life in their literary sources and re-define what conventional female life is and how gender performance is enacted in contemporary society. Instead of valuing female domesticity as a traditional female characteristic, these teen film adaptations value physical beauty as an essential characteristic of contemporary female life. They also show that in order to perform their gender as traditional gender norms dictate, girls must consume. Beauty is socially coded, yet in these literary teen film adaptations, it is presented as a physical and objective quality. In these films, it is based on a girl character’s ability to aesthetically please the senses of the people around her with the costumes she wears. One thing that remains the same from literary text to teen film adaptation is that depending on how well teen girls perform their gender and adhere to capitalist ideologies, they are either rewarded with social value, or it is taken away.

Costume is a vital part of the adaptation process of any text to screen adaptation (Gibson & McDonald 2012, p. 295), as costumes ground viewers in the time period being presented. Depending on genre, costume is used to achieve different affects. In historical screen adaptations, costumes are used to recreate the past and represent a sense of realism. Such adaptations also show fidelity to their originals by re-creating the costumes depicted in text. This is not an imperative for contemporary teen film adaptations, as contemporary teen adaptations do not seek to recreate the past. In contemporising costume, teen film adaptations show fidelity to contemporary fashion, which helps to firmly establish setting and context in the ‘now’.

The function of costume is shaped by genre. In genres that present character archetypes, costume must allow for specific functions. For instance, the science fiction and superhero genre must present their characters in suits that allow for combat and, sometimes, gadgetry. Costumes are not only important when establishing setting and context (Gibson & McDonald 2012, p. 310), as they “offer illuminating insights into the characters” (2012, p. 299). Personality, economic status and social status are all conveyed through costume. In genres that explore character psychology, costume is used to reveal hidden aspects of characters and their personality. Costumes also play a key role in the “construction of gender codes and expectations” (Street 2001, p. 3), as “In classical Hollywood cinema, great emphasis was placed on female costuming as intimately related to sexual attractiveness” (2001, p. 3) and “gratifying the male gaze” (2001, p. 3). The signification of female costumes as sexual and gratifying to the male gaze still remain in contemporary cinema. Costume is also essential when conveying the social place of characters, as costumes “visually establish the range of one’s authority, determining the wearer’s social power in relation to everyone else appearing in different clothes” (Lublin 2013, p. 242).

Costumes can convey different values. Consider, for instance, the way that *Clueless* emphasises the fashion label. *Clueless* conveys that fashion labels are available to all girls and that a bit of guidance and money is all that is needed to gain access to them. It also suggests that guidance and money are readily available to the upper middle class of Beverly Hills. Its literary original, *Emma*, similarly represents commodity through the purchasing of a specific label. The town store is Fords, and it is a central meeting place in Highbury. Fords is not exclusive to the rich and well-stationed members of Highbury, as the farmer Robert Martin is shown shopping there. It is also a place where the low-born, poor pupil of Mrs Goddard, Harriet Smith, takes her business and was “tempted by everything” (Austen 2017, p. 178), “hanging over muslins and changing her mind” (2017, p. 178). Fords is also where Frank Churchill purchases a pair of gloves to boost his reputation and prove himself “to be a true citizen of Highbury” (Austen 2017, p. 153). Both *Emma* and *Clueless* convey that fashion is available to all, but while *Clueless* emphasises the importance of shopping as an activity, *Emma* emphasises the importance of buying from a brand, specifically Fords.

When considering how costumes are re-imagined from text to screen, it becomes clear that the changes in costume and appearance reflect shifts in female social value, economic value and gender conceptions. But no matter if women appear in 19th century empire dresses, and girls appear in mini-skirts and crop tops, costumes inform gender performance. Costumes may change through the adaptation process, but performances of gender continue through time.

Costume is integral to gender performance, but in order for it to be effective in this regard, it needs to be part of a broader cluster of behaviours. Although Bruzzi (1997, p. 167) states that “Clothes are always performative in that they function as signs or enactments on the body to give that body the illusion of integrity and substance”, clothes alone do not enable gender performance. Wearing a costume and adorning oneself is a behaviour and performance, but in order to fully accomplish a gender performance, one has to master appearance, mannerisms and gestures (Butler 1988, p. 519). Costume can subvert the guise, whereby it undermines the gender performance one is trying to accomplish.

One of the most well-known representations of gender performance in Hollywood classical cinema that undermines the guise is in *Some Like It Hot* (1959). In the film, Joe (Tony Curtis) and Jerry (Jack Lemmon) masquerade as members of an all-female jazz band. They adorn themselves in sparkly cocktail dresses, high heels, wigs, makeup and jewellery to look like women, but their behaviours and mannerisms do not match those of women. The men struggle to move like women. They stumble and trip on their heels and question how women keep their balance. When they first see Sugar Cane (Marilyn Monroe), they are astonished by the way she carries herself. Jerry exclaims “Look at that! Look how she moves” (*Some Like It Hot* 1959). This moment in *Some Like It Hot* highlights how costume does not enable gender performance: it is only part of it.

Performance is multi-layered, and looking the part does not mean being instinctively able to perform and project as that particular gender. In the context of canonical literature, a woman figure’s value is determined by costume, but she must also behave in ways that present her nurturing abilities and level of domesticity. In many teen film adaptations, the value of a teen girl figure is also determined by costume, but she must engage in the act of consumption to first select her costume. This shows that while

performances of gender continue through time, the ways in which women and girls perform changes in different historical contexts.

Judith Butler is a prominent gender theorist whose work has spanned decades. Her work typically investigates issues surrounding gender, sexism and feminism. One of her most influential articles is 'Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory' (1988). In this article, Butler dispels the myth that gender is natural and inborn by exploring how it is socially constructed and coded. Butler (1988, p. 520) states that, through actions and behaviour, "the body comes to bear cultural meanings". Therefore, "gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo" (Butler 1988, p. 520). Butler (1988, p. 522) draws on Simone de Beauvoir's claim that "'woman' is a historical idea and not a natural fact". She states:

To be female is, according to that distinction, a facticity which has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have *become* a woman, to compel the body to conform to an historical idea of 'woman', to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialise oneself in obedience to an historically delimited possibility, and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project (Butler 1988, p. 522).

In her article 'Contemporary representations of the female body: consumerism and the normative discourse of beauty', Venera Dimulescu (2015) supports Butler's understanding of gender as a concept that becomes actualised when the body submits to cultural norms. She states that "What makes Butler's argument sustainable is her account about the process of internalizing disciplinary practices that makes the body natural" (Dimulescu 2015, p. 513). She also concurs that "The body becomes natural by its submission to the normative symbolic order and so it is forced into becoming real" (Dimulescu 2015, p. 513). Female physiological abilities like reproduction and birthing have cultural meanings and are, therefore, examples of biological practices that actualise the female gender. Historically, women have been governed in the domestic space. The traditional gender roles were shaped within these spaces "as practices of the physiological heritage where fertility and nurturing skills were considered to be two necessary conditions to be a woman" (Dimulescu 2015, p. 506). This ultimately meant that to be a woman, one had to be a mother (Dimulescu 2015 p. 506). The act of childbirth is, therefore, an instance where the female body conforms to the historical

idea of “woman as reproductive force and object in the preserving power of the social institution of the family” (Dimulescu 2015, p. 507). Thus, when women become mothers and occupy domestic roles, they are performing their gender.

Motherhood and wifehood are presented in many canonical literary texts as socially enforced positions for women. To occupy these positions is to follow traditional gender ideals that assert that a woman’s social place is in the home. Many canonical literary texts show that women must adhere to traditional norms of the female gender in order to assimilate into these roles. A woman’s level of physical attractiveness is often shown to impact a woman’s ability to step into the roles of wife and mother, as beauty has long been valued as a defining quality of womanhood.

A traditional characteristic of the female body is physical beauty, and beauty is often shown to be contingent on costume. Although Dimulescu (2015, p. 507) claims that “during the first decades of the 19th century, women’s physical appearance became an object of documentation and admiration”, women’s behaviour and appearance would have been regulated since ancient times. According to Wolf (2002, p. 129), women have been encouraged since ancient Rome and the Middle Ages to strive for beauty because it was connected to religion. Forms of regulation expanded in the 19th century, however, as the beauty index was invented in the 1830s and the first photographs of naked prostitutes were taken in the 1840s (Wolf 1990, p. 5). Therefore, women’s physical appearance and society’s perception of beauty have long been valued and considered as defining qualities of womanhood. Costume emphasises the female body and helps female figures fulfil notions of beauty. Costumes function in this way because beauty is socially and culturally coded. Beauty is not physical or sexual; it is defined by political, social and cultural factors (Wolf 1990, pp. 2–3). Furthermore, costume is often shown in canonical literature and contemporary teen film adaptations to craft beauty. When women are deemed ‘beautiful’, it is acknowledgment that they have cultivated themselves to satisfy the ideals of the female gender that society creates and endorses. Since beauty is seen to be a traditional characteristic of the female gender, being ‘beautiful’ plays a role in gender performance.

In many works of canonical literature, versions of female life are presented where value is placed on a woman’s physiology and domesticity, but also on beauty. Costume can be used to represent both female domesticity and beauty. *The Scarlet Letter* uses costume

to emphasise the beauty in motherhood, and *Pygmalion* uses costume to highlight the necessity for women to be refined in order to be seen as attractive, enter the workforce and live a conventional domestic life. *Emma*, on the other hand, purposefully overlooks costume and represents female domesticity through depictions of motherhood and wifehood. When women figures perform their gender according to traditional gender conceptions (being mothers, wives and beautiful), they are shown to earn social value. This is a form of reward for performing gender well, and it “provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all” (Butler 1988, p. 528).

Alternatively, when gender performances are found “contesting the script by performing out of turn or through unwarranted improvisations” (Butler 1988, p. 531), there are punishments. These punishments can be obvious and indirect (Butler 1988, p. 528).

Jane Austen’s *Emma* represents gender performances through female domesticity and beauty. Jane Austen’s 1815 novel represents the dualities of female life in the Regency period, where domesticity and beauty were defining qualities of womanhood. The novel places great importance on women’s nurturing abilities and level of natural beauty but pays little attention to how clothes help women become more attractive. There are only passing mentions of the ribbons, gowns and muslins worn by the female characters. This could be a strategy of Austen’s to highlight that the most interesting trait of her female characters is not their appearance but their personalities, mannerisms and behaviours. This could also be a strategy to convey that while beauty and appearance are important, they are not the most important aspects of 19th century female life.

In the novel, the title character lives a domestic life. She is described as “handsome” (Austen 2017, p. 3), but her domestic roles are highlighted as the most important aspects of her life. Emma is a well to do, head-strong character who has been afforded some of the “best blessings of existence” (Austen 2017, p. 3). However, she is the leading caretaker of her sickly father, Mr Woodhouse, and because of her mother’s early death and sister’s marriage, she had “been mistress of his house from a very early period” (Austen 2017, p. 3). She finds herself guiding her father through social interactions and excusing his eccentricities, such as his fear of food and weather. She is responsible not only for nurturing him and caring for his health, but for looking after their household in general. This familial relationship places Emma as the mother figure, living a domestic life with the responsibility of caring for her child, Mr Woodhouse.

Austen's novel also depicts Harriet Smith, whose physical appearance is shown to be her greatest asset. Harriet is described as "a very pretty girl" (Austen 2017, p. 17), who is "short, plump and fair, with a fine bloom, blue eyes, light hair, regular features and a look of great sweetness" (2017, p. 17). It is significant that Harriet's beauty is described as natural and inborn, as the novel was written during the early years of the Industrial Revolution, a time when "material constraints on women were dangerously loosened" (Wolf 1990, p. 4), and fashion and beauty products were being produced on a mass scale. Rather than something crafted through the use of newly available fashion and beauty products, beauty is defined by the novel as physiological. Despite Harriet's description as 'beautiful', she is the parlour boarder of the local boarding school, an orphan, and penniless. She has no currency, yet her 'beauty' is thought by Emma to be her main source of capital, and the most important quality for finding a husband. Although Mr Knightley believes that proper gentlemen look for more than pretty faces, Emma believes that Harriet's 'beauty' and temper are "the highest claims a woman could possess" (Austen 2017, p. 49). She states that Harriet's 'beauty' is not trivial,

for she is, in fact, a beautiful girl, and must be thought so by ninety-nine people out of a hundred, and till it appears that men are much more philosophic on the subject of beauty than they are generally supposed; till they do fall in love with well-informed minds instead of handsome faces, a girl with such loveliness as Harriet has a certainty of being admired and sought after, of having the power of choosing from among many (Austen 2017, p. 49).

Despite Emma's sentiments, beauty is not the only quality that the men of Highbury seek in women or admire about them. In the 19th century world Austen depicts, intelligence, life experience and coming from an honourable family are qualities gentlemen seek out in women. Mr Knightley demonstrates this, as he states,

Miss Harriet Smith may not find offers of marriage flow in so fast, though she is a very pretty girl. Men of sense, whatever you may choose to say, do not want silly wives. Men of family would not be very fond of connecting themselves with a girl of such obscurity—and most prudent men would be afraid of the inconvenience and disgrace they might be involved in, when the mystery of her parentage came to be revealed (Austen 2017, p. 49).

This observation demonstrates that although beauty is an important quality of female life and a form of gender performance, it does not solely define the female gender in the

context of Regency England. Harriet's silliness, lack of life experience and unknown parentage position her as inferior to most men, and even though her 'beauty' is acknowledged by many, it is not enough to attract the respectable gentleman Emma envisaged for her. Harriet does, however, accept the proposal of Robert Martin after Emma and Mr Knightley's engagement is revealed. It is shown in the novel that Robert Martin loves Harriet for all that she is: silliness, social inferiority and all. Harriet is finally shown to become 'woman' after she marries Robert Martin, as by becoming his wife, she conforms to the historical expectation that women should reside in the domestic sphere. However, her 'beauty' is not the only quality that attracted Mr Martin. *Emma* shows that, in the context of Regency England, costume and beauty are not essential qualities in becoming 'woman'. To become 'woman', Austen shows that her female characters must be honourable or possess personable traits, as this helps them become wives and mothers.

The Scarlet Letter represents conventional female characteristics, like nurturing ability and motherhood, as divine and 'beautiful'. The novel also represents 'beauty' through the description of appearance and costume. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* represents Hester as a divine mother. The novel represents Puritan Boston in 1638 and, as such, depicts a colony that firmly believes that sex should be restricted to marriage. The Puritans' "sad-coloured garments and grey, steeple-crowned hats (Hawthorne 2016, p. 45), as well as hoods for women (2016, p. 45), draw little attention to physical appearance, which indicates a desire from the Puritans to strip away their sexuality, remain chaste, and render themselves only as God's people.

Hester Prynne, the novel's protagonist, breaks these sacred rules by engaging in an extramarital affair. She becomes pregnant, bears a child, and is forced to stitch a scarlet 'A' on her bosom to identify her as an adulterer. However, as the third-person omniscient narrator states, the image of Hester with her lovechild is not evil. As Hester stands with Pearl, she is described as being "a figure of perfect elegance" (Hawthorne 2016, p. 50). Her dark hair is "so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam" (Hawthorne 2016, p. 50–51), and her face, "beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes" (2016, p. 51). Never, until this moment, "had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like" (Hawthorne 2016, p. 51). This image of Hester holding her baby conveys that it

is motherhood that emphasises her physical appearance and makes her the most ladylike she has ever been. Hawthorne also uses Hester to argue that motherhood is divine, regardless of the circumstances. In the first few chapters of the novel, Hawthorne compares the image of Hester holding her baby to the image of the Virgin Mary. He states:

Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of Divine Maternity (Hawthorne 2016, p. 53).

Hawthorne conveys through the character of Hester that the greatest virtue of female life is a woman's physiological ability to become a mother. Through his descriptions of appearance and costume, Hawthorne shows that while these are important aspects of womanhood, motherhood is what truly makes women 'beautiful'. Whilst *The Scarlet Letter* represents motherhood as the ultimate female virtue, other works of literature show that physical beauty is the greatest asset a woman can possess, and that beauty is crafted with costume.

George Bernard Shaw represents 'beauty' through costume and shows that 'beauty' is a necessity for the professional and personal livelihoods of women in his play *Pygmalion*. The play also represents the punishments of performing "through unwarranted improvisations" (Butler 1988, p. 531). Eliza Doolittle is portrayed as a poor, uneducated Cockney flower girl. Eliza mirrors the real working women of the early 20th century, "who had no special skill or technical training" (Pinchbeck 2004, p. 293), as she earns a dismal sum selling flowers in the streets of London. Her dream is to move out of alleys and become the shopkeeper of a proper flower shop. However, her appearance is shown to limit her professional potential. She wears a dusty straw hat, "shoddy black coat" (Shaw 2003, p. 11), "a brown skirt with a coarse apron" (2003, p. 11), and a pair of boots "much the worse for wear" (2003, p. 11). Her hair is described as a "mousy colour" (Shaw 2003, p. 11) and in need of a wash, her facial features are "no worse" (2003, p. 11) than the other ladies, but she "needs the services of a dentist" (2003, p. 11). Professor Henry Higgins punishes Eliza for her off-putting appearance, ridiculing her with phrases like a "squashed cabbage leaf" (Shaw 2003, p. 18). Whilst she believes that she is "a good girl" (Shaw 2003, p. 33) on account of her morality, the play shows that Eliza cannot be a good girl whilst she is dirty on the outside. This is highlighted when

Eliza is given a bath, and Mrs Pearce (Higgins's governess) tells her, "You know you can't be a nice girl inside if you're a dirty slut outside" (Shaw 2003, p. 36). Higgins also makes it clear that, after he is done with Eliza, her beauty will afford her a conventional female life, where she thinks of "chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds" (Shaw 2003, p. 33). He also tells Eliza:

you shall marry an officer in the Guards, with a beautiful moustache: the son of a marquis, who will disinherit him for marrying you, but will relent when he sees your beauty and goodness (Shaw 2003, p. 33).

Higgins explicitly identifies beauty as goodness, and after Eliza is changed into a Japanese kimono, her goodness seems to increase as Professor Higgins states that she has "risen in the world" (Shaw 2003, p. 50). Now that Eliza is 'beautiful', the prospect of a husband and a future as a proper flower-shop girl are not out of her reach.

Thus, *Pygmalion* shows that looking physically beautiful through costume is an important factor at that time in determining how women live their lives, because it relates specifically to marriage and becoming successful workers. Compared to literary texts like *Emma*, which values natural beauty over artificial beauty, and conveys that costumes and beauty do not play an essential role in assimilating women into the conventional roles of wife and mother, *Pygmalion* emphasises the ideal that the most important thing a woman can do is become 'beautiful' through costume, as only then can she become a domestic and earn social value.

When female social value "could no longer be defined as the attainment of virtuous domesticity" (Wolf 1990, p. 7), the beauty myth took over its social control (1990, p. 7). After the Industrial Revolution, the beauty myth rose to prominence in the minds of Western women, and "redefined a woman's primary social value as the attainment of virtuous beauty" (Wolf 1990, p. 7). This explains why *Pygmalion*, an early 20th century text, emphasises the idea that Eliza must attain beauty through clothes in order to be valued in society. The beauty myth is a falsehood that perpetuates the idea that beauty is a physical, innate quality. The beauty myth tells the story that beauty "objectively and universally exists" (Wolf 1990, p. 2). Beauty is "An imperative for women and not for men, it is necessary and natural because it is biological, sexual and evolutionary" (Wolf 1990, p. 2). Wolf (1990, p. 3) asserts that in contemporary American culture, none of this

is true. Beauty is not a natural quality; nor is it biological or sexual. Beauty is socially and culturally coded, as:

The qualities that a given period calls beautiful in women are merely symbols of the female behaviour that period considers desirable: *the beauty myth is always actually prescribing behaviour and not appearance* (Wolf 1990, p. 4).

The principal behaviour of the beauty myth is consumerism, as “The contemporary economy depends right now on the representation of women within the beauty myth” (Wolf 1990, p. 7). For instance, women are presented with imagery designed to make them question their own beauty and believe that the skin creams advertised as “holy oils” (Wolf 1990, p. 80) are the only things that will give them radiance and help them become more attractive. Consumption is, therefore, a social and cultural code of beauty, as it is presented as the only form of dedicated labour women can engage in to become ‘beautiful’. This shift in conceptions of beauty relates directly to costuming and lays the ideological ground for the analysis of select teen film adaptations.

Many literary teen film adaptations represent the falsehoods of the beauty myth. *Clueless*, *Easy A* and *She’s All That* represent beauty as a physical quality that is attainable by their teen girl figures when they present themselves in costumes that aesthetically please the senses of other people. *Clueless*, *Easy A* and *She’s All That* value aesthetics, and these films represent the notion that beauty is achievable through shopping, the behaviour deemed desirable in contemporary Western culture. It is through consumer practices like shopping that teen girls are shown to become ‘beautiful’, as in their shopping pursuits, teen girl figures arm themselves with costumes that are shown to make them aesthetically pleasing to others. In this way, costume is shown to craft beauty. Literary teen film adaptations like these show that, when girls live by the beauty myth and engage in consumerism and beauty culture, they can be labelled as ‘beautiful’ and be recognised as having performed their gender successfully. This representation also glorifies the beauty myth and consumption as a direct route to social significance.

Although some girl figures in the literary teen film adaptation genre conform to the expectation that they need to be consumers to be ‘beautiful’, the act of consumerism is often presented as feminist. Some of the teen girls presented in literary teen film adaptations are not shown to be mindless zombies who are conditioned to shop. They

are shown to actually enjoy shopping and see it as an activity where they can use their economic value to express themselves. Therefore, some teen film adaptations represent the idea that there is agency in shopping. Rather than seek beauty because politics and society have declared beauty parallel to wealth (Wolf 1990, p. 9), it is shown that the teen girl figures in *Clueless* and *Easy A* shop primarily to satisfy their own individual desires. By satisfying their desires through shopping, teen girl figures claim consumerism as an empowering feminine activity.

However, there is an underlying flaw in this feminist representation. Even if the shopping scenes in *Clueless* and *Easy A* are shown to satisfy a teen girl's desires, they still present girls becoming 'beautiful' only through consumption. Therefore, teen girl figures must shop in order to fulfil traditional conceptions of female beauty and be socially valued. In turn, these films support the notion that beauty is only reachable through consumption. These films extend the message that consumerism is the only path to beauty. This helps perpetuate the beauty myth and strengthen capitalism.

Clueless, the teen film adaptation of *Emma*, represents an entirely different version of female life from the novel. The film represents beauty as a vital quality of female life that is crafted through costume. Costume designer Mona May hand-made many of the girls' costumes in *Clueless* (Chaney 2015, p. 97) to reflect 90s fashion trends. Her designs are highly feminine, whimsical and made in various fabrics and colours, helping to distinguish the film's characters as rich and privileged Valley girls living in a hyperreal fashion and beauty world. Cher Horowitz, the film's Emma figure, is rich and privileged like her literary counterpart. She is privy to the latest trends in fashion and beauty, as she is shown using a computerised wardrobe that organises her attire into categories. Cher's love for consumption is repeatedly shown in the film. She is depicted at the mall four times, and each time, she is there for sustenance and enjoyment. After failing to talk her teacher into bringing up her grade, Cher states "I needed to find sanctuary in a place where I could gather my thoughts and regain my strength" (*Clueless* 1995). During her shopping trips, Cher quenches her thirst by purchasing clothes from Calvin Klein and Christian Dior, which mark her economic value and status.

The film's shopping scenes emphasise the notion that the mall is a girl's wonderland, a place of glamour, exploration, pleasure and fun⁷. As she has the money to buy these elite brands, Cher is considered to have the best wardrobe by her peers. She is, therefore, presented as the most popular girl at school. Cher's style is shown to make her someone who can be regarded as 'beautiful' because her costumes are shown to gratify the senses of her peers. Girls are shown to want to be like her, as Cher's school rival, Amber (Elisa Donovan), is shown wearing the same red dress Cher wore to school the previous day. Boys are also shown to want to date her. This is evident when Cher is depicted walking into school wearing a bright yellow plaid blazer and mini-skirt. As she walks, an unknown boy presumptuously wraps his arm around her, and she swiftly pushes him aside, shouting "Ugh! As if!" (*Clueless* 1995). Like Cher, this costume is feminine, and as this and all her other blazers "allude to corporate attire" (Speed 2017, p. 45), it displays her hefty social status. This kind of attention permits Cher to feel a sense of self-value, and it solidifies her internal belief that she is fashionable and popular.

Even when Cher attempts to focus on improving her inner self, her fashion sense does not change. She still shops and purchases colourful sweater sets and heels because "however 'clueless' she turns out to be, Cher's knowledge and taste are not dismissed" (Leppert 2014, p. 136). Her love of consumption and her fashion sense do not get lost amongst her humanitarian work because they are still important to her identity. Her consuming habits show off her economic value, and the clothes she wears help her to be seen as popular and 'beautiful' by her peers. However, consumption in *Clueless* is not entirely empowering to view. Through the representation of Cher, *Clueless* strengthens the capitalist ideal that consumption leads to beauty. It encourages female viewers to feel the need to shop in order to reach the same social heights as Cher. Therefore, the film represents a narrative that strengthens capitalism and the falsehoods of the beauty myth.

Easy A also represents the power of consumerism to construct identity, although it does not emphasise the mall as a girl's wonderland or present shopping as a calming, soothing ritual. After Olive (Emma Stone) is notified of her new status as "dirty skank"

⁷ This is represented in films such as *Confessions of a Shopaholic* (2009) and *Mean Girls*.

(*Easy A* 2010), she decides to “be the dirtiest skank they’d ever seen” (*Easy A* 2010). In order to do so, she is shown emptying the contents of her wardrobe and setting off to buy new clothes. She is not shown at the mall, but viewers see the culmination of her shopping experience, and her hefty economic value, when Olive walks into her bedroom with several bags of shopping and sets them down on her bed. As she does this, the camera focuses squarely on them, displaying the label ‘Guillaume’s of Ojai Fine Lingerie’. The fact that Olive selects pieces of lingerie suggests that her impression of skank-iness is based on fashion (Farrimond 2013, p. 52).

Mynka Draper, the film’s costume designer, designed Olive’s wardrobe. She curated a wardrobe consisting of jeans, singlet tops and cardigans to help establish Olive not as a beauty queen or nerd but as a normal teenage girl. In designing Olive’s new look, Draper used corsets and lingerie pieces to emphasise Olive’s change from normal teenage girl to the embodiment of heterosexual desire. Olive demonstrates through the use of lingerie pieces how gender is culturally constructed through appearance and “is instituted through the stylization of the body” (Butler 1988, p. 519). Olive’s corsets hug her figure, drawing in her stomach, and lace embellishments of fabric around her bust and waist create the impression that these features are wider, creating an hour-glass shape. A large red ‘A’ is stitched to Olive’s bosom, and as it sits against black fabric, it is a prominent feature of the outfit. Olive also wears a pair of tight black pants and accessorises with a pair of black sunglasses and a pearl necklace. Although she is not labelled as ‘beautiful’ by anyone in the film, her costumes are shown to attract the attention of her school peers. Her lingerie pieces please the senses of the boys at her school, and this is particularly evident when a group of them cannot take their eyes off her in the cafeteria lunch line. This attention, which is garnered by Olive’s costume, empowers her to use her sexually assertive alter ego to make a political statement about unfair sexual double standards.

The shopping scene presented in *Easy A* reinforces the beauty myth as it represents beauty as being the product of Olive’s dedicated labour. The importance of shopping is highlighted in the film, as it shows that Olive’s shopping is really what transforms her into the image of “a sexually assertive subject for whom physical beauty is a form of empowerment” (Dimulescu 2015, p. 507).

Beauty is often shown to be an issue of class. How much money one has determines how many beauty products one can buy. Beauty products do not equal beauty, but since the beauty myth prescribes the behaviour of consumption, rather than appearance (Wolf 1990, p. 4), and the economy depends on women playing a key role in the beauty myth (1990, p. 7), women are sent the message that they must shop in order to find the costumes that allow them to be considered 'beautiful'. Whilst those with great economic status can spend thousands on designer brands, makeup and even cosmetic surgeries, those who are not as financially comfortable may only be able to afford clothes from bargain bins.

Teen films often connect money to beauty and represent the rich girl as the 'beautiful' girl. The rich girl (like Cher Horowitz from *Clueless*) usually has a wardrobe full of brand new, high fashion ensembles and her very own makeup desk. Working class girls, or girls who live in the middle class, are often presented as unfortunate souls because they have no economic value to exercise. They are 'ugly ducklings' not because their genetic attributes are deemed unpleasant but because they are cut off from the world of consumerism, and therefore, from becoming 'beautiful'. With no access to consumption, these girls cannot perform their gender through consumerism and cannot be socially valued.

In such cases, a rich figure, usually male, recognises the hardships of the poor girl and either purchases new clothes for her or gives her his own money to spend. This is evident in contemporary films like *Pretty Woman* (1990) and *Just Go with It*. These films present male characters who preside in superior economic positions buying clothes for female characters who are not as economically fortunate. After their shopping trips, the poor girls in these films are able to follow the beauty myth.

Rich girls are also represented alongside the poor girl, but they are not portrayed as their financial supporters. The rich girl is usually depicted as a friend to the poor girl, and their job is to teach the art of consumption. These figures include Regina George from *Mean Girls* and even six-year-old Morgan Phillip in *Enchanted* (2007). The rich girl/poor girl dynamic has been represented numerous times throughout cinema and literature. One literary example of the rich girl/poor girl dynamic is represented in *Emma*. This dynamic is repeated in *Clueless* between Cher and Tai. Chapter 4 will explore the dynamic between these characters in more detail.

Many teen films also emphasise the ideology that beauty is an ethical ideal. They show that only by being given clothes, can lower- to middle-class teen girls become 'beautiful' and be accepted. This is represented in *She's All That*, the teen film adaptation of *Pygmalion*. In *She's All That*, beauty is shown to be something that is crafted through costume, and the choice of costume contributes to the main protagonist's performance of gender. According to Widdows (2018, p. 17), "Beauty has long been connected to morality". *She's All That* implicitly supports this notion through its depiction of costume, as its dullness is shown to directly influence the protagonist's 'beauty' and define her inner self. Laney Boggs (Rachael Leigh Cook) is an artistic high school student who expresses herself in socially unacceptable ways through depressing art and her costume (Lane 2017, p. 240). The film's costume designer, Denise Wingate, dressed Laney in dirty art aprons that seem heavy, coarse and uncomfortable, as well as unfashionable and dark clothes to emphasise Laney's detachment from fashion and beauty culture. Wingate also accessorised Laney's look with a pair of thick black glasses and kept her face makeup-free to present Laney as a stereotypical geek.

Laney is not conventionally 'beautiful', and this is significant because "As a value framework, the beauty ideal provides shared standards by which to apportion praise, blame and reward, making beauty-success a moral virtue and beauty-failure a moral vice" (Widdows 2018, p. 19). Laney's beauty failure is her moral vice. Her dull appearance is shown to make her a bad person, someone nobody wants to befriend or associate with. It marks her as an outsider, a lesser being to the popular kids who identify her as "superfreak" (*She's All That* 1999). Laney's status reflects how those who fail to perform their gender as society dictates are regularly punished (Butler 1988, p. 522).

Laney also comes from a working-class family. Her mother has died, and so her family are reliant on a single-parent salary. It is made clear that the family do not have a lot of money at their disposal, as her father works as a pool cleaner, and Laney herself works at a falafel restaurant. Money is scarce, and it is emphasised that Laney has no economic value to spend on clothes. Laney's luck changes when she is given clothes from rich boy Zack Siler (Freddie Prinze Jr.). Laney is given a tight red dress, red strappy sandals and some makeup. This costume crafts Laney's 'beauty'. Now that she has been given trendier clothes, Laney is seen by others as an aesthetically pleasing young woman. This

is evident when Laney is nominated for prom queen and receives a cult following for her campaign. Laney's 'beauty' rewards her with social value, and since she is shown to be performing her gender as dictated by the beauty myth and capitalism, she is socially accepted and celebrated by her peers. Although Laney is empowered by the new clothes she receives, the film supports the beauty myth and the importance of consumption, as Laney only becomes 'beautiful' by acquiring new clothes.

The canonical literature and teen film adaptations discussed in this chapter represent significantly different versions of female gender performance. *Emma* and *The Scarlet Letter* emphasise that, in their time, female gender performance was enacted by stepping into the domestic identity. Both texts also address the function of costume and explore how beauty is a valued characteristic of the female gender. However, they show that beauty and costume are not vital to female gender performance. Through their representation of characters, these literary texts highlight that becoming wives and mothers is a performance of gender as it constitutes becoming 'woman'. *Pygmalion* represents how social value is awarded to women who assimilate into the domestic sphere and abide by traditional conceptions of the female gender. It also emphasises how, in the 20th century, costume crafts beauty. In the play, beauty is shown to be essential to the livelihoods of women, as it impacts their personal and professional lives.

The teen film adaptations discussed in this chapter re-define what it means to become 'woman', as they convey that beauty defines contemporary female life. The teen film adaptations *Clueless* and *Easy A* represent shopping as contemporary female gender performance, as shopping scenes represent girls using their economic value to craft beauty through costume. Although *She's All That* does not include shopping scenes, it does show the gifting of brand-new clothes to a poor girl figure, thus representing consumerism and the power of costume to craft beauty. These films represent the falsehoods of the beauty myth by presenting beauty as physical and objective. In these films, girls are implicitly characterised as 'beautiful' when they aesthetically please the senses of the people around them with their costumes. By representing beauty as a physical quality, *Clueless*, *Easy A* and *She's All That* reinforce the beauty myth and its false narratives. Shopping scenes can display female agency, but in these teen film adaptations, female figures lose their independence through shopping, as they shop not only to satisfy themselves but to abide by the beauty myth and capitalism. Therefore,

these literary teen film adaptations show that consumption is a contemporary form of female oppression, as it dictates how females behave and dress.

Consumption scenes are also integral to the teen film genre as they connect consumerism to makeovers. The makeover trope is a hallmark of the teen film and is consistently represented in the genre. Makeovers are said to be “brought about through self-governance and product consumption: crafted by the magic of the commercial sphere” (Colling 2017, p. 28). Teen films communicate that consumerism is a precursor to makeovers, as girls must shop in order to obtain the products that will transform their bodies and faces. In my next chapter, I will explore how makeovers are adapted from text to teen film, and how they are presented as simultaneously oppressive and empowering to contemporary teen female figures.

Chapter 4: Transforming makeovers from text to screen: representing the triumphs and pitfalls of makeovers

Each of the literary texts discussed in this thesis can be categorised as a makeover narrative; they all present plots where women experience makeovers. These makeovers are transformed in their literary teen film adaptations. This chapter focuses on the makeover trope in the literary teen film adaptation as—like pop culture, relationships and costume—they can be concurrently empowering and constraining to female characters.

Many makeovers depicted in canonical literature represent an unrefined woman, without social propriety, being made over by a socially distinguished person or people. Focus is often given to improving a woman's intelligence, etiquette and attitude so that she conforms to conventional standards of behaviour and morals. Importance is also placed on improving physical appearance as a way to ensure women abide by standards of beauty, although not all canonical literary texts convey that women must be 'beautiful' in order to live well. This type of makeover is represented in *Pygmalion*.

In other canonical literary texts, makeovers are not instigated purposefully. Rather, makeovers are internal transformations that occur within a female character because of a major life experience or personal realisation. These types of makeovers are evident in the literary texts *Emma* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Even though they arise from different periods and literary moments, each text emphasises the importance of its female protagonist's internal transformation, rather than her physical one. *Emma* was written during the Regency period and *The Scarlet Letter* was written during the Victorian period. These periods pre-date the rise of consumption culture, and so the ideology that identity is constructed through appearance was not as prevalent as it is in contemporary culture. Wolf (1990, p. 4) states that "Before the Industrial Revolution, the average woman could not have had the same feelings about 'beauty' as modern women do". Women were exposed to very few images outside of the church, and value in women "lay in their work skills, material shrewdness, strength and fertility" (Wolf 1990, p. 4). In these canonical literary works, instead of looking outward to define themselves by how 'beautiful' they can be, female figures from literature are shown to form conceptions of their identity by looking at their morals, social beliefs and life experiences.

The makeovers represented in *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A* differ considerably from their literary originals. These teen film adaptations revise the makeovers depicted in their literary originals and reimagine the makeovers in contemporary contexts. The makeovers depicted in *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A* place greater emphasis on the importance of being 'beautiful', and if other qualities of the character need improvement, this is secondary to improving her looks.

Literary texts and teen film adaptations can also differ in terms of how they visualise makeovers, and how successful the makeovers prove to be in improving the lives of the female characters experiencing them. Canonical literary texts do not always present makeovers as successful, and makeovers can sometimes devalue the woman figure who needs the makeover. In comparison, many literary teen films present the processes of makeovers as joyous and their effects as beneficial to the girl figure receiving the makeover. This chapter will explore these key differences between the makeovers presented in canonical literary texts and their contemporary teen film adaptations.

In the context of feminism's third wave, makeovers can be seen as experiences where girls reclaim the overtly feminine as empowering. Contemporary cinematic makeovers can also be seen as feminist because they show that being feminine and girly does not compromise social freedom. In this way, makeovers mirror feminists who "developed methods of expression that may run counter to what is expected in order to subvert traditional patriarchal structures" (Renegar & Sowards 2009, p. 3). However, contemporary makeovers can also be portrayed as oppressive.

While many contemporary makeovers presented on screen are underpinned by feminist ideals, the expectation on girls to fit into an idealised version of femininity through the makeover can be quite constraining and harmful. In this chapter, I will argue that makeovers that are represented in select literary teen film adaptations are connected to a version of feminism that celebrates femininity, yet they can also be oppressive, as pressure can be placed on female characters to change their authentic selves and embody idealised versions of beauty and femininity to satisfy the patriarchy.

I will discuss *Emma*, *Pygmalion* and *The Scarlet Letter* as they present makeover narratives that in some way focus on improving the inner self, de-value the female figure, or are unsuccessful. I will also analyse their teen film adaptations *Clueless*, *She's*

All That and *Easy A*, as they present makeovers as instances where girls embrace overt femininity and experience an improvement in their lives. These films can also present a dangerous side to makeovers, as makeovers are often shown to be initiated to meet patriarchal standards of beauty and femininity, and they can alter girls in ways that negate their true selves.

The importance of embodying an idealised standard of femininity and beauty is a prevalent concern for many women in the West. While the beauty myth presents beauty as a glamorous and divine state of being that gives women power, it does not actually empower women. In buying into the ideology of the beauty myth, women lose their freedom to feel good about themselves and define themselves by something other than beauty. The beauty myth sends the message that “women’s identity must be premised upon their ‘beauty’” (Wolf 1990, p. 4).

The beauty myth ensures that women do not feel empowered so that they “remain vulnerable to outside approval, carrying the vital sensitive organ of self-esteem exposed to the air” (Wolf 1990, p. 4). Wolf (1990, p. 4) states that “The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men and power”. It is “a violent backlash to feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women’s advancement” (Wolf 1990, p. 2). The beauty myth is really a manifestation of power relations between men and women, where women are subject to the beauty myth, and men escape it (Wolf 1990, p. 2). Men escape it because beauty is not a usual characteristic of the male gender. A man possessing physical attractiveness is traditionally termed handsome, and handsomeness has connotations of ruggedness and strength. Beauty more often has connotations of gentility and elegance, terms associated more frequently with femininity.

Men also escape the beauty myth because they are positioned to judge female beauty. The beauty myth tells the story that beauty “is biological, sexual and evolutionary: strong men battle for beautiful women, and beautiful women are more reproductively successful” (Wolf 1990, p. 2). This story conveys that men only want to possess women who are beautiful, and since they are the pickers and choosers of women, women must embody beauty in order to be selected (Wolf 1990, p. 2). Beauty in women is valued as a necessity, as it is their only way to be desired and admired by the opposite sex.

Women have no choice but to abide by the beauty myth, as it is shown to be the only way for them to “compete for resources that men have appropriated for themselves” (Wolf 1990, p. 3). Becoming ‘beautiful’ and gaining the attention of men is their only route to social significance. The beauty myth forces women to buy into its messages, as women who reject it are punished. They are often deemed unattractive and are rejected and criticised by men and society. Therefore, the beauty myth takes power away from women and gives it to men.

The media and advertisers present the idea that overt femininity pleases the male gaze. There are countless advertisements that show men pining over ‘beautiful’ women who appear in feminised ways, wearing makeup, high heels and flowing dresses. This representation reinforces a rigid belief system that overt femininity is both the ultimate manifestation of female beauty and what makes women attractive and desirable to men. These types of advertisements also send the message that, by gaining the attention of men, women can feel a sense of gratification and contentment.

The makeovers depicted in many canonical literary texts are modified in their teen film adaptations to fit in with the stylistic conventions of cinema. Therefore, literary makeovers are adapted to meet the contingencies of contemporary cinema. Being a visual medium, cinema adapts the makeovers depicted in written texts from detailed, nuanced descriptions of transformation into physically choreographed, visceral sequences. Cinema presents makeovers as spectacles, and with the use of choreography and costume, screen makeovers can create a sense of glamour and excitement. Makeover sequences are also disruptive, as they are brief moments of physical and emotional exhilaration that interrupt the steady flow of a film. Often times, in the literary teen film adaptation, this disruptive moment is not repeated. The canonical teen film adaptation generally falls into the romantic comedy genre. Genre is not foundational; it is social and cultural (Macdonald 2013, p. 13). Genre is regulated with rules, conventions and procedures (Macdonald 2013, pp.52-53), meaning that it is a performance in itself that serves audiences (2013, p. 94). Makeover moments are repeated from film to film in the romantic comedy genre, but each film usually presents one makeover sequence, as there is usually only one disruptive moment.

Many teen films present makeovers as fun and empowering variations of the Cinderella and Pygmalion myths. Whilst the traditional version of Cinderella’s transformation is

brought about through maternal love (Colling 2017, p. 28), the traditional version of the Pygmalion myth sees women being physically and intellectually improved by others (mainly men). These myths can converge, however, in films such as *Pretty Woman*, where Vivian Ward (Julia Roberts) is whisked away from her life as a prostitute and is paid to spend the week acting as the girlfriend of high-power executive Edward Lewis (Richard Gere). Like Cinderella and Eliza, Vivian's style transforms, and she wears elegant gowns. She also shares a romance with Edward, in the position of Cinderella's Prince Charming, and like Eliza, she is taught good manners and etiquette by Edward, in the role of *Pygmalion's* Professor Henry Higgins. The teen film frequently presents its female protagonist as the traditional Cinderella figure because "Cinderella's transformation personifies in the familiar and easily identifiable tropes of the makeover and reveals the idea of the adolescent girl as a figure in process" (Colling 2017, p. 28). It is important to state, however, that the women depicted in *Emma*, *Pygmalion* and *The Scarlet Letter* are not presented as Cinderella figures. The makeovers presented in these literary texts take place over lengthy periods of time, can be degrading for the characters, and their effects rarely endure.

In Jane Austen's *Emma*, Harriet Smith receives a makeover that focuses on improving her social propriety. Emma believes that she can take Harriet under her wing, "detach her from her bad acquaintance and introduce her into good society" (Austen 2017, p. 17). Harriet's makeover is slowly achieved through time. It is not made explicit, but the novel subtly conveys that, with each meeting with Emma, Harriet changes in some regard. Her makeover is non-visceral and nuanced. Her character development is slowly revealed in the details of her behaviour. It is apparent that she has developed in some regard when she first refuses the proposal of Robert Martin, because she was taught by Emma that accepting would hinder her social propriety.

When Harriet's makeover is shown to be complete, the novel positions Harriet's change as negative. Although the confidence and assertion Emma tried to impart to Harriet are finally instilled, the results trouble Emma. Harriet is made confident enough to believe that she could make a match with Mr Knightley, stating "now I seem to feel that I may deserve him" (Austen 2017, p. 316). Although Emma has achieved her goal of moulding Harriet into a woman who self-assuredly goes after what she wants, Emma is troubled by the notion that their undignified match will cost Mr Knightley his social position.

Emma is bothered by Harriet's transformation, and her displeasure mounts when she realises that she is actually in love with Mr Knightley herself. Harriet's makeover does more to hurt Emma than satisfy her, and although Harriet has developed, she has not developed in the way Emma had hoped.

This new version of Harriet is also shown to be temporary, as she ends up marrying Robert Martin, and this union places Harriet in a lower social position to Emma. As a result, the friendship between Harriet and Emma is extinguished. The third person narrator conveys this, as they state, "The intimacy between her and Emma must sink; their friendship must change into a calmer sort of goodwill" (Austen 2017, p. 372). Therefore, *Emma* presents a makeover that is proven to be unsuccessful because its effects are not desirable and the makeover itself is short-lived.

An unsuccessful makeover that concentrates on physical and internal transformation is represented in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. In George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Eliza Doolittle is deemed coarse and unladylike because of her appearance and lack of class. She is first established as an inarticulate flower girl, whose first line of dialogue reads, "Theres menners f' yer! Te-oo banches o voylets trod into the mad" (Shaw 2003, p. 10). Eliza gains the attention of Professor Henry Higgins, a linguistics professor, who makes notes of her mispronunciations. Her manner of speech is shown to be unacceptable and distasteful, as Professor Higgins states, "A woman who utters such depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be anywhere—no right to live" (Shaw 2003, p. 18). Higgins represents the outspoken patriarchy, who judge female appearance and behaviour, and in turn regulate it. He believes that with his teachings, he can pass off Eliza, an "incarnate insult to the English language" (Shaw 2003, p. 18), as "the Queen of Sheba" (2003, p. 18).

There are two components to Eliza's makeover. The first concentrates on improving her appearance. With Higgins's help, Eliza is taught self-care, as Mrs Pearce gives her a bath and asserts that it will make her "clean and sweet and decent, like a lady" (Shaw 2003, p. 36). With a change of attire and a wash of the face and body, Eliza turns into "a dainty and exquisitely clean young Japanese lady in a simple blue cotton kimono printed cunningly with small white jasmine blossoms" (Shaw 2003, pp. 47–48). Her transformation is not revealed in typical fashion, as it is stumbled upon by her father. As he opens a set of doors in Higgins's home, Eliza is seen standing in the doorway. She is,

at first, unrecognisable to her father, who exclaims “Bly me! it’s Eliza” (Shaw 2003, p. 48). Higgins and Pickering also appear shocked, as Higgins states “What’s that? This!” (Shaw 2003, p. 48), and Pickering exclaims “By Jove!” (2003, p. 48). This reveal and the men’s reactions to Eliza’s new appearance suggest that her makeover will be successful, and because the men approve of what they see, her life will change for the better. This part of Eliza’s makeover is a visceral spectacle as it starkly reveals Eliza’s physical transformation from poor pauper to ‘beautiful’ woman.

The second part of Eliza’s makeover is more nuanced, as it comes in the form of speech lessons given over time. When asked to say, “a cup of tea” (Shaw 2003, p. 51), Eliza pronounces it as “A cappete-ee” (2003, p. 51). With the instruction of Higgins to “Put your tongue forward until it squeezes against the top of your lower teeth” (Shaw 2003, p. 51), Eliza is able to properly pronounce the word ‘cup’. For her final test, she passes herself off as a duchess at the ambassador’s garden party. However, this does not secure the future she wanted for herself. Although she has learned how to look and act like a proper English lady, her dream of owning a flower shop is still out of reach. Although the narrative of *Pygmalion* centres on a woman trying to get a job and make a better life for herself by refining her eccentricities with lessons in how to be ‘beautiful’ and eloquent, Shaw highlights the impracticality of such a concept.

The play is “generally interpreted as a celebration of the power of education” (Porten 2006, p. 82), but the play does not entirely show that education is powerful, as “Eliza’s experience does not in fact fit the plot of the rags-to-riches success” (2006, p. 82). Eliza may succeed in her final task at the ambassador’s party, but she has not been trained in any special skill that she can use to get a job. Higgins cannot guarantee Eliza’s future prosperity and can merely offer her the freedom to do what she wants (Shaw 2003, p. 77). However, Eliza is aware that she has very little skill to do what she wants. She angrily questions her so-called freedom, and asks “What am I fit for? What have you left me fit for? Where am I to go? What am I to do? What’s to become of me” (Shaw 2003, p. 78).

Many adaptors of Shaw’s play have changed the ending so that it follows the narrative formula of a romance. In these adaptations, Eliza and Higgins pair up. Shaw disliked these endings, and wrote an epilogue to the original play, in which he explains why his own ending better suits Eliza. He considers how Eliza’s story seems to be a romance tale,

“because the transfiguration it records seems exceedingly improbable” (Shaw 2003, p. 107), yet he affirms that Eliza should not have ended up with Higgins just because “people in all directions have assumed, for no other reason than that she became the heroine of a romance, that she must have married the hero of it” (2003, p. 107). In Shaw’s original version, “Eliza may be disillusioned to discover she is ‘free’” (Porten 2006, p. 83), but “this knowledge is perhaps a kind of freedom nonetheless” (2006, p. 83). By ending the play like this, Shaw shows that makeovers that focus on perfecting eloquent speech and crafting beauty with clothes and commodities are not all that is necessary for a woman to secure a conventional female life where she is employed in the workplace.

Shaw’s representation of Eliza is somewhat feminist, reflecting his own feminist views. Shaw was a member of the Fabian Society and likened himself to feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (Holroyd 1979, p. 24). Shaw’s feminist values are evident when considering that his plays (such as *Pygmalion*) frequently demonstrated his support for the proper education of women, even though it was an ideal that was resisted by some in late Victorian society (Collins 2013, p. 19). Although Shaw does not present Eliza’s makeover as successful, as her goals are not reached and she does not go from rags to riches, he does not degrade her by representing her efforts as entirely wasteful. Eliza’s future is not hopeless; she just needs more than a makeover to improve it.

A makeover that focuses on internal change is represented in *The Scarlet Letter*, but this makeover devalues the main female protagonist. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* does not represent a conventional makeover, as Hester’s makeover is not given to improve her life. Her makeover happens as a result of her punishment. She transforms her own appearance when she is forced to stitch a scarlet ‘A’ onto her attire, but rather than improve her, the letter is meant to demean her as an object that her fellow colonists can interrogate and belittle.

Whilst Hester’s stitching of the scarlet ‘A’ is not depicted, readers witness its unveiling. It is the only piece of colourful attire in the novel. Furthermore, it is depicted as alluring and captivating, as the “fine red cloth” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 50) is “surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread” (2016, p. 50). It is described by the novel’s narrator as being “so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 50), that it is “greatly

beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony” (2016, p. 50). Upon its reveal, the letter becomes the subject of gossip in the congregation and is seen as an act of rebellion against their “godly magistrates” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 51). One of the female spectators suggests they strip “Madam Hester’s rich gown off her dainty shoulders” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 51) and replace Hester’s ‘A’ with a rag of her own clothes “to make a fitter one” (2016, p. 51). The scarlet letter becomes part of Hester’s identity. As she stands on the public scaffold for the first time, “she turned her eyes downward at the scarlet letter, and even touched it with her finger, to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 56). The omniscient narrator states, “Yes!—these were her realities,—all else had vanished!” (Hawthorne 2016, p. 56), conveying that Hester considers her past life as wife and respectable member of the congregation as having ended. Now, Hester sees herself only as an adulterer. Even in death, Hester does not rid herself of the shame that the letter signifies, as the ‘A’ is engraved onto her tombstone. Hester’s makeover spans years and it shames her throughout her whole adult life. Hester’s makeover is imposed, although she integrates the shame and torment into her own life.

Harmful makeovers, like the one depicted in *The Scarlet Letter*, are often modified in teen film adaptations. Makeovers can still be damaging, but in many teen film adaptations, makeovers are emphasised as rewarding because they are liberating and redemptive. However, a future of prosperity is dependent on the male gaze. By correcting the physical appearance of an outcast girl figure and making her new appearance coincide with patriarchal ideals of female beauty and femininity, makeovers have the power to create a better life for the girl figure because they make girls visible to the male gaze. Attracting the male gaze is shown to solidify a teen girl’s future success, as it implies that she has reached socially pleasing levels of femininity.

The notion that femininity and girliness are empowering is a key ideal of third wave feminism that is also represented in many literary teen film adaptations. The ‘girlie girls’ were a feminist subset who emerged in the 1990s who believed that “‘femininity’ is not opposed to feminism, but is positioned as central to a politics of agency, confidence and resistance” (Munford 2004, p. 148). Girlie girls embraced things like girl talk and housekeeping (Munford 2004, p. 147), “not only to abjure patriarchal definitions of femininity, but to challenge the ‘inflexibility’ of second wave identity politics” (2004, p.

148) which sought to achieve liberation by abandoning traditional beliefs surrounding the value of female beauty and a woman's role in the home. The girly girls tried to show that women can wear lipstick and the colour pink and still be empowered. Whilst the girly girls connected overt femininity with power, agency and resistance of the patriarchy, their lip-gloss and high heels are sometimes considered to be "more visible than a body of politics" (Munford 2004, p. 149). Despite this critique, many teen film adaptations of canonical literature connect lip gloss, the colour pink and other stereotypically girly things to empowerment. When girls are shown using girly products, viewers witness "the reclamation of signs of femininity as empowering" (Cocca 2014, p. 98), as girls are actively shown controlling their own appearances.

Teen film makeovers usually take place in a character's own "Girl World" (Karlyn 2011, p. 79). Female-led screen culture from the 1990s created an image of glossy worlds defined as the character's own "Girl World" (Karlyn 2011, p. 79). Girl Worlds prioritise female experiences and counter the stereotype perpetuated in contemporary culture that femininity destabilises female liberation. They do so by placing "female desire at its core, validating its very existence" (Karlyn 2011, p. 79). Girl Worlds present female characters as third wave feminists who own their feminine interests and are not disempowered because they value and enjoy activities that coincide with mainstream, patriarchal ideals of what girls should look like.

In coinciding with patriarchal values, Girl World femininity can at times place expectations onto women and girls to achieve an idealised standard of female beauty to satisfy the male gaze. This need to attract the male gaze can restrain their freedoms. The pursuit for beauty can be dangerous, as it can jeopardise female liberation by poisoning their lives with feelings of unrelenting inadequacy (Wolf 1990, p. 2). Many women develop eating disorders and turn to invasive cosmetic surgeries to try and become more attractive (Wolf 1990, p. 1). Furthermore:

inside the majority of these controlled, attractive, successful working women, there is a secret 'underlife' poisoning their freedom; infused with notions of beauty, it is a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of ageing, and dread of lost control (Wolf, 1990, p. 2).

Wolf (1990, p. 2) suggests that even though many women are successful workers, their appearances are more important. Women may also already be 'beautiful', but culture

perpetuates the beauty myth so emphatically that, no matter how many virtues a woman has, she will always feel that she should be doing more to become 'beautiful'.

With so much pressure to embody beauty and gain the approval of the male gaze, some of the teen girl figures in these films struggle to cope with feelings of insufficiency. It is clear from the beginning of *She's All That* that Laney has a low sense of self-value and feels like she is, as her tormentors call her, "superfreak" (*She's All That* 1999). This is evident when Zack Siler, the school jock, attempts to talk to Laney, and she tells him "What is this, some kind of new dork outreach program?" (*She's All That* 1999). *Easy A* also presents Olive as someone who struggles with feelings of inadequacy, as at the beginning of the film, Olive states that before her makeover she used to be anonymous. She states, "If Google Earth were a guy, he couldn't find me if I was dressed up as a ten-storey building" (*Easy A* 2010). This highlights her lack of self-value, as she believes that her lack of obvious beauty makes her insignificant.

On the other hand, *Clueless*, in its representation of its female characters, abolishes the convention for teen girls to hate their bodies and appearance. Cher is not an insecure victim of beauty ideologies. The film is entirely concerned with beauty, but the film shows Cher creating her own beauty ideologies and setting her own beauty standards. This challenges Wolf's idea that beauty regimes are toxic and unhealthy to women (Wolf 1990, p. 2), as Cher is shown to have a genuinely happy disposition when it comes to beautification. Cher takes looking stylish and 'beautiful' seriously, as she implements numerous stages of beautification, but she only compares herself to herself. Her "costume decisions" (*Clueless* 1995) are always made by viewing potential outfits on her computer avatar, and she looks at photographs of herself when judging outfit choices. This is significant as it shows that instead of comparing herself to others, Cher only looks to herself when setting her beauty standards.

Tai also seems unaffected by beauty expectations. Although she experiences a makeover, it is made clear that it is not because she feels she must improve herself to reach a level of idealised female beauty. Tai's otherness is shown through her physical appearance. In her first scene, Tai's yellow sneakers, baggy brown pants, black t-shirt, unbuttoned flannel shirt, makeup-free face and dyed red hair dramatically contrast with the other girls' aesthetic, as each of them wears some variation of black and white sportswear. Tai's grunge fashion sense is highlighted when we see an image of her bare

arms. With tattoos on her wrist, hand and upper arm, Tai is even more distinct from Cher and Dionne than first thought.

Cher offers to give Tai a makeover, and in doing so, she makes it clear that Tai's style is not acceptable. Despite Cher's disapproval at Tai's appearance, Tai herself does not display any sense of insecurity over her physical appearance. She is blissfully unaware that her sneakers and hair are not trendy. Cher and Dionne plead with Tai to be allowed to give her a makeover, as Dionne states, "Cher's main thrill in life is a makeover, ok? It gives her a sense of control in a world full of chaos" (*Clueless* 1995). Tai seems to read this exchange as a loving, compassionate suggestion, and she admires the way Cher and Dionne look out for her as she gushes, "Shit! You guys! I have never had straight friends before" (*Clueless* 1995). Tai's bright smile as she says this suggests that she is motivated to say yes because there is potential to forge a strong bond with Cher and Dionne. Therefore, Tai's makeover is not motivated by feelings of inadequacy. *Clueless* suggests, through Cher and Tai, that not every girl is negatively impacted by beauty ideologies, nor is every girl concerned with them.

Clueless disputes Wolf's ideas further by representing a makeover sequence that is entirely light-hearted and fun. The makeover depicted in *Clueless* is represented as a fun and joyful transformative experience that leads to a confident and happy teenage girl. As opposed to its literary original, *Emma*, the makeover sequence in *Clueless* is a cinematic, visually choreographed spectacle. The sequence is in "excess" (Hayward 2000, p. 6) of its literary original, as while *Emma* only uses written language to convey Harriet's long and subtle makeover, *Clueless* uses cinematography and editing to create a fast-paced montage.

Tai's makeover follows the formula of the Cinderella makeover, where importance is placed on good hair and clothes, and their ability to reveal the "'grace' and 'beauty' dormant in the character" (Colling 2017, p. 28). Tai's makeover is presented as a disruptive and joyful experience, as the film's editor, Debra Chiate, edits this sequence into a fast-paced montage set to 'Supermodel' by Jill Sobule. Cinematographer Bill Pope captures the significant makeover moments that show Tai's physical transformation. This supports the idea that:

The makeover is itself Romantic; it removes the mundane, tedious and potentially painful elements of beauty regimens but enhances the enjoyment of success by playing out the effort that produces the transformation (Colling 2017, p. 64).

Pope captures the moment where the hair dye is washed out of Tai's hair and Dionne applies makeup to her face, teaching her the importance of rubbing her lips together and blotting lipstick with a tissue. He also captures the moment Cher goes through her own wardrobe and cuts a t-shirt into a bellybutton-baring crop top. Space is accentuated in this sequence, as the rooms of Cher's house seem large and airy, as they are covered with mirrors that create numerous reflections of the walls. Time is also altered, as the camera shifts from room to room, and the duration of each cut scene is no more than 9 seconds, giving the impression that time has sped up.

This sequence is also played out in the form of a lesson. As Tai watches the girls make her over, she is also observing their techniques for beautification, and is learning how to regulate feminine appearance for herself. This sequence has an energetic, light-hearted and optimistic tone. The manner in which Tai poses, plays with her hair, jumps around, laughs and smiles displays her enjoyment. The final shot of the makeover shows Tai sizing herself up in the mirror. Tai's hair is curly, makeup has been applied to her face, and she wears a mini-skirt with a knitted jumper. Smiling and jumping around, Tai raises her arms in the air as a sign of victory. Tai does not experience another disruptive moment quite like this for the rest of the film.

Tai does experience another makeover, however. Her second makeover focuses on refining her vernacular and behaviour. Although Tai looks like the rest of the 'in crowd', she does not sound like them. Cher decides to help her improve her speech by teaching Tai her own vocabulary. Cher's speech and vocabulary are dominated by hyperbole and an exaggeration of adverbs, like "utterly grateful" (O'Meara 2014, p. 139). Her embellished Valley girl speech is marked by 90s slang words like "totally" (*Clueless* 1995), "buggin'" (*Clueless* 1995), "girlfriend" (*Clueless* 1995), "Audi" (*Clueless* 1995), and "as if" (*Clueless* 1995). Tai's speech contrasts with Cher's, as she speaks with a rough Boston accent, has poor grammar, frequently swears and is generally inarticulate (O'Meara 2014, p. 140). After her lessons, Tai miscommunicates at times, but she does pick up on most of Cher's speech, as she often uses the phrase "I'm Audi" (*Clueless* 1995) to signify her exit from a place or situation.

The importance of achieving feminine beauty to satisfy the male gaze is also represented in the film. After the makeover is revealed at school, Cher notices that the boys are watching Tai. Both Cher and Dionne react with glee at the notion that Tai is now attractive to the boys at school. The girls consider this attention as a sign that Tai's makeover has been successful, and a verification that Tai is a member of the San Fernando Valley 'in crowd'. Tai's representation as a content and carefree girl is still quite apparent, as she seems unaware of how appealing her new look is to the boys at school.

In *She's All That*, the makeover is emphasised as an essential life lesson that redeems the downtrodden, dull-looking, insecure Laney by making her visible to the male gaze. Laney's makeover represents a version of the Cinderella makeover that invites viewers to go along with "the idea and feeling that clothes, hair, skin and accessories can change lives" (Colling 2017, p. 45). Like Cinderella, Laney's makeover is thrust upon her. Mackenzie Siler (Anna Paquin), Zack's makeup-loving younger sister, is employed to use her expertise in girl culture to make over Laney from geek to chic. Mackenzie is the fairy godmother figure in the context of Cinderella, but in the context of *Pygmalion*, she is the Mrs Pearce figure. She performs the physical transformation, but with a greater deal of kindness than Mrs Pearce.

This makeover scene is quite intimate, with only Laney and Mackenzie in the bathroom. Men are positioned as inactive bystanders, rather than teachers, as they are seated downstairs where they have no influence over what Mackenzie does to Laney. As Laney sits against the back wall, with no space behind her, Mackenzie is positioned in front of her with space at her disposal. This use of space presents Laney as a passive bystander. Mackenzie is armed with all the power, and so Laney is subject to whatever Mackenzie decides to do to her. The makeover scene does not offer a montage of shots set to music, but it does show a small portion of Laney's makeover, "making *visible* the transformation process" (Wilkinson 2015, p. 386). Mackenzie tweezes Laney's eyebrows, glides a makeup brush over Laney's chin, and pulls out Laney's braid, telling her that "this particular coif doesn't really go with your face shape" (*She's All That* 1999). This makeover sequence is quite similar to the makeover depicted in *Pygmalion*, as a large portion of it is dedicated to showing the characters in conversation. This makeover scene has a calm tone, as the application of makeup is slow and seemingly pleasurable.

Rather than provide a soundtrack to the makeover, the conversation between the two girls is all that is audible. Like *Pygmalion*, most of the makeover is not visualised on screen, and so it is diluted into a reveal. It seems as though a chunk of time is missing, as the makeover and the reveal are essentially shown back to back.

Laney's reveal begins at the top of a staircase, and her descent from the staircase is a spectacle. It is her catwalk moment, "the moment of glamour, an instance that creates an experience of admiration, effortlessness, public intimacy, and sensations of promise and possibility" (Colling 2017, p. 64). This reveal is in "excess" (Hayward 2000, p. 6) of Eliza's reveal. While *Pygmalion* only describes Eliza's transformation through words and the reveal is stumbled upon, *She's All That* visibly shows Laney's transformation and uses an accompanying soundtrack to create a disruptive, cinematic spectacle. As 'Kiss me' by Sixpence None the Richer begins to play, Mackenzie announces Laney. She describes this new version of Laney as "the new, not improved, but different, Laney Boggs" (*She's All That* 1999). The camera slowly pans up to reveal Laney's full body transformation. Her art smock has been swapped for a tight-fitting red dress and a pair of red high-heeled sandals. The dress hugs Laney's figure, creating shape and definition that her art smock could never make. Her hair is cut into a short bob, and her glasses are replaced with contacts, showing off her bright, petite face. As she reaches the bottom of the staircase, she turns, and facing the camera, presents a shy smile. This reveal is her fun, disruptive moment of transformation. With trendier clothes, a new haircut and some makeup, not to mention the absence of her glasses, Laney Boggs becomes the beautiful Cinderella figure.

It is highlighted that Laney has become the embodiment of heterosexual desire, as the film's cinematographer, Francis Kenny, pans the camera up from Laney's feet to her face, indicating that the scene is being played out through the perspective of the male gaze, specifically Zack's. As the camera lingers on Zack's reaction, there is an unspoken sense of attraction that conveys that he is now seeing Laney as an object of sexual desire. The fact that editor Casey O. Rohrs accompanied this catwalk sequence with the romantic track 'Kiss me' and abruptly stops the track when Laney stumbles in her heels and into Zack's arms emphasises that this moment marks their turn from acquaintances to potential romantic partners. Laney's stumble is a disruptive moment in itself because the humour it incites critiques the familiar and clichéd Cinderella makeover. Laney's

smile at the end of her catwalk indicates that she feels pleasure in gaining Zack's male gaze, and therefore, his approval.

The hint of future romance between the two also suggests a future of prosperity for Laney as, if she begins a romance with Zack, she will most likely ascend to his level of social prominence. Although this is not highlighted as Laney's reason for having the makeover, this scene shows that teen female figures often desire to appeal to male characters, and that when they do, their lives can genuinely improve.

Makeovers and catwalk reveals can be rites of passage towards a greater sense of self and agency, as they are often underscored as prosperous transformative experiences that lead their subjects into womanhood. As "Girl culture presents pleasure as the utopian source of social transformation" (Speed 1995, p. 24), the pleasure and value Tai and Laney receive through their makeovers and catwalks permits their lives to change for the better. After presenting their new and improved selves to the world, new pathways are presented, thus reflecting how a girl's "ability to present herself (her body) successfully marks her out as having achieved appropriate levels of maturity" (Colling 2017, p. 6). Tai fosters a fruitful social life and rises as far in the school's social hierarchy to threaten Cher's own social place. Laney also fosters new relationships and becomes a content, happy girl. The fact that these girls achieve this level of maturity by embracing makeovers reinforces the notion that makeovers can be empowering.

However, not all girls prosper after they experience a makeover. In *Easy A*, Olive experiences a makeover that hinders her life, because in seeking the male gaze through her makeover, she presents a version of herself that is at odds with how she actually thinks about herself.

Easy A is a self-reflexive teen film as it challenges the convention that teen girls should change their appearances to satisfy the male gaze. While many 1990s teen films are conservative, following the traditional conventions of the romantic comedy genre, the teen films of the 2000s and 2010s appear to be more self-reflexive. These particular teen films take a self-reflexive look at the conventions presented in past teen films, and work to challenge some of their conventions. Consider, for instance, the way that many 2000s and 2010s teen films no longer rely on heterosexual romances as the driving force and central plot of the genre.

Instead of focusing its entire narrative on romance, *Easy A* presents a story of rebellion. Olive's personal story of confronting sexism and sexual double standards is its focus. Although Olive has a makeover to change her appearance and gain the attention of men, she does not desire their approval, nor does she want to date them. *Easy A* differs from *Clueless* and *She's All That* because rather than receive a makeover from a girlfriend or man, Olive's makeover is by her own hand. Olive only desires to make herself over and sexualise herself to hold a mirror up to her classmates' behaviour. She wishes to show, by example, how women are victimised and bullied as punishment for overtly displaying their sexuality. Even though Olive's intentions are purely to make a social statement about sexism, her makeover ends up negating her true self.

The detrimental effect of Olive's makeover is foreshadowed during the film's makeover sequence. Michael Grady, the film's cinematographer, presents a montage of Olive's transformation that feels hostile and tense. Olive is shown angrily tearing fabric and sewing it together, and as she does this, she pricks her fingers with pins, grunting and squealing. This erraticism is mirrored in the arrangement of Olive's bedroom, as clothes are scattered onto the floor, covering the entire area. A cover of Joan Jett's 'Bad reputation', sung by The Dollyrots, is also played to emphasise Olive's anger and hostility. The combination of the soundtrack and Olive's movements create the impression that the makeover is urgent. The temporality of the sequence also feels altered, as the film's editor, Susan Littenberg, edited multiple shots into one fast-paced montage, creating the impression that time has sped up. With Olive's alterations, she constructs a new identity as femme fatale, and is able to try it on.

The result of Olive's needlework is presented through a catwalk reveal. Olive's catwalk illustrates how sexual knowledge can "be performed and created through the adoption of appropriate sartorial, bodily and linguistic style" (Farrimond 2013, p. 53). Olive reveals her makeover in front of a busy set of lockers at school, and her catwalk is accompanied by the sexually suggestive song 'Sexy silk' by Jessie J. Cinematographer Grady follows Olive as she walks down a straight path, past a set of lockers surrounded by students. The area around the lockers appears crowded and tight, yet the camera focuses on Olive's face and body. Littenberg edited this sequence into a slow-motion catwalk, where every seductive pout and smirk Olive makes is slowed down and accentuated. This behaviour, matched with Olive's black corset, conveys that Olive desires the gaze of

her male peers and wants to be seen as a sexual object. It is obvious that Olive has become the idealised embodiment of heterosexual desire when boys are shown staring at her, and one boy in particular utters the word “damn” (*Easy A* 2010) as she walks past him. The end of Olive’s catwalk reveal is marked by a girl who obstructs her path.

From this point, Olive shows that she has also made over her speech. Olive changes her tone, pitch and language in an attempt to fully embody her new sexualised self. Olive lowers the volume of her voice, speaks in a calm tone, and slows her speech as she tells a male student, “Hey handsome. I just realised the funniest thing. My name is an anagram for ‘I love’” (*Easy A* 2010). When asked what an anagram is, Olive places the tip of her glasses in her mouth and tells him to “Look it up, big boy” (*Easy A* 2010).

Olive’s makeover scene and catwalk moment are physically choreographed spectacles that are provocative, disruptive, yet glamorous. The makeover sequence and catwalk reveal are greatly in “excess” (Hayward 2000, p. 6) of Hester’s transformation. While *The Scarlet Letter* uses written language to present Hester’s gradual transformation, *Easy A* uses images and sound to emphasise Olive’s instantaneous transformation. The fast-paced editing, Olive’s constant movements, her facial expressions (smirks and pouts) and the soundtrack create exciting cinematic transformation scenes. Olive’s makeover scene satirises the Cinderella makeover cliché that girls become elegant and graceful through makeovers, as Olive’s grunting and erratic movements humorously demonstrate that she is not graceful or elegant. The conservative conventions of the romance genre take over the film after Olive’s makeover and catwalk. The level of power Olive felt during her makeover is not experienced again, and she is never as confident or glamorous as she was during her catwalk reveal.

Though the new version of Olive has a fierce, relentless confidence, the film does not downplay the fact that this is an inauthentic version of the character. This corset-wearing person is not the real Olive, as highlighted when she is shown at home wearing her casual clothes, speaking in her regular tone of voice. As Olive experiences judgement and criticism from her community, it becomes clear that the sexually assertive character Olive is projecting is causing her life to crumble around her. Olive loses her friends, is continuously slut-shamed and finds herself in social isolation. By the end of the film, Olive realises that her makeover and new persona are corrupting her life, and so she ditches the corsets and reverts to her old self. She begins a romance with Todd (Penn

Badgley) at the end of the film, but it is unclear whether she will restore her old friendships and regain their respect. This type of makeover is still connected to versions of the Cinderella makeover, as millennial teen films can present teen girls who experience glitzy or excessive makeovers (Colling 2017, p. 28) that are found to be “unsustainable and corrupting” (2017, p. 28).

Whilst the canonical literary texts discussed in this chapter present makeovers as insufficient experiences that do not benefit the female characters experiencing them, their teen film adaptations celebrate the makeover’s ability to reclaim the overtly feminine as empowering. In these films, makeovers are shown to be empowering as they are presented as glamorous experiences that allow female characters to transform into the beautiful Cinderella figure. As demonstrated by these films, makeovers often represent girls crossing over into womanhood because they have developed a greater sense of self. However, as makeovers are also shown to help girls reach a level of overt femininity that attracts the male gaze, girls do not necessarily break away from the patriarchy. With such high standards of beauty, pressure can also be placed on female characters to change their authentic selves in order to embody a level of idealised beauty and gain the approval of men. Therefore, the makeovers represented in these select teen film adaptations have the ability to empower and compromise the freedoms of teen girl figures.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined how select literary teen film adaptations are stylistically and narratively adapted *from* canonical literature to reflect the values and contexts of contemporary culture. I have looked specifically at the literary texts *Emma*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Pygmalion*, *Les liaisons dangereuses* and *The Scarlet Letter*, as well as their respective teen film adaptations *Clueless*, *10 Things I Hate about You*, *She's All That*, *Cruel Intentions* and *Easy A*, and focused on how these teen film adaptations transform representations of female life from text to screen.

The research in this thesis has explored the idea of adaptation as revision. *Clueless*, *She's All That*, *10 Things I Hate about You*, *Easy A* and *Cruel Intentions* adopt stylistic and narrative tropes of the teen film genre and reimagine the plots of their literary originals into contemporary contexts, creating teen films that have links to their literary originals but also represent contemporary teen narratives that convey new meanings. Through revision of the female life experiences represented in canonical literature and the reimagining of those female lives in contemporary contexts, these teen film adaptations address the social and political contexts of third wave feminism. Being influenced by third wave feminism, these select teen film adaptations impart feminist ideologies in their characters and plots.

The narratives presented in literary teen film adaptations can be summarised as stories of romance and coming of age, but these narratives also make implicit references to social and political issues that are central to third wave feminism. These teen film adaptations revise and reimagine representations of gender politics, female friendships, costumes and makeovers in the literature they were adapted from, and by transforming these representations to reflect third wave feminism and contemporary culture, offer a message of empowerment.

The most noteworthy representation of third wave feminism in the literary teen film adaptation lies in the depiction of teen girl figures. Many female figures from canonical literature are restricted to conform to patriarchal ideas of woman. They lack the freedom to rule their own lives as they must obey the rules of the prevailing patriarchy. In literary teen film adaptations, this representation is transformed. As literary teen film adaptations are products of third wave feminism, teen girl figures are presented as

empowered and having personal agency. They are shown to have the freedom to express their political and social beliefs, value their female friendships as essential to their lives, can choose how to display their economic value, and are often shown to revel in displays of femininity. However, just as third wave feminism is full of inconsistencies regarding what constitutes female freedom, the lives of female teen figures are not entirely lived without prevailing social and political influences. There are contemporary patriarchal and capitalist forms of oppression that restrict their freedoms. The teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis may not offer narratives where teen girls extinguish the power of patriarchy and capitalism, but that does not mean they do not critique aspects of each. By presenting oppression, these teen film adaptations expose and examine specific patriarchal ideals and capitalist institutions that hold power and influence in contemporary culture.

The teen girl figures in *10 Things I Hate about You* and *Cruel Intentions* use their political voices to express their feminist views and embody notions of girl power, a particular cultural expression of 90s third wave feminism that denotes female power and independence. This is a reimagination of the gender politics from their literary originals. While female figures from their literary originals are not at liberty to challenge the patriarchy, teen girl figures are able to rebel because they have vehicles for self-expression and can access politics through pop culture. However, as the teen girl figures in these literary teen adaptations are shown to develop their feminist views by engaging in popular culture and the highly commodified version of feminism known as marketplace feminism, teen girls do not actually engage in explicit politics. By engaging in marketplace feminism, the girl figures in these films seek individual empowerment through consumption of the feminist brand, instead of social change through activism. Marketplace feminism, in fact, restricts their freedoms by blinding them to the realities of gender inequality. Though popular culture is not shown to positively impact character development in these teen film adaptations, it forms a significant part of their narratives because it helps construct teen worlds that appear fun, carefree and glossy, worlds that focus more on music and celebrity than on explicit politics and social issues of concern.

By revising the hostility of female relationships in their literary originals and reimagining these friendships as essential to contemporary female life, *Clueless* and *10 Things I Hate about You* support notions of sisterhood and comradery that were central to third wave

feminism. These films fall into the categorisation of the positive female friendship film. Not all literary teen film adaptations deviate from their sources by transforming hostile female relationships into supportive, beneficial friendships, however. *Cruel Intentions* maintains the antagonistic female rivalry depicted in its literary original, reinforcing the notion that girls cannot get along with other girls. *Clueless* and *10 Things I Hate about You* also represent heterosexual romances as essential to female life, and *Cruel Intentions* explicitly conveys that heterosexual romances provide girls with genuine companionship and support. These films, therefore, represent and reinforce the traditional belief that women are dependent on men. These representations appear to contradict each other, but by occurring simultaneously, these literary teen films show that while teen girl figures can be empowered to lean on other girls for support, they can still be oppressed by traditional views on relationships that reinforce the idea that women cannot get along with one another, and that women are reliant on men.

Contemporary teen girl figures may feel a sense of empowerment in selecting costumes in their shopping pursuits, but shopping is a contemporary form of female gender performance that can restrict a teen girl's freedom. Costumes are integral stylistic elements of *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A*, as they are used to convey information about characters. The costume designers in these teen film adaptations are members of the Screen Idea Work Group who design and curate costumes that display the girl figure's economic value. Economic value relates specifically to how girl figures access consumerism; those who wear designer labels are shown to have access to consumerism, whilst outdated clothes signify the girl figure's inability to access consumption culture.

In these teen film adaptations, costume is also shown to craft beauty. In these films, beauty is shown to be an imperative to contemporary female life, as a teen girl figure's embodiment of beauty earns her social value. The beauty myth does not instruct physical appearance: it promotes socially desired behaviours in order to attain the desired physical appearance. In contemporary Western culture, the socially desired behaviour of the beauty myth is consumption, as the idea that consumer products craft beauty is perpetuated in contemporary culture. In *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A*, costume is shown to craft beauty, but in order for teen girl figures to select costumes that gratify the senses of others and be considered as 'beautiful', they must shop. As the

beauty myth is a strict valuing system (Wolf 1990, p. 2), teen girl figures are shown to not only shop out of pure desire, but out of necessity to be seen and socially valued by society. While this form of gender performance is a revision and reimagination of the gender performances represented in canonical texts, where motherhood, wifehood and beauty are traditional female characteristics that constitute becoming 'woman', this form of gender performance is as strict and inflexible as those in canonical literature. By not consuming, teen girl figures struggle to craft beauty, and as a result, they are punished for deviating from the beauty myth. In dictating how girls exercise their economic value and attain social value, the beauty myth oppresses the female teen figures of these select teen film adaptations.

Finally, while teen girl figures are shown to reclaim femininity as empowering through makeovers, teen makeovers are not solely advantageous. *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A* revise the makeovers depicted in their literary originals and reimagine internal, unsuccessful makeovers as explosive cinematic moments that reflect the Cinderella makeover in tone and style. These teen film adaptations prioritise and achieve external transformation, making way for prosperous futures. These makeovers are visualised as fun, joyful moments in a girl's life that suggest a future of prosperity. This is signified by the makeover sequences themselves, as costume designers, cinematographers, set designers and editors work to create fast-paced montages that celebrate the transformative potential of girl figures. In this way, cinematic makeovers are in excess of their literary originals; while literature can only use written language to convey transformation, cinema incorporates editing, soundtrack and images to visually and audibly represent the transformation process. The makeovers in *Clueless*, *She's All That* and *Easy A* are not entirely autonomous or advantageous, as these makeovers are shown to be initiated in order to help the outcast teen girl figure reach overt levels of femininity that satisfy the male gaze. The pressure to satisfy the male gaze through makeovers can also be harmful. *Easy A* demonstrates that the desire to embody femininity through makeovers can negate the girl figure's true self and cause the girl figure to act out in ways that satisfy the male gaze, rather than herself. These cinematic makeovers show that literary teen film adaptations of canonical literature can represent versions of third wave feminism where the path to femininity can simultaneously empower and compromise the freedoms of teen girl figures.

We generally understand teen films as coming-of-age stories where there is struggle and growth. In the traditional teen film, teens toe the line between childhood and adulthood, limitation and power. They strive for independence by pushing boundaries and rebelling, but freedom is not generally achieved. Due to their age, they are often restrained by their parents and teachers, as well as by the social expectations placed on them. Like traditional teen films, the girl figures represented in the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis also negotiate these factors. They show signs of autonomy and maturity, yet they are limited by patriarchal ideals and capitalist institutions. In presenting empowerment with limitation, the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis suggest that empowerment and oppression are not mutually exclusive. They show that teen girls can be empowered whilst also being oppressed. These films, therefore, send the message that female adolescence is about negotiating power with limitation.

Teen film adaptations of canonical literature are distinct products of third wave feminism from the 1990s and 2010s. Since the release of *Easy A* in 2010, not many canonical works have been modernised in contemporary teen films. There was a modernisation of Alcott's *Little Women* directed by Clare Niederpruem in 2018, but it is not held in high esteem for its modernisation, nor was it as financially successful as its predecessors, which were all conventional adaptations. The film also received mixed critical reviews (Rotten Tomatoes 2019).

Since the 1990s, teen-oriented adaptations have changed. In the 2000s and 2010s, many teen-oriented narratives that were also adaptations of literature were brought to the television screen, rather than the cinema. Instead of adapting canonical literature, many teen television shows adapted Young Adult fiction that told stories of first love and complicated romance. These include *Gossip Girl* (2007–2012), based on the book series by Cecily von Ziegesar, *The Vampire Diaries* (2009–2017), based on the book series of the same name by LJ Smith and JL Miller, and *Pretty Little Liars* (2010–2017), based on the book series by Sara Sheppard.

Unlike the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis, these television shows loosely adapted the literature they were based on. While literary teen film adaptations like *Clueless*, *She's All That*, *10 Things I Hate about You*, *Cruel Intentions* and *Easy A* transform specific moments from their literary originals into contemporary

contexts, these television shows only used the main premises of their literary sources, and from there, recreated the characters and narratives to fit their own needs. A possible reason for this could be that television is a long-form and often serialised medium. These television shows came in one-hour weekly instalments, so there was more time to develop stories and characters, and to ensure that the dramatic premise of the plot can produce multiple episodes' worth of story. Instead of condensing a book series into a 90-minute film, a television series, like the ones listed above, spend many hours telling their stories. Serialised television adaptations of canonical literature, such as BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*, typically air one-hour episodes over multiple weeks. This gives them the luxury of time. Unlike Young Adult adaptations, canonical adaptations use this time to be more faithful to their originals, as there is less need for condensing and compressing the narrative of a literary text. As television shows span years, they also need to ensure they are making their plots as exciting as possible to gain viewership and hold onto those viewers, as well as reflect the zeitgeist. Nevertheless, TV adaptations can also perpetuate the same kind of marketplace feminism that is represented in the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis. For example, *Gossip Girl* represents commodified girl power rhetoric through its representations of femininity and consumption culture.

Comic book adaptations also rose to prominence, not only in the superhero movie genre but also on TV. *Arrow* (2012– 2020), *The Flash* (2014–), *Supergirl* (2015–) and *Batwoman* (2019–) are all adaptations of DC comic book heroes. All four of these series air on the teen-centric network The CW. Comic book adaptations do not just include the superhero genre. In 2017, Archie Comics was adapted into *Riverdale* (2017–), a darker, sexier mystery series also on The CW. *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, published by Archie Comics, was also adapted into a series called *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018–), offering a horror-esque narrative that focuses on the occult.

But what about film? During the 2000s and 2010s, teen film adaptations were still being made, but they were not adapting canonical literature anymore. Instead, they were adapting Young Adult fiction. *Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging* (2008) was adapted from the novel by Louise Rennison, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (2012) was adapted from the novel by Stephen Chbosky, *The Fault in Our Stars* (2014) was adapted from the novel by John Green and *Love, Simon* (2018) was adapted from the novel by Becky

Albertalli. Netflix released *To All the Boys I've Loved Before* (2018), based on the book series of the same name by Jenny Han, and also brought *All the Bright Places* (2020) from the page to the screen.

Film adaptations of dystopian Young Adult literature were also popular in the 2010s, like *The Hunger Games* (2012), *The Maze Runner* (2014) and *Divergent* (2014). Unlike television adaptations, these films produced direct retellings of their literary sources. There may be some divergences here and there, but the bulk of the narrative and representation of characters mirrors the Young Adult fiction from which they are adapted. This shift in adaptation could be considered as a way for filmmakers to tap into pre-existing audiences that read Young Adult literature.

Television and film adaptations clearly work in different ways. While there seems to be an incentive for teen film adaptations to present the characters and plots from literature to match their literary originals, contemporary television adaptations of Young Adult literature seem to have more creative licence to deviate from its sources. This poses the question of what is adaptation in contemporary culture? If it is about taking inspiration from previous works (in the case of television) but also about making direct retellings (in film), there could be two definitions of adaptation that exist simultaneously. Or, perhaps the term 'adaptation' should not always be used. 'Adaptation' is a broad term, but with its long history and the prevalence of fidelity discourse throughout its cinematic history, the term connotes a sense of directness; a new screen work is directly reflective of a previous literary work. Since many television adaptations take inspiration from a previous work and loosely adapt their sources, maybe the term 'adaptation' should be swapped for the phrase 'based on'. 'Based on' suits the type of adaptation television shows engage in, as it suggests a link between a new work and a previous one, but it does not suggest direct recreation.

While there is research that explores the dichotomy between television and film adaptations, there is potential to conduct further research on the topic to better understand the nature and function of contemporary adaptation, as well as its specific processes and contingencies. One way of doing this is to consider how TV and film operate as different mediums.

While there has been research into the stylistic ways written words are adapted into moving images, there is potential to generate further research into investigating how comic books are stylistically adapted for the screen. They are concurrently visual and linguistic artworks that use panels of illustrations to visibly present narratives, as well as captions and speech bubbles to present actions and dialogue through written language. It would be enlightening to investigate how members of the Screen Idea Work Group negotiate with these factors to bring comic books to the TV screen.

Focus should also be given to the function of genre, as the genre of the work one is adapting impacts how it is brought to the screen. Just by considering the array of genres of the above Young Adult fiction books (i.e. sci-fi, mystery, drama, romance) there is more space to investigate how genre functions when narratives are adapted from the page to the screen. Does genre stay the same from text to screen adaptation, does it change, and why?

It would be useful to discuss adaptation as revision in relation to contemporary adaptations of canonical literature that represent versions of the past. Netflix series *Anne with an E* (2017-2019) is an example ripe for investigation. The series is an adaptation of *Anne of Green Gables*, a novel by Lucy Maud Montgomery, originally published in 1908. In it, social and political issues that sat in the background of the novel are foregrounded. Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* and Autumn de Wilde's *Emma* are adaptations of canonical literary texts that can also be examined as examples of adaptation as revision. *Little Women* reimagines Jo's ending to reflect contemporary contexts, and the humour in Jane Austen's *Emma* is emphasised and given contemporary quirks in Wilde's adaptation. By exploring these texts as examples of adaptation as revision, we can open a discussion about how traditional adaptations of canonical literature work to present narratives that represent versions of the past but that also revise and reimagine aspects of the text, allowing new meanings to be created by contemporary viewers.

With so many Young Adult fiction and comic book adaptations being presented on our television and cinema screens, is there still a place for literary teen film adaptations in contemporary screen culture? The lacklustre release of Niederpruem's *Little Women* suggests that perhaps there isn't. However, there may be potential for traditional literary adaptations to garner teen viewership. Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* and

Autumn de Wilde's *Emma* were not explicitly targeted at teen audiences, but these films are highly accessible to the demographic because they present coming-of-age narratives and fit into the romantic comedy genre, which is the conventional genre of teen films. Gerwig's *Little Women* represents a female coming-of-age story and also has the star power of Emma Watson and Saoirse Ronan to attract teen viewers. *Emma*'s story of naive love also has the potential to appeal to many teen girls. Traditional canonical adaptations, like these, obviously no longer form the bulk of adaptation, but if the reception of *Little Women* and *Emma* is any indication, more canonical adaptations may be produced in the coming years that tell coming-of-age narratives and feature romantic relationships that are central to the plot. Adaptations like these may have the potential to attract the teen viewership that would otherwise go to literary teen film adaptations. Films like *Little Women* and *Emma* should not be regarded as the future of the literary teen film adaptation, however, as they do not represent the tropes and conventions of the teen film genre. They are, however, the closest cinematic works, in narrative and genre, to the literary teen film adaptations I have discussed in this thesis.

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Filmography

All the Bright Places 2020, video recording, Netflix, Ohio, directed by Brett Haley.

Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging 2008, video recording, Paramount Pictures, United Kingdom, directed by Gurinder Chadha.

Anne with an E 2017–2019, television series, Netflix, Canada, created by Moira Walley-Beckett.

Arrow 2012–2020, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Vancouver, developed by Greg Berlanti, Marc Guggenheim & Andrew Kreisberg.

Batwoman 2019–, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Vancouver, developed by Caroline Dries.

Beach Party 1963, video recording, American International Pictures, California, directed by William Asher.

Booksmart 2019, DVD, United Artists Releasing, Los Angeles, directed by Olivia Wilde.

The Breakfast Club 1985, video recording, Universal Pictures, United States, written and directed by John Hughes.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer 1997–2003, television series, 20th Century Fox Television, United States, created by Joss Whedon.

Chilling Adventures of Sabrina 2018–, television series, Netflix, Vancouver, developed by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa.

Cinderella 1899, video recording, Star Film Company, France, directed by Georges Méliès.

Clueless 1995, DVD, Paramount Pictures, Los Angeles, written and directed by Amy Heckerling.

Confessions of a Shopaholic 2009, DVD, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, New York, directed by PJ Hogan.

The Craft 1996, video recording, Columbia Pictures, United States, directed by Andrew Fleming.

Cruel Intentions 1999, DVD, Columbia Pictures, New York, directed by Roger Kumble.

Divergent 2014, video recording, Lionsgate, Chicago, directed by Neil Burger.

Drive Me Crazy 1999, video recording, 20th Century Fox, United States, directed by John Schultz.

Easy A 2010, DVD, Screen Gems, California, directed by Will Gluck.

Enchanted 2007, DVD, Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, New York, directed by Kevin Lima.

Emma 1996, DVD, Miramax Films, United Kingdom, directed by Douglas McGrath.

Emma 2020, DVD, Focus Features, United Kingdom, directed by Autumn de Wilde.

The Fault in Our Stars 2014, video recording, 20th Century Fox, Pennsylvania and Amsterdam, directed by Josh Boone.

Ferris Bueller's Day Off 1986, DVD, Paramount Pictures, Illinois and Los Angeles, written and directed by John Hughes.

The Flash 2014–, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Vancouver, developed by Greg Berlanti, Geoff Johns & Andrew Kreisberg.

Gidget Goes Hawaiian 1961, video recording, Columbia Pictures, Hawaii, directed by Paul Wendkos.

Gossip Girl 2007–2012, television series, CBS Television Studios, New York, created by Stephanie Savage & Josh Schwartz.

Grease 1978, DVD, Paramount Pictures, Los Angeles, directed by Randal Kleiser.

Hamlet 1990, video recording, Carolco Pictures, Scotland, directed by Franco Zeffirelli.

The Hunger Games 2012, DVD, Lionsgate Films, North Carolina, directed by Gary Ross.

Jawbreaker 1999, DVD, TriStar Pictures, United States, directed by Darren Stein.

Just Go with It 2011, video recording, Sony Pictures Releasing, Hawaii, directed by Dennis Dugan.

Just One of the Guys 1985, video recording, Columbia Pictures, Arizona, directed by Lisa Gottlieb.

Lady Bird 2017, DVD, A24, United States, directed by Greta Gerwig.

Little Women 2018, video recording, Pure Flix Entertainment, Utah, directed by Clare Niederpruem.

Little Women 2019, DVD, Sony Pictures Releasing, Boston, directed by Greta Gerwig.

Love, Simon 2018, video recording, 20th Century Fox, Atlanta, directed by Greg Berlanti.

The Maze Runner 2014, video recording, 20th Century Fox, Louisiana, directed by Wes Ball.

Mean Girls 2004, video recording, Paramount Pictures, United States, directed by Mark Waters.

A Midsummer Night's Dream 1999, video recording, Fox Searchlight Pictures, Italy, directed by Michael Hoffman.

Much Ado about Nothing 1993, video recording, The Samuel Goldwyn Company, Italy, directed by Kenneth Branagh.

Never Been Kissed 1999, video recording, 20th Century Fox, United States, directed by Raja Gosnell.

O 2001, video recording, Lionsgate, United States, directed by Tim Blake Nelson.

Othello 1995, video recording, Warner Bros. Pictures, Italy, directed by Oliver Parker.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower 2012, video recording, Summit Entertainment, Pennsylvania, directed by Stephen Chbosky.

Persuasion 1995, video recording, Sony Pictures Classics, United Kingdom, directed by Roger Michell.

The Powerpuff Girls 1998–, television series, Warner Bros. Television, United States, created by Craig McCracken.

Pretty in Pink 1986, DVD, Paramount Pictures, Los Angeles, directed by Howard Deutch.

Pretty Little Liars 2010–2017, television series, Warner Horizon Television, California, developed by I. Marlene King.

Pretty Woman 1990, DVD, Touchstone Pictures, Los Angeles, directed by Garry Marshall.

Pride and Prejudice 1995, video recording, BBC, United Kingdom, directed by Simon Langton.

Richard III 1995, video recording, United Artists Pictures, London, directed by Richard Loncraine.

Riverdale 2017–, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Vancouver, developed by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa.

Rock around the Clock 1956, video recording, Columbia Pictures, United States, directed by Fred F Sears.

Romeo + Juliet 1996, DVD, 20th Century Fox, Mexico City, directed by Baz Luhrmann.

Sense and Sensibility 1995, video recording, Sony Pictures Releasing, United Kingdom, directed by Ang Lee.

Sex and the City 1990–2004, television series, Warner Bros. Television, United States, created by Darren Star.

She's All That 1999, DVD, Miramax, California, directed by Robert Iscove.

She's the Man 2006, DVD, DreamWorks Pictures, United States, directed by Andy Fickman.

Sixteen Candles 1984, video recording, Universal Pictures, United States, written and directed by John Hughes.

The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants 2005, DVD, Warner Bros. Pictures, Greece, directed by Ken Kwapis.

Some Like It Hot 1959, DVD, United Artists, United States, directed by Billy Wilder.

Supergirl 2015–, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Vancouver, developed by Ali Adler, Greg Berlanti & Andrew Kreisberg.

Titus 1999, video recording, Fox Searchlight Pictures, Rome, directed by Julie Taymor.

To All the Boys I've Loved Before 2018, video recording, Netflix, Vancouver, directed by Susan Johnson.

Twelfth Night 1996, video recording, Entertainment Film Distributions, Cornwall, directed by Trevor Nunn.

The Vampire Diaries 2009–2017, television series, Warner Bros. Television Distribution, Georgia, developed by Julie Plec & Kevin Williamson.

Wuthering Heights 1939, video recording, United Artists, California, directed by William Wyler.

10 Things I Hate about You 1999, DVD, Buena Vista Pictures, Seattle, directed by Gil Junger.