

Reflection Essay for “From Novel to Film: Landscape and Jane Austen”
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This project required a variety of sources ranging from movies, novels, articles, books, websites, and videos. During the course of the semester I read each of the four novels by Jane Austen and took notes on specific descriptions which related to landscape, which often included a description of a house, home, or area. During this period I also watched each of the related films and took note of the depiction of the scenes. I first wrote my interpretation of the two different forms of medium, and how I saw both. I then began my research. I began my researching with Academic Search Premier, and found a few articles that discussed Austen, and landscape but none of the articles suited my research. I decided to focus more on a historical approach so I started searching in JSTOR under the limiter of history and literature. I found an article about cottages, about Austen and her use of location, and the picturesque. The article about the picturesque and various discussions in class captured my attention. I did a Google search to find a good definition to accompany what I had already learned about the picturesque. I found a site that was created through the National Trust. I began summarizing what I had learned in each article and started structuring my research around what I had already written. I found that I still lacked adequate depth to properly interpret the things I had noticed, so I used Google Scholar to research a bit more about landscape design in Britain during the Austen era. I found two books, one which talked about country houses, and one which discussed landed estates from an archaeological perspective. After reading and summarizing the articles, I felt I needed more focus on Austen herself, and support for my thesis that Austen’s own experiences influenced her writing. I returned to a documentary that had been introduced in class, which was published by BBC. The visuals helped me connect, not only what I saw in the movies, but also what Austen described in her novels, and perhaps what she had experienced. During this project I missed being able to physically be in the

library doing research; I like being able to hold the books I find. Although I missed this aspect of research, I discovered that the library offers many online resources. and I was able to search, find, evaluate, and analyze scholarly peer reviewed articles from home.

As I did my research and read the variety of literature that I came across, I wanted to find and use sources that were not only academic, but also those that pushed and changed my own perspective, which I had created over the semester. At times during the research process I was overwhelmed by the amount of articles I found, but used the processes I have learned from my time at CSUSM to keep focused and eliminate the articles, which while interesting, or important, did not meet my needs. At other times I was frustrated with the lack of articles that fit my search criteria. Knowing when to broaden my search was important also, and in what ways; I have found that using truncation is a very useful tool. I personally like using CSUSM's databases such as Academic Search Premier, or JSTOR, and do not turn to other search engines until I feel I have sufficiently searched through the articles I find. For this project I had to step outside my comfort zone and look beyond my regular areas of research.

Coming from a social science, and historical perspective helped me look at this project from multiple disciplines, and to not shy away from delving into multiple types and formats of research. I wanted to not only understand, but question the information that I read as to get a better analysis of the work and the position I was taking. I found many differing opinions about what Austen meant, what she wanted to say, and how those things should be interpreted when making a film. I had my own opinions, but over the course of reading, re-reading, and re-reading again, my opinion changed and my focus for the project slowly developed into a cohesive interpretation. My own stance was not unique, but the combination of the research and various mediums lead to a research paper that brought the historical context into today's perspective, without denying the original work to be what it is.