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Heritage Film and Heritage Culture: Jane Austen Adaptations

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1 Introduction

“Films, to the despair of historians, have always taken a ‘postmodern’ approach to the past, viewing it not as a dull chronicle but as a dynamic resource for exciting stories and poetic, morally uplifting untruths.”

Deborah Cartmell and I.Q. Hunter¹

For the past three decades British people have undergone times of rapid change and instability in many fields. Their considerable economic power has had a long-term decline. Globalization has spread through all the pores of everyday life, especially with the rise of multinational enterprises. The English legal system was subject to the changes caused by joining the European Union. In addition, the Labour government made a political decision to take part in the Iraq war. All this coupled with the acknowledgement of the fact that many nations and cultures constitute the English society disturbed the sense of continuity and unique national identity.

In an attempt to prevent this dissolution the conservative leaders of the country decided to turn to the past, by regarding old traditions and values as the means for preserving stability. Margaret Thatcher’s government passed the National Heritage Act in 1980² and 1983³, in the aftermath of which encouraging, promoting and displaying the past as a key element of the heritage industry gained in importance. Thatcher’s successor, John Major, carried on her work of nurturing and advertizing a conservative vision of the nation by establishing the Department of National Heritage in 1992⁴. Although Tony Blair went to great lengths in order to recreate a new ‘Cool Britannia’ image of the nation, by the time he became

¹ Deborah Cartmell and I.Q. Hunter *Introduction*. p. 2

² For the full text see http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1980/cukpga_19800017_en_1, last viewed 26.01.2010.

³ For the full text see http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1983/pdf/ukpga_19830047_en.pdf, last viewed 26.01.2010.

⁴ New Labour’s government changed its name into the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. For more information see http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/foi_requests/1738.aspx, last viewed 26.01.2010.

Prime Minister, heritage had already been established as the essential component of the touristic appeal of Britain⁵ or more particularly, England.

One significant part of the heritage industry is the production and release of the so called 'heritage movies'. They became particularly popular during the 1980s, were successful in the 1990s and they still attract audiences at the beginning of the 21st century. On the whole, they are famous for producing feelings of aesthetic pleasure through elaborate screening of the dazzling landscapes and lavish costume props. They mostly deal with affairs and entanglements of the pre-industrial English upper classes (and are nevertheless considered as representations of the nation) and are often based on classic works of literature⁶. Among the British writers whose works have been adapted to film (such as William Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and E.M. Forster), Jane Austen has been particularly embraced by the producers in the last decades.

Austen's adaptations have been a good recipe for both commercial success and Academy Awards nominations. Being relatively inexpensive to produce and enjoying a status of high quality, they clearly reinforced the BBC's tendency to broadcast movies based on the English literary tradition. In the meantime, Hollywood had also detected how popular the British television productions were on the American market and was ready to adopt this formula of transferring her novels into visually splendid films.

This thesis sets out to trace and explore in some detail the characteristic features of the phenomenon of heritage cinema in the latest television and cinema adaptations of *Emma*, generally known as one of Austen's most complex novels. The BBC1 *Emma* (2009), starring British actress Romola Garai and the Miramax *Emma* (1996), starring the American Gwyneth Paltrow will be used as case studies. The structure of the work will be as follows.

First, a short introduction into defining heritage culture will be provided. The official website of *English Heritage* will be briefly analyzed in order to better understand how promotion of the past works in England. Second, a historical frame of the rise and popularity of heritage cinema in Britain will be provided. The time period to be covered is from 1981 (*Chariots of Fire*) to 2009 (*Emma*). This chapter will further make a necessary distinction

⁵ Cf. Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p.57

⁶ See chapter 2.2 for more information about the English heritage cinema

between the notions similar to heritage movies. Finally, a more detailed analysis of the filmic elements will be given.

Next, the reasons why producers choose to adapt Austen shall be explained. Further, the functions of the Austen adaptations shall be named and discussed, as I perceive this as particularly relevant to understanding the widespread popularity of the movie trend I have mentioned. Additionally, the audience who watches the movies will be briefly analysed. The issue of adapting Austen novels to film will not be a central part of this work, but only briefly mentioned.

Subsequently, the thesis shall examine the circumstances of the two adaptations that found their ways into cinema and television. The genres of the movies shall be named and explained. Furthermore, the production of the films will be analyzed, whereby particular attention will be paid to the cast, and to the physical and social setting. Central to the thesis shall be the detailed analysis of the key scenes in both films. The criteria for the study will be the characters' rendition by the actors, and dialogues, cutting, editing and camera movement, setting, light and music. In addition, the critical and popular reception of the movies will be discussed.

Finally, all the discussions will be summarized and the potential ways of studying Austen adaptations further will be given. In addition, possible trends in transferring her novels into film will be suggested.

2 Heritage Culture, Heritage Cinema

2.1 English Heritage Culture

Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines the term 'heritage' in the following ways:

1. property that descends to an heir
2. something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor
3. something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth⁷

⁷ Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/heritage/>, last viewed 26.01.2010.

Life has generally taught us that we have to put an effort and fight in order to acquire something and depending on the circumstances and skills, different people manage to have different things. According to the definitions above, heritage is something that everybody receives upon their birth. If we add the adjective 'national' to this term, we get languages, traditions and places that belong to one people and that are transmitted from one generation to the other. The idea of national heritage involves the notions of democracy and equality, since every member of one nation enjoys a right to it. Due to the incalculable value of these attributes, a national heritage is something worth preserving; it is a resource from which everyone can benefit. This brings us to the core of the *English Heritage* organisation, which is "the Government's statutory adviser on the historic environment."⁸

In many aspects the work of this organisation presents a suitable background for understanding Jane Austen adaptations, which have been popular for more than three decades. *English Heritage* is oriented towards saving and improving the quality of historic buildings, monuments and landscapes. They also strive to make these accessible to the general public and ultimately increase people's understanding of the past.⁹ *English Heritage* uses the buildings which are the vital elements in constructing the nation.¹⁰ They try to make the sometime exclusive aristocratic homes and estates widely available. Interestingly, just like Austen's films, they also provide access only to the higher classes' way of life, neglecting the history of those who belonged to the lower social ranks and constituted the majority of the nation.

The main goal and the idea of all the work of *English Heritage* is explained in the following paragraph:

The historic environment is a resource from which everyone can benefit and is a fundamental tool for regeneration, sustaining community pride, supporting small businesses, creating a sense of identity and belonging and reaching out to and educating the next generation.¹¹

In this small manifesto one can recognise the idea of equality and benefit which I have already mentioned. The other important notions would be a 'sense of identity' and 'educating'. Last but not the least, the financial function ('businesses'), or making a profit, is

⁸ English Heritage. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

⁹ Ibid. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1665>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

¹⁰ For more information see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1148>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

¹¹ Ibid. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.20133>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

also important. The extracted ideas connect us with the Austen adaptations, and will be further discussed in the following chapters.

2.2 English Heritage Film

2.2.1 The Rise of Heritage Cinema

During the 1980s the cultural analysts saw and identified a certain fortification of the heritage industry in Britain. The past was seen as a powerful market, which could fit well into the new enterprise culture. Since cinema stood for one of the most important cultural and social forces of the twentieth century, the English costume dramas were recognised as a very important contribution to this industry.¹²

At the beginning of the 1980s cinema going in Britain was not particularly popular. However, in the following years the home video market developed and new terrestrial television channels, satellite and cable emerged. The multiplex rose and several Hollywood blockbusters attracted large audience. All this ensured that film becomes again the centre of popular culture in Britain. The British film production improved its quality and achieved huge home and international success with several movies. Among these, costume dramas were most popular.¹³ The long-lasting fascination with this movie trend started with *Brideshead Revisited* and *Chariots of Fire*, which attracted large audience, got good critical reviews and won many important awards. These films proved that there was a big market for quality costume dramas.¹⁴

Literature was recognised as an important factor in the production of these movies, since the majority of costume dramas are adaptations of various established novels. Among the most popular have been the novels of William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, Henry James and Jane Austen. Austenmania spread in the mid-1990s, with the very successful BBC serialisation of *Pride and Prejudice*.¹⁵ Some Hollywood producers observed the great success of these not extremely expensive productions. They decided to take part in it and so two highly acknowledged Austen adaptations were made: *Sense and Sensibility* (1995)

¹² Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 1

¹³ Ibid. p.1

See the following chapter for a definition of costume dramas.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 15

¹⁵ Ibid. p.17

and *Emma* (1996). It has been more than ten years and Austen's works are still adapted over and over again. The following chapters will analyse this film trend in more detail.

2.2.2 Heritage Film and Other Genres

Andrew Higson writes that all genres are "loose, leaky, hybrid categories" and they should always be taken with some dose of reserve. However, in order to study movies, it is necessary to label them in some way. Higson chooses the term heritage film and warns that there are some problems with defining it. It is not an exclusive category and as a film group, it overlaps with other groups. It is connected with or similar to the several categories. Let us analyse them briefly in order to try to make a clear distinction. I will use the categories of a period film, costume drama, historical film, literary adaptation and nostalgia film.

A period film is roughly defined by Andrew Higson as a movie which is set in a sufficiently far past. He believes that for many people Austen adaptations are simply period films, not to be distinguished from others by any historical specificity.¹⁶

A literary adaptation is a film based on a work of literature. It is not necessarily set in the past.¹⁷

A historical film is set in the past and depicts famous people in their historical contexts. It generally focuses on public events.¹⁸

A costume drama is defined by the CALD as a film about one period in the past, which is usually broadcast on television.¹⁹ The online Encarta dictionary stresses the importance of the costumes the actors are wearing, which are representative of a particular period in history.²⁰ Costume dramas are assumed by Higson to comprise all period films, describing both historical and fictional figures.²¹ The fictional figures might be from a famous literary work or invented by the screenwriter.

Bearing all this in mind, we may then conclude that heritage film is a period drama (which automatically means costume drama as well) and a literary adaptation. In very broad

¹⁶ Cf. Andrew Higson. *Selling Jane Austen to Movie Audience in the 1990s*. p. 44

¹⁷ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 10

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 12

¹⁹ Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary. 'costume drama'

²⁰ Online Encarta Dictionary. http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_561503101/costume_drama.html, last viewed 17.02.2010.

²¹ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 12

terms it can be defined as the film set in nineteenth or early twentieth century England, depicting lives of the middle or upper classes, and presenting the past through an idealised, nostalgic perspective.

Due to the last feature (i.e. nostalgic perspective), heritage films are not to be confused with the category called retro or nostalgia film. This is Frederic Jameson's term, which describes a specific category within post-modern cinema. It tries to capture the atmosphere and style of an era which may not necessarily be very distant, but somehow feels lost. Unlike most heritage films, they do not need to be literary adaptations and are usually considered to be an empty copy of earlier forms and texts in order to avoid any dealing with the present.²²

2.2.3 Features of Heritage Film

Now that the distinction between heritage cinema and similar terms has been made, let us have a better look at its characteristics. Andrew Higson's work *English Heritage, English Cinema* has been highly influential in this field, so let us start with some of his ideas.

First of all, these films have some British element in their production, and can be classified as either British or British co-productions. The suitable examples for this are the latest BBC adaptation of *Emma*, with the British cast, screenwriter and director, and Miramax *Emma*, produced by an American screenwriter and director, and a mixed American-British cast.²³ Regarding the setting²⁴, these films depict some aspect of the British or more specifically English past before the Second World War (e.g. *Chariots of Fire*) or they are adapted from a canonical English literary text (e.g. Austen adaptations). They are usually filmed in England and feature beautiful landscapes and stately homes.²⁵ Their social milieu is composed of members of middle and upper social classes.

The films usually focus on character developments and therefore do not have the need to push the narrative forward. This is why their aesthetics is different from mainstream Hollywood. The editing and camerawork often create a slow and graceful rhythm. This is achieved with a lot of long shots and the lack of quick, dramatic cutting. The movement of the camera is very fluid and slow. Instead of following characters, it is frequently motivated by

²² Will Brooker. *Retro/Nostalgia Film*. p. 387-388. From *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*.

²³ Chapter 3.4 deals thoroughly with both of the adaptations.

²⁴ For some examples see chapter 3.3

²⁵ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 10

the desire to offer spectator a better look to the period setting, objects and costumes.²⁶ The slow editing work is complemented by the non-violent stories, impeccable manners and the soothing soundtrack. The plots of the heritage films are in some way involved with the everyday life of the upper classes. They deal with love stories, family relationships and social issues. These are followed with pieces of classical music, which are sometimes used to reflect the characters' emotions.²⁷

Since they have all of the mentioned characteristics, Jane Austen adaptations provide a perfect specimen for this movie trend. Let us then continue analysing the heritage cinema through the movies based on her novels.

2.3 Jane Austen Adaptations

2.3.1 Producers

The reasons why television and film producers decide to adapt Austen's novels are numerous. Sue Parill points out that first of all, they tell simple and nice love stories, which are particularly appealing and popular with female audiences. The plots are compelling, populated by interesting and altogether charming characters and unfold at a gentle pace. Parill further mentions that a particularly important quality of Austenean movies is the very name of the writer, which is widely recognizable. Most educated people, even Americans, she says, have at least had the opportunity to hear about her. If we look at this aspect from a broader perspective, we might observe that movies filmed according to the literary source material generally have the advantage of already being known to the spectators. They are likely to have previously read the book, or if not, they will most probably have heard of it. Apart from this familiarity, classic literary works used for adaptations inspire a certain amount of respect and admiration because of their high quality and success. What happens consequently is that they pass all of these features onto the movie. Austen adaptations have not infrequently attracted the attention of Academy Award committees. One of the examples is the Oscar winning Miramax *Emma*. Last but not least (especially in the consumerism era), is the fact that the production of these movies is, comparatively speaking, not extremely expensive. Since Jane Austen's novels are in the public domain, the author does not need to be paid, the

²⁶ Ibid. p. 38

Also, see chapter 3.4.2 for some examples.

²⁷ See chapter 3.4.3 for examples of the use of soundtrack.

films do not have costly special effects, are not populated by numerous cast and do not require an exotic location.²⁸

2.3.2 Functions

There are many functions that Austen adaptations fulfil, and they are all in some way contributing to the popularity of the movies. The films are visually beautiful and since they can be viewed as a story of a nation, they have a cultural significance. They are used in educative purposes and they represent a boost to the national tourism and heritage industry.

It has already been mentioned that heritage films have an emphasised display of picturesque landscapes, lovely costumes and great houses. Higson writes that the style of the camera is pictorialist "with all the connotations the term brings of art-photography, aesthetic refinement, and set-piece images."²⁹ He further observes that heritage cinema is not so much interested in story-telling as in the landscapes, their properties, actors, props and archaic dialogue.³⁰ Carola Surkamp also points out that these movies indicate certain artistry and carry out an aesthetic function rather than the narrative.³¹

The cultural function of the heritage movies refers to the possibility to understand them as an image of the English nation. A nation theorist Benedict Anderson offers us perhaps the most adequate explanation of the concept of nation. He states that it is a kind of community which is constructed or imagined by people, who do not necessarily know each other, but still see themselves as members of one group. They share the same borders, culture and the sense of independence.³² This feeling of belonging certainly needs to be consolidated and fortified by particular mental pictures and ideas of the members of an imagined community. A movie represents a very powerful and effective mode of achieving this stabilisation. Movies "provide not only stories of national unity, of belonging, and stable internal and external boundaries but also have immediate visual impact."³³ It is rather obvious that heritage films promote an image of Englishness. However, this image is restricted only to upper classes and rural parts of the country. England is seen as a land of beautiful landscapes and houses, well-mannered and classy people. This picture is very distant

²⁸ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p.3

²⁹ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 39

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Cf. Carola Surkamp. *Teaching British Heritage Films to German Students*. p. 171

³² Cf. Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*. p.6, 7

³³ Gesa Stedman. *Austenizing Britain*. p.11

from the multicultural and multinational modern England. That is the reason why some critics argue that the 1990s revival of interest in Austen is a part of a kind of nostalgic effort to reclaim whiteness.³⁴

Apart from maintaining an embellished picture of Englishness in the eyes of the public, the heritage films present an important part of the heritage and tourism industry. They provide great promotional material for the attractive sights of England. People who saw the movies and enjoyed their visual splendour, frequently want to see the beauties of English landscapes and country houses themselves.³⁵ One of the easiest ways to find the desired locations is the website called: *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations*.³⁶ Higson also names several other ways to encourage the public to consume much more than just the film or television program, some of which are clothes stores, food outlets, magazines, and furnishings.³⁷ Additionally, with every new adaptation, the publishers will bring out new editions of the books and other Austen souvenirs will be produced and marketed.³⁸

M. Casey Diana conducted a little educational experiment with her students to prove that watching Austen's adaptations have an educational function of improving the understanding of the novels. According to the outcome, she concluded that Emma Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility* instilled a desire for reading and provided a better and deeper reading experience for her college students.³⁹ In addition, Carola Surkamp argues that films are generally very useful in learning a foreign language. They provoke discussions and incite learners to talk and write in a foreign language.⁴⁰ In the case of Austen adaptations, it is even better since one can work with both a text and a movie.

2.3.3 Audience

Higson observes that Austen films are cultural products, which were produced in a certain context for a particular audience. He stresses that the film producers are more

³⁴ Cf. Marc DiPaolo. *Emma*. p.94

³⁵ Sue Parill provides statistics about Lyme Park in Cheshire (Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*), which had 800 visitors during the first week after the series was shown on television. The previous year there were only 86 tourists in the same period. Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 6

³⁶ <http://www.movie-locations.com/>, last viewed 23.02.2010

³⁷ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 61

³⁸ One of the numerous examples for this is *The Jane Austen Centre*. <http://giftshop.janeausten.co.uk/>, last viewed 17.01.2010

³⁹ For more information about the experiment see M. Casey Diana. *Emma Thompson's Sense and Sensibility as a Gateway to Austen's Novel*. p. 140-147

⁴⁰ Cf. Carola Surkamp. *Teaching British Heritage Films to German Students*. p. 166

interested in meeting the audiences' expectations, than creating a perfectly correct reproduction of Austen's messages.⁴¹ He also provides one possible profile of the audience. He says that these films are usually seen by women⁴², who are relatively older cinemagoers. Within the middle classes, they are popular with teachers, lecturers, social workers and others who work in caring professions, all of whom are usually very keen on literature and the arts in general.⁴³ Sue Parill mentions that these movies appeal to modern feminist viewers. She adds that some women like the movies because they actually make them feel satisfied with living in the contemporary world, where there is much more freedom of choices.⁴⁴ Finally, probably the biggest reason for audiences' interest in these costume dramas is the nostalgic longing for the order and beauty of the past. Order is not only presented on a public level, but also on a private one. Here the majority of characters manage to find a perfect mate and prosper both emotionally and economically. Speaking of perfect matches, let us have a look now at the latest cinema and television adaptations of *Emma* to explore this movie trend further.

3 *Emma* (1996, Miramax) and *Emma* (2009, BBC)

3.1 Genre

A genre is a type of art or cultural artifact, with certain elements in common. In the artistic field of film, the usual common generic elements are subject matter, narrative, stylistic conventions, character types, plots and iconography.⁴⁵ According to the *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*, heritage film can be regarded as a genre specific to the British nation. It deals with British or more frequently English material. It was developed by distancing British film from Hollywood domination through its form, style and content and constitutes a part of national heritage.⁴⁶ In defining the heritage cinema, Andrew Higson underlines that its main focus is romance, and according to this, differentiates two possible classic genres within this national movie direction. He says that they are conventionally

⁴¹ Cf. Andrew Higson. *Selling Jane Austen to Movie Audience in the 1990s*. p.36

⁴² A brief look at Austen fan groups on FaceBook is a good example that the majority of her readers and movie watchers are girls and women. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Jane-Austen-fans/33778810624>, last viewed 17.02.2010

⁴³ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p.102, 103

⁴⁴ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 7

⁴⁵ Cf. Steve Blandford, Barry Keith Grant, Jim Heller. *The Film Studies Dictionary*. p. 112

⁴⁶ Cf. Maya Lockett. Heritage Film. from *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*. p. 210
For more information about characteristic of heritage cinema, see chapter 2.2

played either as romantic dramas or romantic comedies.⁴⁷ The two latest adaptations of *Emma* can be distinguished as the representatives of both types.

The attribute of being romantic may be applied to both adaptations. They concentrate on particular feelings of intimate personal life, have a female protagonist and their audience consists mainly of women.⁴⁸ There are many aspects which make McGrath's film a romantic comedy. He plays with some visual means to achieve a humorous effect, as when he positions Emma and Harriet in such a way that it seems that they are wearing men's hats in the Ford's shop. He also uses physical movements in a funny way, when Emma for example leans on a little boy to wait and see whether Mr. Elton will confess his love to Harriet. Next, the script sometimes instructs the actors to speak in a less suitable way for their respective social status when they make jokes. Emma once tells Harriet that Mr. Elton must have found his wife while he was "doing charitable work in a mental infirmary."⁴⁹ Emma's voice-over commentary can also be a source of deliberate sarcasm, for example when she first meets Robert Martin and thinks that Harriet can do better than *that*.⁵⁰

Let us define Higson's category of romantic drama within heritage cinema, as a genre which is different from romantic comedy in its serious tone, achieved with more detailed analysis of characters' emotions and with making the class issues more obvious. Although the BBC series is not entirely without humorous moments⁵¹, the overall atmosphere is not mainly intended to amuse us and make us laugh. One example for a more complex display of emotions is the treatment of Jane Fairfax. The Miramax film does not dedicate a lot of time space to her character. She does not speak a lot and seems to have a function of the competitor to Emma in beauty and accomplishments (such as musical talents). In the BBC adaptation on the other hand, Jane goes through a lot of emotional pressure. After strawberry picking, Emma notices that Jane seems fatigued and exhausted. At that point she is urged by Mrs. Elton to accept the governess position and has to wait for Frank to publish their engagement. She is also exposed to additional emotional torture by Emma and Frank's inappropriate flirting at Box Hill.⁵² Regarding class problems as based on the novel, it cannot be said that the Miramax film eliminates them altogether.⁵³ However, it can be argued that its main focus

⁴⁷ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Literature, English Cinema: Selling Jane Austen to Movie Audiences in the 1990s*. p. 41

⁴⁸ Cf. Gill Branston. Romance. from *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*. p. 389

⁴⁹ Cf. David Monaghan. *Emma and the art of adaptation*. p.223, 224

⁵⁰ For more examples of funny episodes, see chapters 3.2 and 3.4

⁵¹ See Mr. Elton's proposal sequence, chapter 3.4.3

⁵² For other examples of the analysis of some other characters', see chapter 3.2

⁵³ See chapter 3.3.2 for more examples

is to present the love story in such a satisfying manner, that everything that is not pleasing is put in the background. On the other hand, the BBC series exposes class problems from the very beginning, starting with the Bates having to move from their home to a smaller place and leaving their beloved niece to their cousins. The servants are also much more present in the BBC series than in the Miramax version. Working-class members can also be seen harvesting in the fields together with Robert Martin and selling fruit and vegetables in the street market. Finally, unlike in the Miramax film, the BBC ending does not give us any clues that the friendship between Emma and her social inferior Harriet will be continued. Instead, as it suits her social status, Emma seems very likely to finally befriend Jane Fairfax.

The Miramax movie is generally light, cheerful and with a lot of sense of humour, and it can thus be classified as a romantic comedy. On the other hand, the BBC adaptation goes deeper into analyzing the characters' emotions and shows both rich and less luxurious places and lifestyles. This makes the series fall into the category of romantic drama. However, this crude distinction (drama vs. comedy) should not be pushed too far. Namely, although O'Hanlon's version has a more serious tone, it is not completely devoid of comedy. In a similar way, while McGrath's film has a generally humorous and romantic atmosphere, it attaches more importance to the class issues than it might seem.⁵⁴

3.2 Cast

The actors and actresses in the leading roles significantly contribute to the atmosphere of a movie. The casting choices are important in creating a certain impression. Both Austen adaptations are especially interested in Emma's character, her exciting inner life and the romance with Mr. Knightley. It can be argued, nevertheless, that the 1996 movie focuses much more on Emma than on the others, since most of the attention is given to the development of her character. The BBC version, on the other hand, be that because of the larger time frame or due to the intentional emphasis on social issues, dedicates an adequate amount of time to several other characters apart from Emma (e.g. The John Knightleys, or Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates). Through their deeper emotional interpretation the series adopts a fairly dramatic tone, whereas the way how most of the Miramax movie actors rendered their characters is in keeping with the general comedic emphasis.

⁵⁴ See chapter 3.3.2 for some examples.

Many scholars have argued that the character of Emma does not only fully occupy the central place in the Miramax film, but also brightly illuminates it. Troost and Greenfield produce statistics that 41 percent of the dialogue is given to her, which is by far more than any other character got. Mr. Knightley has 13 and Harriet Smith 12 percent. The statistics also demonstrate that McGrath focused so much on Emma and Mr. Knightley's romance that he significantly reduced Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax's love story, who occupy only 4 and 1 percent of the dialogue respectively.⁵⁵ Apart from that, Nora Nachumi explains how McGrath's Emma goes to great lengths to promote a rising star, Gwyneth Paltrow. She mentions that at the time of the movie release, there were many articles written about her outstanding beauty and private life. She says that Paltrow is "lit to perfection", because of which the movie cannot portray her in an ironic light.⁵⁶ In addition, Marc DiPaolo goes even further to suggest that McGrath, who is obviously a male, might have even got too romantic at times during the film, particularly when he framed Emma on a Grecian couch between two plants reading a letter from the Coles.⁵⁷ Sue Parill, on the other hand, finds all the attributes which Paltrow possesses to be rather suitable, if not desired for her role. Namely, due to her manipulative nature, stubbornness and class-consciousness, Emma's character is quite easy to dislike. If a very appealing and charming actress, like Paltrow, plays her role, she might make the character more sympathetic, thus making it easier for the audience to forgive her when she admits making mistakes.⁵⁸

Douglas McGrath's film starring Gwyneth Paltrow portrays Emma as the uncrowned queen of Highbury, who certainly likes to be in control. The opening of the movie gives us some clues about Emma's personality traits.⁵⁹ The narrator describes her as a girl who knows how the world should be run, which reveals her dominating personality. In the first shot of Emma, we see her holding a miniature globe, which represents a little realm of Highbury. It seems like a toy in her hands, with which she can easily play. Nevertheless, the world of Highbury is not a toy she made; it is much more unpredictable and complex and Emma will have to learn how to deal with it. It might also be argued that in her role of a ruler, Emma displays some desirable characteristics. She always shows a lot of forbearance to her father, whose inheritance provides her with security and status. She loves him and treats him with

⁵⁵ Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield. *Filming Highbury: Reducing the Community in Emma to the Screen*. For the complete statistics see the webpage: http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/opno3/troost_sayre.html, last viewed 17.02.2010

⁵⁶ Cf. Nora Nachumi. *As if!*. p. 135

⁵⁷ Cf. Marc Dipaolo. *Emma Adapted*. p.93

⁵⁸ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 123

⁵⁹ For the detailed analysis of the opening scene see chapter 3.4.1

respect. Emma also demonstrates her generosity and kind heart when visiting the poor. She gently tucks one poor woman in bed and spoon feeds her with a soup and also regularly provides food for the Bates women.

It might be said that Romola Garai is also a rising star (although a bit older than Paltrow at the time she played the same role) and Emma, as her biggest role so far, might give a big boost to her career.⁶⁰ Regarding her performance in this role, the movie critics have voiced different opinions. The *New York Times* reviewer described her as “irresistible as the willful, wrongheaded matchmaker Emma Woodhouse, all but eclipsing her many predecessors in the role.”⁶¹ In the *Telegraph* it was written that she managed to present very well the smug self-satisfaction of her character, if in a bit too modern a way.⁶² The critic of the *Independent*, on the other hand, wrote that Garai managed to bring out Emma’s snobbishness by portraying her as a ‘minx’, but in such a manner, that the audience starts disliking her too early.⁶³ The Guardian also published a rather unfavourable review, criticizing her emphasized facial expressiveness.⁶⁴ Be that as it may, the BBC series was broadcast for the first time relatively recently, so more reviews and analysis are yet to come.

In comparison to Paltrow’s controlling Emma, Garai seems to portray the heroine more like an imaginative child, who is slightly spoilt and needs to grow up. Just like in the Miramax version, the beginning of the BBC series is also a suitable introduction to Emma’s character. It is emphasized from the start that Emma received a lot of attention and love from her father and governess. While other children (Frank and Jane) had to leave their homes, she did not have to experience the same suffering. Next, the first time we see her as an adult, while she is listening to Miss Bates praising her niece, Emma makes a childish impression. With her hair hanging loose, eyes wide open and shoulders dropped as a sign of boredom, she looks more like a little girl than a young lady. Furthermore, the film’s insistence that Emma

⁶⁰ Cf. Anita Singh. *Romola Garai to play Emma in BBC’s latest Jane Austen adaptation.* <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/5100713/Romola-Garai-to-play-Emma-in-BBCs-latest-Jane-Austen-adaptation.html>, last viewed 19.02.2010.

⁶¹ Cf. Alessandra Stanley. *It’s Still Mostly Sunny at Hartfield.* <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/22/arts/television/22emma.html>, last viewed 18.02.2010.

⁶² Cf. John Preston. *Emma. Emma - Criminal Justice - When Boris Met Dave: TV review* <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/6270024/Emma-Criminal-Justice-When-Boris-Met-Dave-TV-review.html>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

⁶³ Cf. Tom Sutcliffe. *Look under the bonnet.* <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/the-weekends-television-emma-sun-bbc1brmonty-python-ndash-almost-the-truth-the-bbc-lawyers-cut-sat-bbc2-1797676.html>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

⁶⁴ Cf. Sam Wollaston. *Emma.* <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2009/oct/05/sam-wollaston-tv-review>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

has never been outside of Highbury⁶⁵ might be intentional to build up a picture of Emma as still a child, who has always led a sheltered life in a small town. The film also puts an emphasis on her education. She drafts a list of the books she needs to know about, and reads them alone or with Harriet. We can also see her practicing her piano playing skills in the scene parallel to the Gypsies attack. Finally, her vivid and active imagination, where she interprets events in her own colourful and romanticized way⁶⁶, may indicate that she needs to mature and learn more about the real world that surrounds her.

Apart from Emma, other casting choices are also important for the overall impression. Jeremy Northam, who plays Mr. Knightley in the Miramax film, portrays him as a good-humoured, charismatic and sensitive family friend of the Woodhouses. He is frequently praised for being very handsome. Nora Nachumi comments on his extremely good looks and points out that in having Northam as Mr. Knightley, the movie also succeeds in exposing one of Emma's initial flaws. She says that the age difference between them seems non-existent and that their union is very aesthetically pleasing. This brings into question Emma's initial inability to see in him more than a brother-in-law.⁶⁷ Sue Parill gives him the attribute of being sensitive, which is demonstrated in the shot in front of Donwell Abbey, where he tells Emma that he would rather stay at home "where it's cozy" than go to the ball. He also comes across as particularly romantic in the proposal scene.⁶⁸ Marc DiPaolo writes that Mr. Knightley is also stodgy, which is why Emma teases him sometimes. For example, when Mrs. Weston and Emma talk to him about his feelings for Jane, as if he were afraid of conversations which are about romance and love, he rather abruptly leaves the scene.⁶⁹ Apart from that, the 1996 Mr. Knightley can also be very strict with Emma, as when he criticizes her after the Box Hill incident⁷⁰. He even seizes her hand, which is very inappropriate for such a gentleman. All in all, neither he, nor Emma is perfect, and as he romantically commented during his proposal it is their imperfections that make them perfect for each other.

Jonny Lee Miller plays Mr. Knightley as rather formal and serious at the beginning of the film. As the movie progresses, he starts to show his sensitivity, sweetness and tenderness.

⁶⁵ Emma mentions on different occasions that even Jane went to the seaside and that she has never gone to visit her sister in London.

⁶⁶ For example the incident where Mr. Dixon saved Jane from falling from the cliff or Frank's rescuing Harriet from the Gypsies.

⁶⁷ Cf. Nora Nachumi. *As if!*. p. 134

⁶⁸ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 125

⁶⁹ Cf. Marc DiPaolo. *Emma Adapted*. p.90

⁷⁰ For more detailed insight into the Box Office picnic see chapter 3.4.5

When Emma suggests in the first episode that there might be something developing between their siblings,⁷¹ although it is obvious to the audience that John Knightley and Isabella's playful chasing in the garden is more than friendship, serious Mr. Knightley quickly rejects the idea.⁷² He also sharply rebukes Emma when she proudly tells him that Harriet refused Robert Martin, by saying famously that they are not her dolls. The Guardian's reviewer⁷³ argues that it is very unlikely that Emma should not fall in love sooner with the very good-looking Mr. Knightley, especially after this argument⁷⁴. On the other hand, apart from being stern and strict, Mr. Knightley is also a very good and caring uncle, who takes care of his nephews and a dutiful landlord, who kindly listens to and advises Robert Martin when he asks for the opinion about proposing to Harriet. Additionally, his tenderness and sensitivity become particularly obvious when he wistfully watches Emma dance with Frank at the ball, making us think that he is very aware of the fact that he is so much older than them. Finally, he comes across as especially vulnerable in the proposal scene, when he gets so excited and anxious that Emma needs to calm him down with her touch.

In the Miramax film Denys Hawthorne portrays Mr. Woodhouse as a cheerful comic character. He does not seem to realize many things which are going on around him. He stubbornly refuses to call Mrs. Weston by her new married name and unlike Mr. John Knightley in the BBC version, when he is in the carriage with Emma and Mr. Elton, he does not notice Mr. Elton's flirtation with Emma. Generally speaking, he is not so fearful of every Emma's plan or action and does not seem like a person, who would unintentionally or on purpose confine Emma to Hartfield.

Michael Gambon, who plays Mr. Woodhouse in the BBC adaptation, has received the most favourable reviews from the movie critics in comparison to all the other actors. Tom Sutcliffe writes that he is "absolutely inhabiting his solipsistic fretting about the hazards of life".⁷⁵ Even the Guardian's critic, who on the whole wrote an unfavourable review of the

⁷¹ The film makes it seem that this is the first successful match Emma made.

⁷² More precisely, he refuses to believe that they start liking each other because Emma wished them to do so.

⁷³ Cf. Sam Wollaston. *Emma*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2009/oct/05/sam-wollaston-tv-review>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

⁷⁴ The Miramax Mr. Knightley is much less strict in the 1996 interpretation of this argument. In an invented archery scene, Emma starts missing the target, which is symbolically followed by her mistaken judgment in Harriet's love life. As a result Mr. Knightley ironically comments to watch for his dogs.

⁷⁵ Cf. Tom Sutcliffe. *Look under the bonnet*. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/reviews/the-weekends-television-emma-sun-bbc1brmonty-python-ndash-almost-the-truth-the-bbc-lawyers-cut-sat-bbc2-1797676.html>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

adaptation, admitted that Gambon did splendidly in capturing Mr. Woodhouse's nervousness and frailty.⁷⁶ Sandy Welch provides an introduction to Austen's story, in which Mr. Woodhouse loses his wife. This family tragedy from Emma's childhood accounts to some extent for his behaviour and makes the audience sympathize with him. However, although he is very caring and protective of Emma, he does impede her growth and acceptance of her adult destiny, which is demonstrated in her childish demeanour throughout the film.

Another important character is that of Miss Bates. In the Miramax film Sophie Thompson portrays her in a very entertaining way. She is younger than one might expect Miss Bates to be, but her posture, peeping through the little round glasses and nervous high-pitched giggle make her seem older than she is. Marc DiPaolo argues that Miss Bates is very important to McGrath's film. Her characteristics of being sweet and irritating at the same time can be seen as a symbol of Emma's everyday life in Highbury.⁷⁷ Apart from that, her and Mrs. Bates' tandem is one of the main contributors to the film's comic effect. Mrs. Bates never speaks and seems to be hard of hearing, which is why she always appears to be dimly aware of what is going on around her. One of the examples for this is the first time we see the Bates women at Emma's party. Miss Bates thanks Emma for inviting them and for the pork loin she sent and screeches 'pork' to her mother. Soon after, she comments that Emma is like an angel and yells 'angel' to the indifferent Mrs. Bates, which altogether makes a humorous effect.⁷⁸

Tamsin Greig as Miss Bates is much less of a comic figure than Sophie Thompson. She is a rather pathetic woman, whose whole life revolves around her niece Jane. She talks really quickly with a more or less flat intonation, which makes it seem like she is constantly mumbling. She always wears dull colours and lives in a simple and not very well lit apartment, which reflects her impoverished state. In the opening of the BBC series⁷⁹, we see her and Mrs. Bates having to leave Jane to their cousin because they cannot afford her good living conditions any more. This event struck them both heavily- Mrs. Bates stopped talking and Miss Bates only talks about Jane's accomplishments and reads her letters to the others. She is so used to talking about Jane that she continues to do so even when her niece is in the

⁷⁶ Cf. Sam Wollaston. *Emma*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2009/oct/05/sam-wollaston-tv-review>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

⁷⁷ Cf. Marc DiPaolo. *Emma Adapted*. p. 101

⁷⁸ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 131

⁷⁹ For more detailed analysis of the opening scene, see chapter 3.4. 1

same room. One can even sense a note of resentment in Jane's voice, which does not seem very likely for her sweet and modest character, when her aunt starts repeating every word from her letter to Emma and Harriet. Miss Bates is also a kind and good-natured woman. After she is insulted in the Box Hill scene, she still manages to smile at Mr. Weston's praise of Emma. Moreover, when Emma comes to apologise after the incident, in the Miramax version Miss Bates snubs her on the pretext that she does not feel well. The benevolent BBC Miss Bates, on the other hand, not only welcomes Emma to her home, but also mentions three times that she is very kind for coming and bringing the food.

Tony Collette, who plays Harriet in Miramax film, stands in clear contrast to Paltrow's Emma in physical appearance and general way of behaving. As Sue Parill points out, she does well in looking foolish and easily influenced by her higher class friend, as was probably instructed by the director. As a matter of fact, she is so good at this role, that it might seem hardly likely that Emma would befriend her. She looks particularly odd in the high-waisted dress, when she poses for Emma and ridiculous when she keeps dropping objects in visiting the poor. She also somewhat exaggerates in expressing her feelings, as when she cries because a puppy's eyes remind her of Mr. Elton's eyes.⁸⁰ However, she also looks particularly moving and modest when she finds out that Mr. Elton proposed to Emma⁸¹. It might be argued that through Collette's grotesque rendering of Harriet, Paltrow's Emma comes across as even more graceful and delicate, which goes in line with the film's general emphasis on Paltrow's beauty and allure.

Louise Dylan in the BBC series does not portray Harriet as very foolish, only slightly dim. Harriet is more similar to Emma in clothing and physical appearance than in the Miramax version and she demonstrates a certain character development. When we are first introduced to her, we can notice her relative lack of manners at the table, where Emma needs to instruct her how to eat properly.⁸² At the beginning she is a keen admirer of Emma, she stifles her affection for Robert Martin, because her friend thinks he is too plain. She also humbly states that Emma is not at all to blame for the situation with Mr. Elton, but only herself. After the Gypsies' attack, Harriet tries to describe to Emma what has happened. She seems more assertive at this point, as she slightly exaggerates the circumstances of the

⁸⁰ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 126

⁸¹ For detailed analysis of Mr. Elton's proposal, see chapter 3.4.3

⁸² More about this scene in the introduction of Harriet, chapter 3.4.2

incident. Finally, she is self-confident enough to believe that Mr. Knightley devoted to her romantic attention and she does not get confused, as in the Miramax version, upon seeing Emma's distress and discomfort at this thought.

I chose Emma, Mr. Knightley, Mr. Woodhouse, Miss Bates and Harriet as the most important members of the cast.⁸³ The actors who played them contributed to the specific image and atmosphere of the movies. Both adaptations focus on the romantic story of Emma and Mr. Knightley, and for the greater aesthetic pleasure of the audiences, the actors chosen for these roles are rather appealing and physically attractive. The Miramax film put Emma's character in front of the others, so she appeared much more frequently. The cast chosen for the 1996 version, their dialogues and behaviour make a great contribution to the general comic effect. On the other hand, the BBC version goes more deeply into character analysis and provides explanations for many of their character traits, which is more typical for the genre of drama.

3.3 Setting

Two most recent versions of *Emma* keep the early nineteenth century setting.⁸⁴ They both follow more or less closely the source text. The ways in which their production team used the source reflect partially the time constraints imposed by the format (the 1996 film lasts 121 minutes, whereas the BBC miniseries' runtime is 240 minutes). This is the main reason why the BBC version is closer to the novel in its use of characters and scenes described by Austen. More importantly, the directors of both movies used the setting in their own distinct way to achieve different final effects. Let us analyse the setting of two Emma adaptations from a physical and social perspective.

⁸³ I believe that Mrs. Weston, Frank Churchill, Jane, Mr. Elton and Mrs. Elton (and the John Knightleys in the BBC version) also significantly contribute to the adaptations' atmosphere and the general tone. For the sake of brevity, I decided not to discuss their casting choices here. Nevertheless, their roles will be analysed in the chapter of the Key Scenes. (3.4)

⁸⁴ Most adaptations of the novel are set in the nineteenth century. The only exception for now is the 1995 film *Clueless*, written and directed by Amy Heckerling, starring Alicia Silverstone, which is set in the late twentieth century.

3.3.1 Physical Environment

The Miramax movie was filmed in England in 41 days⁸⁵, close to Dorchester and Weymouth.⁸⁶ The aim of the movie is to provide a nice, bright and pleasant romance set in the 19th century and the display of splendid large gardens, excellent food and lavish costumes work towards achieving this goal. In order to make an ‘airy, fairy-tale quality’⁸⁷ of the film, McGrath did not faithfully stick to the accurate sense of the seasons. When the Christmas Eve party takes place, it starts to snow. However, we see Emma, Mrs. Weston and other women relatively lightly clad, certainly not suitably for that time of the year. David Monaghan observes that McGrath clothes Emma in a different splendid dress every time in order to enhance his *mise-en-scène*. He also adds that both exteriors and interiors are very well lit, which is provided through constant sunshine and high-wattage candles.⁸⁸ Another inaccurate aspect of the setting, as pointed out by Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier⁸⁹, is the fact that all the houses look very nice and clean. She mentions that there were many horses and carriages which certainly made a lot of dirt, but we do not see it in the film. As a matter of fact, due to the aesthetically pleasing shots, the audience can enjoy the movie better. And many of the shots filmed outside are not only beautiful, but may also have a symbolic function. The example for this is the proposal scene, where Emma and Mr. Knightley kiss under the massive oak tree.⁹⁰ Raimund Borgmeier also draws our attention to the symbols of flowers. He writes that there are many beautiful flowers in Mr. Knightley’s garden in front of Donwell Abbey when he and Emma practise archery. These can be read as a metaphor for love and connote something pleasant and beautiful, which is developing between them. Just before the end of the movie, Emma pulls the petals off the daisies and says that she does not like them, that they are drab. These ‘not very nice’ flowers demonstrate Emma’s apprehension of being insecure in Mr. Knightley’s feelings.

The BBC version of *Emma* was filmed in Chilham in 4 days⁹¹ and in Surrey (church scenes) in another additional 4 days⁹². The way O’Hanlon used the places, clothes and other

⁸⁵ Cf. Todd S. Purdum. *From 'Saturday Night Live' to Jane Austen* <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/08/25/movies/from-saturday-night-live-to-jane-austen.html?pagewanted=all>, last viewed 23.02.2010.

⁸⁶ For detailed information about the locations see *The Worldwide Guide to Movie Locations* website <http://www.movie-locations.com/movies/e/Emma.html>, last viewed 23.02.2010.

⁸⁷ A quotation from Kali Pappas taken from Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 146

⁸⁸ Cf. David Monaghan. *Emma and the art of adaptation*. p.221

⁸⁹ Cf. Stefani Brusberg-Kiermeier. *Recent Appropriations of Wuthering Heights*. p.151

⁹⁰ For more information about Mr. Knightley’s proposal scene, see chapter 3.4.6

⁹¹ [yourcanterbury.co.uk](http://www.yourcanterbury.co.uk). http://www.yourcanterbury.co.uk/kent-news/BBC_s-Emma-to-start-filming-in-Chilham-next-week-newsinkent23083.aspx?news=local, last viewed 23.02.2010

props reflects a serious, less bright tone of the adaptation. First, the series makes a nice contrast to the Miramax film in its usage of nature and costumes to reflect the seasons. After Emma tells Harriet about Mr. Elton's proposal, we see the plants in front of Hartfield recovering the green colour and also the flowers appearing, which announces that winter is over. The first time we see them afterwards, which is probably in February or March, they are still wearing coats, unlike in the Miramax film in the puppies' scene. The costumes in *Emma*, which are worn by women, are also interesting as they reflect the differences in characters and social statuses. Emma mostly wears nice materials and pleasant colours, such as white, yellow, pink. Harriet's clothes change from time to time. The first time we see her and Emma after she finds out about Mr. Elton's proposal, she is wearing a grey coat, whereas Emma is in a red one. The colours of their clothes mirror their moods here. Impoverished Miss Bates and her mother always wear simple dresses with pale and dull colours and pompous Mrs. Elton vivid, conspicuous combinations. Next, McGrath's film is lighter and more cheerful in tone than O'Hanlon's one, because it, apart from the visually lavish and colourful places, also includes those which are austere and simple. The Bates' dark, dry and plain apartment and Harriet's simple, almost empty room stand in stark contrast to Emma's huge rich house. Interestingly enough, even when Emma organises dinner parties at her home or when there is a party at the Westons', the candles provide much less light than in the Miramax film. One more interesting difference in the setting of both adaptations is that the BBC version has strikingly more long shots of the houses (Hartfield and Donwell Abbey) and nature (gardens, fields, hills). The camera in the Miramax film is slightly more mobile and the film has more lively movement. The BBC version is frequently involved in presenting the museum aesthetics of the places and beautiful panoramas, which have a very important function in promoting English heritage.⁹³ It might be argued that this is the case because the 1996 film is an American production (Miramax) and the 2009 British (BBC), so Britons are more interested in presenting the beauties of their country, which are a part of their culture and identity. Finally, although there are more long shots of the landscapes and gardens in the BBC series, Emma is more often found inside a house than in the Miramax version. The 1996 Harriet and Emma are sitting in the garden, gossiping and embroidering, whereas in the BBC adaptation, they are inside, reading books. The Miramax Emma practises archery with Mr.

⁹² This information was found on one blog and wikipedia, so it is of limited value. However if this is true, it means that the shooting of two times longer series took five times less time. This would probably mean that the budget of the BBC *Emma* was smaller than for the Miramax film. <http://www.strangeirl.com/emma/em4cred.php>, last viewed 24.02.2010. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_\(2009_TV_serial\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_(2009_TV_serial)), last viewed 24.02.2010.

⁹³ See chapter 2.3.2 for more information about Austen adaptations' functions.

Knightley on his estate and argues about Harriet, while in the BBC series they have an argument at her home. In the Miramax version Emma is also outside with Harriet when the gypsies attack her. In many of the invented scenes, McGrath puts Emma in situations where she is not so claustrophobically enclosed, and this, unlike in the BBC adaptation, removes the boundaries of closed space, which might be one of the explanations for her irresponsible behaviour.⁹⁴

3.3.2 Social Environment

The social setting of the adaptations encompasses mostly the upper classes (the Woodhouses and the Knightleys) in nineteenth-century England.⁹⁵ Some of the characters belong to the middle class (Mrs Goddard, Harriet) and there are also members of the working classes (servants are present, but they are not given a voice). Emma is considered to be the most consistently class-conscious of Austen's novels.⁹⁶ Both adaptations display this class-consciousness and to some extent criticise such a system. However, the American version tends to undercut the existing hierarchies, whereas the British one shows the luxurious life of the gentry, but also attempts to contrast it with everyday life of the lower ranks.

Most class-conscious characters are the Eltons and both adaptations make fun of them. Mr. Elton, who emphasizes in his proposal that Harriet is of such a lower rank that he would never consider her as his wife, manages to find a rich bride. However, when he gets married to an extremely talkative and self-important woman, he almost loses his own identity. In the Miramax film he never gets to finish any sentence he utters and in the BBC adaptation, we see him struggling to drag a donkey with condescending Mrs. Elton on it. One of the strongest critiques of the system comes through Emma's friendship with Harriet. Throughout the story Emma manipulates and mistreats some of the less economically powerful citizens of Highbury. She treats Robert Martin with condescension and although he is generally considered to be a good man with a lot of gentlemanly qualities, she strongly discourages Harriet from being interested in him. Emma does not realize that playing with Harriet's destiny might be very hurtful to her friend. After all, she does not have any substantial background and if she does not marry, she might become a poor old spinster, like Miss Bates. By talking her into developing an interest in figures of a much higher social position than her

⁹⁴ Cf. David Monaghan. *Emma and the art of adaptation*. p.222

⁹⁵ This is rather typical for this movie trend. For more characteristics, see chapter 2.2.3

⁹⁶ Cf. Carol M. Dole. *Class and the American Market*. p. 67

own, Emma makes Harriet much more vulnerable to the cruelties of the life of less wealthy women in Regency England.

Although both adaptations criticise the social order to some extent, the Miramax adaptation tends to downplay class differences. First, although the Westons and the Coles are not entirely upper class (that is to say, they belong to the rising bourgeoisie) unlike in the BBC series, their houses seem as big and luxurious as the Woodhouse's. Next, Dole observes that *mise-en-scène* also diminishes the hierarchies. She points out that Emma and Harriet are almost always filmed together, sitting opposite each other or walking side by side. In this way neither of them seems dominant.⁹⁷ Sue Parill notes that Mr. Knightley calls Robert Martin "a good friend" and Emma calls the poor woman, whom she is helping a "lady".⁹⁸ In the BBC version, the relation between Robert Martin and Mr. Knightley is that of a landlord and his farmer. When talking to Mr. Knightley about Harriet, Robert Martin seems to stand in awe of his landlord and shows clear reverence, which is suited for his rank. Finally, the prospect of the friendship between Emma and Harriet is put into question in the BBC adaptation, whereas in the Miramax film Harriet is present at Emma's wedding and is one of the few whom Emma kisses as she leaves the church.⁹⁹ On the other hand, both films embellish the upper-class lifestyle by showing beautiful people living in grand houses and enjoying all the luxuries of the gentry, although in the BBC series we get to see more of the Bates' less luxurious everyday life.

The social setting of both films is rather similar to the source text- they both deal mainly with the upper classes. They criticise but also aestheticize their lifestyles. However, as Dole argues, McGrath's film tends to display some of the American myth of classlessness.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, with Emma seeming more likely to befriend Jane instead of Harriet, the BBC version seems to imply that no class boundaries will be crossed here.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 67

⁹⁸ Cf. Sue Parill. *Jane Austen on Film and Television*. p. 133

⁹⁹ For more information about the ending of the adaptations and Harriet and Emma's friendship see chapter 3.4.7

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Carol M. Dole. *Class and the American Market*. p. 76

3.4 Key Scenes

3.4.1 The Opening

The opening sequence of a film can be considered the most important part of every movie. Apart from trailers and marketing elements, the beginning is something that carries the first images the audience sees, introduces the story and characters and sets up the expectations of those who are watching. The openings of the Miramax and BBC version of *Emma* reflect the directors' and screenwriters' different ideas about how this Austen adaptation should be introduced.

The Miramax film opens with a little globe spinning in a vast universe covered in stars. It rapidly approaches the camera and fills the screen. In a close-up of the spinning globe we can see the United Kingdom and Ireland roughly covering a quarter of the world. We may start connecting the image with the time when the territories of the British Empire covered that huge a space on earth, and regarding the time frame of the story, we would be on the right track. Nevertheless, the Empire will not be the topic of this movie, as we will soon find out by the shot revealing that the surface of the globe is not covered with a map of the world, but with paintings attached to a material most similar to silk. The camera moves to the south of England and we are subsequently presented with a nice row of hand-made watercolour pictures of Highbury and its inhabitants framed with doves and oak leaves. The globe starts spinning again and when it gradually slows down, we observe that it is a painted ball, which Emma created as a present for the Westons' wedding and which she is holding for her former governess to examine. The first scene is followed by the soft and sweet music of an orchestra in which the sounds of a harp and woodwind instruments are in the foreground. Soon the cheerful violins take over and a clear and pleasant voice of a female narrator can be heard.¹⁰¹ She announces that the story is set in a world distinctly different from our own (''when one's town was one's world'') and adds that in this world the dancing attracts more attention than army movements. All this sends a message to the audience to sit back and relax, that nothing too distressing or dreadful will happen. Perhaps slightly ironically the narrator continues that ''there lived a young woman who knew how this world should be run'' and we see a medium close-up shifting from the globe to Emma, who is holding it like a toy. It might suggest that the focus of the following two hours will be Emma and a little realm of Highbury of which

¹⁰¹ It seems that the voice comes from Greta Scacchi, who has the role of Emma's former governess. Nevertheless, her name is not written in the opening or closing credits.

she is a sort of queen.¹⁰² Hilary Schor made an interesting comment about McGrath's choice of a female narrator. She connects the quick disappearance of the voice with an absent mother and Emma's loss of female friendship of Miss Taylor and suggests that it might lead us to long for an assertive and more experienced female figure to lead Emma into making correct moral choices and having "the world spin in the proper direction."¹⁰³ Emma's first words express satisfaction at a well-made match and announce her future intentions of matching people. She congratulates Mrs. Weston and the camera focuses on Emma's face, which wears a slightly melancholic expression. The focus then moves to the empty part of the globe, revealing the emptiness the heroine feels upon having her best friend starting a new life. Other moments present at the beginning of the film include Mr. Woodhouse showing distress at the thought of the wedding cake and Mr. Elton praising Emma's work. When Mr. Woodhouse starts looking for his apothecary saying that he would support him in his opinion that the cake is unhealthy, Mrs. Weston tells him that the apothecary is actually eating the cake, which makes a comic effect.¹⁰⁴ Mr. Knightley appears after the wedding in the following scene by joyfully joining Emma and Mr. Woodhouse's conversation. We first hear his voice, which connects the shot occupied by the Woodhouses with a portrait-like shot, where he stands in the centre, framed by a window and red curtains. In the following scene he says that he can give Emma advice because he is almost her brother. The first impression of him is that of a confident, bright, young man, who comes out as a potential moral guide to Emma's maturing and coming to terms with the world.

The first episode of the BBC series opens with three important moments in the childhood of Emma, Frank and Jane respectively, which has been added to Austen's story by the screenwriter Sandy Welch.¹⁰⁵ The opening sequences introduce us directly to the background stories of the main characters. The very first scene starts with a medium close-up of Emma as an infant in a baby carriage and then a long shot of a country manor house on a bright, sunny day follows. Mr. and Mrs. Woodhouse, pushing the carriage, slowly walk into the picture. McGrath used a low angle shot to show how caring and slightly anxious Mr. Woodhouse and smiling Mrs. Woodhouse behind him appear to Emma. Unlike in the Miramax *Emma*, in the BBC version we immediately hear a clear voice of a male narrator,

¹⁰² See chapter 3.2 for more examples of Paltrow's playing Emma as a kind of queen.

¹⁰³ Hilary Schor. *Emma, Interrupted: Speaking Jane Austen in Fiction and Film*. p. 149

¹⁰⁴ For more examples of comical effects see chapter 3.1

¹⁰⁵ Before she wrote the screenplay for *Emma*, Sandy Welch adapted *Jane Eyre*. Perhaps Welch wanted to explain to us Emma's character by thinking of Jane, who as an orphan child living at her aunt's house learned to provide for herself without relying that much on other people. In contrast, Emma is presented as pampered and always taken care of.

followed by the joyful soft sounds of a piano and violins. Interestingly enough, the narrator is Jonny Lee Miller, who is also Mr. Knightley in the film. The most logical explanation for this choice might be the fact that he was actually old enough at the time, when the events he will tell us about happened, to remember them well and comprehend their consequences. It is also interesting that through the role of an omniscient narrator who introduces us to the story and the characters, Mr. Knightley himself might come across as omniscient. The attribute of knowing a lot and having a capability to see through other people's actions and behaviour can be ascribed to him in the story as well¹⁰⁶, and thus his role as a narrator might serve as a kind of foreshadowing of his further good judgment and reliability. His manner of telling the story is objective and neutral, without the irony of the female narrator in the Miramax version¹⁰⁷. It might be argued that Mr. Knightley, to whom Emma means a lot, wants to justify her unflattering actions to the audience by explaining how in comparison to other children, she had an easy time growing up, received a lot of attention and might have got a little spoiled. He first tells us about Emma's birth and parents. Then suddenly the soothing background melody changes from major to minor¹⁰⁸ and we see a dark and almost colourless shot of dead Mrs. Woodhouse. Soon after, Mr. Woodhouse, Isabella and Emma are shown from a bird's eye perspective standing next to the coffin. The narrator explains what has happened and moves on to tell us about the rest. "The sun continued to shine on Emma" both literally (in the following scene we see Miss Taylor and Emma having a stroll on a sunny day) and metaphorically (she is the only one of the three children who stays at her parents' home). The woman and the girl are exposed to the sunshine, but the Westons' house, by which they are passing, is in shadow. Two distressed men knock on the door of the Westons and we soon find out that after his mother's death, Frank's aunt decides to set him apart from his father. We see Frank entering a carriage on a dark rainy day, going to his new home.¹⁰⁹ The director again used a bird's eye perspective, which links us back to the former scene with the Woodhouses, reflecting the connection between the children who feel sadness upon losing one of their parents. Finally, the narrator tells us Jane's story. In an invented scene Miss and Mrs. Bates discuss the necessity of leaving Jane to Colonel Campbell for the girl's sake. They are facing increasing poverty and have to sell the house and move to a smaller one. This is a very rare occasion where we can hear Mrs. Bates speaking and crying, which might suggest

¹⁰⁶ He recognized Mr. Elton's intentions with Emma and Frank Churchill's feelings for Jane Fairfax.

¹⁰⁷ The narrator in Austen's novel is also famous for his/her use of ironic comments.

¹⁰⁸ 'Major' and 'minor' are specialized terms in music. Major is easily recognized by laypeople as a 'happy' melody and minor as the opposite.

¹⁰⁹ It might be interesting to mention that it never rains in the Miramax version, which contributes to the bright tone of the film. For other aspects of the setting see chapter 3.3.1

that leaving Jane influenced her so deeply and powerfully that she lapsed into a long-lasting melancholy and silence. In a medium close-up, where grey and brown colours predominate, Jane is being taken to the carriage and we hear Miss Bates' voice explaining that everything will be fine. Colonel Campbell stands in front of the carriage in a low angle shot so that the audience can see him through Jane's eyes. Both women look sorrowfully towards the carriage and the camera slowly focuses on tearful Miss Bates. The gravity of the situation adds some complexity to Miss Bates' character and thus she might arouse more compassion from the audience.¹¹⁰ Frank and Jane's episodes are followed by the same dramatic melody which reaches a crescendo when the children are taken away. After the Bates women wave goodbye to Jane, Emma and Miss Taylor pass by and the music changes again to a soft cheerful piano. The introduction ends with the narrator's words that unlike other children Emma stayed at home "with very little to distress or vex her for many years to come." The title sequence with initial credits starts with a drawn gate opening into Emma's world. The words are displayed on a charming purple-brownish background filled with delicate white curvy patterns and figures of animals, furniture and people, who mime some of the scenes from the movie. The figures are very much fairytale-like and together with a cheerful melody they move us away from the seriousness of the initial scenes. They announce that we may loosen up as we will be dealing with a romantic movie, the emphasis of which will not be tragedies and exploration of social issues, but a love story.

Both Douglas McGrath and Jim O'Hanlon decided to introduce new moments into Jane Austen's story. In the Miramax version Emma gives the Westons a wedding present. She made them a little globe, which stands for Highbury, with little portraits of the members of their social circle. The BBC version starts with three stories from Emma, Frank and Jane's childhood, which form a good background for the characters and story development. From the introduction it is not hard to envisage that the focus of the Miramax version will be on Emma. We may expect a charming love story with elements of a comedy. Regarding the BBC series, the opening announces that the emphasis will be put on more characters. It will also be a love story, but with elements of social drama.

¹¹⁰ This is typical of romantic dramas. See chapter 3.1 for more information about the genre.

3.4.2 Harriet's Introduction

Harriet Smith "was not clever, but she had a sweet, docile, grateful disposition"¹¹¹. Jane Austen also described her as a "very pretty girl" with a "look of great sweetness"¹¹². Her amiable and naïve character exposes Emma's egoism and snobbishness, but also helps her to come to self-realization and to understand better the world around her. Harriet's introduction to Emma and high society is thus an important element in the story.

In the Miramax version, Mrs. Goddard, the schoolmistress, brings Harriet Smith with her to a party at Hartfield and introduces her to Emma. The very introduction is not filmed, so the first time we see Emma and Harriet in the same room is when Mr. Elton arrives. Emma mentions to him that there is someone new and in the next medium shot we see Harriet, who is smiling shyly. She seems quiet and has the demeanour of a modest and polite young girl. Emma says that she is struck by her charm and asks Mr. Elton to help her make sure that Harriet feels comfortable at the party. He accepts by making it clear that it is his pleasure to help Emma. When she introduces Harriet and Mr. Elton, courteously and slightly awkwardly, they both leave aside the objects they were holding. This is followed by the sound of a clarinet and violins, which make a mildly comic effect. In his manner of not finishing the sentence, Mr. Elton bows and says "any friend of Miss Woodhouse's...". His obvious lack of interest in Harriet and emphasis on Emma, clearly announces his intentions, but the heroine of the film is at this point too absorbed in her matchmaking to notice it. In the following scene over the rich dinner table, Mr. Weston is talking to Harriet. Before we get to see them closer, the camera slowly moves over the table, showing us the display of rich and tasty dishes. Harriet demonstrates her good manners in small talk, and in a medium close-up, in Emma's smile we may notice that she is satisfied with her new acquaintance.

In the BBC version, Emma spots Harriet in the schoolyard while talking to Mrs. Goddard and Miss and Mrs. Bates. This sequence starts with a chime of a school bell, followed by a long shot of a stylish yard filled by girls running and playing cheerfully. The background music is a sweet piano melody. We see Emma walking alone and hear the voice of Miss Bates talking about Jane. The camera slowly moves and includes the Bates and Mrs. Goddard, who are sitting and drinking tea, in the long shot of the country school. Miss Bates expresses concern about Emma walking alone. In Emma's slightly bitter response, how she does not want to stay at home just because Miss Taylor is married and she has no companion

¹¹¹ Jane Austen. *Emma*. p.21

¹¹² *Ibid.* p.18

for walks, we can sense her need to cross the boundaries of Highbury and meet other peers. She sees Harriet in the school yard and is instantly influenced by her beauty. The women realize that they do not know anything about her parentage, but Emma is sure that due to her beauty, she must be of upper-class birth. She invites Mrs. Goddard for supper and tells her to bring Harriet. During the supper, charming and pretty Harriet clearly demonstrates the lack of table manners, from which one can infer that she might not be a daughter of noble parents. She also immediately follows small signals about proper behavior that Emma sends her. When Mr. Elton arrives at the dinner party, Emma presents Harriet to him as a special friend. Similarly to the Miramax version, he replies that Emma's friend is also a friend of his. He seems less than impressed, when Emma tells him that Harriet will be joining her at visiting the poor. Once again Harriet follows Emma's instruction at the table and Emma smiles contentedly.

The BBC version of Harriet is obviously physically more attractive than the Miramax one, and on the whole seems more similar to the character Austen described in the book¹¹³. On the other hand, the slightly ludicrous Miramax Harriet adequately reflects the general comic atmosphere of the film adaptation, which is a deliberate intention of the director. Both of them are equally demure and modest and thus fit into the authentic character of good manners and polite behaviour, present in Austen adaptations¹¹⁴. They are both the centre of Emma's matchmaking schemes. Already in the first encounter with Mr. Elton we may sense that Emma is wrong to pursue her idea of joining him and Harriet.

3.4.3 Mr. Elton's Proposal

Emma's confrontation with Mr. Elton after his proposal is the first major crisis in the story. Until this point she thinks she has been manipulating certain social interactions from a position of detachment. She is suddenly forced to realize that she has been lying to Harriet, Mr. Knightley and herself. Not only has she been wrong about Mr. Elton's feelings for her friend, but she has also got accused of knowing about his affections all along. In what follows, we may notice that she has acquired a reasonable level of understanding the consequences of her actions. She also demonstrates an unselfish concern about Harriet's feelings, which she

¹¹³ Admittedly, Jane Austen described Harriet as "plump" which suits Tony Collette better. However, Louise Dylan has all the other characteristics: "blue eyes, light hair, regular features."

¹¹⁴ For more characteristics of heritage cinema, see chapter 2.2.3

puts in front of her own. Both movie adaptations deal similarly with the proposal scene. They differ slightly, nevertheless, in their dealing with the aftermath of the incident.

During the party at the Westons, Mr. Elton prominently displays his interest in Emma, which culminates on their way home. In the Miramax version, he arrives at the party in the same carriage with Mr. Woodhouse and Emma. She informs him that her friend will not join them and he replies that it is not a tragedy and that he prefers smaller parties. At the Westons' Mr. Elton constantly follows and interrupts Emma in socializing with other guests and this produces several funny moments. For example, while Emma and Mr. Knightley are sitting comfortably next to the fireplace and chatting, he squeezes between them and nonchalantly says he hopes he is not intruding. He starts talking about the danger of Emma's visiting Harriet when Mr. John Knightley announces that the weather is distressing Mr. Woodhouse, so he and Isabella will take him home. Mr. Elton says he will make sure Emma comes home safely at which point the camera focuses on him. In a close-up we see him looking contently at Emma and the soft background melody of the violins adds a romantic streak to his look. The music continues in the next scene until the moment Mr. Elton declares his love for Emma in the carriage.

Barley has Emma started talking about the weather to relieve the awkwardness of being alone with Mr. Elton, when he jumps over to her side and starts "making violent love to her."¹¹⁵ He seizes her hand, which is clenched into a fist as a sign of her discomfort and determination to stop him from proposing. She goes to the other side and still continues stubbornly mentioning Miss Smith, at which Mr. Elton sneers and makes a short funny hysterical laugh. He sits next to her again and in a close-up of their profiles we can follow the verbal fight. It might be argued that Emma is here gently brought into focus, since her face is slightly lighter and more visible than his. She is distressed and confused and decides to change the side of the carriage once again. Mr. Elton follows and tries to approach her with a whisper, at which Emma twitches in anger. He insists that she must have understood his intentions, but Emma replies that she only saw him as a suitor for her friend. When she utters these words, the dramatic music of strings starts playing, and Mr. Elton moves to the other side of the carriage. They look away from each other. Their physical positions in the carriage mirror their diametrically opposed opinion about Harriet and marriage.

¹¹⁵ Jane Austen. *Emma*. p. 100

After Mr. Elton's proposal, Emma goes to Mrs. Weston to tell her what has happened. If we thing back to the opening scene, where Emma is presented as a little queen of Highbury, we may say that her dialogue with former Miss Taylor supports the idea of her as a kind of a ruler. She is trying to solve an issue in her kingdom and Mrs. Weston works as her advisor, who will help her to come up with the best strategy. We do not know how much time has passed in between, but we may notice through the window, opposite which Mrs. Weston is standing, that there is no more snow outside and the trees seem to already have green leaves¹¹⁶. Emma is surprised to find out that Mrs. Weston already had suspicions about Mr. Elton's intentions. Emma says that the worst thing is that she persuaded Harriet to care for Mr. Elton. She makes a firm decision to stop matchmaking, only to start looking for another suitor for Harriet a few seconds later. Mrs. Weston advises her to tell Harriet straightforwardly about her misjudgment. Emma says "I suppose I'll just say: Harriet,..." and at this moment the next scene starts with Emma and Harriet sitting opposite each other. Emma continues the sentence "... I have some news; about Mr. Elton." They are sitting in the middle of the room, filmed in a medium shot with the camera slowly approaching them. In the background we can hear logs crackling in the fireplace which is soon coupled with a soothing soft melody. Emma tells her what has happened regretting very much that the only person responsible for everything is she herself. Harriet's sweetness and modesty in taking the news give Emma the impression that she is a superior friend. This is also mirrored in their physical positions. Harriet is placed on a seat which is higher than Emma's. At the end of the scene, Emma leans forward, kisses Harriet's hand and places her head on it. Thus, moral superiority, which Emma perceives in Harriet, is reflected in physical dominance by Harriet being 'above' Emma.

The BBC version approaches Mr. Elton's proposal sequence in a manner similar to the Miramax's version, with several differences regarding the scenes that precede and follow the proposal. The BBC miniseries generally presents Mr. Elton as a pompous, serious village vicar. In this part of the story, he also comes across as a comical figure. He meets Emma and Mr. John Knightley in a bustling street and greets them cordially. When Emma tells him that Harriet is ill, he wears a very serious expression and says he is very sorry to hear that, but a happy smile soon crosses his face as he goes on to talk about a different topic. He manages to

¹¹⁶ It has already been mentioned that Douglas McGrath did not always stick to the time and weather accuracy. Apparently, these were sacrificed for the visual splendor of summer costumes and for the general atmosphere of warmth, light and coziness.

have himself invited by Mr. John Knightley to share a carriage for the Westons' party. We can hear lively music in the background as Mr. Elton says goodbye, which reflects his good humour at the prospect of a party. The camera focuses on Emma and we may observe in a medium close-up that she is quite bewildered by his lack of interest in Harriet's absence from the event. On the way to the Westons Mr. John Knightley and Emma pick up the young vicar and he places himself very close to Emma. Unlike Mr. Woodhouse in the Miramax version, Mr. John Knightley strongly suspects that Mr. Elton is interested in Emma, which he confirms in the carriage. When Emma mentions Harriet, Mr. Elton seems not to have even heard what she said, which makes Mr. John Knightley smile knowingly. Perhaps because she wants to escape any comments about Mr. Elton, upon arrival Emma gives Mr. George Knightley a little lecture on gentlemen using a carriage to arrive at a place. At the party Mr. Elton closely follows Emma, just like in the Miramax film. For instance, here Mr. Elton sits between Emma and Mrs. Weston, thereby interrupting their conversation with Isabella about Frank Churchill. Mr. Woodhouse also joins them. The young vicar makes a rough guess that they have been talking about Miss Smith. Somewhat exaggeratedly he expresses his concerns about her health, but only in relation to Emma. As he talks about it, the camera moves to Mr. Woodhouse, who nods at the mention of taking care about Emma's health, oblivious to Mr. Elton's underlying motives, which altogether makes a comical effect.¹¹⁷ In addition to this, when Mr. Elton, looking caringly at Emma, says 'Have I not the right to complain?'¹¹⁸, we see that Emma feels uncomfortable and that Mrs. Weston and Isabella suspect his intentions. At the same time Mr. John Knightley confidently says 'I knew it', which reminds us of his words to Emma about Mr. Elton and the fact that he was right. The sentence he just uttered refers, nevertheless, to the snow. Good-hearted Mr. Weston invites the guests to stay, but rather anxious Mrs. Weston says they do not have enough guest rooms, and due to the lack of space and bad weather conditions, the party finally breaks up.

Much to her dissatisfaction, Emma ends up in the same carriage with Mr. Elton. He does not immediately jump to her side like in the Miramax version. He provides a little introduction by looking through the window and commenting 'how bright they shine.'¹¹⁹ He goes down on his knees and declares his love. Emma is shocked and she asks him about Harriet, which surprises him. He speaks in a much calmer voice than the 1996 version of Mr.

¹¹⁷ Although we defined O'Hanlon's Emma as a romantic drama, it is not entirely devoid of comic elements. See chapter 3.1 for more information about the genre.

¹¹⁸ Mr. Elton is complaining about Emma's endangering her health by visiting Harriet.

¹¹⁹ He probably talks about the stars. It is hard to imagine that the stars are shining brightly or at least that he can see that on a very snowy evening.

Elton. He slowly explains that he only cares about Emma and that it must have been obvious. He sits next to her and continues talking about his love, while astonished Emma is at loss for words. When he takes her hand, she raises her voice and directs him to sit on the other side of the carriage. After he says that he never thought of Harriet (by slightly emphasizing the word 'never'), Emma tells him that she only saw him as a suitor for her friend and adds that she herself does not think about marriage at the moment. When both of them are silent, a quiet and serious music starts playing and continues to the next scene- a long shot of the Woodhouse's manor.

The following shot pictures Emma sitting in front of the mirror, contemplating the past few months. We can hear her thoughts in a voice-over as she is recollecting several events. This is the first time that the linearity of a chronological editing, present throughout the movie¹²⁰, is broken. In a flashback, she sees Mr. Elton looking at her, while she is painting Harriet, and hears the strict voice of Mr. Knightley, who says that Elton is not the right choice for her friend. Emma whispers to herself how she could be so stupid and then with more alarm looks at her reflection in the mirror and wonders how she will tell Harriet. The following scene stands in stark contrast. We see a sunny day, Mr. George and John Knightley playing with John's children and Emma looking at them through the window. Mr. George Knightley energetically waves to her. She waves back with much less enthusiasm and the same mood continues in the next scene, where Mr. Woodhouse reads Mr. Elton's letter. Without consulting anyone, Emma finally goes to tell Harriet the news. We see a long shot of a school and Emma approaching it. The music reflects Emma's hesitation to go inside. Finally, announced by Harriet's servant, she enters the place. It is nearly empty, with very little decoration on the wall and no curtains, wallpaper or carpets. This emphasizes Harriet's social position and difference between her and the Woodhouses. The exact words Emma used to tell her what has happened are not filmed. After they exchanged presents, the director immediately goes to Harriet's reaction. The dialogue scene between them is mostly composed of over-the-shoulder shots. This provides the audience with two different perspectives. Harriet blames only herself for not seeing what was obvious and Emma thinks it is all her fault. Harriet even suggests than Emma might change her mind regarding marrying Mr. Elton, which causes a sharp reaction of her friend.¹²¹ When she calms down, Emma comforts her

¹²⁰ As it has been demonstrated so far, the events usually follow each other, that is to say, they follow the logic of a chronological narrative.

¹²¹ Emma jumps and raises her voice saying that she would certainly not accept the proposal.

friend by saying that she is a much better person than herself, and takes her hand as a sign of support.

Mr. Elton's proposal sequence is the first indicator for Emma that she was mistaken in her judgment and that she cannot control people. At the Westons' party it becomes clear that Mr. Elton pays too much attention to her, which is soon confirmed in his proposal. Afterwards, most of all she seems to regret hurting Harriet in leading her to believe that Mr. Elton cared for her romantically. Both adaptations deal with this sequence in a similar manner with a lot of elements of a comedy. The Miramax version is richer in musical background¹²² and it continues to give Emma the central place in the story. The visual effects brought her slightly in the focus in the proposal scene; she takes on the role of the ruler in accepting advice from her confidante Mrs. Weston and is never out of focus when she shares the latest news of Mr. Elton with Harriet. On the other hand, although including elements of comedy in the Mr. Elton's proposal sequence, the BBC version overall remains much more serious in tone. Unlike in the 1996 version, here we are constantly aware of the differences in status and amount of wealth. The Westons' house is not big enough for all the guests to sleep over and Harriet's room is strikingly empty and simple. Emma also tells Mr. Knightley off, because he did not arrive at the party in a carriage, which is more suitable for a gentleman. The BBC adaptation also gives more space to the development of other characters.¹²³ The John Knightleys are almost omitted from the 1996 version, whereas in the 2009 adaptation they appear on quite a few occasions. In the scene where Emma tells Harriet about Mr. Elton, the Miramax version never omits Emma from the shot. In the BBC version, there are several medium close-ups where we can observe Harriet's face and notice how hurt she felt.

3.4.4 The Attack of the Gypsies

The gypsies, who attacked Harriet, represent an abrupt intrusion into the peaceful world of the higher social ranks. Dirty, poor, aggressive and hostile, they almost seem to have come out of some other story. Marc Dipaolo argues that this segment represents a good

¹²² English composer Rachel Portman won the Academy Award for the best music score in *Emma*. According to the Movie Music UK database, she is the first female composer who has ever won an Oscar (<http://www.moviemusicuk.us/portman.htm>), last viewed 07.02.2010.

¹²³ This adaptation lasts significantly longer than the Miramax version, so there is enough time for character developing.

example of Austen's satire of romantic fiction.¹²⁴ He writes that according to the novel, the hungry gypsies are only looking for food and do not jeopardize Harriet. It is Emma, who makes it look like a romantic hero saving a damsel's life. This episode is important, because it proves that the heroine has still not gained a full understanding of the world around her. The incident inspires her to continue making attempts at matchmaking, although she decided to quit it. The Miramax version includes Emma in the attack scene, thus adding more thrill to the story. The BBC interpretation of the scene places importance on Emma's overactive imagination, which is an important feature of her personality.

In the Miramax film Harriet and Emma are having a stroll in a wooded area. We hear birds chirping and leaves rustling under their feet, while Harriet is preparing to tell Emma some news.¹²⁵ Suddenly the sound of barking dogs interrupts the idyll, and Harriet spots a group of gypsies looking at them. They are first filmed in a relatively long shot, but the second time we see them, they seem to be slightly closer and they start moving towards the camera, which builds suspense. In the following medium long shot Emma rubs Harriet's arm and urges her to talk about the ball to dispel the growing fear. The gypsies enter the shot walking behind them, when the serious music of strings starts playing. In the medium shot which follows Emma and Harriet are filmed from behind, looking vulnerable, their heads turned towards the gypsies. Harriet tramples on something and falls, when one of them says to the others to take her bag. There are several gypsies both male and female, all of whom are adult, which make the situation more dangerous. They surround Harriet and take her scarf, while Emma is struggling to detain them. As the music reaches a crescendo, Mr. Frank Churchill appears, screened in a low-angle shot. The angle emphasizes how important it is that he should appear at that moment. What follows is a close-up of his hand taking Harriet's, with the soft clarinet sound in the background. The director used here the match-cut transition to join this shot to the next one in a cozy room of Emma's house, which begins with another close-up of Harriet and Frank's hands. A close-up can carry a connotation of intimacy. Seeing their hands together probably leads Emma to adopt the idea that they might be a possible match. After Mr. Churchill leaves, Emma and Harriet discuss Mr. Elton, and Harriet proudly discards small objects that remind her of him. She says goodbye to him and in a voice over, we hear Emma's thoughts. She confidently says "Hello Mr. Churchill", who is the next target for her friend. This clearly demonstrates that she was not completely honest when she

¹²⁴ Cf. Marc DiPaolo. *Emma Adapted*. p.110

¹²⁵ She wants to tell Emma about her new infatuation. At the Westons' ball Harriet was standing alone and Mr. Elton, who did not have a partner, pointedly refused to dance with her. After Mr. Knightley rescued her from embarrassment when he asked her for a dance, she fell in love with him.

told Mrs. Weston she would stop looking for a suitor for Harriet. She still has to learn about the social world that surrounds her.

The 2009 version of the gypsies' attack starts with a postcard-like long shot of the Woodhouses' manor, seen through the bunch of delicate violet flowers.¹²⁶ The camera slowly moves in the house, filming the inside of a room where we see Emma practicing playing a piano. The director used cross cutting to increase the tension in the audience. He links up three different sets of action, which occur simultaneously: Emma's practicing, Mr. Frank Churchill riding fast and somewhat anxiously through the town streets and Harriet rambling through the wood and having a chat with a friend of hers. The three sets of action are connected with the melody of Emma's piano. She stops playing and continues to hum to herself two bars from the musical composition. She suddenly spots something in the window and rushes outside. The camera moves to the window, where we can see for ourselves how Mr. Churchill is carrying Harriet who almost fainted. Then we hear Harriet giving Emma an account of what has happened. Through the bushes the camera tracks Harriet and her friend in the wood, which might remind us of a predator watching its prey and preparing to attack. She says that dozens of evil gypsies suddenly appeared and they all wanted her money. What we see, nevertheless, is a group of four boys, who do not seem to endanger her life. They take her bag and run away, when Mr. Churchill appears on his horse. He is filmed in a low-angle shot, similarly to the 1996 adaptation. Back in Emma's comfortable room, Harriet is lying on a sofa, looking dreaming at Mr. Churchill. When she tells him that she owes him her life, we see Emma in a medium close-up, thinking about the incident. In a slightly slow-motion flashback, accompanied by the romantic orchestral music, Frank raises Harriet from the ground and she faints in his arms. Frank's low masculine voice assures her that everything will be fine. When she finishes romantically reinterpreting the event in her mind, Emma smiles happily, thinking that her friend fell in love with Frank. She unjustifiably confirms her suspicion in the next scene, when Harriet tells her she fell in love with someone of a much higher rank. Without mentioning his name, Harriet describes the virtues of Mr. Knightley and while doing so, she looks absent-mindedly through the window. Emma follows her look and by a complete coincidence she can see through the window Mr. Churchill having a walk with her father. She immediately connects him and Harriet's new object of adoration. An encouraging smile spreads across her face and she says that she is not surprised by Harriet's choice, especially after his service to her. The readiness to believe that Frank's help to Harriet

¹²⁶ This is one of many examples how O'Hanlon uses nice, postcard-like shots. See chapter 2.3.2 for more information about the functions, which this kind of shots fulfill.

would be a start of a romantic relationship indicates that Emma has still not come to terms with the way of the world she is living in. She does, nevertheless, warn Harriet to be careful with her feelings and to first try to check whether they are mutual.

The gypsies' attack is one of the most dynamic scenes of the story, and both films used certain techniques to create suspense. The Miramax version involves Emma in the incident and adds more threatening adult gypsies. The BBC adaptation uses the cross-cutting technique of editing to build up tension. In both films, the suitable dramatic music accompanies the event. The ending of this episode demonstrates in both ways that Emma has not matured yet and still has the need to meddle with other people's feelings. In the Miramax film this is demonstrated by her words of welcoming Mr. Churchill into Harriet's life. On the other hand, the BBC version shows several of Emma's fantasies, one of which is the scene, where Mr. Churchill rescues Harriet. Although she warns her friend to be more careful with her feelings this time, she readily adopts the idea of Harriet and Frank as a couple and says that she supports Harriet in her choice.

3.4.5 The Box Hill Picnic

At the Box Hill picnic Mr. Knightley reprimands Emma for insulting Miss Bates. She consequently experiences intense feelings of remorse, as she realizes the cruelty of her words.¹²⁷ This conversation represents a point of Emma's growing self-understanding. She not only realizes how unfairly she treated Miss Bates, but she also feels extremely sad because she disappointed Mr. Knightley, which is a first step towards becoming aware of her feelings for him. The very words of the insult are more or less similar in both adaptations. The other parts of the picnic are slightly different. In the Miramax film the strawberry picking and the Box Hill visit are merged into one event. The BBC version of the picnic is more detailed and much closer to the original text.

¹²⁷ We might say that this also demonstrates how limited the freedom of expression was among the higher social ranks at the time. Tony Tanner argues that Emma often has to remain silent rather than express her real feelings. She made one mistake at the Box Hill by making a joke at Miss Bates' expense. Consequently, she encountered harsh criticism from Mr. Knightley. The fact that the joke appears so large and important an issue might indicate that such a community depended a lot on a degree of repression of emotions and attitudes. Cf. a quotation of Tony Tanner's critical survey of Jane Austen, taken from Marc Dipaolo. *Emma Adapted*. p.32

In the Miramax adaptation the Box Hill picnic encompasses both strawberry picking and a cold picnic lunch with a view onto the lovely landscape. We see Emma and Harriet sitting on one slope of the hill, as Harriet tells Emma that she is in love with someone who is far superior to Mr. Elton as a gentleman. Emma believes that she is talking about Frank and encourages her. Just like in the BBC version of this conversation¹²⁸, Emma's idea about Harriet's secret focus of attraction is visualized through the medium long shot of Frank, who is laughing loudly while talking to Miss Bates and Jane Fairfax. Emma looks at him probably as a signal to Harriet, that it is him who they are talking about, and Harriet only smiles politely, which is not to be taken as a sign of confirmation of Emma's suspicion. In a long shot of Box Hill the party is sitting in front of a nice green landscape. This shot is also one of the rare occasions in the Miramax film where we can see some of the servants as well. Throughout the film Mrs. Elton prominently displays several characteristics which are not typical of a higher society lady. She talks with a full mouth and never allows her husband to finish any sentence, by constantly interrupting him¹²⁹. At the picnic she pushes Jane Fairfax into accepting a governess position that she found for her, although Jane never asked her to do so. Here Frank Churchill comes across as a far better person than in the BBC series. In order to prevent Mrs. Elton from pushing Jane further, he interrupts her by complimenting her on the sandwiches she made.¹³⁰ Interestingly enough, in this version it seems that Emma is tempted to insult Miss Bates because of Frank's efforts to shift the attention from Mrs. Elton's urging Jane to become a governess. After she thanks him for the compliment, Mrs. Elton continues to talk to Jane. Then Frank proposes that they play a game, in which everybody has to fulfill one of Emma's commands. When he says "three things very dull indeed" the camera moves to Miss Bates who giggles. It is as if the director wanted to point out that among the company members it is most likely that Miss Bates should comply with this request. Mr. Knightley, who sits next to her, looks very suspicious of this game. In a demonstration of dissatisfaction the Eltons excuse themselves on the pretext of planning to pick more berries. In what follows, Emma insults Miss Bates. Her first reaction is an innocent smile, which we are very used to. Her face suddenly assumes a serious expression as the camera focuses on Mrs. Weston who looks disapprovingly at Emma. Miss Bates is a pathetic sight, as she stammers out that she understands what Emma meant. Although Emma initially

¹²⁸ The BBC version of the conversation takes place after the gypsy attack. For more information see chapter 3.4.4

¹²⁹ Douglas McGrath might have taken these liberties with the original text in order to present Mrs. Elton as a less likable and sympathetic character.

¹³⁰ It is not very likely that Mrs. Elton made the sandwiches herself though. Her servants would more probably do it for her.

seems to be aware of Mrs. Weston and Mr. Knightley's objection, she is later surprised at the sharpness of Mr. Knightley's rebuke. He even seizes her arm, which might be considered by Austen's adaptations' audiences, who are used to an impeccable display of good manners, as a very inappropriate move. Emma turns her back to him in order to avoid his look and so as not to be seen crying. When Mr. Knightley looks at Emma's neck, we can sense that it is difficult for him to talk to her like that. After this moment it becomes increasingly clear to both of them what they feel about each other.

It has been mentioned on several occasions in the BBC adaptation that Emma has never travelled outside Highbury. As she is looking at the picture of Box Hill in the book, which Mr. Knightley gave her as a present, the drawn lines of the trees and the hills turn into the real nature. This transition works as a small demonstration of how Emma's dreams about travelling (even though it is a short trip) turn into reality. The long idyllic shot of Emma, Frank and Harriet from behind is soon replaced by a less peaceful medium shot, where Frank and Harriet complain about the heat. They soon decide to look for the others together, leaving Emma, content at the thought that there might be something developing between them. The rest of the company seems to entirely lack Emma's enthusiasm for the picnic, which is also noted by Frank. It is interesting how Mr. Knightley watches sadly and perhaps slightly jealously how Emma giggles while Frank is saying something to her. When they are all finally seated in front of the lovely view, Frank's behaviour becomes increasingly unacceptable and hurtful to Jane. He constantly and openly flirts with Emma in front of her and even mentions how some men regret their choices to get married, as if he were alluding to himself. Obviously bored by the company, he proposes a game and soon Emma insults Miss Bates. She seems less malicious in her remark than the Miramax Emma, although she laughs heartily at the joke. The BBC adaptation focuses much less on Miss Bates' reaction. She first smiles politely and then becomes serious and comments that she understands what Emma implied. When Emma meets Jane and Mr. Knightley's unpleasantly surprised looks, she immediately realizes her mistake. Good-natured Mr. Weston is not aware of what has happened, so he continues the game with a conundrum in praise of Emma. While Emma is listening to his wordplay, she discreetly looks at Miss Bates to see if she is alright, which demonstrates that she regrets making the joke. The kindness of Miss Bates is shown when she manages to smile at Mr. Weston's joke, although with eyes full of tears. The Eltons seem a bit subdued in this episode, if still spiteful. Frank places his head on Emma's lap¹³¹ and

¹³¹ This physical contact might be considered very inappropriate at the time.

announces that he wants Emma to find him a wife, which she naturally accepts and glances at Harriet. The rest of the company decides to go for a walk leaving Emma and Frank.¹³² By the time they are gone, Emma does not find Frank, who is constantly moaning about how he needs to leave the country¹³³, interesting anymore and goes to admire the view. Mr. Knightley's lecture on Emma's bad behaviour is filmed with a handheld camera, which makes the scene seem more realistic. He is filmed in a slightly lower angle than Emma, which naturally tends to show him as being morally above her. Unlike the 1996 version of Mr. Knightley, who expresses criticism with more subtle, underlying emotion, the 2009 one substantially raises his voice and thus gives vent to his anger. Bearing in mind Emma's behaviour in this adaptation, not only towards Miss Bates, but also flirting with Frank, it comes as no surprise that he should be so annoyed and disappointed. The fact that they are both very hurt is a sign of their growing affection for each other.

The Box Hill picnic is a turning point in both Austen adaptations. It exposes many inner emotions that have built up throughout the film, and paves the way for the events that conclude it. In the Miramax version it becomes clear that Frank cares about Jane as he tries to save her from Mrs. Elton's torment. Emma finally voices her opinion that Miss Bates speaks too much nonsense. When Mr. Knightley reprimands Emma, they both experience hard time because they care about each other's opinions and feelings. In the BBC version, Frank's emotions are much more difficult to decipher. It is possible that his inappropriate behavior is caused by a lot of suffering he is going through. He cannot air his feelings for Jane in order not to upset his controlling and strict aunt, who would probably not approve of the match. Apart from that, he might also be jealous because of the rumors about Mr. Dixon and doubting her loyalty. In the rebuke scene, a heated Mr. Knightley cannot help expressing his disapproval at Emma's mistreatment of Miss Bates and she cries when he leaves. They both feel sad, Mr. Knightley because of Emma's behavior and Emma because he is disappointed with her, which again demonstrates that they care about each other.

3.4.6 Mr. Knightley's Proposal

The scene of Mr. Knightley's proposal provides an emotional release for both Mr. Knightley and Emma, after they remove the restraints of verbal carefulness. At the beginning

¹³² There are also several speechless servants standing around them, seeming almost like a decoration.

¹³³ He even says that he will leave as soon as he books a ticket, which sounds like the 21st century (as if he would book a plane ticket or something similar).

of their conversation nearly every sentence that passes between them is misinterpreted. Emma is reserved because she is afraid that Mr. Knightley will confess his love for Harriet, but he misunderstands her reserve as a sign of her sadness at the loss of Frank. His simple declaration of love contrasts starkly with Mr. Elton's excessive compliments and Frank's playful flirtations. It demonstrates that both films value direct, sincere expressions of emotion over ornate speech. The Miramax version uses the comic elements of Emma's uncertainty as she tries to discover whether Mr. Knightley loves Harriet. The BBC adaptation is more serious in tone. The dialogue of the proposal is slightly longer and the very proposal is supplemented by two more mini-scenes.

In the 1996 version, after Harriet tells her about her feelings for Mr. Knightley, Emma feels ill at ease and soon we find out in the conversation with Mrs. Weston that Emma loves Mr. Knightley. Douglas McGrath uses several smaller scenes here to show us the changing processes of her thoughts, which altogether have a comic effect. In the conversation with Mrs. Weston mentioned above, Emma tries to guess and prepare herself for what Mr. John Knightley thinks about his brother and Harriet. Emma's intention is not to think about Mr. Knightley, but then she orders his favourite dish, plucks the petals of flowers to predict whether he loves Harriet and gets up in the middle of the night to take down Harriet's picture. In a medium shot she is seen in the church praying in voiceover that Mr. Knightley never marries anyone but herself. As she leaves the church, she meets Mr. Knightley unexpectedly. She seems calm and composed, whereas he nervously takes his hat off and touches his hair. They both avoid each other's look. After he finds out that Emma does not love Frank, Mr. Knightley is more encouraged to talk to her. First, she avoids talking about it, but then after seeing him very disappointed, she apologizes and promises to hear what he has to say. The proposal takes place under the branches of a big oak tree, which with its positive attributes of strength and endurance may symbolically imply that their union will be successful and happy.¹³⁴ He gently asks her whether there is any chance he could win her heart. She replies that she is afraid this moment is a wonderful dream. After he says that their imperfections make them perfect for each other, he proposes to her and they kiss. She brings up almost immediately that she cannot marry because she does not want to leave her father. He soothingly says that he will move to Hartfield and they embrace. The camera moves slowly into a long shot of the couple standing under the tree followed by beautiful and happy music.

¹³⁴ For more information about the setting, see chapter 3.3

In the BBC version Harriet displays much more self-confidence than in the Miramax one when she informs Emma that she is in love with Mr. Knightley. Afterwards, a very anxious and distressed Emma goes for a walk and talks aloud to herself about her feelings. She thinks about some nice moments she spent with Mr. Knightley (e.g. holding Isabella's daughter and dancing at the ball). Then in a voiceover Emma realizes that she is in love with him as she would not like him to marry anyone but herself. Her realization is followed by a crescendo of the background music. In the meantime Mr. Knightley at his brother's home finds out about Frank and Jane's secret engagement. One day, probably not long after, while Emma is taking care of the flowers in the garden, she notices Mr. Knightley. Although she tries to hide, he sees her and invites her to talk. When they are talking about Frank, whereby Mr. Knightley shows compassion thinking that Emma is hurt because he and Jane are engaged, they are walking down the garden, which is enclosed by the tidy rows of bushes. As soon as Emma tells him that he need not worry because she is not in love with Frank, they walk out of the garden onto the open road. It seems that leaving the surrounded garden area represents Mr. Knightley's emotions which were enclosed by the fear that Emma loves Frank Churchill and now that she reassured him that his suspicions were wrong, his emotions can freely come to the surface. The words he uses to propose to her are very similar to those Jane Austen used in the novel.¹³⁵ When he asks her what she thinks about his proposal, Emma makes a nice gesture of putting her hands on each side of his face, which makes him relax a bit and they kiss. This is the first time that she seems more mature than him. In the next scene we see them in a long shot, sitting on a bench with the Woodhouses' mansion in the background. Here they clarify to each other how they came to understand their own emotions. In the following long shot of Donwell Abbey, Mr. Knightley's home, we see Emma rushing inside. She bursts into her fiancé's office, somewhat hysterically tells him that they can never marry and leaves him puzzled.¹³⁶ He quickly runs after her and tries to calm her delirious state of mind. When he says he will move to Hartfield, like an innocent puppy or a child who has just got what they wanted, Emma finally smiles happily and they decide to go and tell Mr. Woodhouse about their news.

Mr. Knightley's proposal puts an end to several questions about the truth of various characters' feelings. Emma is not in love with Frank and Mr. Knightley does not want to marry Harriet or Jane. He loves Emma, and to his surprise she loves him too. The Miramax

¹³⁵ For the complete dialogue, see Jane Austen. *Emma*. p. 325

¹³⁶ This unexpectedly dramatic reaction stands in stark contrast to Paltrow's relative control in the same situation and does not seem to reflect the behaviour of an adult mature person. However, it might be in line with Garai's portrayal of Emma as childish. For more information about Paltrow vs. Garai's Emma, see chapter 3.2.

film employs several comic scenes, which slowly bring us to the proposal. Emma seems more in control of her feelings and knows exactly what she wants (as demonstrated in the church). The BBC Emma seems very mature when the proposal takes place, when she gently and reassuringly touches Mr. Knightley's face. However, she demonstrates her basic childish nature when she temporarily cancels the engagement. One way or another, through the happy union of the couple both versions move slowly to the satisfactory conclusion.

3.4.7 The Ending

Both movies have a happy ending, which means that all the characters are content how everything turned out for them. They somewhat differ in their representation of the conclusion of the story. The Miramax version ends with the wedding and the painted globe similar to the one we saw at the beginning. The BBC series does not film the wedding of Emma and Mr. Knightley, but introduces the scene where they are at the seaside.

The 1996 movie manages to put a lot of events before the wedding into a small time frame and uses quick cutting to achieve this. The camera is used for shots outside of Hartfield through a window at a middle distance. With this set-up we first see Mr. Woodhouse very happy and excited at the news which Emma and Mr. Knightley shared with him. Then we see Mr. and Mrs. Weston congratulating them, who are followed by Miss Bates with Frank and Jane, who are all elated at the news. Next we see one person who is very sad after talking to Emma- upon hearing what has happened, Harriet runs away in tears. None of the short scenes are accompanied by any dialogue, but in a voiceover we can hear the same female narrator, whom we heard at the beginning. In the following scene, Emma and Harriet meet again in a kind of conservatory where Emma is taking care of flowers. We hear from her that it has been weeks since she last saw Harriet. She came to tell Emma that she decided to marry Robert Martin. To her surprise Emma is very happy about it, saying that her happiness is complete by knowing that her friend found her love as well. The final scene presents Emma and Mr. Knightley coming out of the church down a path, their friends cheerfully clapping their hands at both sides of the path. As pointed out by Hilary Shor, although Austen gave Mrs. Elton a small remark at the wedding, McGrath allowed her to occupy the screen for a relatively long moment. She uses her typical phrase that although she is not an expert, her friends think she has "quite the eye". She then ironically comments that there is a shocking lack of satin. Shor explains that McGrath managed in this way to maintain some of the famous irony of Austen's

narrator.¹³⁷ He also achieved a comic effect, which is true to the character of the movie. Finally, as the couple reaches the end of the path, they kiss and the camera moves upward, towards the church steeple and the sky, reflecting perhaps that only the sky is the limit to their happiness. We then return to what looks like the globe from the beginning. The painted pictures represent the circle of Emma's friends, which comprises the Martins as well, implying that for this Emma class differences might not pose an obstacle to her friendship with Harriet.

In comparison to the rest of the BBC miniseries, the finale significantly increases in pace and presents many more events than usually. The closing sequence starts with Emma and Mr. Knightley telling Mr. Woodhouse the news of their engagement. We can notice a gentle smile on his face, but then he goes solemn. Again, no dialogue can be heard, only the serious and dynamic music of strings. Next Isabella reads the letter about Emma and Mr. Knightley and is thrilled by the content. In this adaptation, like in the novel, Emma is informed about Harriet and Robert Martin's engagement by Mr. Knightley. Both of them together with Frank and Jane Fairfax attend the wedding, over which pompous Mr. Elton presides.¹³⁸ Emma congratulates Harriet on her choice. Their conversation is interrupted when Robert Martin calls Harriet. She smiles warmly to Emma and leaves. Their exchange of words was unusually short and they do not promise to see each other in the future. There is no definite sign that their friendship bonds will not be broken. Frank approaches Emma and apologizes for his behaviour. He calls Jane his angel and promises to take care of her. Considering his previous behaviour, this can hardly make up, but just like Emma, we are left hoping that he will do as he says. Mrs. Weston gave birth to a little girl, because of whom, to Miss Bates' and our surprise, Mrs. Bates started talking. Unlike in the Miramax version, here we can see the reconciliation of Emma and Jane, which is followed by Mrs. Weston's smile. In the Miramax film the only reference to the child is a picture on the globe of the Westons with a baby. Regarding Emma and Mr. Knightley's wedding, Jim O'Hanlon decided to skip that part and show us the couple setting off on a honeymoon instead. From a feminist perspective, it can be argued that Emma here seems to very much depend on Mr. Knightley and to be subordinated to him. It is Mr. Knightley who decides that they should tell the news to Mr. Woodhouse. He also makes the decision to take her to the seaside and we can see Emma leaning on him in the coach. Finally, after all the earlier mentions of Emma never having seen the sea, she catches

¹³⁷ cf. Hilary Shor. *Emma, Interrupted: Speaking Jane Austen in Fiction and Film*. p. 171

¹³⁸ Although Jim O'Hanlon did not include Emma and Mr. Knightley's official union, by filming Harriet and Robert Martin's marriage rite, he managed to follow Austen adaptations' tradition of ending with a wedding.

the first glimpse at the blue water in the distance. The final aerial shot shows Emma and Mr. Knightley standing on a cliff holding hands, looking at the vast infinity of the sea, which might be read as a symbol of their deep and unconditional love.

There is no doubt that both filmic versions of Austen's novel are of a romantic character. There is a wedding at the end of each movie and all the characters seem to have achieved everything they wanted. Emma and Mr. Knightley marry and decide to live at Hartfield, so that Mr. Woodhouse would not be left alone. Jane and Frank were finally able to reveal their secret engagement. The emotional and economic security of their cousin made the Bates women happy. Harriet marries Robert Martin, thus appeasing Emma's uneasy conscience. However, the endings also reflect the slightly differing characters of the movies. The 1996 movie is a light romantic comedy, whereas the 2009 film is a more serious romantic drama. The Miramax version employs several moments which achieve a humorous effect. On the other hand, the BBC adaptation deals more thoroughly with emotional themes and the development of characters. In the Miramax film everybody is perfectly happy in the end. In the BBC version although Emma is overjoyed, she cannot part from her father without tears. In the Miramax film Emma and Harriet's friendship does not seem to be called into question. The BBC miniseries, nevertheless, implies that their bonds could be broken and that Emma might have found a new friend, Jane, who is socially and economically more suitable to be her companion.

3.5 Reception

Film critics have broadly agreed that Miramax adaptation possesses the elements of a good comedy.¹³⁹ However, many have argued that the tone of the film is very mild and somewhat frivolous. Hilary Shor writes that the film is so charming and perfect in its filmic presentation, that it is simply too easy to watch.¹⁴⁰ Carol M. Dole further suggests that the adaptation sustains the American myth of classlessness to such a degree that it fails to deal properly with the class issues that concerned Austen.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, McGrath's movie is generally considered to be very successful when it comes to revenues. Its budget ranged between £6 and 7 million. Regarding the costume drama box office takings, Miramax Emma falls into the category of those which were most successful. Thanks to a very good marketing

¹³⁹ For more information about the characteristics of a comedy, see the chapter on genre.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Hilary Shor. *Emma, Interrupted: Speaking Jane Austen in Fiction and Film*. p.144

¹⁴¹ Cf. Carol M. Dole. *Austen, Class and the American Market*. p.67

and distribution strategy,¹⁴² it earned \$20 million at the American box office.¹⁴³ Leaving the figures aside, perhaps more importantly, this version of *Emma* was nominated by Academy Awards committee for two Oscars and won one of them. By winning the most prestigious and famous of film awards, it earned a status of high quality, which can still boost the sales of the DVD version.

Since it has only recently been broadcast, it might still be early to assess the critical reception of the BBC miniseries. Nevertheless, the first impressions of the reviewers are split and the audience does not seem to be very delighted. In his interpretation of the series as a simple and stereotypical chick flick, Sam Wollaston expresses his satisfaction at the fact that there will be no costume dramas on the BBC for some time.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, the *New York Times* title optimistically says that it is still ‘‘mostly sunny at Hartfield’’ and gives a rather favourable review of the adaptation of Austen’s masterpiece.¹⁴⁵ When it comes to the audience, it might be useful to have a look at the Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board webpage (BARB). When the first episode was aired, the audience turnout was 4.84 millions, the following week the number decreased to 4.12. In the third and fourth week of broadcasting the BBC miniseries did not enter the list of the 30 most watched programmes, which means that it had less than 4.29 and 4.32 million viewers respectively (which is in both cases less than on the first evening).¹⁴⁶ If we compare this to the number of over 11 million viewers of all episodes of *Pride and Prejudice* miniseries in the 1995¹⁴⁷, we may observe that the number of the audiences of Austen adaptations has largely decreased. The reasons for this are multiple. First, the story of Ms. Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Knightley Darcy is more famous than that of *Emma*. Second, this story involves more action, which consequently produces more vigorous acting. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the new technologies change significantly the number of television viewers. The *Emma* series can be downloaded for free online and there are also several versions uploaded on youtube. Another important element is the substantial increase of popularity of reality shows. The BARB shows that The X Factor broadcast at almost the same time as *Emma* attracted more than 13 million viewers

¹⁴² For more information about promoting and releasing costume dramas in the USA see Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 133-142

¹⁴³ Cf. Andrew Higson. *English Heritage, English Cinema*. p. 93-95

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Sam Wollaston. *Emma*. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/tv-and-radio/2009/oct/05/sam-wollaston-tv-review>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Alessandra Stanley. It’s Still Mostly Sunny at Hartfield. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/22/arts/television/22emma.html>, last viewed 18.02.2010.

¹⁴⁶ Broadcasters’ Audience Research Board. <http://www.barb.co.uk/report/weeklyTopProgrammesOverview?>, last viewed 26.02.2010

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Gesa Stedman. *Austenizing Britain*. p. 10

in the first three weeks of October and more than 14 in the fourth. Finally, as the *Independent's* journalist suggests, the Austen adaptation market might have simply reached saturation with films being screened every year.¹⁴⁸

4 Conclusion

By using the examples of the latest film and television adaptations of Austen's novel *Emma*, this thesis has shown what constitutes a typical representative of heritage cinema. It started with putting the term heritage film in the context of heritage culture. Then it explained how it is related to other similar movie directions and what differentiates it from them. Next, it focused on one example within heritage cinema- Austen adaptations. Through them, it further explored the movie genre by explaining what makes it popular with producers and the audience, and why it is important for English art, identity, tourism and language.

Next, the thesis focused on the latest *Emma* adaptations. According to their importance for the main characters' development, the key scenes were selected. Their analysis revealed that they follow more or less closely Austen's story of upper classes and their lives. They provided examples how the picturesque setting, costumes and other props are integrated into the story and how the characters' renditions give it a certain tone. Further, the exploration of the adaptations proved how the camera editing, cutting, mise-en-scène and soundtrack work together to achieve a soothing, romantic, sometimes comic and sometimes slightly dramatic effect of the narrative. It showed what is typical for heritage films, but also pointed out some variations within the genre. Finally, by comparing the reception of the movies, I have observed that Austen adaptations have lost some of the previous popularity.

For future researchers, it might be interesting to analyse the participation of audiences in the USA when the latest *Emma* finishes being broadcast. If the number of viewers decreases like in Britain, the heritage film critics might want to explore what caused this reaction and what is the future of this movie trend.

For now, I want to suggest that the audiences may have become too familiar with the conventions of costume drama. As we can see in the examples of *Emma* adaptations, they more or less follow closely the same pattern of production and stage rather similar versions of

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Jonathan Brown. *Has the Costume Drama Had its Day?* <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/tv-radio/has-the-costume-drama-had-its-day-1806884.html>, last viewed 17.01.2010.

the story. In order to reach wider audiences, the movie producers should try to be more innovative. It might be interesting to see an adaptation which does not perfectly stick to Austen's story. Perhaps the producers can also be less precise when it comes to period details and try to somehow better link the story and characters to contemporary sensibilities. All in all, with the booming film market, where there are hundreds of various movies produced every year, we might not wait for too long for this to happen.

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