

The Early Television Versions (1948–1972)

Analyzing the Transposition Adaptations

E*mma* is a rich novel, not only because of its complex characters and the contentious social and moral issues it tackles, but also because its narrative structure is highly sophisticated, to the point that Ian Watt grants it a place of honor as the groundbreaking text that first realized the true potential of the novelistic medium.¹ In his 1957 work *The Rise of the Novel*, Watt suggests that Jane Austen wrote the first complete novel by merging the psychological, personal storytelling style of Samuel Richardson (a style that would be further developed by Henry James) with the plot-driven, satirical style of Henry Fielding into a “harmonious unity [with] the advantages both of realism of presentation and realism of assessment, of the internal and external approaches to character...” (297). Consequently, “her novels have authenticity without diffuseness or trickery, wisdom of social comment without garrulous essayism, and a sense of the social order which is not achieved at the expense of the individuality and authenticity of the characters” (297). Watt also explains that Austen’s writing style:

is employed with supreme brilliance in *Emma* (1816), a novel which combines Fielding’s characteristic strength in conveying the sense of society as a whole, with something of Henry James’s capacity for locating the essential structural continuity of the novel in the reader’s growing awareness of the full complexity of the personality and the growing situation of the character through whom the story is mainly told: the unfolding of Emma Woodhouse’s inner being has much of the same drama

of progressive revelation with which James presents Maisie Farange or Lambert Strether. (297)

Austen's writing style—commonly described in academic circles as a “free-indirect” style—navigates deftly between representing the inner life of the protagonist and the perspective of the narrator, just as it simultaneously relates the stories of Emma the individual and Highbury the society. In the case of *Emma*, this shifting back and forth between Emma's perspective and the narrator's is at the core of the narrative richness of the novel. Much of *Emma*'s irony and humor comes from the disparity between these two perspectives, as the narrator is more critical of Emma, and seems to have a better grasp of the world of Highbury, than Emma herself.²

This selfsame innovative narrative voice of Austen's ironically proves to be the most challenging aspect of her novels to bring to the screen—and yet, any filmmaker hoping to evoke the tone of the source text in a film version arguably should at least attempt to do just this. The narrator is most often missing, whereas Emma's perspective is always included, even if it is not assured the dominant dramatic viewpoint. Some adaptations do include bookend narrative voice-overs that place the story in a larger context, but it is arguable that the narrator heard on the audio track is never quite the same as the narrator from the novel. For example, *Clueless* recreates Austen's irony by juxtaposing what the heroine is thinking via voice-over with what is shown visually on-screen, often in a manner that inspires the viewer to laugh with “Emma” and at “Emma.”³ Other adaptations choose to focus on recreating one element of Austen's narrative voice, or “free-indirect” style, giving primacy either to the “inner being” of Emma or to the sense of the society as a whole. In other words, some films emphasize the “Henry Fielding” influences found in *Emma* and other films emphasize the “Samuel Richardson” influences in *Emma*. As we shall see, the American adaptations of *Emma*, with their focus on the lovely heroine, tend to highlight the “Richardson” that Watt sees in Austen—thereby encouraging feelings of intimacy with the heroine, her thoughts, and feelings. The British television adaptations, with their focus on Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax, Robert Martin, and Highbury as a whole, emphasize the “Fielding” that Watt sees in Austen by regarding the heroine from a more clinical distance, and by focusing more on the ensemble cast of characters.

According to Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield, the reason that the films tend to choose one narrative style over another is that the limitations of the filmic medium demand that such a choice be made. In making this assertion, they seem to infer that no complete adaptation, as such, is possible ("Filming Highbury" 1-3). They are correct, up to a point. Since the running time of most adaptations is not adequate to dramatize all of the events of the novel in their entirety, cuts to the story need to be made, and different adaptations choose different scenes, characters, and storylines to excise. While such cuts are often deemed a necessity by adaptation theorists, they are not dictated solely by the differences between the written and audio-visual mediums, as has often been suggested, but by the vision of the story that the creative team wishes to present to the public.

As discussed in Chapter One, John Wiltshire has posited that, in the case of each individual adaptation, the "scriptwriter and filmmakers be understood as readers" who "make public and manifest what their reading of the precursor text is" (5). Given that the production team members are readers, they are likely to come to certain conclusions about the novel itself—for example, whether it is more of a domestic Bildungsroman or a social critique—and their determinations about the nature of the novel influence how they bring the novel to the screen. And so, for example, if the screenwriter and the director interpret the focus of the novel to be on Emma and her "coming of age," then they will craft an adaptation in the style of a domestic Bildungsroman. Such a reading would highlight Emma's thoughts and feelings and show the world of Highbury primarily through her eyes. As a natural consequence, some of the supporting characters will be given less attention, and they may even be presented to the audience solely through the distorted lens of Emma's personally biased perspective, without the narrator to qualify or correct Emma's judgments.

On the other hand, if the production team thinks the real focus of the story is on social issues, or if the creators prefer characters such as Knightley or Jane Fairfax to Emma, then the narrative focus will shift away from Emma onto Highbury, and the adaptation will take greater care dramatizing the thoughts, feelings, and trials of the supporting characters than it will making manifest Emma's inner life. Either way, once the production team determines whether the novel is a

social critique or a domestic Bildungsroman, that determination has a very real and practical effect on how the adaptation will take shape, and will influence the adaptation's plot structure, narrative perspective, and tone.

In terms of plot structure, there are essentially three basic ways in which *Emma* adaptations transform Austen's story: those that highlight Emma's relationship with Harriet Smith, those that focus on Emma's competitive relationship with Jane Fairfax, and those that attempt to grant equal weight to both storylines. Within the framework of these three possible plot structures, the transposition adaptations tend to present five possible narrative viewpoints: Emma's, Mr. Knightley's, an unidentified narrator's, the citizens of Highbury (a multitude of perspectives that unify into a single voice not wholly unlike a Chorus in Classical drama), or any combination of the above.

In each of the Austen adaptations, narrative perspective is assigned to a particular character in a number of ways. The characters who appear in the most scenes, by their nature, stake a claim to the audience's attention and emerge as central to the plot. Of course, a large role for a particular character does not necessarily mean that he or she claims the right to be called the narrator of the story. However, if the camera lingers on a character's face, or if private thoughts are revealed in voiceover, then that character has assumed a place of primacy in the unfolding of the story that is denied to other dramatic players who are kept at a greater distance from the audience. The importance a particular character assumes in a given narration is also determined by the nature and quality of the actor's performance.

Another factor in determining which narrative perspective a given adaptation favors is the inclusion of "invented scenes." Adaptations which desire to tell the story of *Emma* from the perspective of characters such as Mr. Knightley or Jane Fairfax tend to create additional dialogue and even entire scenes for these characters to further cement audience identification with them, often undercutting the empathy that viewers feel with Emma herself in the process. Writing about the Austen film canon in general, and the *Emma* films in particular, critic Sarah R. Morrison observes that the most interesting elements of the adaptations,

...are those invented scenes and bits of dialogue not found in the novels....It is in such marked departures from the novels that we can detect filmmakers

struggling with the differences in the two media—and in particular, with the lack of a narrator...(1)

Precisely because they are departures from the novel, “invented scenes” in a film adaptation act as strong indicators of the interpretive gloss that the production team wants to give the source story.

Additionally, the dramatic tone a given adaptation strikes is yet another indicator of the kind of reading it represents. Differences in tone from one transposition adaptation to another may be accounted for by differences in the plot structure and in the narrative voice.⁴ However, tone is also influenced by the costumes, which can be historically accurate or fairy-tale like, and by the music, which could evoke jubilant emotions with up-tempo melodies or thoughtfulness with more sober strains (either through Regency-period compositions or an original motion picture score). Stage-bound productions that have little or no location shooting might create feelings of claustrophobia in the viewers, while location shooting could use natural sights to create a lush and verdant Highbury just as easily as it could paint the “Garden of England” in drab and forlorn colors. All of these dramatic elements influence the overall feel of the production, as well as contribute to a given adaptation’s reading of the novel.

Those filmic adaptations that grant primacy to the narrative perspective of the citizens of Highbury (and that emphasize the Jane Fairfax subplot) are readings of the *Emma* story as a social critique. Such adaptations usually strike a darker tone, and they consistently realign the emphasis of the story, minimizing the attention paid to Emma’s personal journey and focusing instead on the story of Highbury. Those adaptations that center most strongly on Emma’s perspective are the domestic Bildungsroman adaptations. These adaptations concern themselves more particularly with Emma’s thoughts and feelings, and have deliberately chosen to keep the audience at a distance from Jane Fairfax, who might distract too much from audience sympathy with Emma and the evils of *her* situation.

Based on the criteria outlined above, it is a relatively straightforward task to determine what kind of reading each adaptation of *Emma* represents. Once the reading is identified, it will be compared with comparable, pre-existing interpretations from writings of literary critics about the novel. In matching a reading taken from a film adaptation with a reading from literary criticism, my goal is to demon-

strate the value and validity of judging film adaptations as interpretations and envisionings of the novel.

The first four adaptations of *Emma* that will be discussed in detail in this chapter—the 1948, 1954, 1960, and 1970 versions—may be categorized as *transposition* adaptations that represent readings of the novel as a social critique instead of as a domestic Bildungsroman.⁵ Although all transposition adaptations share the same goal of dramatizing the events of the novel as faithfully as possible, they often diverge from one another in striking ways because of the different readings of the novel that they represent.

A discussion of the very first filmed adaptation of *Emma*, a 1948 television production written by Judy Campbell, follows.

The Judy Campbell Screenplay

“Emma.” May 24, 1948. (BBC, live, B&W, 105 minutes).

Casey Finch and Peter Bowen, authors of “‘The Tittle-Tattle of Highbury’: Gossip and the Free Indirect Style in *Emma*,” contend that Austen portrays gossip ambivalently in the novel, simultaneously trivializing it through scenes in which it is depicted as amusing and validating it by evoking a narrative style that is “gossipy” in nature. According to Finch and Bowen:

Itself never identifiably authorized—who, after all, is ever the originator of a rumor?—gossip functions as a powerful form of authority because its source is nowhere and everywhere at once. (Finch 545)

The first *Emma* adaptation made for television—a live BBC TV broadcast that aired between 8:30 p.m. and 10:15 p.m. on Sunday, May 23, 1948—dramatizes gossip in action with a similar ambivalence.⁶ Screenwriter Judy Campbell, who also starred as Emma, treats gossip seriously as a social phenomenon but also sees the funny (or even the endearing) side of tittle-tattle.⁷ Her screenplay captures both the charm of Highbury and its rigid class structure, detailing the light and dark sides of the community through showcasing the gossipy conversations that unfold in Ford’s shop. The scenes in which Miss Bates and Mrs. Ford exchange rumors as they conduct their business

in the store demonstrate how gossip is used as a source of news, as a means of knitting the community together, and as a manner of influencing the course of people's lives in town.

Since the program's comparatively brief running time and the studio-bound nature of the production demanded that the action of the novel be compressed, significant cuts and alterations to the story were made. Interestingly enough, the changes to the story structure that Campbell made in her screenplay would later become standard alterations for most of the adaptations that would follow. For example, here, as in the majority of versions, Emma's sister Isabella and brother-in-law John Knightley are mentioned but do not appear, and the Box Hill excursion and the strawberry picking at Donwell Abbey are dramatized as taking place during a single afternoon. As Sue Parrill observes, the most notable features of this particular version include a larger-than-usual role for Mr. Perry (who, oddly enough, does not mention any plans for a carriage) and a final scene that shows a post-nuptial kiss between Emma and Mr. Knightley (Parrill 111). The scenes featuring Emma alone are largely excised, and the scenes staged at Ford's, here presented as Miss Bates' home territory, seem to loom larger as a result.

The special attention that Campbell pays to Miss Bates and, by extension, Miss Bates' niece Jane Fairfax, moves the focus of the story away from the title character, and offers a more distant, mediated view of Emma's gradual transformation than the novel does. Part of this special attention appears deliberate, as the screenplay is clearly more interested in portraying, in detail, the financial and emotional crisis that Jane is enduring, and is less interested in Emma's confining situation. The consequence of this significant emphasis is that Campbell's version of *Emma* may be interpreted as reading the novel as a social critique instead of as a domestic Bildungsroman.

Campbell's screenplay simultaneously brings class issues to the forefront and creates a critical distance between the audience and Emma by preserving the narrator, who—speaking as an audio-track voiceover—analyzes Emma's actions and situation, as well as presents important information about the society of Highbury as a whole. It begins with a narrative voiceover reading an abbreviated, and slightly rewritten, version of the opening paragraphs of the novel that introduces the setting as Surrey, 1816, and explains Emma's background

and current situation. As the camera focuses on Mr. Woodhouse snoozing by the fire and Emma playing the pianoforte, the narrator relates the circumstances of the death of Mrs. Woodhouse, the departure of Isabella, and the recent marriage of Miss Taylor, leaving the “handsome, clever, and rich” Miss Woodhouse very lonely indeed. As one of the few adaptations to include a narrator—the others being the 1995 *Clueless*, which includes voiceover narration by the heroine, and the 1996 Douglas McGrath *Emma*, which features “bookend” narrations by Greta Scacchi—this first dramatized version helps clarify the history of the central characters and their position within Highbury society with ease and immediacy.⁸ Later adaptations, by contrast, tend to bombard viewers with a parade of characters who seem to have a specific position in society, and in relation to Emma herself, that is not readily apparent.⁹

In addition, information about class and social mores that is critical to the development of the central themes of the story, as well as to the advancement of the plot, is conveyed through the depiction of gossip in Highbury society. As mentioned earlier, it is Ford’s which serves as a focal point for the initiation and spread of rumor and insinuation, assuming an unparalleled importance as a window into the complexities of Highbury society. It is in Ford’s that we find the girls of Miss Goddard’s school staring lovingly at the handsome Mr. Elton, and Miss Bates and Mrs. Ford expressing surprise that he didn’t marry the woman whom they thought he was going to marry (presumably Emma). In another Ford’s scene, Harriet inquires after Elizabeth Martin during a discussion with Mrs. Ford, an inquiry that Mrs. Ford later reports to Robert Martin, encouraging him to believe that he still has hope with Harriet. Finally, and most importantly, Miss Bates keeps groups of Ford’s patrons up-to-date on the comings and goings of Frank, Jane, and Mr. Elton, with subtle commentary on the odd discrepancies in their behaviors included free of charge. As these moments can attest, this adaptation emphasizes the feminine community of Highbury and Miss Bates’ all-important role as the gossip equivalent of town crier. The result is an adaptation that treats gossip seriously as a legitimate source of news and social pressure, and that appears to lightly mock the practice by giving cute, sly dialogue to the gossips.¹⁰

Writing about Austen's depiction of gossip in the novel, Finch and Bowen observe:

...gossip in Highbury derives its power neither from the opinion of a single individual nor from the dictates of an identifiable institution—the police, the law courts—but from the collectivity of voices that whisper about neighbors in private rooms and across gateways. Just as the free indirect style of the novel functions as a form of narrative surveillance over the novel's characters, so gossip in the novel deploys a mild surveillance over the members of the Highbury community. Through covert insinuation rather than overt pressure, gossip delineates a circle of consensual values. (Finch 549)

As powerful as Emma is in the Highbury community depicted in the novel, she is far from above the social pressures exerted by the gossipers. Indeed, Finch and Bowen suggest that the climax of Austen's work, in which Emma discovers her love for Mr. Knightley during a moment of epiphany, is brought about by the final, and long-delayed, harmonizing of Emma's personal desires with the expectations of gossipy Highbury society. For Finch and Bowen, "Free indirect style has here literally created the space of the unconscious as the natural source of Emma's inner desires, which, naturally enough, now discover themselves perfectly aligned with the overriding social imperative the novel has been at pains to establish from the start: 'Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself!'" (554).

In the novel, Emma certainly feels social pressure to marry Knightley, partly from the gossip phenomenon that Finch and Bowen discuss, but also from the active competition of Mrs. Elton, which threatens to marginalize Emma's position in society. It is no accident, for example, that Emma's first conscious recognition of Mr. Knightley's attractive bearing follows shortly after the newlywed Eltons lead the first dance at the Crown Inn Ball, taking Emma's rightful place as the star of the party merely because they are married and she is not. To what extent the various social pressures brainwash Emma into *believing* herself to be in love with Mr. Knightley because she *must* be in love with Mr. Knightley is unclear. To what extent those pressures come from local gossip is also unclear—although we do know that the Westons plot to see Emma married to Frank, Elton and Knightley plot to have her for themselves, and the locals as a whole are eagerly watching to see if her new surname will be Churchill, Elton, or Knightley.

As the critics discussed in the previous chapter demonstrate, there is disagreement as to how to read the pressure placed upon Emma to marry. For Wayne Booth, marriage to the excellent Mr. Knightley is exactly what a character as wonderful as Emma deserves. Other critics expressed reservations that Emma was too independent to be married and would be unhappy wedded to Mr. Knightley. Campbell's screenplay, with its kind-natured portrait of the matchmaking gossips who whisper about Emma's love life, seems to take the more positive view and assume that marriage to Mr. Knightley is good for Emma. Therefore, the gossips who encourage the match are acting in Emma's best interest. In a way, Campbell's gossipy characters are not all that different from the readers of the novel themselves, who also tend to eagerly follow Emma's romantic adventures and wonder which eligible bachelor Jane Austen will marry her to in the end. Such readers enjoy "the tensions of the story and the illusions of autonomous self" that delay the romantic union of Emma and Mr. Knightley just as they "enjoy the pleasure of closure, the harmonious reconciliation of self to society" when the lovers finally come together in the end (Finch and Bowen 554-555).

In Campbell's screenplay, gossip is generally shown to be benign and is consistently portrayed as beneficial to the community. Campbell's gossips share the main concerns of Emma and Mr. Knightley; their chief interests are matchmaking and making known the needs of the distressed and disenfranchised. While Emma does not participate in the gossiping that takes place in Ford's, (underscoring her alienation from other women discussed by several critics in the previous chapter,) sensitive *men* lend their ears to the gossips.¹¹ And so, both Mr. Knightley and Robert Martin learn vital information about the plights of Jane and Harriet through the grapevine at Ford's. In fact, the gossips at Ford's may even be said to work in opposition to Emma as a populist alternative to her queenly influence in Highbury. While Emma wishes to disrupt the marriage between Harriet Smith and Robert Martin, Mrs. Ford works to bring the two separated lovers back together again by hinting to Robert that he is still loved. While Emma declares her wish to remain single, Miss Bates and Mrs. Ford wonder in whispered tones whom she will marry. And while Emma shows indifference to Jane's ill health and financially dire situation, those at Ford's are concerned with little else. Since Mr. Knightley's

goals align so perfectly with the goals of the gossips, he is symbolically linked with them, although he does not engage in any gossip at Ford's himself.

Although there is much gossiping about developments in Mr. Elton's love life, most of the gossip in this adaptation concerns Jane Fairfax—particularly her health, her love life, her livelihood, her taciturn nature, and her mysterious trips to the post office. Jane's complicated back story from the novel—which includes the death of her parents, her life with Col. Campbell, the marriage of Mr. Dixon to Miss Campbell, her brush with death on a boating excursion, her fears of becoming a governess, and the cancelled trip to Ireland—are difficult to relate on screen, and virtually every adaptation fails to rise to the challenge of presenting this material clearly and with adequate dramatic weight. The highlights are tolerably well presented here, however, and the inclusion of the oft-excised boating accident anecdote helps validate Emma's fanciful romantic pairing of Mr. Dixon and Jane as tragic lovers. Jane's loaded comparison between the slave trade and the governess trade survives the translation to the screen (when it, too, is often omitted), dramatically emphasizing how hopeless she feels in her situation. Also included is the usually eliminated romantic moment that Jane shares with Frank as he is supposed to be tending to the rivet in Mrs. Bates' spectacles.

In fact, Campbell's screenplay places such dramatic emphasis on Jane that Emma's concerns are considerably muted; this is especially true because Jane features as a central point of debate in virtually every argument between Emma and Mr. Knightley. Mr. Knightley criticizes Emma for not befriending Jane during their argument over her interference with Robert Martin's proposal, and he also spends as much time warning her of the secret connection between Frank and Jane as he does scolding her for insulting Miss Bates.¹² Knightley's constant evocation of Jane Fairfax's name in this version gives great weight to Mrs. Weston's theory that the two are destined for marriage. And, when Mrs. Weston voices her suspicions to Emma, the reaction borders on violent:

Emma: Nonsense, he does not care about Jane Fairfax—I'm sure he does not.

Ms. [sic] Weston: All the same I should not wonder if it was to end in his marrying her!

[Emma clenches her fists and shakes them at her.]

Mrs. Weston: Do not beat me! (Campbell 56)

It is hard to imagine how this scene would have “played out” on screen. I cannot visualize Mrs. Weston speaking those lines in genuine terror, but there is a seriousness to the dialogue, and to Emma’s still-subconscious fears of losing Mr. Knightley, that makes it equally hard to imagine the scene played purely as two old friends having a jolly laugh at one another’s expense. Since the scene ends here, no subsequent interaction between the two characters can provide further context. Despite its abrupt ending, the scene is significant because it hints that Emma’s as-yet-undiscovered feelings for Mr. Knightley are passionate and internalized, and that Emma will not ultimately be pushed into marrying someone that she does not love.

Still, Mr. Knightley’s attentions to Jane Fairfax are not included in this adaptation solely as a means of making Emma jealous and keeping the viewers at home in suspense. His attentions to Jane in this adaptation do indeed stem from “disinterested benevolence,” and he is not the only one in Highbury to fuss over Jane Fairfax in this version. Mr. Perry, the apothecary, is worried about her medical condition, noting that she sports “the pallor of the Metropolis” and assuring her that “Our Highbury airs will soon restore the color to those cheeks.” Attention of an even more stifling kind is given Jane by Mrs. Elton, who serves admirably in this version as yet another example of a flawed teacher and mother figure—outpacing Mrs. Weston and Emma as the worst patron in Highbury with her coercive insistence that Jane Fairfax take a position as a governess.

To the extent that the Campbell screenplay emphasizes Jane’s story over Emma’s, it rewrites the novel and recasts Jane as the central figure of the story. Since Jane is a passive heroine, however, the active protagonists in this version are those who come to her aid, namely Mr. Knightley, Miss Bates, and Mrs. Ford. An intriguing consequence of this realignment of the story is that those who torment Jane emerge as even more villainous here than they do in the book.

As such, the jealous and neglecting Emma seems less sympathetic here, Frank Churchill is simultaneously more childlike and predatory, and Mrs. Elton's attempts to get Jane work as a governess seem wholly sinister and not remotely motivated by a desire to help.

While great attention is given to Jane Fairfax, Campbell gives comparatively little attention to Frank Churchill's motivations. Since the screenplay does not excuse his actions, they seem all the harder to comprehend. If one is inclined to forgive Frank for his lies and for his abuse of Jane, it is because of his fears of being disinherited by a rich, cold-hearted aunt. However, this screenplay emphasizes his duty to Mrs. Churchill as an invalid instead of presenting his fear of falling victim to her excessively class-conscious views. Compounding the problem, this screenplay (like virtually all subsequent adaptations of *Emma*) is remiss in providing full and comprehensible accounts of Mr. Weston's first marriage and his clash with Mrs. Churchill, the inevitable consequence being that Mr. Weston is portrayed as a bland, affable character who (for no apparent reason) lacks the full confidence of a son who (for no apparent reason) does not share his surname. This screenplay has Knightley voice fears that Frank might take after Mrs. Churchill, but he does not explain the cause for his concern. Mr. Weston begins to describe Mrs. Churchill as a constant thorn in his side, but Mrs. Elton interrupts him to discuss the barouche-landau before he explains how and why. Frank gallantly assumes the blame for the salacious rumors of Jane's "relationship" with Mr. Dixon, letting Emma off the hook, but he emerges less as a fully realized character and more as a distillation of Emma's "cattiest" and most immature traits. In the context of this adaptation, Frank symbolizes gossip at its most destructive—as slander that adds misery to Jane's already pitiful situation, nearly driving her out of town.

However, this version's emphasis on Mrs. Elton and Frank as Jane's chief tormentors does not deflect all blame from Emma. In fact, Judy Campbell's script is one of the few screenplays that faults Emma far more for flirting with Frank Churchill at Box Hill than it berates her for insulting Miss Bates. Campbell dramatizes a scene from Jane Fairfax's perspective that is written from Emma's point of view in the novel, in which Jane refuses Emma's gift of arrowroot after the Box Hill excursion and tells Miss Bates, "I am not in need of kindness from Miss Woodhouse." One might argue that one of the reasons that

this scene does not appear in the novel, as such, is that Austen was careful to shield readers from scenes that would provoke strongly hateful emotions towards Emma.¹³ Of course, readers with active imaginations could well re-envision several key scenes in the novel from Jane's perspective—particularly the Box Hill segment—and feel vicarious pain for Jane and anger on her behalf towards Emma. By including this scene, Campbell's adaptation brings Jane's pain to the forefront.

Campbell's adaptation draws further attention to the destructiveness of Emma's behavior by offering the audience a more intimate look at another character in the novel whom Emma's actions wound, Robert Martin. In the book, Austen cleverly does not allow readers to feel the full force of the consequences of Emma's interference in the relationship between Harriet Smith and Robert Martin. Robert Martin is described physically through bits of Harriet's dialogue and through Emma's biased eyes when she watches him from afar, but he is not described by the narrator, who is a far more reliable source than either Harriet or Emma. Also, he never speaks for himself, but has his dialogue filtered through Knightley, Harriet, and the narrator. We know that he is a good enough letter writer that Emma cannot, in good conscience, allow herself to attribute the authorship of the proposal to his sister, but we are not allowed to read the letter ourselves. We would never be able to forgive Emma for standing in Robert's way if we saw for ourselves the purity of his love and the beautiful way in which he expresses it; consider how much sympathy Austen evokes for Captain Wentworth and Mr. Darcy when she allows readers the opportunity to examine their letters to the heroines of *Persuasion* and *Pride and Prejudice*.

And yet, Campbell's script gives us some inkling of what Robert Martin is like, as she allows us to experience the character with greater immediacy than we are allowed to in the novel. Unlike in the novel, the screenplay dramatizes the scene when Martin asks Mr. Knightley whether he is financially ready to propose to Harriet. Martin is polite, serious, and calls Mr. Knightley "sir" repeatedly, and Mr. Knightley says he is "honored to offer advice," but the brevity of the conversation suggests that their relationship is formal and hardly the equivalent of a friendship. Later on, Robert Martin is seen shopping at Ford's when Frank Churchill bursts in carrying a faint Harriet,

fresh from her unsettling encounter with the gypsies. While Austen's prose pokes fun at the romance-novel "heroism" of Frank Churchill in coming to Harriet's rescue, this version includes a new scene in which Robert Martin vows to protect Harriet from further harm at the hands of vagabonds, and it is a segment clearly meant to be taken seriously as a sign of Martin's continued love for Harriet:

Martin: I will see them removed from the parish...they'll be out within the hour. I shall make certain of that—tell Miss Harriet she need have no fear, ma'am—villainous rascals. (Campbell 64)

By centering its attention on gossip in Highbury, Campbell's screenplay presents a reading of the novel not all that different from Finch's and Bowen's. Although essentially a transposition adaptation that does not alter the text as radically as a commentary adaptation or an analogy adaptation, Campbell's version nevertheless presents an imaginative and intelligent dramatization of Austen's narrative that illuminates the role that Highbury gossips play in the story. For Campbell, the Highbury gossips serve a useful purpose in society, despite how trivial they might, at first, appear. Inasmuch as gossips such as Miss Bates and Mrs. Ford subtly push Emma towards a union with Mr. Knightley, they aid in bringing about her ultimate happiness. Since the gossips draw attention to Jane Fairfax's situation, they alert Mr. Knightley to a woman in distress and see to it that she is looked after in her time of need. And Ford's, as a central meeting place for the Highbury community, alerts Robert Martin when he might be of service to the accosted Harriet, just as the gossips of Ford's give him hope that one day he may win her hand. While the portrayal of gossip is at times tongue-in-cheek, and while Frank Churchill is included as an acknowledgment of the potentially destructive side of gossip, the screenplay takes an intriguing and sympathetic view of tittle-tattle. In fact, for Campbell, rumor and gossip serve as a means through which the less fortunate members of Highbury may gather information, aid one another, and advance their own aims, irrespective of whether those aims align with those of a Miss Emma Woodhouse or a Mr. Knightley.

The NBC Kraft Television Theatre *Emma*

"Emma." November 24, 1954. (NBC, B&W, 60 minutes).

"Emma is simply a figure of fun."

Or so Reginald Farrer maintains in a 1917 *Quarterly Review* piece (24). He writes that the goal of Jane Austen's novel *Emma* is to dramatize:

...the gradual humiliation of self-conceit, through a long self-wrought succession of disasters, serious in effect, but keyed in Comedy throughout. Emma herself, in fact, is never to be taken seriously. And it is only those who have not realized this who will be put off by her absurdities, her snobberies, her misdirected mischievous ingenuities....To conciliate affection for a character, not because of its charms, but in defiance of its defects, it's the loftiest aim of the comic spirit. (24)

Farrer's view of *Emma* seems to underpin the first American-based television adaptation of the novel, an hour-long live production broadcast on November 24, 1954 as an episode of *NBC Kraft Television Theatre*.¹⁴ Certainly actress Felicia Montealegre plays the title character for laughs. In her pigtails and puffy-sleeved dresses out of a Disney cartoon film, Montealegre emphasizes all that is infantile and ridiculous about Emma, making her twitter with delight at the beauty of Miss Taylor's wedding spread and squeal with joyous mockery at the illiteracy of Harriet's yeoman beau. And Emma is not the only character from the novel that is portrayed as silly in this version of the story. Peter Cookson plays a bi-polar Knightley who, at one moment, is laughing and carefree and, in another moment, seems so furious with Emma that Mrs. Weston (here looking like a chubby Mother Goose figure) fears he will become physically violent.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Sarah Marshall plays Harriet just as inconsistently. Sometimes she appears to be a starry-eyed and dreamy-voiced innocent and other times she seems to be a sly and scheming figure. Her beau, William Larkins (an inexplicably renamed Robert Martin) is also a quaint, earthy farmhand who enjoys waxing poetic about the birth of a litter of pigs ("We got the finest litter of pigs you ever saw...from Polly, your pig, Harriet. Oh, bless her old sow's heart!").¹⁶ He is even chummy with Knightley, shaking his employer's hand firmly during

the scene in which he asks Knightley whether or not he should propose to Harriet, proclaiming, "You, Mr. Knightley, to hear me out and counsel me, are the best friend a man ever had."

Assuming that the dialogue is not ad-libbed, the teleplay by Martine Bartlett and Peter Donat (who play Mrs. Elton and Larkins in the production) emphasizes the comic elements of the novel while downplaying the tragic. Their teleplay omits virtually all of the supporting characters, including Miss Bates and Mrs. Bates, Robert Martin, Frank Churchill, Jane Fairfax, Isabella and John Knightley, and the gypsies. In fact, in the fashion of the *Wuthering Heights* movie directed by William Wyler, the Kraft adaptation opts to adapt primarily the first portion of the novel rather than attempting to render the entire novel dramatically in sixty minutes.

In place of many of the more serious elements of the novel that have been eliminated (such as the Jane and Frank subplot), this adaptation presents a series of originally conceived comic interludes that contribute to its broadly farcical tone. These moments include Mr. Woodhouse repeatedly moaning in sorrow at the Weston wedding so that the whole assembly could hear him, Knightley's wincing with pain in front of Serle the butler when he overhears Harriet and Emma's "caterwauling," and—most incredibly—the moment when Harriet rushes into Hartfield, frantic that "Old Jim" the bull has gotten free and that William has had a terrible time catching him, inspiring the following memorable line from Knightley: "If I can't rescue Emma from herself I can rescue William from a bull." When Sue Parill refers to this moment as having "shades of *The Beverly Hillbillies*" in her book *Jane Austen on Film and Television* (113) she is not exaggerating.¹⁷

Because so many of the darker elements of the story have been lost on the way to the small screen, and because this version includes so many original comic moments, the story becomes a silly romp focused primarily on the love triangle between Harriet, Mr. Elton, and William Larkins, and on Emma's attempts to steer Harriet away from Larkins and towards Elton. While few expect film and television adaptations to scrupulously preserve every single character, scene, and bit of thematic minutiae presented by the author in the source material, this particular adaptation goes so far in its pruning of Austen's

novel that it effectively eviscerates the work and would offend the sensibilities of almost any Austen scholar. As Parrill writes:

The Kraft Television Theatre adaptation can hardly be considered among the best cinematic presentations of *Emma*....The adaptation gives little indication of the novel's core of ideas. It exploits only the most superficial elements of the novel. (114)

In her review of the adaptation, Parrill makes accurate objections to the massive cuts made to the story, the silliness of the tone, and the lackluster quality of the production as a whole. Also, Parrill observes that the class conflict that is so central to the source novel is misunderstood and misrepresented by the American production team—a complaint that critics such as Carol M. Dole have leveled at more contemporary American Austen adaptations as well. Parrill writes:

The introduction of William Larkins as a country bumpkin makes for an incongruous kind of low comedy that is typical of American television of that time. A peculiarly American twist to the handling of Larkins' character resides in the emphasis on his cultural and intellectual inferiority, rather than class difference. Larkins, however, reveals no sense of his inferiority or shows any marked deference to either Emma or Mr. Knightley. As for Harriet, there is no reference to her being of low origins. Her inferiority resides in her silliness and her lack of polished manners (Parrill, 114).

While I agree with Parrill's analysis of the adaptation as a whole, I would suggest that certain moments in the production evoke class concerns, but in a less sophisticated and less coherent manner than Austen would. For example, Harriet's social status is unclear, but several large and inconsistent hints as to her background are dropped, leaving viewers confused as to the real state of affairs. Harriet seems to be greatly inferior to Emma in class and social status when she shows awe at Emma's wealth, asks Mrs. Goddard what a footman is, and creeps reluctantly into Hartfield as if she were an intruder expecting to be found out. Yet these clues are undercut by the revelation that—in this version of the story—she and Emma took music lessons together with Mrs. Goddard “around the quadrille” and have been reunited for the first time as young women at the Weston wedding. Several male members of the upper class also observe Harriet at the wedding and express a romantic interest in her by staring, and one even remarks, “Whoever she is she is uncommon pretty,” giving weight to Emma's theory that Harriet's looks could land her a

wealthy husband after all.¹⁸ Also, whether it was by accident or design, this adaptation presents the Eltons as sympathetic figures. Their opposition to Emma, who is clearly more socially and economically powerful than they are, raises some class issues that might provoke meditations from thoughtful viewers but which are not fully explored by the program itself.

The chief reason that the Kraft adaptation of *Emma* is so difficult to discuss as a reading of the novel is that, while the production team as a whole seems intent on making the story a laugh-riot, several key actors in the broadcast appear to treat the proceedings seriously. Roddy McDowall's interpretation of Mr. Elton is entirely in earnest, adding a dramatic weight to his character that no other character in this version (including Emma and Mr. Knightley) has. Also, while the actresses playing Harriet and Mrs. Elton (Sarah Marshall and Martine Bartlett) usually seem to be striving to make their characters amusing, there are subtle shadings to their performances that make their characters still more serious than the two main characters.

While the Judy Campbell adaptation draws attention away from Emma and towards the other residents of Highbury on the screenplay level, the Kraft adaptation refocuses audience attention away from Emma because of a more intangible factor—the nature and quality of the actors' performances. Although the means are different, the end result is the same: this adaptation, like the Judy Campbell adaptation before it, redefines the protagonist of the story. While the Judy Campbell adaptation offers its sympathy to Jane Fairfax and her allies, (Mr. Knightley, Miss Bates, Mr. Perry, and Mrs. Ford,) this Kraft adaptation aligns its sympathies with the social climbers—Harriet, Mr. Elton, and the new Mrs. Elton (formerly Augusta Hawkins).

Since the Kraft adaptation treats the supporting characters with greater attention and seriousness than it treats Emma, it plays as more of a social critique reading of the novel than as a domestic Bildungsroman. Emma makes mistakes in this adaptation, failing to register that Mr. Elton is in love with her and that Harriet is in love with Mr. Knightley, but she is not shown to grow much emotionally or intellectually during the course of this adaptation. If this Emma learns anything from the wise patriarch Mr. Knightley, it is that she should not be too comfortable associating with members of the lower classes who have powerful social ambitions. Such inappropriately intimate asso-

ciations at the very least cause pain to the likes of Elton and Harriet, whose hopes of marrying into stewardship of Hartfield and Donwell Abbey Emma first encourages and then dashes.

As observed earlier, one of the reasons Mr. Elton emerges as sympathetic in this version of *Emma* is that Roddy McDowall is so superb in the part. McDowall is the best of the actors to play Mr. Elton on film to date, and he outshines all of the other cast members in the Kraft adaptation with his subtly nuanced performance. McDowall presents an Elton whose love for Emma seems genuine, and his marriage to Augusta Hawkins is presented as a mistake made while he was on the rebound. This is a striking contrast from the Elton of the novel, who bears a far closer resemblance to the Mr. Collins character from *Pride and Prejudice*, in his uncanny ability to substitute one wife for another with little or no emotional cost to himself so long as the dowry is right.¹⁹

Admittedly, even in the Kraft production Knightley observes that Elton is eager to marry well, and jokes with friends that Elton is a little too eager to please ladies. Also, Elton's snobbish reaction to Miss Smith, the "everyone has their level" speech, is preserved here when it is sometimes cut from other, more serious adaptations. Still, there is a marked difference between the pleasant attentions he offers Harriet (glancing at her as he begins reading aloud Byron's "She Walks in Beauty Like the Night," theatrically proclaiming to those gathered at the Weston wedding that she will make a beautiful bride when she catches Miss Taylor's bouquet) and the longing looks he gives Emma and the tender whispers he slips into when he speaks to her. During the proposal scene, McDowall's Elton seems sincere in his affections throughout, demonstrating lust for Emma and jubilation at the thought of their imminent union, before his emotions turn to surprise, anger, and dejection. Later on, when Emma explains to Mr. Knightley what has transpired, he scolds her for encouraging Mr. Elton by inviting him to so many meals and parties and asks her, "What did you expect but that he'd fall in love with you?", suggesting that the perceptive Mr. Knightley has decided that the clergyman has a heart to wound after all.

Also interesting in this version is Mrs. Elton, who is comically portrayed by co-scriptwriter Martine Bartlett. This Mrs. Elton appears in only one scene, in which Mr. Elton introduces her to Mr. Wood-

house and Emma at Hartfield, and the only reason she appears to have been spared the culling that other secondary characters fell victim to is that she serves the purpose of reassuring viewers that Mr. Elton has found love after all, despite being led on by Emma (and Mrs. Elton is funny, and all funny elements of the story have been scrupulously preserved in the script). Her dialogue is close enough to the dialogue from the novel; she speaks of having a full calendar, having to downgrade from two barouche-landaus to one, the “formidable” nature of country life, and the necessity of music and watercolors.²⁰

As with Roddy McDowall’s performance, the change in the character comes not from the script but in how the lines are delivered. Here Mrs. Elton seems nervous the entire time she is at Hartfield, and she seems to be talking herself up mainly as a means of fishing for compliments from an audience she partly expects to be hostile. That she keeps asking Mr. Elton to vouch for the truth of each of her statements suggests insecurity, and her nervous laugh hints at greater depths of personality than the shallow-seeming dialogue would attest to. Far from declaring herself an enemy of Emma, she expresses a wish to visit every Tuesday and, when the idea is not greeted with enthusiasm from Emma, she beams, curtsies, and flees from the sitting room, dragging Mr. Elton after her. Again, the scene is presented as broad comedy, but any version of the story that fails to show Mrs. Elton in her darker moments, especially when she bullies Jane Fairfax or encourages her husband to snub Harriet, is a version that leaves viewers feeling sorry for the nervous newcomer.

Interestingly enough, while the Eltons emerge as virtual victims at the hands of Emma, Harriet herself has never seemed so consistently ambitious.²¹ In the novel, Harriet is skeptical of Emma’s plans to marry her to Elton, believing herself to be unworthy of the match even as she fails to prevent herself from developing feelings for Elton. It is only after the dance at the Crown Inn, when Mr. Knightley rescues her from Elton’s rebuff, that she begins to love Mr. Knightley. And it is only after a confused conversation with Emma, with misunderstandings on both sides, that Harriet begins to believe herself capable of capturing Knightley’s fancy and becoming mistress of Donwell Abbey. In this version, which does not feature the Crown Inn segment, Harriet appears to fall in love with Mr. Knightley at first

sight, seduced by his wealth and upper-class polish, and she refuses William Larkins' (read: Robert Martin's) proposal primarily because she is already head-over-heels for Knightley. Hence, when Emma suggests that she should refuse Larkins' proposal, Harriet takes even less manipulating than usual to come around to Emma's way of thinking. In fact, she talks herself into turning down Larkins as much, if not more so, than Emma does.²²

The last time viewers see Harriet in this version is the scene in which she informs Emma that she is in love with Mr. Knightley. Instead of seeing Harriet personally after this point, all news of her fate is filtered through Mr. Knightley who, in the final scene, tells Emma of Harriet's engagement to William Larkins before segueing into his own proposal to Emma. The exchange concerning Harriet happens in this fashion:

Knightley: I must admit that I had a hand in bringing them together.

Emma: [amused and feeling vindicated that even Knightley can play matchmaker.] You mean you made the match yourself?

Knightley: Yes, yes. And it is a good thing, Emma. I believe that Harriet has always loved him and he's never stopped hoping that one day she'd accept him. And he's a good man, Emma.

Based on all that came before this exchange, and considering the fact that Harriet is not the one telling Emma this, I believe that Harriet is actually not in love with Larkins, but chooses to settle for him once she sees that Mr. Knightley was courting her on Larkins' behalf and not on his own. When I think of the Kraft adaptation in purely evaluative terms, I do not object to this departure from the novel on the basis that it is a departure, but I do wish that it was executed more skillfully.

And yet, even this dramatically ineffective presentation of Harriet as a somewhat socially ambitious figure serves my reading of the novel by making me question just how vast a departure it is from Austen's characterization of Harriet after all. Indeed, this Kraft Harriet inspires me to reflect upon Janet Todd's observation that readers

are allowed only a mediated exposure to Harriet and are never afforded the opportunity to get to know the *real* woman behind the hype. Distrusting the romanticized vision of Harriet offered by Emma, Janet Todd constructs a particularly disturbing interpretation of the character that sees her as akin to the monster in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* (283). In her *Frankenstein* analogy, Todd charts Harriet's gradual transformation from someone "humble" and "totally subservient to Emma" into a "smug" and "presumptuous woman who insists on inappropriate equality," first by trying to "please Emma by denigrating Jane," and then by "assuming the matchmaking herself" and choosing Mr. Knightley as her future husband (Todd 287-288). Todd cites as the culminating moment of this monstrous metamorphosis Harriet's boldest moment, in which she rebukes Emma for mistaking Frank Churchill as the object of her affection and physically turns away from Emma for the first time:

Hopeful of Mr. Knightley's affection, Harriet turns on her Pygmalion, and the experience shatters Emma....Like *Frankenstein*, Emma has created a monster she heartily wishes destroyed, but which instead seems about to take from her all she values. Unlike *Frankenstein*, Emma stays somewhat responsible for her creation and she learns from her error...Like the monster, Harriet is the product of isolation and fear, created to fill the needs of her creator alone. She exists against the social order of things as the monster had contravened the natural. Inevitably both monsters assert themselves and the assertion rebounds on their creators. As a result, the monster's self or the creator's selfishness must be destroyed. (Todd 288)

Of course, most readers see Harriet's dreams of becoming Mrs. Knightley as nigh impossible given her mysterious parentage and lineage—ultimately revealed to be far humbler than Emma had anticipated—so Harriet's disturbing ambition to supplant Emma would appear to be doomed from the outset, given the social realities of the time.²³

In effect, the mistake that Emma makes in this social critique adaptation is similar to the mistake that Maaja A. Stewart sees Emma making in the novel. Stewart writes that Emma, in "her interactions with Harriet Smith and Miss Taylor-Mrs. Weston...ignores economic and class differences and attempts to confer her own status on the other women" thereby mimicking "the role of a man by assuming control over the status of women" (153). Also, as Beth F. Tobin has observed, by "assuming the role of match-maker, Emma assumes the

right to tinker with the very delicate social and economic adjustments involved in arranging a marriage in a highly structured world" (480). This adaptation portrays Emma as deluded in thinking that she has the influence to blur class and status distinctions enough to successfully orchestrate a match between Harriet and Mr. Elton. The end result is that Harriet is disappointed in her desire to marry Mr. Knightley and Mr. Elton's heart is broken when he realizes that Emma never intended to have him for herself. In fact, despite the comic tone of the production, (and its insistence that Mr. Knightley is a more suitable mate for Emma than Mr. Elton,) Mr. Elton in particular emerges as sympathetic in the Kraft version, giving a bittersweet quality to an ending that sees him fail to win Emma.

Because the Kraft *Emma* is not readily available for viewing, I have taken great care in describing it, and I have been honest about its glaring dramatic defects. Indeed, I have stated that I agree with Sue Parrill that it is a poorly mounted production. However, I have also treated seriously the implications of its seemingly unorthodox portrayals of Harriet and the Eltons, and have found those portrayals to be both fitting and intriguing. In its handling of these characters, the Kraft *Emma* challenges Emma's dominating perspective from the novel, opening up the possibility that the motivations and actions of certain characters—whom Emma is either biased against or in favor of—may be misrepresented by the heroine. In this manner, the Kraft adaptation can offer a rewarding interpretation of the novel to those who are willing to forgive its dramatic shortcomings.

Vincent Tilsley's Screenplay & the "Lost" Adaptation (1960)

"Emma." Feb. 26–April 6, 1960. (BBC, B&W, 180 minutes);

"Emma" August 26, 1960 (CBS, 60 minutes).

Critic Sarah R. Morrison cited "those invented scenes and bits of dialogue not found in the novels" as the most intriguing elements of an adaptation of *Emma* (1). For her, the ways in which an adaptation departs from a source text is more interesting to discuss than they ways

in which it faithfully retells the story. Certainly all of the adaptations of *Emma* include invented scenes and dialogue that shape their presentation of Austen's story. As the Judy Campbell and Kraft adaptations have already demonstrated, sometimes these new scenes are more dramatically satisfying and more brilliantly conceived than at other times. One of the most remarkable features of the third consecutive *Emma* adaptation, a live BBC miniseries broadcast in 1960, is that the screenplay creates a number of new scenes that cast Highbury's ruling class in a truly unsympathetic light.²⁴ While at times melodramatic in style, and hardly up to the standards of Austen's wonderful prose, the new scenes crafted by screenwriter Vincent Tilsley present inventive and entertaining perspectives on the relationships between the central characters in the novel.

The longer running-time of the Tilsley adaptation (it was a six-part miniseries with a total running time of 180 minutes) helped facilitate a more complete rendering of the events of the novel than either the Campbell or the Kraft adaptations that preceded it was able to. And yet, rather than try to fill the running time of the miniseries exclusively with material from the novel, Tilsley's screenplay includes a number of almost entirely original scenes. Focusing on the darker side of Emma and Mr. Knightley, as well as on the villainy of Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Elton, the new scenes show the privileged characters from the novel neglecting or actively tormenting the members of the Highbury community who depend upon them for support. Those characters who emerge more sympathetically as a result of the "invented scenes" include the often charitably rendered Jane Fairfax, Harriet Smith, Robert Martin, and Miss Bates, but this time even Mr. Weston and Frank Churchill are portrayed sympathetically as victims of a failed patronage system. The Tilsley screenplay naturally suggests that the ruling class is protecting its own sovereignty when it abuses these more dependent figures, but it complicates the issue further by hinting that sexual jealousies and vanities also underpin the main class conflicts.

For example, Tilsley's screenplay expands the segment in which Mrs. Elton makes her first visit to Hartfield to include a new scene in which Harriet has a tense first encounter with the woman to whom she lost Mr. Elton. The conversation between Emma and Mrs. Elton begins much as it does in the novel, with Mrs. Elton's casual com-

ments insulting all aspects of Emma's life, but then it deviates sharply from Austen's prose when Harriet appears unexpectedly at the doorway:

Harriet: I know you didn't expect me, Miss Woodhouse, but I was passing and I wanted to ask you—

(She breaks off, appalled at the sight of the Eltons. She doesn't know what to do with herself. She is too confused even to flee. Emma realizes there is nothing else for it but to introduce her.)

Emma: It's very lucky you came, Harriet. You can make the acquaintance of Mrs. Elton. Mrs. Elton, allow me to introduce my friend, Miss Harriet Smith.

Mrs. Elton: Indeed? I am very pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss—what was the name?

Harriet: Smith.

(Mrs. Elton has obviously heard all about Harriet from the very biased point of view of Elton and is contemptuous of her.)

Mrs. Elton: Smith, yes. No relation to the Smiths of West Hall near Maple Grove?

Harriet: I don't think so. (Desperately to Emma) I really think I'd better go—

Mrs. Elton: Very vulgar people encumbered with low connections, and yet expecting to be on a footing with the established families. Isn't it extraordinary how some people have so little sense of rank?

Harriet: Yes, it is—indeed.

Mrs. Elton: These particular Smiths come from Birmingham, you know, which is not a place of much promise. Have you any connections with Birmingham, Miss Smith?

Harriet: I don't believe so.

Emma: Pray sit down, Harriet.

Mrs. Elton: Very unpleasant people. (4:6-7)

Here Tilsley presents a Mrs. Elton who is already in full possession of the facts of her new husband's previous association with Miss Woodhouse and Miss Smith and is enraged about it. She has already struck out at Emma by belittling Emma and her friends, but her venom is more veiled because she is still assessing Emma's strength as an enemy. Since the socially inferior Harriet constitutes a safer target, Mrs. Elton's veil of amiability can fall away and she can be more overt in her hostility. In the dialogue quoted above, Mrs. Elton appears to be motivated as much by sexual jealousy of Harriet, knowing that Harriet had designs on her husband, as by fears that Harriet will try to marry well, emerging on more equal social footing with herself.

The scene does not appear to contradict anything in the novel itself, and it sets the stage for Mr. Elton's snub of Harriet during the Crown Inn ball scene later on. Most importantly, the scene casts the central concern of the Tilsely adaptation as the abuses of power that authority figures commit in the novel, most especially those abuses committed by women against the women beneath them in the social order. This thematic emphasis on issues of class-based competition and jealousies earmarks the Tilsley adaptation as a social critique rather than as a domestic Bildungsroman. As Paul Delaney writes in "'A Sort of Notch in the Donwell Estate': Intersections of Status and Class in *Emma*," the novel depicts a fierce class struggle in which:

female aggressors inflict harm on female victims, and are implicitly condemned for it by the narrator's judgment. Both Mrs. Elton and the friend with whom she wants Jane Fairfax to find employment, would enjoy humiliating Jane because she is more genteel than they are....Miss Bates is attacked by Emma and Mrs. Elton, Harriet by Mrs. Elton, Jane Fairfax by Mrs. Elton and indirectly by Mrs. Churchill. None of the victims has any power to hit back. Austen motivates the aggressions of Mrs. Elton and Mrs.

Churchill by revealing that their own origins are suspect: they take advantage of the status they have gained through marriage to become self-appointed guardians of the boundaries they themselves have crossed. They have gained power from their association with men, then use it to oppress women....(518–519)

In the Tilsley adaptation, Emma is less overtly hostile to Harriet than Mrs. Elton is, but the moment Harriet declares her love for Mr. Knightley, Emma becomes fiercely jealous of her young friend. Naturally, Emma experiences similar jealous feelings in the novel, but the Tilsley screenplay complicates the situation further by suggesting that Mr. Knightley's desire is not fixed solely on Emma. Although Mr. Knightley claims to be interested in Emma alone, his dialogue in Tilsley's script is often cryptic and his attentions to both Jane Fairfax and Harriet have romantic overtones that suggest that, if Emma does not shape up in his eyes, he may seek his bride elsewhere.

There are essentially five originally conceived scenes that suggest Mr. Knightley's search for an ideal wife has not yet reached its conclusion, three of which deal with his possible love for Jane and two of which concern his budding romantic relationship with Harriet. In the first romantic-tinged scene between Mr. Knightley and Jane Fairfax, he reveals his suspicions to Jane that she is secretly attached and in pain over how the relationship is progressing. He offers to send William Larkins to and from the post office on her behalf to help her keep her romance secret. Jane is flustered and ends the conversation quickly. In a follow-up scene, Jane admits to having a secret relationship and thanks Mr. Knightley for his concern, but refuses his offer of help. In the third scene in this vein, Mr. Knightley has a quiet moment with Jane on the balcony at the Crown Inn ball. She confesses to her inclination to end her unhappy relationship and begins to cry. Mr. Knightley suggests that they go back inside and dance before the Highbury gossips begin to talk of their growing romance. These scenes, which ostensibly show Knightley trying to help Jane keep her secret relationship healthy, have a subtext which suggests that Mr. Knightley hopes to supplant Frank in Jane's affections.²⁵

In a thematically related subplot, Mr. Knightley also appears interested in Harriet. He has at least one tender conversation with her following her trying experience at the Crown Inn ball that might raise suspicions in a viewer that he has designs on her. The possibility that he may well be attracted to her seems even more likely in a scene be-

tween Mr. Knightley and Robert Martin. In this scene, Mr. Knightley discourages Robert from renewing his proposal to Harriet since Emma's influence remains too strong and it would be fruitless to try again so soon. Something in Mr. Knightley's tone suggests to Robert that Knightley is not being completely honest. The yeoman begins to suspect that Knightley wants Harriet for himself and he decides to renew his suit as soon as possible, before Mr. Knightley can steal Harriet away from him.

Since Emma is in love with Mr. Knightley, his interest in both Harriet and Jane ultimately brings Emma's friendship with Harriet to an end and delays (or prevents) any connection from forming between Emma and Jane.²⁶ Once it is revealed that Jane has married Frank, Emma no longer sees Jane as a threat and is able to have kind words with her. On the other hand, Emma's relationship with Harriet comes to a disastrous close when Harriet literally flees from Hartfield into a raging thunderstorm after overhearing the news that Emma and Mr. Knightley will wed. Harriet is later rescued by Robert Martin, who dutifully offers to fetch an umbrella for her, but the breach between herself and Emma appears to be lasting even after she is reunited with her lost love.

While the powerful women in the Tilsley adaptation try to humble the less socially and economically powerful women whom they see as romantic rivals, they also strive to humiliate lower-class men with designs on marrying into a higher class. In these cases, the motivation for the opposition appears to be based more firmly in class bias and in a desire to keep social upstarts from marrying into the family. This theme is not too far removed from Delaney's interpretation of the novel:

Austen shows that, in the status struggle, female power is often misused. The gender system prevailing among the gentry subordinates women to men, and unmarried to married women, at the same social level; but it gives women the power of their status rather than their gender in relations with subaltern groups. Emma can therefore humiliate Robert Martin, and Mrs. Churchill can do the same to Mr. Weston, without fear of reprisal (518–519).

Thanks to its concern with this theme, Tilsley's screenplay treats Mrs. Churchill as a far more formidable, off-screen threat than other adaptations of *Emma* do, emphasizing her evil influence over the lives of Mr. Weston, Frank, and Jane. While other adaptations rarely fail to

mention Mrs. Churchill, they generally do so briefly, and they consistently fail to include a full and comprehensible history of her relationship to Mr. Weston. Since this version takes greater care in fleshing out the characters of Frank Churchill and Mr. Weston than many other adaptations, it makes more manifest the pain that they have felt suffering at the hands of Mrs. Churchill.

Of all of the characters in the novel, it is arguably Mr. Weston who has been the least served by the film and television adaptations of the novel, primarily because not one of them gives enough attention to his background, which Austen herself deemed important enough to include as an opening for the second chapter.²⁷ Austen generally portrays Weston as an agreeable man who speaks of his own ability to weather personal crisis and disappointment with a Zen-like peace-of-mind, particularly when he has just received yet another letter from his son putting off a visit. Still, he is capable of great anger, especially toward Mrs. Churchill, the arch nemesis who opposed his first marriage, took his son from him following his wife's death, and compelled Frank to change his surname from Weston to Churchill. The novel also has an intriguing subplot involving Mr. John Knightley's intense personal dislike for Mr. Weston that is usually omitted from film versions, but is briefly hinted at in the Davies-Lawrence version with Kate Beckinsale. John darkly reflects on Weston's motivations in allowing a hated sister-in-law to raise his son, and takes every opportunity to complain of Weston's social opportunism.

Although the Tilsley screenplay does not include John as a character, it retains Mrs. Churchill's objections to Weston's attempts to marry well. The screenplay further develops Weston's character by emphasizing his own match-making hobby (Weston and the former Miss Taylor have a noteworthy scene to themselves where they observe Emma and Frank walking together in the garden and express their eagerness to hear of an engagement soon). Additionally, there is a particularly effective moment towards the end when a wrathful Mr. Weston vows to Emma that he will punish his son for wronging them all, suggesting that he has a temper to set off after all. By making Weston a more fully developed character, and by emphasizing the pain that Mrs. Churchill has caused him, the screenplay seems more concerned with the rights of wronged men than the two previous adaptations.

To the same end, Tilsley's screenplay takes great strides in giving Frank more life than he usually has on screen, primarily by emphasizing how beholden he is to his aunt's whims—something other adaptations fail to do because the characters spend so little time explaining *who* Mrs. Churchill is and *why* her influence is felt so strongly in the lives of those close to Emma.²⁸ The first sign in the screenplay that still waters run deep and that Frank is not as frivolous as he appears is in the following exchange between him and his father in episode three:

Frank: What would you think of my marrying, Sir? Do you think I am too young?

Weston: Of course not. If you had your future to make, it would be different, but a young man of your expectations—

Frank: If my aunt and uncle disapproved of my choice, I would have very few expectations left, Sir. (3:26)

Frank is more honest and direct here than he tends to be in the novel, but the scene demonstrates effectively how much power authority figures have to ruin the lives of those dependent upon them—even the lives of their own male heirs. This exchange lays the groundwork for Frank's later defense that he had to keep his engagement secret or risk his aunt's wrath. Whereas the novel grants Frank the courtesy of defending his actions throughout the story by presenting his long letter of apology/apologia, the films tend to excise the letter, with filmmakers seeing it as just one more example of an unnecessarily long epilogue that inexplicably drags out the final act of the novel.²⁹ The letter is usually replaced by a brief talk between Frank and Emma that occurs off to the side during a larger party celebrating the three marriage unions at the end of the novel.³⁰ In this case, Frank's quiet moment with Emma includes this apology:

Frank: You must consider exactly what position I was in. I had fallen in love with her at Weymouth—and yet I did not dare to address her openly. Had my poor aunt discovered the truth I should have been forced to renounce either Miss Fairfax or my inheri-

tance. The latter I would have done gladly—By doing so I should have deprived the woman I loved of future wealth and position. What could I do but induce her to stoop to a secret engagement?

Although his motives remain suspect, and although Mr. Weston does have words with his son about the transgression, Frank Churchill emerges as more complicated and more sympathetic in this screenplay than he does in any other filmed adaptation set in Regency England, partly because this speech is better than the ones written for him in the other versions.

This adaptation's emphasis on unjust female authority figures who discriminate against both men and women leave it potentially vulnerable to the criticism that it is slightly masculinist and antifeminist in its concerns. Tilsley's script is especially likely to evoke this reaction from readers who agree with Claudia Johnson's view that "Austen is not embarrassed by power" and portrayed Emma supportively as a "woman who possesses and enjoys power" (*Women, Politics, and the Novel* 125). To the extent that the adaptation could be defended from claims of sexism, it is important to note that Tilsley casts Mr. Knightley as something of a fair-weather friend to his charges. Since Tilsley's Knightley is flawed, then perhaps the screenplay's criticism of female authority figures is softened somewhat, if not completely cleansed of tinges of sexism.

Although Knightley begins as a good friend to Robert Martin, their amicable relationship deteriorates as Martin suspects that Mr. Knightley loves Harriet. Like the Kraft adaptation, Tilsley's screenplay dramatizes the conversation in which Robert Martin seeks Mr. Knightley's advice on how to approach Harriet. This Robert Martin is articulate, polite, and well-aware of the class distinction between himself and Mr. Knightley, and he broaches the subject with dialogue of this flavor: "If you'd be good enough to spare a few moments, Sir, I've a very particular problem I'd like to talk to you about." There are subsequent scenes between Martin and Knightley in which Knightley warns Martin against making further proposals to Harriet so long as Emma's influence remains a constant. Martin is a stalwart figure throughout the miniseries, despite the fears and suspicions which Mr. Knightley develops in the final installments of the story. Since this incarnation of Robert Martin is less clownish than his equivalent char-

acter (William Larkins) in the Kraft adaptation, it reflects badly on Mr. Knightley when Robert loses faith in him.

Time and again in the script, this Mr. Knightley's actions tend to create suspicions in others that his motives are not inspired by "disinterested benevolence." Although some of these suspicions are based on assumptions that cannot be verified, there is one scene in the script in which his behavior is notably rude and hostile. The scene occurs shortly after Frank arrives in town and it is the first encounter between the two men. In this "invented scene" Mr. Knightley, in a rare moment of indecorousness, drops all pretense of amiability towards Frank the moment that Emma and Mr. Weston leave them alone to talk amongst themselves:

Frank: I'm very glad to know you, sir.

Knightley: And I you. I remember you well as a little boy.

(Emma and Weston drift a short way off)

Frank: I must confess, Mr. Knightley, I am so entranced by everything I find at Highbury that I am sorry I ever had to leave.

Knightley: Perhaps you will visit more frequently, now you find it agrees with you.

Frank: As frequently as I can, sir, though it is not always in my power. My aunt puts many difficulties in the way.

Knightley: (Dryly) So I understand.

Frank: Well, what do you think of the situation, Mr. Knightley? I read in the papers that the government is expected to fall within the week. Do you expect it to?

Knightley: I am not interested in politics, Mr. Churchill. They seem to be conducted by men generally too dishonest to lead a life of crime.

Frank: (Amused) I agree with you heartily. A gentleman has better pursuits. I passed Donwell Abbey on the way here and saw a very fine herd of cattle in your meadow. Do you use the new methods of breeding?

Knightley: I have always found the old methods to work very well. Excuse me, sir. I must speak to Mrs. Weston. (2: 23)

Certainly, there is no shortage of reasons for Mr. Knightley to dislike Frank. From Mr. Knightley's perspective, Frank is impulsive, trivial, a liar, a slanderer, a flirt, and a dandy. In short, Frank is a "politician." These objections to Frank's supposed moral relativism constitute less selfish reasons for Mr. Knightley to dislike Frank than jealousy alone. However, the theme of jealousy is so central to Tilsley's script that it grants the greatest weight to envy as the chief reason Mr. Knightley hates Frank, the fop who has courted both of Mr. Knightley's favorites. Of course, as the most important man in Highbury, Mr. Knightley might be in a position to offer some guidance and assistance to Frank, who is younger and less secure in his economic and social status, but the natural consequence of Knightley's fierce jealousy of Frank is that he refuses to assume a mentor role of any kind in relation to the young man.

It would be difficult to argue that either Emma or Mr. Knightley grow in maturity or social awareness during the course of the Tilsley adaptation. Although both characters are capable of great kindness, even here, they are motivated primarily by jealousy and a desire to protect their land and position against any and all threats. The end of the miniseries is happy because they have defeated all of their rivals in love, not because they have grown as people. At the beginning and at the end of the miniseries, they are perfectly willing to embrace and assist members of the lower classes who do not constitute a threat to their sovereignty, such as Miss Bates. However, in Tilsley's screenplay, when it comes to protecting their own interests, they are more similar to Mrs. Churchill and Mrs. Elton than they are dissimilar.

As a reading of the novel, this transposition adaptation dovetails nicely with critical writings by Paul Delaney, presenting a darker view of the protagonists without altering the tone and storyline enough to qualify it as an outright deconstructionist dramatization. In

choosing to spotlight the concerns of the less fortunate members of the Highbury community, the Tilsley adaptation shares a kinship with the Judy Campbell and Kraft versions that preceded it. However, Tilsley's script is more concerned with representing the problems faced by the men of Highbury than Campbell's is, and it treats issues of class with a less broadly comic tone than the Kraft version.

Nineteen-sixty saw one further television production of *Emma*, this time airing on American television as an hour-long broadcast that was part of the CBS drama series *Camera Three* on August 26. Soap star Nancy Wickwire, of *As The World Turns* and *Days of Our Lives* fame, played the title character in an adaptation written by Claire Roskam, produced by John McGiffert, and directed by John Desmond. Outside of these scant few facts about the creative team behind the special, no significant information is available for study since both the screenplay and the original footage are "lost."

The Glenister-Constanduros Version (1972)

"Emma." 1972. (BBC2, color, 5-parts, 257 minutes)

The fifth adaptation of *Emma* is a miniseries that was first broadcast on BBC2 in 1972, written by Denis Constanduros and directed by John Glenister.³¹ At 257-minutes, this miniseries (commonly referred to by critics as the "Glenister-Constanduros version") is the longest adaptation of *Emma* and comes "closest to the novel in its inclusiveness of the scenes and characters described in the novel" (Parrill 123).

Interviewed in Monica Lauritzen's book-length examination of the production, *Jane Austen's Emma on Television* (1981), director Glenister explained that:

I judged my responsibility was to those who had never read the book. My responsibility was to have them so engrossed in the story and its development that they would rush to read the other Jane Austen novels. I'm not concerned with those who'd already found Jane Austen—it may be pleasant to see somebody else's interpretation of a character they knew/.../but the direct responsibility of doing *Classic Serials* at all are to those who don't know them at all, and who might be frightened off them by bad English teaching at school—there's enough of that/.../I was frightened by much English literature because it all seemed so grand, and eloquent and

unreachable. And it seems to me that one of the main purposes of the *Classic Serials* is to say to people: look these are cracking good stories. (Lauritzen 53–54)

That Glenister was true to his word is evidenced by the production itself, which many might argue is scrupulously faithful to Austen's novel. Essentially all of the key scenes in the development of the plot survive the transition from book to screen. Even elements of the novel that are often excised entirely by film adaptations survive the transition to the screen in this version. Certainly this is the only adaptation to include Mrs. Weston's pregnancy and to feature John and Isabella Knightley in anything beyond a cameo appearance (although John is possibly too jovial here). Of course, the "verbal content" of the scenes "is very much abridged; so much so, in fact, that the manuscript has the appearance of a distillate of the original" (Lauritzen 127). In places in the script where original dialogue is written that has no corollary in the novel, Constanduros strove to "preserve as much as possible the 'flavour' of Jane Austen's language. 'What you've got to do,' he said, 'is to give the impression of it sounding like Jane Austen, without it being really, literally Jane Austen's dialogue' (Lauritzen 127).

Since some scenes were cut and others were combined, the natural consequence is that some characters have more scenes in the miniseries than they do in the novel (at least percentage-wise) and others appear in fewer. Largely to emphasize the romantic element of the storyline, Knightley's role is emphasized, while Mrs. Weston's role is reduced (Lauritzen 80). There are also more scenes of Emma and Harriet alone, probably to make their relationship seem more intimate. Perhaps the most unusual departure from the novel is that the miniseries includes more scenes without Emma than the novel does. These scenes, most of which are invented, are not vital to the plot, but they do help develop the characters that they feature (there is an interesting moment when Mrs. Elton appeals to Jane Fairfax as a fellow foe of Emma's and another which takes place after the Crown Inn ball when we see Harriet beaming to herself, obviously smitten with Mr. Knightley) and, as Lauritzen indicates, gives a sense of the Highbury community as a whole while breaking us free of Emma's perspective in the way the narrator (absent in the miniseries) did in the novel. "Through this deviation Constanduros also departs from a general

tendency in mass media entertainment to over-emphasize a few main characters in order to give the audience an opportunity for close identification" (Lauritzen 79–80).

Aside from the thoroughness of the retelling, one of the central reasons a modern person would be most interested in consulting this particular adaptation is its anti-romantic quality, which some might argue is in keeping with Austen's tone. The most obvious example of the anti-romantic sentiment behind the film is the director's choice to cast Hammer-film alumnus John Carson as Mr. Knightley, an actor whom Sue Parrill describes as "paunchy and graying" and one who "exudes solidity and complacency" as he "emphasizes the age difference between Emma and Mr. Knightley" (124). The love he demonstrates for Emma is sweet rather than passionate, and the pricklier side of his persona in the novel is perhaps not as emphasized as it should be, but Carson is, nevertheless, excellent at channeling a version of the Knightley character who "with his sidewhiskers, is genial and avuncular. His criticism of Emma is kind and instructive" (Palmer 3). The casting of Carson as an "anti-romantic" Knightley probably also helped prepare some viewers for the ending of the miniseries, which does not feature a climactic kiss between Emma and Knightley accompanied by a swell in the music score. In fact, Carson's Knightley is the only cinematic incarnation of the character who does not kiss Emma on screen.³²

Ironically, rather than be praised for coming close to achieving "total fidelity" to the source material—the stated goal of the production team (Lauritzen 112)—this adaptation has often been criticized by Austen scholars for being too bland and conservative in its staging and too inept at dramatizing the richness of Emma's emotional and intellectual life.³³ The complaints certainly have some merit, although one might well argue that the "no frills" quality to the miniseries is a strength and not a defect. The staginess of the adaptation arguably causes the viewer to focus on the actors and the dialogue rather than on the historically accurate set design, thereby recreating the novel's emphasis on dialogue over poetic description of setting. As Sue Parrill observes, "if what the viewer wants is a literal translation, unencumbered by superior acting, imaginative staging, or on-location shooting, the 1972 BBC version is the way to go" (Parrill 123) since it

“has its appealing qualities” even if it “suffers from a certain claustrophobia” (Parrill 147).

Far more troubling is the fact that this adaptation leaves most of Emma’s thoughts and feelings a mystery when they should be laid bare. Since Emma’s inner life is so compelling in the novel, her thoughts and feelings are some of the strongest arguments in her favor. Without exposure to her psyche, viewers of the television adaptation may wonder at her motivation and judge her more harshly on the basis of her mannerisms and actions alone.³⁴

As weighty as these objections might be, I would argue that the Glenister-Constanduros version succeeds in advancing an intriguing reading of the source novel, even if its deficiencies prevent it from succeeding in duplicating exactly, and in entirety, its artistic effect. Even though Emma does grow and change as a character during the course of the Glenister-Constanduros version, one might argue that the adaptation doesn’t play as a domestic Bildungsroman reading because of its failure to appropriately emphasize the workings of Emma’s mind. It does, though, succeed admirably as a reading of the novel as a social critique, evoking some of the same issues discussed in academic writings by Tony Tanner, Allison Sulloway, and Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar. The stage-bound, claustrophobic feel to the miniseries that Parrill describes creates an effect which reinforces this version’s view of Highbury as a static and oppressive environment. Emma seems to have little power over her own life here, and the simple sets seem to close in on her in key scenes, especially when she is shown gazing longingly out of the window at the outside world that her sickly father has denied her access to. This, indeed, is an Emma that is “seldom ever two hours from Hartfield” (Austen 252), and who complains to Mr. John Knightley that attending two dinner parties and making plans for a ball that is cancelled hardly constitutes a mass of “visiting-engagements” (Austen 251) or a great call on her time. Doran Godwin is good at playing up Emma’s frustration at her limited social circle, often delivering her dialogue through a fake smile and clenched teeth. She exudes nervousness and restlessness, and pushes the character as far as it can be reasonably pushed in a transposition adaptation to resemble the imprisoned heroine of “The Yellow Wallpaper.” According to Lauritzen, Doran Godwin’s por-

trayal of Emma in this version arises from Glenister's vision of the character:

After reading the novel and various critical studies, [Glenister] had come to the conclusion that "everything that Emma did, her whole behavior pattern, seemed to fit the classic case of the psychoneurotic". He did not see her as a "mischievous, pretty, wicked lady" but as somebody who was "disturbed/.../slightly unstable/.../with certain repressions and frustrations and certain activities which were sublimations of her own fears and desires". This interesting and quite original conception of Emma was to be his key throughout the production, and in looking for an actress he wanted to find "somebody who would appear slightly high-strung", with a "slightly neurotic tension". This is a quality that is found in very few young leading actresses, he said, and he remembered leafing through the directory "till a face lept out at me which seemed to say what I wanted it to say". And when Doran Godwin eventually appeared for a hearing she seemed just right for the part. "She walked through the door and it was Emma," said Glenister. "Slightly neurotic, a beautiful voice, and a natural grace/.../Doran has 70 per cent of Emma built into her" (Lauritzen 117).

Since the miniseries fails to give the audience a truly intimate connection with Emma by revealing her thoughts in voice-over, it only gradually becomes apparent just how unhappy Emma is, and that her fidgety movements and forced smile are manifestations of her depression. However, the miniseries is most successful in explaining Emma's fidgety nature, and in her feelings of being trapped, when it emphasizes the socially awkward moments in her life. These dramatic moments include those in which Emma is repeatedly interrupted in her conversation by Miss Bates (Constance Chapman); when Mrs. Elton (Fiona Walker) obviously takes precedence over her during the Crown Inn ball, and when Emma is compelled to defuse potential arguments between her father and John Knightley, thereby soothing their nerves and fraying her own.

Emma's social discomfort is reflected in the figure of Jane Fairfax, who is the very picture of tension and repression throughout the miniseries. "Stiff in movements and halting in speech. She appears to be speaking through clenched teeth. These qualities make her convincing since they suggest that she is holding something back" (Parrill 127). During her introductory scene in the miniseries, Jane even yells at Miss Bates in front of Emma and Harriet for talking too much about her possible future as a governess, a melodramatic moment that seems a great public sin against Miss Bates. As jarring as

this moment is for those who think of Jane as more reserved and as more indulgent of Miss Bates, it is dramatically effective and draws the viewer's attention to Jane's desperation and secretiveness far more rapidly and effectively than many other adaptations. The similarity between the performances of Godwin as Emma and Ania Marson as Jane also underscores the parallel nature of the characters explored by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*:

Like...antithetical sisters we have discussed, Jane Fairfax and Emma are doubles. Since they are the most accomplished girls in Highbury, exactly the same age, suitable companions, the fact that they are not friends is in itself quite significant. Emma even believes at times that her dislike for Jane is caused by her seeing in Jane "the really accomplished young woman which she wanted to be thought herself" (II, chap. 2). In fact, she has to succumb to Jane's fate, to become her double through the realization that she too has been manipulated as a pawn in Frank Churchill's game. The seriousness of Emma's assertive playfulness is made clear when she talks indiscreetly, unwittingly encourages the advances of Mr. Elton, and when she allows her imagination to indulge in rather lewd suppositions about the possible sexual intrigues of Jane Fairfax and a married man. In other words, Emma's imagination has led her to the sin of being unladylike, and her complete mortification is a prelude to submission as she becomes a friend of Jane Fairfax, at one with her too in her realization of her own powerlessness. (159-160)

Like Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation of the novel, the Glenister-Constanduros miniseries seems to assert that, "Although Emma is the center of Austen's fiction, what she has to learn is her vulnerability as a female" (158-159). The central difference between the Glenister-Constanduros miniseries and the writings of Gilbert and Gubar is that, at the start of the miniseries, Emma already seems acutely aware of her limitations and frustrations, but has not yet learned to see similar pain in other women, especially Jane Fairfax. As the miniseries progresses, Emma begins to see echoes of her situation in Jane's and gradually feels greater empathy for Jane. That empathy is portrayed as liberating, as Godwin's Emma grows less nervous and mannered as the miniseries progresses and as she feels more of a kinship to Jane.

In this version of the story, Emma's fears of Mr. Knightley's being in love with Jane Fairfax are lifted very firmly and quickly by Knightley himself, leaving Emma free to entertain good feelings towards Jane without having to suppress jealous and possessive feelings con-

cerning Knightley. This alteration allows Emma to grow to like Jane some time before the Box Hill segment and the revelation of the secret engagement. In fact, Emma's sympathy for, and liking for, Jane becomes quite apparent in a dramatic moment when Emma comes to Jane's rescue. During a large indoor gathering, Mrs. Elton and others accost Jane about her mysteriously regular walks to the post office. Their questions are relentless and insinuating, even more uncomfortably framed than the questions put to Jane in the novel on the same subject, and Jane is obviously feeling desperate and trapped. It is Emma who interrupts the questioning by artfully changing the subject and leading the assemblage away from Jane. The screenwriter, director, and actors all put such dramatic weight on this moment that it assumes a great importance as the moment in which Emma has chosen to ally herself with Jane as a friend and fellow woman in trouble. Although the two characters do not speak frankly as friends until after the engagement is revealed, their bond of sympathy is formed in this scene.

But perhaps the greatest dramatic success the miniseries has to offer is its unique and suspenseful handling of the novel's extended epilogue, in which a striking parallel is drawn between Mr. Knightley and Frank, and in which the duality between Emma and Jane becomes even more apparent. Most filmed versions of the tale end rapidly after Mr. Knightley's proposal, taking time only for a final scene between Emma and Harriet and a disgusted look from Mrs. Elton before the closing credits roll. This version, however, casts Emma and Knightley as reluctant to break the news of their engagement to Mr. Woodhouse and places them in a position where they are forced to act almost as indifferent to one another as Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax had to. It is particularly striking seeing John Carson's Mr. Knightley skulking about sheepishly when he is in the same room with both Emma and Mr. Woodhouse, showing that even the rich and powerful Mr. Knightley, who prizes honesty above all and who was once so unsympathetic of Frank's fear of Mrs. Churchill's disapproval, is capable of resorting to subterfuge to protect his future happiness. His actions prove the validity of many of Emma's defenses of Frank. In a similar fashion, when Emma adopts a reserved manner and dodges pointed questions put to her by a confused Mr. and Mrs. Elton about why Knightley has been acting so distracted lately, she

begins to look a lot like Jane Fairfax did when she was asked what Frank Churchill was like when they met at Weymouth. (This scene is very funny, by the way. Doran Godwin is particularly good here, as are Timothy Peters and Fiona Walker as the Eltons.)

Many of these scenes are in the novel, although the narrator leaves much of the symbolic doubling between the future Knightleys and the future Churchills uncommented upon. Austen does offer readers a glimpse into Emma's thoughts shortly after Harriet leaves for London and the John Knightleys. In these thoughts, Emma considers the wisdom of withholding the announcement of her engagement until Mrs. Weston has safely given birth to her child and completed her recovery. "There was a communication before her, one which she only could be competent to make—the confession of her engagement to her father; but she would have nothing to do with it at present.—She had resolved to defer the disclosure till Mrs. Weston was safe and well" (Austen 356). Emma was as good as her word and did, indeed, tell her father "as soon as Mrs. Weston was sufficiently recovered" (Austen 367), but the implication in the miniseries is that Emma and Knightley keep the secret for a while, probably more than the fortnight suggested in the novel, until Emma begins to bristle at the dishonesty of their situation. "Poor father," she says in the final installment of the miniseries. "We must tell him. Not to do so puts us exactly on the level with Frank Churchill."

When she does tell her father in the novel "it was at first a considerable shock to him, and he tried earnestly to dissuade her from it....But it would not do. Emma hung about him affectionately, and smiled, and said it must be so....Mr. Woodhouse could not be soon reconciled; but the worst was overcome, the idea was given; time and continual repetition must do the rest" (Austen 367–368). This conversation, related primarily by the narrator but punctuated by dialogue from both parties quoted by the narrator, plays out as even more aggressive in the miniseries. While in the book Mr. Woodhouse is indeed disapproving and distressed, he never forbids the marriage, but in the miniseries Mr. Woodhouse briefly does just that. Emma tries to ease her way into the subject by mentioning to her father that "Harriet is not the only one who is contemplating marriage." Mr. Woodhouse looks distressed and hopes that it is not his friend Miss Bates. His response when he realizes that Emma speaks of herself is, "What?

No. You cannot mean!" She tries to reassure him that John and Isabel will live in Donwell and that she and Knightley will live at Hartfield:

Emma: So you will be getting two daughters instead of one and more of Mr. Knightley's company for good measure. Oh, there father. Can you not see what a happy arrangement it will be for all of us?

Mr. Woodhouse: I do not care for arrangements. I am too old for such things.

Emma: But father—

Mr. Woodhouse: No! [he resumes reading, signifying that the conversation is over, leaving Emma in miserable silence.]

The director manages to sustain the silence between them for a long, suspenseful moment before it dawns on Emma that the chicken thieves might be the key to breaking the stalemate. But in that moment, the whole of Emma and Knightley's future hangs in the balance, and it is a moment that has no real correlation in the novel. In that moment, viewers will recall an earlier scene when Emma is trapped indoors with her father during a thunderstorm, fearful that she has lost her love to Harriet, and listening to her father mutter how tiresome life is when one lives from one bowl of gruel to the next. The old and frail looking Donald Eccles plays Mr. Woodhouse as a very sickly, fearful man whose pains happen to be darkly comic, as opposed to other screen incarnations of the character, all of which seem too robust to be anything other than hypochondriacs. The seriousness of the physical condition depicted by Donald Eccles, and the loneliness and sadness of the prospect of Emma living out the rest of her youth tending to him is all summoned in that one moment, and it is brilliantly effective. Some of the humorous tone of the ending of the novel is recaptured by the humorous toast offered by Mr. Woodhouse in the final scene. It emphasizes that the old man will be a lot for the newlyweds to put up with, but he will not be deliberately adversarial in his dealings with them. Such a dramatization of the end of the novel is interesting in that it emphasizes the limits of the power that

both Emma and Knightley have over their own destinies, but it has the disadvantage (from a feminist perspective) of placing Mr. Woodhouse firmly in charge of his own house, undercutting the brilliant, subversive reading that Claudia Johnson finds in the novel's ending that "in moving to Hartfield, Knightley is sharing her home, and in placing himself within her domain, Knightley gives his blessing to her rule" (Johnson 143).

The central goal of the Glenister-Constanduros adaptation is to make manifest the claustrophobia of Emma's life, the limits of her power, and the scarring psychological effect that it has on her. In this version, Mr. Knightley is wise and gentle, and yet does not fully grasp the extent to which either Emma or Frank suffer at the hands of ill-tempered and mercurial guardians for most of the story. Still, Knightley eventually learns to empathize with them once he has first-hand experience keeping secret his engagement to Emma from the irrational Mr. Woodhouse. In a similar manner, by the end of the miniseries, Emma learns to see that Jane, in many ways, shares her vulnerability, trapped in a small home with a dull-witted aunt. The discovery of kinship with Jane, and the blossoming of her love for Knightley, eventually offer Emma an escape from her neurosis and help her come to terms with her life in Highbury.

The Glenister-Constanduros version is the first *Emma* adaptation to seriously address the evils of Emma's circumscribed life instead of subordinating them in importance to the sufferings felt by the supporting characters. The Kraft adaptation's comic treatment of Emma made her secret pains seem trivial compared to the pain that she caused Mr. Elton. The Campbell and Tilsley adaptations possibly placed too much emphasis on Jane's storyline, and Emma's stature diminished as a natural consequence...to the point that she was *almost* supplanted as the heroine of the story. Here, in the Glenister-Constanduros miniseries, we have an Emma who has assumed center stage, and has not retained her position as protagonist at the expense of Jane, whose storyline remains largely intact. The central problem with this incarnation of Emma is that, aside from one or two sentences included in voice-over, her thoughts are kept from the viewer, so she is not as accessible as the heroine from the novel. (But this is also true of the stagey adaptations that preceded it.)

The adaptations covered in this chapter were all variations of the transposition adaptation, and most of them emphasized the importance of social critique over the story of Emma's personal development, especially since moments in which Emma's thoughts were revealed to the audience in voiceover were few and far between. Also, with the exception of the Kraft adaptation, each early television adaptation granted great significance to the Jane Fairfax storyline, often to the point that it threatened to eclipse both Emma's and Harriet's.

As we will see in the following chapter, the 1990s adaptations reverse virtually all of these trends, offering audience members a more intimate presentation of Emma, meatier roles for Harriet, and (in two of the versions) a far smaller presence to Jane Fairfax. Also, instead of being exclusively social critique transposition adaptations, one film is a domestic Bildungsroman transposition adaptation, another is a commentary adaptation, and the third is an analogy adaptation.