Chapter Four

Emma and Aisha: The Reincarnation

Film adaptation of Jane Austen’s novels is a genre in its own right. It started with stage, film and television versions of the novels and then spread to newspaper columns and comic books. Austen’s appropriations are not limited to England and United States but her plots and topics of family, class, marriage and money translate effectively to Indian culture too. Aisha (2010) directed by Rajshree Ohja is Hindi reworking of Jane Austen’s Emma. The story of Emma is shifted from ‘Highbury’ to ‘Delhi’, where the protagonists are posh Defence Colony residents, who speak English, play polo and shop and dine at DLF Emporio, the new luxury mall. The Mrs. Weston’s character is no longer a former governess but a member of the exclusive Delhi Gymkhana, the private club where she met her husband (Aisha made them sit at the same bridge table, hence her claim to matchmaking). Aisha drives a foreign automobile and goes clubbing with her friends. The characters take an expensive white water rafting holiday in Rishikesh, at the foot of the Himalayas, several steps up from an outing to Box Hill or Mr. Knightley’s strawberry beds. In such a glamorous world, the main character needs a strong material presence. While Austen’s Emma is a big fish in a provincial pond, a young woman able to shine on a small stage with minimal competition. Aisha is, in contrast, one of many in a glittering world of high life. In order to rise above those around her, she needs even finer shoes and clothes even greater conspicuous consumption. She needs to control people but she also needs to put on a display, lest she disappear into the crowd.

Aisha follows the plot of Austen’s novel. She tries to match up her friends, particularly small town girl Shefali, who on Aisha’s advice falls in and out of love with a series of men.
Aisha attends sparkling parties, receives an unwanted marriage proposal, and learns of a secret engagement between two of her friends. Old friend Arjun frequently tries to talk sense into her and eventually realizes that he is love with her. But there is a slight difference between Austen’s Emma and Aisha. Though Austen’s Emma is handsome, clever and rich but she is not materialistic. She is not obsessed about clothes, houses, furniture and forms of transport. But Aisha represents the modern world in which conspicuous consumption is no longer the mark of the shallow, self-centered character. Aisha mimics the rural Emma of Regency period with modernity, globalism and capitalism.

The other major film is *Emma* (1996) directed by Douglas McGrath starring Gwyneth Paltrow as Emma Woodhouse and Jeremy Northam as Mr. Knightley. In this film McGrath has imitated Emma very nicely. With the storyline of Austen, he has presented Emma Woodhouse as a twenty one years old woman who believes that “there is nothing more than match well made” (McGrath 1996). After marrying her governess to a widower, she takes on the next project of marrying her plain, uncultured friend Harriet Smith with the local vicar Mr. Elton but Emma’s close friend Mr. Knightley describes her activities as “vanity working on a weak mind that produces every kind of mischief” (McGrath 1996). This film is a “heritage production that lovingly displays period clothing, rich furnishings and elegant accessories from Regency England. In the words of Linda Troost, “Douglas McGrath’s light hearted Emma (1996) is bedecked with period costume, picturesque British locations, and all manner of British supporting players” (67). As both the films undertaken for study in this chapter contrasts with the text in every way, Hutcheon’s argument supports the claim, “as a process of creation, the act of adaptation always involves both (re) interpretation and then (re) creation; this has been called both appropriation and salvaging, depending on your perspective” (8).
Film adaptation is concerned with the fidelity to the source text in terms of theme, character, plot, subject matter etc. Adaptation should not give way to plagiarism. When one mode of expression gets changed to another mode of expression that transfer from one medium to the other will definitely undergo a change in the process, but what should be kept in mind is that one should not lose track of the original source. This is what McFarlane talks about in his book *Novel to Film: An introduction to The Theory of Adaptation*.

A film involves selecting an actor and an actress, mise-en-sene, a camera position, a camera angle, a camera movement, a location, a type of montage shots, music, etc. and all the effects may not necessarily be identical to those of the sentence, and vice-versa. Even dialogues in the film are affected by an actor’s performance. Also the filmmaker can introduce new dialogues apart from the text in order to project his percept more effectively. The application of adaptation theory can be well seen in the two movies along with the cultural difference between the both the movies. *Emma* directed by Douglas McGrath, displays the culture of west and on the other hand *Aisha* displays the modern Indian culture. But the theme of both the movies is same as Linda Hutcheon states that, “Themes are perhaps the easiest story elements to see as adaptable across the media and even genres or framing contexts” (10). The cultural difference between both the movies is discussed below.

The opening of McGrath’s *Emma* is little different from the opening in the novel. In the words of Sue Parrill:

> The opening of the Miramax film, although not so sensational, nevertheless intrigues and invites the viewer. It opens with a close-up of a spinning ball, reminiscent of a globe of the world
in a starry sky, but when it slows down, we perceive it to be a painted ball which Emma has created as a gift to the Westons and which she is holding up for Mrs. Weston to examine. It suggests the little world of Highbury of which Emma is the queen, and also prepares the viewer to focus on this world. The film ends with another look at such a ball, with the names and faces of the characters on it. (134)

In the novel, Austen gives full fledged information about Emma. But in the film, the narrator gives a very little detail of Emma. He says, “In a time when one’s town was one’s world…and the actions at a dance excited greater interested than the movement of armies, there lived a young woman, who knew how this world should be run” (McGrath 1996). Linda Hutcheon argues, “part of both the pleasure and frustration of experiencing an adaptation is the familiarity bred through repetition and memory” (21), so McGrath makes every stylistic choice with the intention of being different from the novel.

In the novel, Austen hasn’t discussed the marriage of Miss Taylor, rather she tells us that she is married. But in the film McGrath made the point to show the marriage of Miss. Taylor because McGrath wants the audience to come across the skill of Emma in match making in the very first scene of the film, though this skill proves to be a disaster as the film moves. This scene is laid in the garden, where there are various people attending the ceremony. Emma is shown in the very first scene of the wedding. Her first and important dialogue of the film is, “the most beautiful thing in the world is a match well made” (McGrath 1996). Emma presents one of her painting to Mrs. Weston. This is an addition made to the film, because in the novel there is no
mention of such a present. This addition is welcomed as adaptation theorists Bluestone lays stress that novel act as a raw material for the filmmaker and it is for the director to mould the story of the novel according to his own terms. Next the scene is shifted to Hartfield, as it was in the novel. Emma and Mr. Woodhouse talks about Miss Taylor’s wedding and they soon receive Mr. Knightley at their residence. Mr. Knightley inquires about Miss Taylor’s wedding and Emma feels proud as she made the match between Miss Taylor and Mr. Weston. He is always finding fault with her. He says, “I am practically a brother to you Emma. It is not a brother’s job to find fault with his sister?” (McGrath 1996). He says nothing of this sort in the novel. In the novel details about Emma’s elder sister and Mr. Knightley’s relation with Emma’s sister is given which is omitted from the film, because filmmaker cannot incorporate each and every detail in his film and it is upon the filmmaker to decide what should be omitted and what not. Corrigan’s first question supports this omission. For the more lucid analysis, traced below are the analogues characters of the Indian adaptation:

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<tr>
<th>ORIGINAL CHARACTER</th>
<th>ANALOGOUS CHARACTER</th>
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<td>(Emma)</td>
<td>(Aisha)</td>
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<td>Emma Woodhouse</td>
<td>Aisha</td>
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<td>Mr. Knightley</td>
<td>Arjun</td>
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<td>Mrs. Weston</td>
<td>Chitra Masi</td>
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<td>Mr. Weston</td>
<td>Colonel Singh</td>
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<td>Harriet Smith</td>
<td>Shefali</td>
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<td>Mr. Martin</td>
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Mr. Elton                                          Randhir
Mrs. Elton                                          Pinky
Frank Churchill                                      Dhruv
Jane Fairfax                                         Arti
Isabel                                               Aaliya
John Knightley                                       Karan

The opening of Indian *Emma*, *Aisha* is entirely different but the plot moves in the same manner with the changes made according to the modern Indian culture. Aisha is shown driving a yellow car, as in modern India girls drive cars. She is on her way to attend the marriage ceremony of her masi (aunt). In this movie governess has been changed to Masi that is mother’s sister because governess system is not the part of the Indian culture. Aisha is clad in a beautiful Lehanga, as in Indian culture girls wear Lehanga or sari at the weddings. Like Austen’s Emma, Aisha made the match between her Chitra masi and Colonel Singh. Like in the novel, Austen introduces Emma’s elder sister as well. On the similar note, Rajshree Ohja introduces Aaliya the elder sister of Aisha who is already married to Karan and she is pregnant. Aisha’s father is also introduced to us by Aisha’s voiceover. Pinky who is the best friend of Aisha is shown dancing in the wedding; she plays the character of Mrs. Elton of Austen’s *Emma*. In the novel and in the McGrath film Emma plans to take up next project of making a match for Mr. Elton but she does not know with whom she is going to make a match. But Aisha in the wedding itself decides to make a match between Randhir and Shefali. `Randhir is rich boy and Aisha’s friend Shefali is a country girl who has come to Delhi with her aunt to find husband. In the party Randhir by mistake spills wine over
Shefali’s head, Aisha sees both of them together, there she decides to make a match between both of them. The most famous dialogue of Austen’s Emma, “The most beautiful thing in the world is a match well made”, has been changed in Aisha but the meaning of both the dialogues remain same. She says, “Asli satisfaction tab milta hai when you get two people together. Doo perfect logon ko perfectly match karna” (Rajshree 2010). Like in the novel, we are introduced to Mr. Knightley after the wedding of Miss Taylor, in the similar way in Aisha; Arjun who is Mr. Knightley of the novel is introduced after the wedding of Aisha’s aunt. He is Aisha’s friend as well as her neighbour. But unlike Mr. Knightley of Emma, he is the younger brother of Aisha’s brother-in-law. In the novel as well as in McGrath’s film Mr. Knightley is elder brother of Emma’s brother-in-law. In Indian culture it is very rare that elder sibling remains unmarried and the younger one marries as it was in the case with Mr. Knightley of Jane Austen’s Emma. Like Mr. Knightley Arjun warns Aisha not to interfere in someone’s personal life as every person has their own taste.

In McGrath’s film, Emma throws a party at Hartfield, but before this party full fledged detail of Mr. Weston and his son Frank’s background is given in the novel. But McGrath’s incorporated this detail in the party itself because he has only two hours to present the story of Austen’s Emma on the screen, he cannot incorporate each and every details of the novel in the film. In the party, Harriet Smith is also introduced. In the novel, Mrs. Goddard has asked for permission to bring Harriet Smith to party at Hartfield but in the film, Mrs. Goddard has brought Harriet Smith with her to a party at Hartfield and introduces her to Emma. Next the film moves on the similar note as was in the novel. Like in the novel Emma increases her interest in Harriet. She asks Harriet as to whom she knows in Highbury except Mrs. Goddard. Harriet says the
Martins, at Abbey mill Farm. Emma very keenly asks her more about Mr. Martin. When asked by Harriet, that has she never seen Mr. Martin in town, Emma replies:

Emma: Only the Martins are the sort of people with whom I have to do with. A degree or two lower, and I might be useful to their families. But a farmer needs none of my help, and therefore as much above my notice as he is below it.

Gwyneth Paltrow (Emma of the film) has very nicely portrayed the snobbish attitude of Austen’s Emma. McGrath’s perception of Emma was to show her snobbish and at the same time, there should be no disliking of her character. According to Sue Parrill:

Since Emma is a character who is easy to dislike, having an appealing actress like Paltrow play the role is an advantage. She makes Emma a sympathetic figure, even when she is at her most wrong-headed, and she is easy to forgive when she admits that she has been wrong. (123)

Next we find Mr. Elton talking about Harriet with Emma. He asks Emma to draw a portrait of Harriet. He says:

Mr. Elton: An idea has just dropped into my head, surely from heaven itself. What if you were to exercise your artistic talents and draw a portrait of Miss Smith? Oh, I would love to watch you draw her.
But in the novel, it was Emma who suggested that Harriet’s portrait should be made. In other words, she wanted a portrait of Harriet to be painted, and she herself offered to paint the portrait. McGrath made a change in this scene as he wanted to make the audience suspicious of Mr. Elton’s interest in Emma as Austen disclosed it in the middle of the film. As mentioned in the novel, Mr. Elton takes up the job of getting portrait framed from London and in the film he does the same thing. Next day in the Highbury town, Harriet informs Emma about the proposal made to her by Mr. Martin. Emma advises her to say no to Mr. Martin as Mr. Elton is interested in her and that’s why he had gone to London to get her portrait framed.

The story of Aisha moves in the same manner like Austen’s Emma with the changes in it. The setting of the movie is in modern India. In place of portrait which Emma draws of Harriet, there is exhibition of the paintings made by Aisha. Aisha, Shefali and Pinky go together for exhibition. In modern India it is a trend to exhibit paintings made by the people. The party which Emma throws at Hartfield is changed into the ‘polo match’. It is a status symbol to play polo in India, but playing pool is usually the hobby of elite class of India. Aisha changes the entire look of Shefali, as she is shown wearing ‘salwaar kameez’ but for the polo match she has to wear a western outfit. Aisha takes Shefali for shopping and after this Shefali is shown in the western outfits in the entire movie. In the novel as well as in the Hollywood film, Emma makes no changes in the outfits of Harriet. But this is done in the Indian adaptation, as during Regency era to wear fashionable clothes was not necessary but in the modern society of the twenty-first century it is the integral part. Aisha altogether changes the outlook of Shefali but Emma does not make any changes in the appearance of Harriet. Aisha made the changes in the appearance of Shefali because she is living in the modern India, where girls wear western outfits. Aisha takes Shefali to a luxury mall for shopping. She makes all the changes in Shefali and grooms her so
well that Shefali too looks like Aisha, modern and fashionable. The visit to the mall states that though India is a developing country, but in terms of luxuries it can compete with the first world countries. All the expensive international brands are available in India. As Pamela C. Gibson states that:

… the Hindi film *Aisha* (2010, dir. Rajshree Ojha) shows a worrying development: the shopping montage is used here to sell western luxury brands, and we see sixteen Dior dresses. This film, like *Clueless*, is loosely based on Jane Austen’s novel *Emma*. The heroine who remodels her new best friend of inferior social status here wears western designer clothes; the humbler character is originally dressed in humbler garb. (207)

Moreover Arjun was also shocked to see the drastic change in Shefali. When asked by Aisha, how is Shefali looking? He says, why don’t you change Shefali’s name as well because you have changed Shefali’s personality altogether. Aisha asks him “Are you making fun of me? Arjun replies that you are making fun of Shefali because “once upon a time there was a Shefali but now there is a Xerox copy of you” (Rajshree 2010). Arjun insists that she should take up some job, instead of this match making. But in the novel there is no mention of ‘job’ by Mr. Knightley, because during the time when this novel was written it was very rare that girls took up jobs and the job which was usually taken up by girls was governess. According to Kathryn Stout:

Because most family fortunes went to male heirs, unmarried women in the upper class had a few options. They could not work at trade, although position such as governess were
acceptable. Those with sufficient dowry could marry well that is, marry someone with money, otherwise, their only hope was that a male relative would feel duty bound to provide for them. (71)

In the polo match, when Arti (Mrs. Elton of Emma) is introduced to Aisha by Arjun, Aisha asks her whether she left New York because recession is going on there and many people left New York for this reason. Arjun comes forward to rescue Arti by saying that some people come back because they miss their family and friends. The director Rajshree Ohja, very nicely incorporated the big economical problem of the twenty-first century. During Regency period there was no such recession. This is the problem of new times, which is very well shown in this scene. In this film there are other issues also portrayed along with match making, such as recession and unemployment.

The heated argument which takes place between Aisha and Arjun regarding Shefali in Arjun’s office is that argument which takes place between Emma and Mr. Knightley at Donwell Abbey, the residence of Mr. Knightley. The conversation between both of them takes place on the serious note in the novel but in McGrath’s film, this seriousness is however undermined by comedy. The serious note of conversation is changed to comedy because McGrath did not want audience to get bored and in order to keep their interest intact, McGrath inserted comical elements in this very scene. Emma and Mr. Knightley are engaged in a bit of archery while arguing over Harriet, the argument between both of them was not regarding the personality of Harriet as was the case in Aisha but it was regarding the refusal of proposal which was made by Mr. Martin and Harriet declining it under the influence of Emma. Mr. Knightley blames Emma for all this. While Emma is feeling very much in the right of her decision and her arrows too
plant themselves firmly on the target. She tries to defend herself against Mr. Knightley’s statements her aim becomes increasingly worse and the arrows end up further and further from the target. The potential sting is, however, blunted by Mr. Knightley saying with an amused smile: “Try not to kill my dogs” (McGrath 1996). His dogs are lying close to the target. According to Sue Parrill:

Emma starts out by shooting better than Mr. Knightley, but after he berates her, she ends up missing the target entirely. Both the driving a one-horse vehicle and shooting arrows at a target would have been acceptable activities for a young woman in Jane Austen’s time, but it is unlikely that the old fussbudget Mr. Woodhouse would ever have condoned her driving a gig. (142)

Like in the novel, Mr. Knightley of the film finds Harriet a ‘simpleton’ because she refused Mr. Martin’s proposal. Emma finds Mr. Martin ‘inferior’ to Harriet because he is a farmer. She says:

Emma: What! A farmer? Even with all his merit and match for my dear friend, it would be a degradation for her to marry a person whom I could not even admit as my own acquaintance.

Mr. Knightley: He is superior in sense and situation. What are Harriet Smith’s claims of birth or education which makes her higher than Robert Martin? She is the natural daughter of nobody-knows-who. The advantage of the match was entirely on her side.
Mr. Knightley finds Harriet inferior to Mr. Martin because there are no claims about her education and birth. In the novel this conversation takes place between both of them at Hartfield, not at the residence of Mr. Knightley. Similar to the novel, Mr. Knightley warns Emma of Mr. Elton. As Emma wants a courtship between Harriet and Mr. Elton and Mr. Elton will not marry a girl who is inferior to his status. In the novel, we find in the middle of the story that Mr. Elton is not the perfect model for a gentleman, but in this movie we see it more at the start.

Next we find, Harriet collecting riddles and charades. This scene is portrayed in the same manner as it is given in the novel. In this scene McGrath made no changes. In the novel, after this scene, information is received that Isabella, (Emma’s elder sister) her husband and their five children would be visiting Hartfield very soon to spend their winter vacation. But in the film there is no mention of such an arrival. McGrath has made the use of exterior locations. McGrath has shown how Emma tries to make Harriet and Mr. Elton come closer. After coming back from Mrs. Clark’s home on the road to Highbury, Emma and Harriet are joined by Mr. Elton. In order to make both of them come closer she herself opens up her lace and tells both of them to move on and she will join them a little later. But in Aisha, this scene is portrayed in a very different manner. Aisha takes both of them for a dinner to some unknown place. Actually there was no restaurant where she was taking them. It was a hotel, where she had booked a room on the name of Randhir. She leaves both of them alone and goes back. To avoid staying in the hotel both Randhir and Shefali keep walking in the dark night and were shocked at this stupid behaviour of Aisha. This scene reflects the thinking of modern Emma (Aisha), who plans to leave Randhir and Shefali in one room for whole night, which Emma of Regency era cannot even think of, it can be notice that how thinking of individuals changes with the span of so many years. The society of Regency era doesnot allow this kind of activity, though Indian society too is against this kinds of
activities but Aisha represents modern and rich girl who stays in Delhi and these things are very common in such metro cities. The lifestyle of metro cities is quite different from that of other cities in India. But still it can be noticed that Randhir had some Indian values with him, that’s why he preferred to walk whole night instead of staying with Shefali in the hotel room.

After leaving both Randhir and Shefali alone in that place, Aisha reaches her aunts residence. There she meets Dhruv (Frank Churchill of *Emma*) who is the son of Colonel Singh. Like Emma she gets attracted to him. Next morning, Aisha takes Shefali to animal health centre. In the animal health centre, Shefali meets Sourabh (Mr. Martin of *Emma*). Both of them knew each other earlier and they were talking on friendly terms. When asked by Aisha she informs her that he is the son of her uncle’s friend and works in the BPO sector. Like eighteenth century Emma, Aisha shows her snobbish behaviour as she finds Sourabh quite beneath her. Here the farmer of Austen’s *Emma* has been changed into a man working in the BPO sector.

McGrath now takes the audience to the Christmas party at Randalls the home of Mr. Weston. Before the party Jane Austen makes readers acquainted with the arrival of Mr. John Knightley, Isabella and their five children. The film takes us, straight to the Christmas party. The events of the party are shown in the same manner as described in the novel. The most important part of this party is the proposal made by Mr. Elton to Emma on his way back to Hartfield. As both of them are alone in the carriage, Mr. Elton shocks Emma by making a marriage proposal to her and Emma gives a shock to him as well by telling him that he should make this proposal to Harriet. Mr. Elton tells Emma that he could never think of lowering himself by marrying a girl like Harriet, because Harriet did not belong to the same social level as he. According to Kathryn Stout:
Set in an early 19th century English village, this story comments on the upper class attitudes toward marriage. Rather than standards based on character, marriages were regarded as acceptable on the basis of wealth and social standing. One could marry slightly below one’s own social position if the intended partner would bring wealth to the marriage. (71)

Harriet lacked wealth as well as social status that’s why a person like Mr. Elton could not endure to think of Harriet as his future wife but in the modern India, social class is not so important. The important thing is the amount of wealth you have. Randhir rejected Shefali because she is not rich as well as not modern and fashionable as Aisha. In the city like Delhi rich girls like Aisha are very modern and fashionable and are the attractions for rich boys like Randhir. The Christmas party of Austen’s *Emma* has been changed into a trip to Rishikesh. During river rafting in Rishikesh, Shefali falls into the water. Aisha asks Randhir to jump into the water but Randhir doesn’t jump; instead Arjun jumps into water and saves Shefali. This attitude of Randhir is not liked by Aisha and Shefali. At night in Rishikesh Randhir like Mr. Elton proposes to Aisha and even tries to embrace her. Aisha gets the shock of her life and tells him that he should make this proposal to Shefali and he says that he used to entertain Shefali just because she was Aisha’s friend. There at Rishikesh, there occurs a big fight between Arjun and Aisha because Aisha persuaded Shefali to say no to Sourabh and in the eyes of Arjun she is ruining Shefali’s life. This scene serves as an equivalent to the scene which is shot at Donwell in McGrath’s film.

After the proposal of Mr. Elton to Emma in the novel, Austen gives details of the end of the visit of Mr. and Mrs. John Knightley and their children. But in the film this has been omitted.
This omission highlights Corrigan’s first question as director will decide which scene he wants to omit and which scene he wants to keep. But the scenes omitted in the film are not so important scenes as their absence does not make any difference to the plot of the film. McGrath follow the Austen’s plot further, where Emma reveals truth to Harriet about the behaviour of Mr. Elton. Like in the novel, McGrath’s Harriet too does not blame Emma for all this as she always considered Mr. Elton as her superior. She says:

Harriet: …I always felt that I did not deserve Mr. Elton’s affections. So I cannot blame him for believing the same. I could never dream it possible.

But her heart was broken and she was very sad to hear this. Similar was the plight of Indian Harriet that is Shefali. Her heart too breaks when she learns that Randhir has proposed to Aisha, instead of her. McGrath in his film created a scene, which is missing in the novel. To distract Harriet’s disappointment of Mr. Elton’s behaviour, Emma takes Harriet along with her to a puppy farm. According to Sue Parrill:

Some elements are unique to the Miramax film include Emma’s puppies. On two occasions Emma invites Harriet to the stable to visit the puppies, both times apparently to distract her from disappointment over Mr. Elton’s preference for others. Apparently the scene’s only purpose is to add some humor and variety of scene. One time Harriet cries because a puppy’s eyes reminds her of Mr. Elton’s eyes. (141)
Next day in Bates House, Emma and Harriet are informed about Jane Fairfax’s visit to Highbury. In this scene changes can be noticed which McGrath introduced in the film. In the novel, Miss Bates informs Emma and Harriet about the visit of Jane Fairfax to Highbury and also informs her about the past history of Jane. As Jane lives under the guardianship of Colonel Campbell and Mrs. Campbell and they are going to Ireland to meet their daughter and son-in-law. Jane instead of accompanying the Campbell’s to Ireland would be paying a visit to Highbury. But in the movie, Jane herself narrates her past history to Emma. Later in the movie Emma receives information from Mr. Knightley that Mr. Elton is engaged. But no account is given with whom; rather Mrs. Elton is introduced to us later. In the novel Mr. Knightley gives full fledged details of Mr. Elton’s fiancée that is Augusta Hawkins. In Aisha, too Arjun informs her about the engagement of Randhir and Pinky. The blow which Aisha receives is greater than that of Emma because Randhir got engaged with none other than her best friend. Pinky was Aisha’s best friend and she was attached to her and cannot think of the secret engagement of Pinky with Randhir. When asked by Aisha, about the engagement, Pinky criticizes Aisha by saying, “Little Miss Perfect, Aisha, who roams around her ugly friends to make herself look better. The truth hurts, doesn’t it? Atleast I don’t control others’ lives to assert my rights on them”. But in the novel as well as in the McGrath’s film there is no such criticism because Mrs. Elton is not at all related to Emma in the novel.

The meeting of Mr. Martin, his sister and Harriet at Fords shop has been shown by McGrath similar to the terms of Austen and the way she narrate this scene in the novel. McGrath made no changes to this scene. Harriet tells Emma that while on her way to Hartfield, it started raining and she ducked into Fords. There she met Mr. Martin and his sister Elizabeth Martin. While she was coming out of the shop, Mr. Martin told her to go by Mr. Coles stable because the
near way is flooded. Harriet finds it quite kind of him as he warned her about the flooding. But this scene has been depicted in a very different way in *Aisha*. While Shefali was on her way to meet Aisha, her sandal opened while crossing the road. Sourabh managed to get her sandal by putting his life in danger. Instead of getting impressed with Sourabh, Aisha tells Shefali that “it does not mean that you can go with Sourabh just because Randhir said no to you” (Rajshree 2010). Instead of the cultural difference it can be noticed the difference between the times. During the Regency era there was no traffic on the roads and there was no problem while crossing the road. But a modern time is the time when roads are full of traffic. McGrath has tried to show things as realistically as possible in his film by showing things according to the Regency era but Rajshree in his film is trying to show how the story would have been during the present times with the touch of Indian culture in it.

In the novel after the meeting of Harriet with Mr. Martin at Fords, Austen in her novel gives the details of the return of Mr. Elton to Highbury, the family background of Mr. Elton’s fiancée is given and of course the sadness of Harriet is discussed when she comes to know about Mr. Martin’s engagement. All these details are omitted from the film; rather McGrath shows the viewers the meeting of Emma and Frank Churchill which is too different from the novel. In the novel Emma meets Frank for the first time at Hartfield, as Frank arrived at Randalls (the home of Mrs. And Mr. Weston) and Mr. Weston brought him to Hartfield on the following day to meet Mr. Woodhouse and Emma. But McGrath has introduced Frank Churchill in a most extraordinary way. Emma is out driving an open chase on her own. She drives into a pond which has formed on the road and one wheel gets stuck to the bottom. From out of the bushes Frank rides to her rescue. He teases her before he lends a hand, and they introduce themselves to each other. The entry of Frank is different in this film because the filmmaker was aware of the
importance of the character of Frank, as he creates complications in the story. Therefore, Frank’s entry in the film is shown different from the novel.

Even the party organized by the Coles has been portrayed very nicely by McGrath with little changes made to it. Like in the novel, Jane receives a pianoforte as a gift and everyone tries to make out that who actually has presented her that pianoforte. In the novel, it’s Emma who actually suggests that this must have been presented by Mr. Dixon but in the film “it is Frank who suggested that Mr. Dixon is the one who sent the pianoforte to Jane” (Parrill 127). Then both of them play piano and sing. According to Sue Parrill:

The music if the Miramax Emma was composed and orchestrated by Rachel Portman and features solos by the harp, clarinet, and flute. Unlike John Gleinster, Douglas McGrath made copious use of music to reflect and to set the mood. In this film both Emma and Jane sing and play the pianoforte. (146)

Emma sings “an English translation of an Italian aria” (Parrill 146) where as “Jane Fairfax sings and plays (without gloves) a piece from John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera” (Parrill 146). Though everyone appreciated both of them but Emma knew very well that Jane played much better than her and this caused jealousy in her. But this jealousy increased when Mrs. Weston tells her that she thinks Mr. Knightley and Jane Fairfax are a couple, Emma comes heavily on Mrs. Weston by saying, “Mrs. Weston, do not take to match making, you do it ill!” (McGrath 1996). But this scene has been changed entirely in Aisha. Instead of the party thrown by the Coles, the scene is laid at Aisha’s residence on the eve of Diwali. Austen’s Emma includes mention of Christmas, but there is no real sense of the celebration in the novel. However
celebration of festivities such as Holi, in which the Radha/Krishna myth is recreated or Diwali
known as the festival of lights plays a major role and happens in several Bollywood movies, and
it is interestingly included in Ojha’s Aisha. As Diwali is the most celebrated festival of India, so
Rajshree made a point to show the glimpse of this festival in his film. At Aisha’s residence Arti
is asked to sing a song and she sings so beautifully that everyone appreciates her. Aisha feels so
jealous that on hearing this appreciation and her jealousy increases when Arjun goes to drop Arti
at her residence. The cultural difference between the two movies can be seen in this scene too.

One more important party in Austen’s Emma, is the party which is organized by Mrs. and
Mr. Weston. The party is very important for the plot construction of the story. The importance of
the party lies in the fact that it has been included in the movie. “The importance of the dancing at
the Crown Inn is shown by its inclusion in the novel and in all three film versions” (Parrill 146).
This party helped in the development of Harriet’s character. In the party Mr. Elton insults
Harriet by refusing to dance with her but Mr. Knightley rescued her by asking her to dance with
him. Later on Harriet confessed to Emma that she could not forget the callousness of Mr. Elton
and therefore decides to destroy the bandage, which she once wrapped on Mr. Elton’s finger and
kept it as a token of his memory. She says:

Harriet: I have come to a decision about Mr. Elton. I shall never forget
him or his wife at the ball. To prove my sincerity, I shall now
destroy something which I had thought to cherish always. You
know what this is, of course. Can you have forgotten? Mr. Elton
cut his finger, and you urged me to bind the wound. I cut too
much bandage, and he played with the extra little bit while I
finished it up. He left it by his chair, and I, in my nonsense, made
a treasure of it.

But in the novel, instead of only bandage kept by Harriet as a treasure, she keeps a small piece of
court-plaster and a small bit of an old pencil. Harriet explained that these two articles were
connected with Mr. Elton and that she had been cherishing them like a treasure. But now, she
went on to say, these articles no longer had any sentimental value for her. Similarly, Shefali too
decides to throw away the things like CD and small umbrella which she took from the juice glass
of Randhir. In this scene of Aisha, it is noticed that how things kept as treasure varies in both the
movies. McGrath’s Emma represents the Regency era and during that things like CD’s didn’t
exist at all but a film like Aisha represents modern times, therefore Rajshree made changes in the
things too which were kept as a treasure.

The gypsies’ episode of the novel has been changed little by McGrath in his film where as
Rajshree in his film Aisha does not include this episode. In the novel, Harriet was taking a walk
along the Richmond Road in the companying of her friend Betsy Bickerton, when a gypsy
woman and her children attacked her. It so happened that Frank Churchill was also passing that
way and he rescued Harriet from that gypsy group. Frank brought shocked Harriet to Hartfield
and Emma at once took charge of her and thanked Frank. But in the McGrath’s film the attack of
the gypsies also exhibit significant differences. In the film both Emma and Harriet are walking in
a wooden area when they are attacked by adult male and female gypsies. Harriet falls and Emma
tries to fend off the gypsies. Then Frank appears on horseback and rescues both the ladies. The
character of Harriet’s friend Betsy Bickerton has been omitted from the film. This scene has been
omitted from the Indian adaptation as this scene must not be felt important by Rajshree that’s
why he omitted. Moreover, gypsies cannot be found in India so its absence from the film made no difference to the film.

There is one more particular scene in the novel, which is not included in the McGrath’s film but is the part of Rajshree’s film *Aisha*. In the novel, Mr. Knightley suspects Frank of ‘double-dealing’. On the one hand Frank seems to be pursuing Emma, but on the other hand he seems to have a secret understanding with Jane Fairfax. However, Emma does not believe Mr. Knightley’s analysis of the situation. In *Aisha* this scene has been included but represented in a different way. In one party Aisha dances with Dhruv, in order to make Arjun jealous. Arjun asks Dhruv, “Are you serious about Aisha?” if not don’t play with females. Dhruv says that we both can share her. Arjun gives him a punch and meanwhile Aisha comes to rescue Dhruv and they all leave. This scene suggests that how with the passage of time things change. Austen’s Frank who is the inhabitant of Regency period could not endure to think in such a way because that was time when old traditions and customs were being practiced but during twenty-first century there is no place for old traditions. Dhruv accepts in front of Arjun that he is playing with Aisha but Frank Churchill never accepted this in front of Mr. Knightley.

The staging of Box Hill is different in McGrath’s film. McGrath has compressed the events of strawberry picking in the Box Hill outing. In the novel the strawberry picking occurs at Donwell Abbey, which is followed by the next day by a carriage to Box Hill. In novel at Box Hill, Frank mentions the plans of Mr. Perry, the apothecary, to set up a carriage. But in this film McGrath omits both the reference to Perry’s plans and the game of anagrams. This omission highlights Corrigan’s second question. In *Aisha* the Box Hill outing has been changed to trip at Rishikesh, which has been discussed earlier.
Like Austen’s Emma, McGrath’s Emma too gets the shock of her life when she comes to know from Mrs. Weston that both Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax are engaged. She gets a shock because she was pushing Harriet towards Frank and she does not want that the heart of Harriet once again breaks. But in Aisha this engagement has been shown in a different way. After hearing about the engagement of Randhir and Pinky, Shefali is very sad. In order to change her mood Aisha takes Shefali along with her to Mumbai and the other mission of her was to bring Shefali and Dhruv closer. Aisha too wants to meet her elder sister Aaliya, who is about to deliver a child in few days. In Mumbai, while shopping Aisha tries to bring Dhruv and Shefali closer. Later on Arjun also comes to Mumbai as he is also going to become uncle of the baby and he is accompanied by Arti. At night, they all go to have drinks in the night club. After one drink Shefali feels vomittish, Aisha takes her to toilet, there she tells Aisha that she is in love, but she does not disclose the name with whom she is in love and Aisha misunderstands her as she thinks that Shefali loves Dhruv. When Aisha comes out of the toilet she finds Dhruv and Arti kissing each other. Dhruv tells Aisha that you didn’t show any interest that’s why I shifted my interest to Arti. The cultural difference too can be noted in this scene as well. In Austen’s Emma and in McGrath’s film, Emma comes to know from Mrs. Weston the secret engagement of Frank and Jane Churchill. But in Aisha Dhruv and Arti were not secretly engaged. This reflects the change which has occurred in the contemporary Indian society where relationships form in night club and that too instantly. Moreover, both Dhruv and Arti were kissing each other publically, which didn’t exist during the Regency period.

In the novel, when Emma finds Harriet in love with Mr. Knightley, she finds herself too in love with Mr. Knightley. Emma found herself in a state of utter confusion. She wished that she had never met Harriet, because Harriet had now made a claim to Mr. Knightley which Emma
never allows. McGrath too depicted this scene in his film in the same manner as it is told by Austen. But he made one change in this scene that he showed Emma sitting in the garden and pulling petals, to decide whether Mr. Knightley loves her or not. According to Eckart Voigts-Virchow:

That the many flowers we see in the gardens are not merely beautiful background decoration, but may, to some extent, symbolize the metaphorical flowers of love, becomes particular evident in one scene in the final part of the film. There, Emma sitting in her garden and pulling the petals off a daisy. She has just discovered that she loves Knightley, but does not like the insecurity and painful feelings of love. (71)

One more scene is added to the film which is not in the novel. In this scene McGrath has shown Emma sitting in a church and praying before God that Mr. Knightley remains single. She says:

Emma: Dear Lord, if he cannot share a life with me, is it wrong to ask that he not share it with anyone? That we go on as we go on now, him stopping by at any hour, always the brightest part of our lives, a natural and easy member of the family. I would be content if he just stayed single Lord. That’s it! If he would just stay, that would be enough to make me perfectly satisfied.

McGrath has been criticized for this scene as it depicts Emma as a selfish human being. According to Laura Mooneyham White:
Even when contemporary interpreters of Jane Austen attend to the religious context of her real and fictional worlds, they are apt to make mistakes. For example, the 1996 film of *Emma* directed by Douglas McGrath includes a scene in which Emma prays before the altar of her parish church, asking God to keep Mr. Knightley from marrying Harriet Smith. First, understanding Austen’s premise that none of her heroines could be irreligious as such (as opposed to faculty or selfish) makes plain how unlikely it is that Austen lost as to petition God for thoroughly selfish aims. Second, if the filmmakers had known that “serious reflection” in the novel means praying, they would have known that Austen’s characters do indeed pray at key moments of grief, trauma, or thankfulness. They do so, however, in private, at home. Using the parish church as a kind of private chapel would simply not be done by a young woman in Emma’s position. (39)

But in *Aisha*, Shefali fights with Aisha when Aisha tells her that Arjun cannot love you, which Harriet of Austen’s *Emma* cannot dare to do. In *Aisha*, when Shefali tells Aisha that she does not love Dhruv rather she loves Arjun, Aisha is shocked to hear this and tells her that this can’t be possible, as you both have nothing in common; moreover “you are not Arjun’s type”. Shefali becomes so furious that she blames Aisha for causing trouble in her life and she says that you never considered me your equal rather I’m just your project. There is probably a kernel of truth to this, too. Harriet Smith never dared to question the authority of Emma because she was
aware of her ‘inferiority’ to Emma. But Shefali does not consider herself inferior to Aisha. Though Aisha is rich compared to Shefali but Shefali always considered her as a friend. But Harriet always considered Emma her superior because during the Regency era, you become superior with your class and family background.

The scenes leading up to the end including Mr. Knightley’s proposal to Emma is shown in a different way in both the Hollywood and Bollywood versions of Austen’s *Emma*. In the novel, it has been raining, as the rain ceases, Emma goes out for a walk. After few turns in the shrubberies, Emma sees Mr. Knightley who has come from London. When Emma confirms Mr. Knightley that she was not in love with Frank, then Mr. Knightley proposes to her and she accepts his proposal. But in McGrath’s film when Emma comes out of the church, the proposal itself takes place under the branches of a giant oak tree. This proposal scene is depicted in a very different way in *Aisha*. After Aisha’s sister delivers a baby girl, she comes back to Delhi from Mumbai. After coming back to Delhi she apologizes to her friend Pinky and they both reconcile. Later on, Aisha confesses her love for Arjun in front of her father. He is very happy to hear this and forces her to go and speak to Arjun. As Arjun has gone to attend the engagement ceremony of Dhruv and Arti she rushes there. Aisha by mistake gets into the function of someone else and there on stage she confesses her love for Arjun in front of everyone present there but she cannot make out who all were there as the lights of the hall were switched off. But when light were switched on, everyone started making fun of her and she felt so embarrassed that she rushes to the bathroom and weeps there. She then comes back home and is very upset. At late night, Arjun comes to the residence and he makes a proposal to Aisha and even tells her that Shefali has gone with Sourabh. At the end all the three couples are united and can be seen in traditional Indian dress dancing with each other.
The ending of novel is different from both the films. In the novel Emma writes to Harriet about her engagement with Mr. Knightley and even writes to her sister to invite Harriet to London. While Mr. Knightley informs Emma that Mr. Martin had gone to London and there he proposed to Harriet again and she accepted. The wedding is summarized in the last paragraph and even the parentage of Harriet also becomes known in the end. But McGrath’s film squeezed a great deal with cutting and shows the Weston’s congratulating both Emma and Mr. Knightley, Frank, Jane and Miss Bates rejoicing at the news. On hearing this news Harriet rushes away in tears. Later on, Harriet comes to tell Emma that she is going to marry Mr. Martin. Harriet’s trip to London is omitted and even information regarding the parentage of Harriet is not revealed in McGrath’s film. The final scene shows Emma and Mr. Knightley coming out of the church and their friends line the path on both sides. At the end of the path they both stop and kiss each other. In Aisha also all the three couples are united and they dance with each other. Like Austen’s Emma, this movie too ends with the union of the three couples. But of course there are changes made by the director according to the contemporary Indian way of living. As Austen’s Emma never thought of taking up a job but Aisha plans to take up a job and she is frequently told by Arjun to take up some job. But McGrath in his film tried to show the time of Regency period when this novel was written. Accordingly the proper curtseying and mannerism, ball room dance, puff-sleeved gowns and large bonnet hats that are typical to the English is shown in the film. This film won Oscar for Best Music and was nominated in Oscar for Best Costume Design in 1997. Ariane Hudelet explains why this is:

Jane Austen’s texts had already given way to rituals before the age of film, [...] but cinema has brought the phenomenon to a more significant level, by expanding the range of the audience
concerned, in terms of place, gender, and social class. (156-7)

McGrath’s film definitely reaches out to a new audience, but it also reaches out to a larger audience expanding the reach of Jane Austen and insuring that her legacy grows. *Aisha* is set in elitist Delhi society where people raise toasts at weddings and take up gardening as a hobby.

*Aisha* the Indian adaptation of Austen’s *Emma* has carefully preserved the basic storyline. *Emma* is much about class and rank, which does not translate well to the metropolitan and cosmopolitan world in which we live today. So the makers omitted some major forces, which in the novel work on Emma. Aisha belongs to metropolis of Delhi, hardly a country village and the moneyed higher classes. There is no threat to her social position, which is really the greatest driving force and danger in Emma. Aisha is not, like Emma the dominating presence, nor is she a queen about to be dethroned. She is just someone who manages to be the centre of attention.

Miss Harriet Smith, Shefali in the movie is a middle class girl from village who is even worse in light of the original, does not accept being perceived as socially inferior. Miss Smith in the novel is acutely aware of her inferiority to Emma, which makes Emma’s attention to her so remarkable. Even cars and houses of today only scream ‘money’ and not ‘class and breeding’. The trips to Donwell and Box Hill are represented by a trip to a white water rafting resort, where the company also indulges in some weed smoking. It’s a nice touch to be altered to the fact that Emma and her set would today be knocking about in Dior, Chanel, Ferragamo and Louis Vuitton.

The look of the movie is very modern and contemporary. The main characters are dressed in European style, stylish, elegant but very skimpy. Only Shefali wears some traditional salwaar kameez, off and on. The personal struggle Aisha has to face when she realizes how lost she is, symbolized by her binging on desserts. She then applies for a job which means quitting Delhi,
but is saved from this wretched fate by Arjun who finally states his love for her. They had loved each other for a long time but did not think themselves worthy. She was distracted by her projects and was not really thinking. He had not thought of her because he watched her mainly to find fault and keep away from any harm. So, we can conclude that *Aisha* is the modern day adaptation of *Emma*. The story of *Aisha* needed to be watered down, because we live in more complicated but less trying times. There was less a climate of change and uncertainty, than when *Emma* was written.

Sonam Kapoor, the Indian Emma, tells BBC that contemporary India may be a perfect setting for Austen’s story:

> Victorian society’s rules and regulations, and the class system is still prevalent all over the world. It’s about having the right address, the right cars, wearing the right clothes, getting married to the right guy, having enough money… I think you can relate to it, because these are situations you can never get rid of.

Thus it can be concluded that Sonam Kapoor, as Aisha looks very stylish and wealthy like that Emma is said to be. On the other hand McGrath’s *Emma* takes us to a Regency era, with proper curtseying and mannerism, ballroom dance, puff-sleeved gowns, that are typical to the English whereas *Aisha* is set in elitist Delhi society where people raise toasts at weddings and take gardening as a hobby. Financially secure and without a care in the world, Emma’s character focuses her abilities on matchmaking while she herself declares her wish to remain unwedded. Paltrow as Emma aspires nothing of importance as she goes about her day, socializing and in
that, Aisha is more believable as a character as she is shown to be a budding artist and having keen interest in animal welfare, apart from shopping and partying.

Although the presence of Jane Austen in India first emerged with colonialism, there has been a significant evolution and transformation in the understanding of Austen in the Indian subcontinent. The transposition and appropriation of Austen’s *Emma* into Bollywood aesthetics and conventions shows a post colonial Austen in which the text is transformed. Austen’s themes and interests find echoes in the Indian context. Although Indian adaptation of *Emma* entails a considerable lack of fidelity to Austen, the text acquires a new dimension and layers in India and contributes to the global understanding of Jane Austen.

In the analysis of both these films it is noticed that omissions and additions too are the part of both the films. As discussed in the previous chapter the concepts of Corrigan too can be applied to these films and the alterations in the text are rightly justified. Moreover, according to the assumption that, “a filmic adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium” (Stam 17) therefore alterations made in the films made on novels are welcomed. When shooting a movie, directors face different choices which concern budget, actors, locations, crew and so forth. Even if five or more directors with similar aesthetic inclination and artistic background tried to represent their version of *Emma* or any work of fiction, the resulting movies would be closely comparable, although with many differences which distinguish each film from the other. The phenomenon, defined “automatic difference” Stam contributes to the endless production of adaptations of a same novel.