CHATER FIVE

THE EAST and THE WEST: Adaptation in the Post-Colonial context.

In the previous two chapters it is discussed how a text undergoes some alterations when it is adapted for the screen. Thus the previous two chapters trace a comparison between the two novels and their adaptations focusing upon the omissions and additions that are dictated by the change of medium from text to the screen. This chapter would trace the fact that in the present study the text not only undergoes a transformation according to the change of the medium but also due to the change of the context which in present case is a transition from the west to the east. Homi Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* and Edward Said in his *Orientalism* explore this difference in detail. The other critic to trace the relationship between culture and society is Raymond Williams. In this chapter the views of these three critics are taken cognizance of to further the discussion of the previous two chapters locating it within the framework of culture.

Jane Austen’s novels were published during England’s Regency period, which lasted from 1810 to 1820. During the Regency period, the English middle class gained considerable prestige and social status. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the English economy had expanded profitably due to an increase in manufacturing and commerce. “It is only at the end of the eighteenth century that the modern structure of class, in its social sense, begins to be built up” (Williams, *Culture and Society* xiii). Austen’s novels take place almost exclusively within the privileged circle of England’s landed gentry and aristocracy. Most of England’s population was composed of modest middle-class families, workers, housekeepers, servants, soldiers, etc. The Industrial revolution had enabled a small fraction of middle class businessmen to become wealthy and move into the upper class. Another political development that heavily influenced
English society during Regency period is the French revolution, as the relationship between France and England deteriorated. This has been marginally referred in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen’s references to the war and military are vague, and she allows the military to play a significant role in *Pride and Prejudice*, but she does not offer any political commentary related directly to the war. Raymond Williams frames a Marxist challenge to the common misconception that Jane Austen ignored or effaced the social realities of her day, obliterating everything from Napoleon to the Atlantic slave trade “with the fiction of purely personal relationships” (Williams, *The Country and the City* 113). Williams rejects false dichotomy between the personal worlds of Austen’s courtship novels and the real-life concerns of Regency England, drawing our attention to her preoccupation with the gentry’s struggles to reproduce itself as “an acquisitive high-bourgeois society at the point of its most evident interlocking within an agrarian capitalism that is itself mediated by inherited titles and family names” (*The Country and the City* 115). Williams was not one of the first to notice the critical edge to Austen’s preoccupation with wealth and status.

England was the first country in the world to become industrialized, from 1770 onward, the Industrial Revolution began in English Cotton mills, ironworks and coal mines. By the early nineteenth century it was in the full swing of its first phase, creating the new ‘class’ society. For the first time, different economic groups or classes began to oppose each other’s economic interests on a wide scale, creating class feeling. From Austen to Hardy, this class feeling dominates the English novel. A comparison between a novel of the eighteenth century *Tom Jones* and one of the nineteenth century novel *Emma* illustrates these social distinctions. The society of Tom Jones is still an aristocracy in which property and birth play the central roles. All the main characters are connected with landed interests. In the novels of Jane Austen, many
characters appear from outside the world of landed interests and these people who have made their money in business challenge the traditions and assumptions of landed society. Like Mr. Elton of *Emma* is associated by family with new money and trade. This does not mean that everyone who is rich is a member of the upper class. But without money, people sink fast, as Austen shows to be the case with Miss Bates in *Emma*. In the novels of this era, money is the engine that takes you where you want to go. According to Richard Price, even Sir Walter Raleigh was reported to have said, “… whosoever commands the sea, commands the trade of the world; whosoever commands trade of the world, commands the riches of the world, and consequently the world itself” (56). England remained aristocratic in many ways throughout the nineteenth century until World War I. Only after that period it attained democracy in the sense of the word that we use today. Though there came a social change in the atmosphere of English people but money was the primary thing. In Austen’s view social change appears to originate with exterior economics forces; for example, characters often marry for economic reasons.

The English society of nineteenth century was divided into three classes: upper middle and lower or ruling class, bourgeoisie and working class. The major cleavages in the society are between those who do not have to work for a living and those who have to work for living and between those who possess some property and those who possess no property and support themselves through manual labour.

During the time when Austen wrote her novels, “the modern structure of class, in its social sense, begins to be built up” (Williams, *Culture and Society* xiii). First came the ‘lower classes’ to take lower orders, then the ‘middle classes’ who were the working classes and at last and on the top came the ‘upper classes’. “*Class prejudice, class legislation, class consciousness, class conflict* and *class war* follow in the course of the nineteenth century” (Williams, *Culture and
This society was marked by profound change, some traditional elements and ideas remained and paradoxically were used to alleviate some of the economic and social pressures caused by industrialization. This in turn accelerated the shift to what Thomas Carlyle called the “Cash Nexus”, where human relations were determined by contract and profit and no longer by personal ties or obligation. This can be witnessed in the novels by Jane Austen. This point is going to be discussed further for the analysis of both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* by Jane Austen.

Not surprisingly, the rich led the way in consumption. They indulged themselves in ‘an orgy of spending’, with their large houses, superlative furniture, expensive cutlery and wallpaper. These are the signs of conspicuous consumption and fashion novelty became “an irresistible drug”. The upper classes always had the ability to spend, but it was only during the eighteenth century that others consumed as well. For instance, the middle classes spent more than ever by imitating the rich, and then, the rest of society as they imitated the middle class and had huge impact on demand. It is in this social and economic context discussed above, that Jane Austen wrote her novels. Though she did not write directly, the way other writers such as Charles Dickens wrote in his novels about the lack of moral and spiritual values in the society of that time and also traced the cons of industrialization, but Austen submerged this problem of industrialization, under her love stories. Though the major themes of her novels are marriage, love and courtship but the effects of industrialization can be seen in the relationships of her characters.

*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is a novel based on the rigid class system present in eighteenth and nineteenth century England. According to Jibesh Bhattacharyya:
Pride and Prejudice is primarily preoccupied with the business of match making. And money plays an important part in it. David Daiches has written that Austen is the only English novelist who is, in a sense, a Marxist before Marx. She exposes the economic basis of social behavior with an ironic smile. Money, however, is not different from, but part and parcel of marriage. The theme of Austen’s novel is marriage into an economically superior society. (75)

Due to industrialization, select middle-class families had managed to acquire enough wealth in order to buy land and settle on sprawling estates in the country. These new members of upper class, known as the landed gentry, were eager to align themselves with the traditional landowning aristocracy and, at the same time, distance themselves from those who remained in the middle class and below. *Pride and Prejudice* presents the conflict that arises when members of the middle class, such as the Bennets, mingle socially with members of the upper classes, represented by Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley. As Jibesh Bhattacharyya states that:

In *Pride and Prejudice* Austen creates a little world which reflects this social background of the age. Contemporary materialistic pressures determine and modify the behaviour of the people in her ‘little neighbourhood’. Regulations in particulars of etiquette dictate a constant sense of decorum at balls and in dialogue. (74)

The Bennets are a respectable middle class family. They own a small amount of land, but they must work to cultivate it. They have few servants and limited financial resources. Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley, on the other hand, do not have to work for a living.
Elizabeth, the heroine of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, represents the middle-class of the Regency era. According to Jibesh Bhattacharyya:

Mrs. Bennets’s five unmarried daughters in *Pride and Prejudice* pose a problem akin to that faced by most women in Jane Austen’s time. The relationships of Elizabeth and Darcy, Jane and Bingley, Charlotte and Collins, Lydia and Wickham, are instrumental in developing the theme of money and marriage, with its social and economic implications. (75)

Though at that time the middle class imitated the upper class, during the starting of the novel, Elizabeth is shown as socially irresponsible. This can be noted when her sister Jane becomes ill while visiting the Bingleys, Elizabeth decides to walk to Netherfield instead of taking the carriage, so that she may nurse her sister. Thus we see Austen’s heroine “crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity” (28). Mr. Bingley’s sister demonstrates the upper class desire to keep the lines between classes firmly in place. The reaction and commentary offered by the Bingley’s sisters when Elizabeth arrives on foot and out of breath exemplifies their condescending upper class attitude. She says:

To walk three miles, or four miles, or five miles, or whatever it is, above, quite alone! What could she mean by it? It seems to me to show an abominable sort of conceited independence, a most country town indifference to decorum. (31)

The second half of *Pride and Prejudice* affords Elizabeth time to develop a responsible social position. When she returns from Kent, where she has been with the Collins and where Mr. Darcy
had first proposed, Elizabeth judges her own behaviour and the behaviour of those around her, including her family, with more objectivity and less prejudice. She no longer feels the urge to laugh at her younger sister’s follies. She takes proactive steps, for example, to urge her father not to allow Lydia to accompany the regiment to Brighton because she understands that a disadvantage to the family must arise “from the public notice of Lydia’s unguarded and imprudent manner” (188). Elizabeth now comprehends that it is essential for her family members to protect their “respectability in the world” (189), which can be “affected by the wild volatility, the assurance and disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia’s character” (189).

Mr. Darcy, the hero of the novel is a representative of the hereditary aristocracy. He is a wealthy and proud landowner who does not have to work for a living. He employs workers to farm his land, and families living in the area surrounding his estate depend on his patronage. His proud nature can be seen, when he refuses to dance with Elizabeth as he finds her beneath his social status. Darcy even does not let Mr. Bingley to form relations with Jane as he finds Bennets below their social status and with low family connections. But Darcy’s hesitation, when it comes to admitting his admiration and affection for Elizabeth Bennet exemplifies his initial conviction that he could and should never marry a woman from a lower social class. The narrator tells us that “Darcy never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her. He really believed, that were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger” (44). But soon his attitude towards Bennets and their family connections changed when he found himself in love with Elizabeth. It is Elizabeth’s superior strength of character, her independence, and her sense of dignity that qualified her to win Darcy’s love and become his wife despite her low family connections.

The character of Mr. Collins represents how one is very keen to rise up in the social ladder.
Mr. Collins focuses first and foremost on himself and his desire to rise up in the social ladder by continuing benefits from the patronage of Lady Catherine de Bourge, making an advantageous marriage and ultimately inheriting Longbourne. He spends most of his time at the beck and call of Lady Catherine, though he does not make sure to notify her ladyship when “any of the cottagers were disposed to be quarrelsome” so that she may “scold them into harmony and plenty” (140). Even Mr. Collins’ wife marries him just for her ‘financial security’ and not for ‘love’. Charlotte was born into a middle-class family. She understands that her financial and social future depends on marrying a man who can provide for her. Charlotte reveals her conservative attitude towards marriage to Elizabeth:

Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. If the dispositions of parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar before hand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have their share of vexation; and it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life. (20)

Charlotte agrees to marry Mr. Collins, although she knows that she has little in common with her future husband. Financial security is more important to Charlotte than romantic fulfillment.

When Thomas Carlyle lays stress that human relations were determined by contract and profit, the character of Mr. Wickham comes to mind. Mr. Wickham creates misunderstandings in Elizabeth’s mind regarding Mr. Darcy. For money he tried to elope with Darcy’s sister. He even lured Lydia and eloped with her in order to fetch money from the Bennets, without realizing that any woman who is engaged in any kind of inappropriate behaviour with a man prior to marriage
was considered morally corrupt. Once a woman had lost her virtue in the eyes of the community, she became a social outcast. It is only through the generous intervention of Mr. Darcy that Lydia’s reputation can be rescued once she has officially married and settled down with Mr. Wickham.

Lady Catherine de Bourge of *Pride and Prejudice* too is the representative of upper class who looks down upon those who are socially inferior to her. Lady Catherine is on the other side of financial and social spectrum. She is the epitome of the old order and the social class which prided itself in its wealth, pure ancestry, and flawless connections. Lady Catherine’s indignation as voiced to Elizabeth upon the rumor of her engagement to Mr. Darcy, presents the most striking example of the line of distinction that existed between the upper and lower classes in Regency England. Financial means, social acceptability and propriety were everything. Lady Catherine forcefully states it this way:

> And is such a girl [Lydia] to be my nephew’s sister? Is her husband, who is the son of his late father’s steward, to be his brother? Heaven and earth- of what are you thinking? Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted? (290)

Lady Catherine insulted Elizabeth to the fullest, but Elizabeth is the character who transgresses social boundaries and violates social expectations. Elizabeth does not consider herself to be inferior to members of the upper class simply because she was born into a middle class family.

Indeed, she is a character who, unlike community, values personal worth and individual character over reputation and social status. Her straightforward nature gives the disapproval of
the most influential woman of the upper class in the novel, Lady Catherine. Lady Catherine too like proud upper class woman is not shy to express her dislike of Elizabeth’s character.

Noting the “seemingly uncrossable distances between the aristocracy (Darcy and Lady Catherine), the gentry (the Bennets) and ‘trade’ (the Phillipses and the Gardiners)”, Duckworth asks how, “in this world of distances are people, and classes, to come together?” (117). Elizabeth Bennet is the character who proves that she is adept at conversing with those who are socially superior to her when she stays with the Collineses and they frequently dine with Lady Catherine at Rosings Park. Elizabeth’s accepts the proposal of Darcy after her visit at Pemberley. While her visit in Pemberley we can notice that she is interested only in material objects. On seeing the beautiful Pemberley the narrator says, “at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something” (198). Though her attitude towards Darcy had changed before her visit to Pemberley but she started thinking herself to be mistress of Pemberley before the second proposal of Mr. Darcy. She too becomes materialistic in her thought when she says:

I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been familiarly acquainted! Instead of viewing them as a stranger,

I might rejoiced in them as my own, and welcomed to them as visitors my uncle and aunt. (199)

Thus we can notice that at the end of the novel, Elizabeth too becomes the victim of rising up in the social ladder and to possess materialistic things which she was earlier deprived of. So it can be concluded that Austen too in her novel *Pride and Prejudice* reflects the changes which occurred in the society of Regency era due to industrialization.
On the other hand, if we take into the account the Indian adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, the ideas of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’ fits well in the analysis of *Bride and Prejudice*. By analyzing *Bride and Prejudice* from Edward Said and Homi Bhabha’s theory it will come out that the text undergo a transformation with change of context as well. Said in his book *Orientalism* draws our attention in which west and east forms ‘binary oppositions’, in which west serves superiority which is masculine, rational, progressive and so on. But east or orient serves as feminine, irrational, passive, undisplined and so on. This element of ‘inferiority’ associated with east (orient) can be traced in *Bride and Prejudice*.

Mr. Darcy in *Bride and Prejudice* at every level before he falls in love with Lalita, tries to show the inferiority of East and the superiority of west. On his first look at Amritsar, he says, Jesus! Balraj, where the hell you brought me? (Chadha 2004). His look around the streets of Amritsar showcase that how ‘inferior’ he is thinking of the orient and its people. Though at first look Gurinder Chadha’s film may appear to be simple British-South Asian comedy but it is actually much more complex in its engagement with identity and culture clash. This ‘inferiority’ associated with the ‘orient’ is seen in Mr. Darcy’s mother, as for her going to India is useless as all the specialties of India are now available in the west.

Said also laid stress that west always represents that their ‘culture’ is superior to that of the other culture. When Darcy tells Lalita that he finds arranged marriages quite strange as how can a boy and a girl spend their entire life with each other without knowing each other before. Actually here he wants to prove the superiority of the western culture over the eastern. Though Lalita defends her culture at every point and at every level but she herself cannot escape from the ‘cultural hegemony’. Said borrowed this concept from Antonio Gramsci who thought of hegemony as domination by consent, the way ruling classes succeed in oppressing other classes
with their apparent approval. In the words of Mohanty, “Said locates this Gramscian idea of culture or hegemony, predominantly operative in civil society, where the influence of ideas, institutions, and traditions work not through domination, but by consent” (102). By wearing western dresses Lalita herself is following the western culture. The concept of ‘cultural hegemony’ fits very well to Bakshi girls because it is out of their own choice they are wearing western outfits, no one forced them to wear those dresses. Even Mr. Kohli of the film is caught in the web of ‘cultural hegemony’ because at each and every level of the film he is praising America and showing his own country as inferior to the other. The character of Mrs. Bakshi too fits well for this concept as she is always fighting with her husband regarding their going to America. She thinks that Mr. Bakshi would have earned lots and lots of money if he had migrated to America. She wanted to marry her Jaya with Balraj, so that she can visit Jaya in foreign land anytime she feels like.

The best example of this ‘cultural hegemony’ is Balraj and his sister Kiran. Though Balraj is an Indian but he is settled in London. He and his sister too have given up the cultural values of India and have adopted the western culture. Lalita is herself caught in this web but she still makes a point to stand for her country and its rich culture. But Balraj and his sister are far away from this. When Darcy landed Amritsar for the very first time he started critizing this place, but Balraj did not make any effort to speak in favour of his nation rather he agreed with Darcy. Even when Darcy tells Balraj to leave Jaya as you have nothing in common moreover look up for an Indian girl who is settled in the west, Balraj makes no effort to tell Darcy don’t look down upon India and its people.

Edward Said in his book lays stress that the west always functions as the centre and the east is a marginal other that simply through its existence confirms the west centrality and superiority.
This can be traced in a scene where Lalita ask Darcy in marriage where he is staying in Amritsar.

Darcy: It’s the DN International.

Lalita: That’s the best hotel in town.

Darcy: Their computer system keeps crashing, the electricity goes. I don’t know how business functions here.

By this conversation between Lalita and Darcy it is clear that Darcy is considering India inferior to that of his nation. Even Lalita also unknowingly confirms the superiority of the west, which can be seen further in their conversation.

Lalita: I’m sure Amritsar’s hotels can’t compare, but I bet there’s a slight price difference. How much does it cost to stay in one of your hotels?

Darcy: A good room’s about four, five hundred dollars a night.

Lalita: That’s more than what most people make here in a year.

Lalita here too unknowingly shows India inferior to America. The day Darcy stepped on Indian land, he looked at India as inferior. He never appreciated anything related to India.

Even Mr. Kohli of this film, accepts the western domination by consent but he is more prone towards Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’. Mimicry is the slightly alien and distorted place in which colonized either out of choice or under pressure will repeat the colonizers ways and discourse. In mimicry the colonizer sees himself in a mirror that slightly but effectively distorts his image and subtly unsettles his own identity. Mr. Kohli always tries to mimic the American way of life. He is all the time flaunting about his new house. He is always appreciating American
way of life and tries his level best to mimic it in the best possible way. For him all those who mimic the west are educated and those who live Indian way of life are uneducated. He says, “You know, the Indian community there is very professional, all doctors and computers and…not like these uneducated minicab” (Chadha 2004). His mimicry of the western culture is to such an extent that he performs a small Indian wedding in temple and a big American wedding in LA.

When Bhabha explains his concept of ‘mimicry’ he states that west has always been convinced that its presence overseas greatly affected the natives, that the smartest and most sensitive of them immediately started scrambling to adopt western ways and values but the west has never been comfortable with the idea that its sons and daughters might in turn be affected by the cultures they encounter. However, it is mostly in literature that we find alternative perspective in Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness the colonial experience has the effect of turning the ivory collector Mr. Kurtz into a megalomaniacal barbarian and in E.M. Forster’s A Passage to India; two British women suffer permanently unsettling experiences in India. Even in Bride and Prejudice, some of the characters do so. First character is none other than Darcy’s girl friend Anne. Though she does not say anything regarding Indian culture or follows it but in the wedding of Mr. Kohli and Chandra, she is wearing a sari. Even Darcy does so. While attending the marriage in India, he wears traditional ‘pajama kurta’ in the wedding. Though he is uncomfortable in the dress but he keeps on wearing the Indian dress. He even danced with Lalita and the dance is none other than traditional ‘Garbha Dance’ of India. At the end of the film he is shown playing the traditional drums. Further, he is shown riding off on elephant while wearing traditional Indian outfit. By viewing the film, it can be concluded that it is Darcy not Elizabeth who changes according to the new set of priorities.
The most influential of Bhabha’s contribution to post colonial theory is his idea of hybridity. While Said’s *Orientalism* keeps the sphere’s of colonizer or colonized rather firmly apart. Bhabha with his interest in their interaction sees important movements going both ways. Bhabha argues that the cultural interaction of colonizer or colonized leads to the fusion of cultural forms that from one perspective confirms the power of the colonial presence, but on the other hand as a form of mimicry simultaneously unsettles the narcissistic demands of colonial power. *Bride and Prejudice* is presented in a hybriate form. In this movie the two cultures intersect with each other.

The plot of *Bride and Prejudice* overtly follows that of Austen’s novel, but Gurinder Chadha’s film is not about the meeting of different social classes, it is about the mingling of various cultures. The two main characters run into conflict at their first meeting, as Lalita misunderstands Darcy’s ideas on the ideal woman thinking he wants them ‘subservient’ but correctly understands that he regards India as ‘beneath’ him. Lalita at every level defends ‘the real India’ against ‘imperialists’ like Darcy, who wants to turn her country into a ‘theme park’ for westerns by acquiring a luxury hotel in Goa. Despite a mutually suspicious Indian Elizabeth and American Darcy, the film inevitably leads towards cultural combination once they get past their pride and their prejudice.

In the song “No Life Without Wife”, Lalita reveals herself to be more hybrid than the typical “demure, sari-clad, conventional heroine who is untouched by any ‘anti-national’ western influence”. Lalita may not be shown as explicitly aspiring to career, but she certainly will not tolerate being a stay-at-home wife who does cooking while her husband earns the money. Lalita wants a modern, western marriage. She says, “I just want a man with a real soul/who wants equality and not control” (Chadha 2004).
The application of *Pride and Prejudice’s* romance plot to the stylizing and conventions of Bollywood cinema reveals a natural affinity between Austen’s comedy of errors and the popular Indian film tradition. There are many points of compatibility which are discussed in the previous chapter including the parallel between marrying for money and Indian arranged marriages, emphasis on the family, the use of dances to depict socialization, romantic courtship and choreographed patterns of men and women. This plethora of parallels shows the way onto the contours of Indian culture and Bombay cinema, which is exactly what Chadha does. However, her hybridizing interests extend beyond the mere kinship between the two texts and her cultural relocation has greater repercussions than simply changing out Austen’s balls for Bollywood dances, which she does. The narrative and structural blends of cultures ends up creating a stylistic and commercial middle ground for global audiences, one which allows Chadha to comment on the pride and prejudices which affect the east and the west in today’s post colonial global world.

The next novel by Jane Austen which has been taken up for analysis is *Emma*. *Emma* exhibits the complexities one would expect from an author who is experienced and is now perfecting her craft, “the novel upholds traditional attitudes toward class consciousness in the marriages” (Lambdin 110). Unlike Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*, Emma is “handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition” (1). Emma Woodhouse is on the top of the ladder of social class. She is like the upper class people of Regency era who looks down upon those who are socially inferior to her except Miss Harriet Smith, whom she considers her friend but in reality Harriet is just her project. She tries to control the life of others with her ‘matchmaking’ business. Though Emma is herself ‘class conscious’ but her this attitude changes when she has to analyze the ‘class’ of other characters of the novel.
Mr. Elton is much more above in the social ladder of class with respect to Harriet, then how could she think of making a match between both of them and how could she think of Mr. Martin inferior to Harriet. Nancy Armstrong observes, “Austen’s novel castigates behaviour that has been prompted by social motivation- Emma’s low regard for Martin, Knightley’s for Harriet, Elton’s for Harriet, as well as Emma’s for Miss Bates” (154).

Emma is the most proud heroine of Austen’s all novels. She is proud because she is rich and money plays a vital role during Regency era. “Emma is so very class conscious that it would be difficult to defend her from the accusation of being a snob” (Tanner 194). Even if Britain as a nation became politically powerful and rich during the nineteenth century as a result of massive increase in industrial production, wealth was still concentrated in the hands of a privileged few, for industrialization created greater inequalities of wealth than ever before. This can be traced in the analysis of Mrs. and Miss Bates characters. Both the Mrs. and Miss Bates are single women, a mother and her daughter. Mrs. Bates is a widow and Miss Bates has never been married. McMaster in his *The Country Companion o Jane Austen* notes:

They are of class that was later to be called ‘shabby genteel’, people who have come down in the world. Once prominent as the wife of the vicar, Mrs. Bates lives on slender means, in cramped quarters in an upstairs apartment, with only one servant. (125)

In Austen’s time period, women who had lived with few financial resources likely have a harsh lot in life. To quote one incident, when asked by Harriet that if she (Emma) did not marry, she would grow to be an old maid like Miss Bates. To this Emma replies that:

I shall not be a poor old maid; and it is poverty only which makes
celibacy contemptible to a generous public! A single woman, with a very narrow income, must be a ridiculous, disagreeable old maid!

the proper sport of boys and girls, but a single woman, of good fortune, is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else. (73)

By this speech of Emma, it can be traced down how ‘money’ plays a vital role in order to gain respect in the society, moreover it is your class too which affects your place in the society. Like, when Emma passes on the sarcastic remark on Miss Bates in the trip to Box Hill, Mr. Knightley scolds her, as he believes that proper behaviour is dependent upon social class of both parties concerned. Miss Bates lack of fortune and the lower social status that results from it are a factor in the way Emma ought to treat her. While Miss Bates’ acquiescence to the legitimacy of Emma’s criticism shows that she accepts that Emma, who is of a higher social standing, has the right to criticize her, a woman of lower social standing.

Emma’s snobbery does not end here. Emma does not form a good opinion of Mr. Martin just because of Emma’s social snobbery. She is acutely class-conscious and is not prepared to treat farmers on a footing of equality with persons of her own social status. Actually Mr. Martin seems to be a good match for Harriet because of his excellent character and because he is almost of the same age as Harriet. But Emma looks at the matter from a different point of view altogether. Emma like typical upper class woman gives importance to class instead of good character, that’s why she mistakes Mr. Elton as a good match for Harriet. Mr. Elton of Emma is the vicar of Highbury. He like Mr. Wickham of Pride and Prejudice is a worldly-wise man who would marry for money and not solely for merit. As Raymond Williams in his Culture and Society states:
Religion is now…for the most part, a wise prudential grounded on mere calculation…whereby some smaller quantum of earthly enjoyment may be exchanged for a far larger quantum of celestial enjoyment. Thus Religion too is profit, a working for wages. (80)

Mr. Elton is the vicar, who is being paid for his job and at the same time he is not at all a good hearted person. He wants to marry Emma just because she is rich and will bring him handsome dowry. Armstrong notes that, “Mr. Elton’s preciously penned charade [a riddle which expresses his love to Emma, which she mistakenly believes is meant for Harriet] characterizes him as a man of class pretensions and mercenary concerns” (145). When Emma declined his proposal, he marries Miss Hawkins who too is rich but less than Emma. Mr. Elton looked down upon Harriet, as she is inferior to him and insulted her many times and his wife too joined him in this mission of insulting Harriet. Mrs. Elton too possessed none of the finer qualities of a gentlewoman, though because of her claim to wealth, society status. In direct contrast to the status (and, by implication the behaviour) of a gentlewoman, Mrs. Elton is, as Cornish states, “the vulgarist woman to be found in Jane Austen’s pages (which is saying a good deed)” (156).

Harriet Smith of Emma is just a puppet in hands of Emma. She is the illegitimate daughter of an unknown man and ultimately is found to be daughter of a trader by profession. The social inferiority of Harriet can be seen the way she blindly follows what Emma tells her. She is glad that Emma becomes her patron as she is very well aware of the fact that Emma is far superior to her in class. Harriet’s submissive nature is also responsible for her rejecting Mr. Martin’s proposal of marriage to her. If Harriet had not been under Emma’s influence, she would certainly have accepted Mr. Martin’s proposal in the very beginning. Though Emma considers Harriet as her friend but in reality she is just her project. Like Mrs. Bates and Miss Bates, Harriet is ready
to embrace whatever position society has assigned her in the social class hierarchy. At the end of the novel, when Emma finds herself to be in love with Mr. Knightley, she starts ignoring Harriet and when Harriet comes to know about the engagement of Emma and Mr. Knightley, she didn’t dare to question Emma, as she herself had started liking Mr. Knightley. She could not raise any question to Emma because she was herself aware of her social status. Even when at the end of the novel her parentage came to be known, it too didn’t help her to move upward in the social ladder because people who were in trade and earned new money, too were considered as inferior. Juliet McMaster states that “Trade represents new money, and new money, like wine, isn’t considered quite respectable until it has aged a little” (The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen 123). Elizabeth Bennet of Pride and Prejudice managed to rise above the influence of her mother’s ignorance. Harriet, however, merely accepts what society tells her through its various mouth pieces. Austen does not give Harriet someone who can successfully help her to rise above her circumstances. Austen uses Harriet to explore the subject of class consciousness in her world. Michael Kramp states that:

Emma’s care for Harriet is clearly in part an egotistical adventure,

but the heroine’s plan to improve her newfound friend also suggests

a national concern about the social positions and potential of young woman. (15)

Although her concerns in the novel are mainly petty ones, the very nature of her character suggests that Austen was very well aware of the role that social class played in England.

Mr. Knightley is the hero of the novel. He not only weds the heroine in the long run but also possesses certain excellent qualities. He is a straightforward, honest, well-meaning,
courteous, and considerable man. He is the owner and manager of a large estate Donwell Abbey, is accustomed to the natural order of hierarchy which his society sanctioned. He treats people with kindness and respect, but it is always the kindness and respects of a superior man to those beneath him. Mr. Knightley is very well aware of his social position but he instead of being a snob like Emma and selfish like Mr. Elton, tries to help those who are inferior to him. Mrs. and Miss Bates are clearly classified as those beneath him, and that they are content with remaining in their current social position, shows that they accept, as he does, the norms of social class of the culture of Regency England. He is even kind with Harriet Smith and even with Mr. Martin. Though he is good at heart but still he cannot escape himself from the class hierarchy of that time. He is against the growing intimacy between Harriet and Emma. He thinks that Harriet “is not the superior young woman which Emma’s friend ought to be” (32). He knows very well that friendship never existed between those of high class and low class. He was the first to warn Emma about Mr. Elton’s character and it seemed from his speech that he was the supporter of Mr. Elton. When Mr.Knightley warns Emma of Mr. Elton’s motive in finding a wife he says that Mr. Elton is “not at all likely to make an imprudent match. He knows the value of a good income as well as anybody. Elton may talk sentimentally, but he will act rationally” (57). Therefore, even Mr. Knightley acquiesces that to marry a woman of fortune and status was a wise thing to do because status was often achieved because of fortune. It is worth noting that while Mr. Elton is conscious of class distinctions and of repudiating a connection with “illegitimacy and ignorance”, (54) as Mr. Knightley describes Harriet’s situation. Mr. Elton always wanted to pursue a connection with Emma who is of higher rank than himself, making clear that the discrepancy of social class he repudiates in a match with Harriet does not apply to his desired match with Emma. This shows that Mr. Elton was acting in accordance with what the social
conventions of the time encouraged regarding improving one’s social status by marriage. Mr. Knightley too marries in a rational way like that of Mr. Elton. Though Mr. Knightley loved Emma, but still he married her because in class and rank she was his equal and mistress of Hartfield and of course a rich woman with large fortune.

Highbury, the town provides the setting for *Emma*, is a self-contained place. Highbury is like a microcosm of Austen’s world, or a small representative of society in England as a whole, the interactions among characters heighten the reader’s focus on the role of social class in this small society. As most of the events of the novel take place within Highbury, it serves as the ideal place in which to examine the details of social status. Wiltshire notes that “the novel generates, especially in volume II, a sense of busy interplay between characters and between *social classes*, a network of visiting, gossip, charitable acts, and neighborly concern’ (68). *Emma* is filled with diverse characters, many of whom have come to know through the dialogue of other characters. Mr. Perry the doctor of Highbury, the Coles, or James and the Woodhouse’s other servants are examples of this. Each of these characters is assigned a social class or place in society which is discovered through the eyes of Emma. Juliet McMaster in his *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* gives apt summary of social class of Highbury:

The Highbury of *Emma* is close to presenting a microcosm of Austen’s social world. Here, from Mr. Knightley…to the poor family to which Emma dispenses charity, we have assembled nearly all the levels of society that Austen presents. Moreover, the novel’s heroine is one who specializes in social discrimination, and makes prompt though often inaccurate judgments about the social station of the
people around her. (118)

It is clear, that *Emma* provides a discourse on social class and how money plays a vital role. The role of social class also represents the culture in which Austen herself lived. As Lambdin states that, “The novel ends with the appropriate matches restoring order to the community of Highbury, an order that had been threatened by Emma’s careless imagination and Frank’s careless attitude toward love” (110). There are some people who do recognize the subtly subversive strain in Austen’s writing. W.H. Auden wrote in his verse, *Letter to Lord Byron*,

You could not shock her more than she shocks me;
Beside her Joyce seems innocent as grass.
It makes me most uncomfortable to see
An English spinster of the middles class
Describe the amorous effects of “brass”,
Reveal so frankly and with such sobriety
The economic basis of society.

Auden recognized that Austen’s writings reflect how entrenched her society was with ‘power to money and prestige’, money and prestige were chiefly under the control of those who were on the top of the social ladder. Austen understood the social and cultural politics of her society extremely well. As has been seen, her novels are filled with the intricacies of Regency society.

*Aisha* on the other hand is the post colonial adaptation of Austen’s *Emma*. The first idea which is generated while looking at the film is the concept of ‘cultural hegemony’ by Antonion Gramsci. If the character of Aisha is taken into account, it is noticed that in the entire film except on two occasions, one on the Diwali night and other at the wedding function of her Masi in the
starting of the film, Aisha is shown wearing western outfits. This is not the part of Indian culture but Aisha through her character represents that how she is following the western culture with consent. Not even Aisha but all the characters of the film represent same thing. In the polo match, Aisha and the other ladies dress in the same manner, the way western ladies dress when they go and watch polo match. Aisha altogether changes the personality of Shefali. After Shefali becomes good friend of Aisha, she is too not at all seen in the traditional ‘salwaar kameez’ of Indian dress. She too like Aisha falls under the category of ‘cultural hegemony’.

When it comes to Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘mimicry’ it applies very well to the analysis of Aisha. In the entire movie it can be noticed that all the characters are trying to mimic the western life style. The best example is that Aisha is shown driving foreign automobile. Aisha takes Shefali to night club as well and going to night club is the culture of the west and in this film, the characters are frequently shown going to night clubs. In their trip to Rishikesh, on one occasion all of them are shown sitting around the bonfire, playing guitar and smoking some weed. This too reflects the mimicry of the western culture. The public kiss of Dhruv and Arti in the night club too reflects this idea. The mimicry of the western culture is to such an extent that Pinky and Arti does not hesitate to wear bikini while playing volley ball on the banks of the river. In the west it is very common that people play volley ball on the sea shore with ladies wearing bikini.

Randhir rejects Shefali on the grounds that she is not fashionable and modern like Aisha. She wears ‘slwaar kameez’ which is described by Randhir and Pinky as quite old fashioned and not fit for this world. On one occasion Aisha is shown wearing a very small dress while standing outside the hospital with two fully dressed Indian ladies in the back ground. This reflects that that Aisha’s imitation of the west is to such an extent that she does not even feel the necessity of
not wearing such a small dress in the hospital. The Emma of the Regency era wants to improve the social status of Harriet and she did not laid emphasis on the clothes of Harriet. But Aisha main motive is to change the personality of Shefali altogether; this was the reason why Aisha took Shefali to the beauty parlour, where her long hairs were also trimmed to short. In the west the emphasis is given to the money but not to the character of the individual. In the same manner Aisha too rejects Sourabh on the ground that he is not rich and works in BPO sector with limited income. Aisha does not consider Sourabh’s true love for Shefali.

This film too represented in the hybrid form. Though the emphasis is given to western culture but the traditional values of Indian culture are too intact. On the wedding of Aisha’s aunt, on the day of Diwali and at the end of the film, all the characters are shown wearing typical Indian dress, with women in Lehanga’s and sari and men in Indian pajama kurta with turban on their heads. In the wedding of Aisha’s aunt, though all of them are wearing Indian dress but the way they raise toast for each other is the glimpse of the western culture.

In this film, characters are representing Indian people, as western and eastern traditions are mixed and in post colonial terms we can say that characters are hybridized. Aisha, the Indian Emma, is prototypical modern Indian character, mixing eastern with western values. On one hand, westernization plays a crucial role in the configuration of Aisha. Her love for western labels such as Prada, Louis Vuitton, Dior or L’Oreal basically highlights her wealth--- in line with the ‘rich’ Emma but it also suggests her un-Emma like obsession with western fashion and style. On the other hand, Indian values are present in the configuration of the protagonist. Aisha is not simply a westernized Indian citizen; she is extremely concerned with traditions, such as the celebration of weddings or festivals like Diwali.
The character Arti (Jane Fairfax) is a character returned from the diaspora, who has worked in New York with Arjun (Mr. Knightley). Like Jane Fairfax, Arti is the only woman in the film who must work to earn a living. Arti differs from Jane Fairfax, however, in that she is not resigned to an unwanted fate as a governess but strongly enjoys her position as a banker. Moreover, if Jane Fairfax is more accomplished than Emma---as her piano performance shows, Arti is also more gifted than Aisha, at least as far as Indian traditions and rituals are concerned. Arti appears as the ideal hybrid, post colonial subject who combines perfectly tradition and westernization.

Harriet Smith’s inferiority lies in her unknown parentage and lack of intelligence, the weakness of Ohja’s Shefali remains in her lack of westernization. Shefali is often mocked for her unfashionable and uncool clothes. This Indian Harriet Smith went a transformation from village girl into a hybrid subject combining eastern and western culture. Shefali first becomes a mini-Aisha, imitating her movements, clothes, brands. After she becomes aware of Aisha’s manipulations, Shefali begins to distance herself from Aisha’s world.

One of the complexities of the post colonial enterprise involves the difficulties for a culture in mixing its native traditions with the western values of the colonizer and this fruitful tension and positive outcome is certainly reflected in Rajshree Ohja’s Aisha.

When Jane Austen was writing her novels, she witnessed the effects of industrialization on the people. Money started playing vital role in the lives of people. Relationships started framing on economic bases. Along with money, class dynamics was also one of the major forces during that period. Raymond Williams in his Culture and Society discusses the effects of
industrialization on the British society and these traits are clearly visible in the novels of Jane Austen namely *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*.

But when Indian adaptations of Jane Austen’s novels are taken into account, we can notice that the effects of industrialization have no place in these Indian adaptations. But the post colonial strands are palpably visible as they are circumscribed by the Indian socio cultural ethos. Both *Bride and Prejudice* and *Aisha* embody within themselves a post colonial ideology. In both these films the ideas of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha are clearly visible.

Thus it can be brought into notice that the changes in the text also occur due to the change in the context. The period in which the writer is writing the text, the culture and circumstances that period too can be traced in his/her writings. This is analyzed in this chapter.