

## SUMMARY DIAGRAM: TRANSFORMATION

**CONTEXTS**

The society that each text is a part of: how they inform, reflect on, influence the texts - historical/political, social, cultural. Consider what else applies.

- ✦ Both 19thC UK and 20thC USA were leading economic and political powers but under threat.
- ✦ UK a period of revolution and change. The class structure under threat with the emerging middle class whose wealth mainly through trade demanded recognition.
- ✦ USA the isolationist policies prior to WW2 no longer applied with its role as international policeman. The plight of the economically disadvantaged nations demanded a global and political response for pragmatic and humanitarian reasons.
- ✦ The role of women and marriage are important. 19<sup>th</sup> C women had little control of their lives. Marriage provided financial security and social status. Emma's claim that she would never marry provides the satiric edge to the text.
- ✦ In the modern context the dilemma for Cher is her virginity. Christian's homosexuality introduces a controversial social issue as does the character Dionne who is black. Both are presented in positive ways.
- ✦ Austen's world relied on propriety and decorum in the proper conduct of a life. The standard, one was judged by, was according to mind, manners and morals. Clueless depicts a teenage world of wealth where excess and indulgence are conspicuous.
- ✦ Both texts are products of their Age. Austen's achievement is based on an enduring ability to entrance succeeding generations. She has entertained us both in moral and ethical terms with a wry fondness for human strengths and frailties. Heckerling's text is original in its approach to Emma. The teen world she has created with its pop culture qualities is relevant and has vitality for its audience.

**NOVEL to FILM**

- ✦ Film appropriates and transforms the original source and is rich in literary and other cultural references.
- ✦ A narrative point of view is replaced by subjective point of view angle and techniques –lighting, camera shots, costuming, sound.
- ✦ Austen's novel relies on words and events for meaning
- ✦ The actors communicate complexities of mood, thought, emotions. The combination of words and images creates powerful meaning.
- ✦ Satiric elements remain. Authorial voice is equated with voice over technique. The irony of the novel that occurs between narrator and characters is replicated in the film in the shift between 'match' or 'mismatch' between words and images.

**TEENPIC**

- ✦ Strong emphasis on popular teenage past times – clothes, boy-girl relations, driving cars, parties, sex, music, shopping, drinking, trying drugs,
- ✦ Settings reflect lives of teens – schools, colleges, homes, shops, fast food restaurants
- ✦ Physically attractive central characters – tend to dominate and control peers. The 'dork' who is interested in the intellectual, spiritual
- ✦ Adolescent lack of intellectual or moral self examination – emphasis on superficial, materialistic values, disturbing lack of social discipline
- ✦ Concerns – usually focus on issues of growing up, rites of passage, forming peer relationships, conflict with parents, conflict with dominant social values, dynamics of group relationships
- ✦ Complicated twists to plot, essentially busy
- ✦ Essentially positive outcomes – live happily ever after. Fairy story nature of the ending usually reflected in the plot in which elements of the fairy story reside.
- ✦ Film qualities: Usually clear strong colours, clear focus. Lots of close ups.
- ✦ Noisy – music, SFX

### Similarities/ Differences

### Resemblances

### Parallels

### Correlations

**CHARACTERS**

Emma/Mr.Knightley = Cher/Josh  
 Harriet/Robert Martin = Tai/Travis  
 Harriet/Mr Elton = Tai/Elton  
 Harriet/Mr Knightley = Tai/Josh  
 Emma/Frank =Cher/Christian  
 Mr Elton/Emma =Cher /Elton  
 Mr Woodhouse =Mel Horowitz  
 Mr Woodhouse/ Mr Knightley= Mel/Josh  
 Augusta Hawkins = Amber  
 Note the qualities the characters share.

**PLOT**

- ✦ Both texts establish the female character at the beginning
- ✦ Both texts have a moral outcome
- ✦ Key plot - Harriet Smith/ Mr Elton/Robert Martin =Tai/Elton/Travis
- ✦ Absent is relationship of Frank Weston/Churchill and Jane Fairfax. The character of Frank is suggested in Christian whose homosexuality is plot contrived in Clueless
- ✦ No Box Hill incident – a minor calamity is the brief scene with Lucy whose ethnic origins are confused
- ✦ Friendships remain – reconciliation of Cher and Tai and Travis is treated kindly. Emma distanced herself somewhat from Harriet and Robert Martin
- ✦ The father's roles parallel-health, power suggested but in different ways
- ✦ Mrs Weston as friend and confidante is 'replaced' by Dionne, Cher's young, black friend
- ✦ A wedding opens Emma. Wedding of Mr Hall and Miss Geist ends Clueless
- ✦ The authorial voice is equated with the 'voice-over' technique

**EVENTS**

- ✦ Photograph of Tai taken by Cher found in Elton's locker Emma ch 7
- ✦ Elton's declaration of feelings after the party in the Valley ch 15
- ✦ Tai saved from social embarrassment by Josh at the Dance ch38
- ✦ The rescue of Tai from the 'undesirables' at the Mall ch39
- ✦ The destruction of the sentimental 'relics' kept by Tai from the Elton episode ch 47
- ✦ The Christian character suggestive of the mystery, secrecy, riddles, games of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax
- ✦ The Awakening. Both Cher and Emma realize their true feelings for Josh and Mr Knightley respectively.



EMMA and CHER

- ♣ Not understanding, not aware, unperceptive
- ♣ Ignorant, deficient, stupid, blind, having no idea, naive
- ♣ Everyone else is clued up, picking up on the clues as to how to behave, how to do it, how to get it right.
- ♣ Both females move from ignorance to self-awareness (of a sort)-ie 'cluey'
- ♣ Rich, indulged, egotistic, motherless
- ♣ Intelligent but uninformed
- ♣ Limited interest in education
- ♣ Both observe the conventions of the society they live in
- ♣ Both have an almost resident young man of sensibility advising and supervising.
- ♣ Both have a falling out with him, followed by a cathartic reconciliation in which goodness and superior perception is acknowledged
- ♣ Both are smug, manipulative, self-centred
- ♣ Need to control situations and others lives
- ♣ Both are transformed, become enlightened
- ♣ Both must recognize inadequacies and lack of judgment and come to the correctness of the male judgment

SETTING

- ♣ Landed 19<sup>TH</sup> C gentry in Highbury becomes late 20<sup>th</sup> C Beverly Hills
- ♣ The home is central. Note Cher's comment 1972 classic and the play on words
- ♣ The shopping mall parallels the village shop
- ♣ School confines characters and offers a reference for social gatherings and class distinctions.
- ♣ Similar to Highbury with its hierarchal structures based on birthright and land ownership
- ♣ There is limited movement between classes. The plight of the Bates shows a decline to genteel poverty while the Coles and Robert Martin with their increasing wealth are in ascendancy. Tai and Travis are outsiders who through talent and patronage cross the class barrier.
- ♣ There is an apparent ignorance of the outside world for both female protagonists. Emma had never been to London or to Box Hill. Cher believes Bosnia is in the Middle East and that Kuwait is in the Valley

ROMANCING

- ♣ Both texts are about romantic pairings, their blunders and mistakes until all is reconciled and partnerships resolved. It seems that one gets the partner one deserves.
- ♣ Both are about the rituals and taboos of the mating 'game'- flirtation, courtship, engagement /secret engagement, dating, going steady, commitment and 'breaking up'. Each relationship undergoes assessment and evaluation according to the values and beliefs of the society.
- ♣ Both showcase the public nature of all social experiences.
- ♣ Both heroines' imaginings contribute to this element in their desire to 'make-over' the lives of the protégé.

COMING OF AGE

Both move through the process of growing-up, coming to an understanding of others and self. Each moves from a degree of:

Unawareness to awareness	Pretension to social tolerance
Self-deception to truth	Self-delusion to honesty
Smugness to sympathy	Blindness to clarity of judgment
Self- satisfaction to generosity of spirit	Self-importance to appreciating the independence of others
Arrogance to humility	Manipulation to respect of others

Note : The direction and influence of Mr Knightley and Josh in this process.

PLAYING

- ♣ The notion of games and play is evident in the film through the irony of the dialogue- puns, quips, asides, literary allusions, repartee, wit and musings.
- ♣ Scheming and deception are present – the 'make-overs' of Miss Geist and Tai and the puzzle that is Christian
- ♣ Time fillers such as talking on mobile phones, driving fast cars, watching TV, using the computer, wearing walkmans/mini discs, 'dressing up and dressing down', the preoccupation with image. No serious exercise eg tennis, skateboarding as a past time. Word games eg debating, negotiating with teacher and photography.
- ♣ Heckerling plays with Austen's text. Note the opening scene of the film and the opening chapter of the novel. Consider their shared view of the society which they depict – attitude to women and men and to society itself.

ISSUES

1. Role of the female in a patriarchal society
2. Nature of female / male relationships
3. Growth to self-awareness
4. The nature of society- its hierarchy, limitations, divisions, conventions, rules, conformity/ rebellion/ confusion/ contradiction.
5. Love and Marriage – the changing concepts of morality, the consequences of breaching the code, sexual permissiveness