

Title:	<i>Emma</i> on Film: Feminist Influence in the 2020 Adaptation
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Abstract

For past literary works to enter the modern cinema, they not only need to be made to suit the new medium, but also need to be adapted and often updated to engage the contemporary audience. In this sense, adaptations, supposedly a reflection of the past, become symbolic of the greater change of social values of the present.

Jane Austen's works are some of the most frequently adapted 19th Century fictions. In addition to the plot, one of the reasons for the lasting popularity of Austen's works lies in her perceptive social critique and covert challenge of the patriarchal order. This capstone project studies the case of Austen's novel *Emma* (1815) and how its latest adaptation, *Emma*. (2020), directed by Autumn de Wilde, transposes Austen's text onto the screen. By comparing the text and the film in theme and in form, this paper argues that the adaptation reflects the contemporary ideals and persisting struggles of womanhood nowadays. The paper looks into the film's characterisation of the heroine, the portrayal of the heroine's interpersonal relationships, as well as the social critique on gender and class inequality. It is hoped that the project can supplement a more in-depth study on the new film in relation to the text, and more broadly, shed light on contemporary culture and the development of the feminist movement over the years.

Reflection

In this capstone project, I had the opportunity to delve into Austen's works and screen adaptations, which have fascinated me since my secondary school years. The knowledge I gained from courses on literature and film has allowed me to see beyond the love stories and reflect on the connection between myself, society and the entertainment I consume. The process of researching for this project also offered me insights into gender issues, which made me appreciate women's concerted effort in fighting for equality all the more.

The project was challenging at times, but I am grateful to have Professor Li Ou as my supervisor. Her kind encouragement has always motivated me to give my best effort. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Li for her guidance and support throughout this journey.