

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

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Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Petra Velichová

Pride and Prejudice and its predecessor: Fanny Burney's *Evelina*

Pýcha a předsudek a její předchůdce: *Evelina* od Fanny Burney

(Bakalářská práce)

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a řádně jsem v ní uvedla veškerou použitou literaturu.

V Olomouci dne

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1. Introduction

Although there exist many amazing women writers, only a few of them have succeeded in winning the special attention of both readers and literary critics. My bachelor's thesis is going to deal with two such women, both living at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

One of them is, I dare say, one of the most significant women writers ever. I am talking about the author of such masterpieces as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) or *Emma* (1815), Jane Austen, of whom Sir Walter Scott wrote a laudatory paragraph in his Journal in which he says that Jane Austen 'had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is, to me, the most wonderful I ever met with.'¹ Later on, he regretfully added: 'What a pity such a gifted creature died so early.'²

The second woman writer with whom I would like to occupy myself in my bachelor's thesis is Frances (Fanny) Burney. Frances Burney, or Madame D'Arbly when called by her marital name, is unfortunately not so well-known to contemporary readers as is her successor Jane Austen, notwithstanding that it was Fanny Burney and her novels that were probably the main source of inspiration for Jane Austen's works. Though she is not that popular anymore, she was considered one of the most successful writers of her own times, being admired and read by a vast audience including Jane Austen herself.³

To introduce my thesis: first of all, I am going to summarize the preceding and contemporary periods and the conditions that influenced Burney's and Austen's writing; secondly, I am going to analyse the writers' lives that are often reflected in the novels; lastly, I would like to closely analyse the novels with respect to the common features that appear in both.

¹ Quoted in JASNA-Vermont, "Sir Walter Scott on Austen: March 14, 1826," *Jane Austen in Vermont*, last modified March 13, 2009, <http://janeausteninvermont.wordpress.com/2009/03/13/sir-walter-scott-on-austen-march-14-1826/>.

² JASNA-Vermont, "Sir Walter Scott on Austen."

³ See Vivien Jones, "Burney and Gender," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 111.

As we are going to see later in the thesis, it is not so hard to understand what made Jane Austen so close to Madame D'Arblay. It was not only a love of literature and writing that the two women had in common. Although their fates eventually turned out to be slightly different, still there were many things which connected the two and naturally influenced the themes they dealt with in their novels and thus influenced their whole literary careers.

Although the main part of my thesis is going to be the analysis of the common features of Jane Austen and Frances Burney, its goal is going to be slightly different. To conclude the bachelor's thesis, I am going to find out which factors resulted in the fact that Jane Austen's legacy has survived up to this date and that she is still very popular and read by contemporary reader, while her literary model Madame D'Arblay has, likely irreversibly, fallen into oblivion.

2. Historical Background

2.1 General Survey

The period of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is regarded as one of the most complicated in British history. It was a period full not only of warfare and riots, but also of many important changes in social and cultural life.

There were many national problems, the most serious of them being the recurring riots of the Catholics in Scotland and Ireland, whose conditions were worse than those of Protestants.

Further afield, the continual war with France and the fighting in America and India were exhausting for the British.

A great threat came with the French Revolution of 1789. It did not turn out to be confined within national boundaries, and the British were forced to declare war on France again. After many years of warfare, the French Emperor Napoleon was defeated by the Anglo-Dutch and Prussian armies in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.⁴

⁴ More on the subject in Christopher Hollis, *History of Britain in Modern Times, 1688–1939* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1946).

2.2 Society and Cultural Life

The eighteenth century is known for the increasing gap between the rich and poor. The conditions of the working classes were horrific. On the contrary, aristocrats had a comfortable income without necessarily having to work. On the other hand, it can also be considered an era of progress in social life because those who were inventive and daring could earn a lot of money and easily enter into the upper-class society despite not being of noble birth.

Cultural life blossomed during this period. New works of art emerged since art was no more only for the rich but also for the talented who were able to ask for patronage.⁵

If something can be said to have flourished during those times, it is definitely literature. Thanks to the expansion of print more books and magazines were published and more and more people had access to literature.⁶ The increasing level of literacy resulted in a bigger demand for books so that many people from a wider range of classes began to write. This led to works by writers such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, whose *Pamela* (1740) is one of the most influential novels of the period,⁷ and the Catholic author Alexander Pope.⁸

Though the eighteenth century was a century in which poetry, drama and magazine publishing prospered, it is still best known as the period in which the novel began to flourish.⁹ Eva Simmons in her 'Introduction' to the Augustan Literature says that novels became so popular because they were "how to" and/or "how not to" guides to comportment'.¹⁰ Still, there was also the opinion that reading novels could be

⁵ More on the subject in Hollis, *History of Britain in Modern Times 1688–1939*.

⁶ See Gary Day, "Introduction," in *The Eighteenth-Century Literature Handbook*, ed. Gary Day and Bridget Keegan (Bodmin: MPG Books, 2008), 9.

⁷ See Eva Simmons, "Introduction: The Augustan Age in Perspective," in *A Guide to Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature: 1660-1789*, ed. Eva Simmons (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994), 6.

⁸ See Janet Barron and David Nokes, "Market, Morality and Sentiment: Non-dramatic Prose 1660-1789," in *A Guide to Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature: 1660-1789*, ed. Eva Simmons (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1994), 28.

⁹ See Paul Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (London: Continuum, 2008), 90.

¹⁰ Simmons, "Introduction," 8.

harmful to young people's minds.¹¹ On the other hand, a new kind of novel called the 'sentimental novel' was appreciated as a moral manual for readers who were expected to behave in the same way as their heroes did.¹²

2.3 Gender

Talking about the period in which Frances Burney and Jane Austen lived, we cannot omit the issue that is usually directly connected with the two writers – gender. The eighteenth century both was and was not a period friendly to women. Women were still regarded as subordinate to men, brought up to be good wives and mothers. It was unusual for women to attend schools and only a small number of them could read. If they did read, the range of books they were given was very limited. Richard Terry suggests that 'women were expected to develop themselves intellectually only with a view to becoming helpful and amiable companions for their husbands.'¹³ Moreover, women's property was controlled by their fathers or husbands, and their women were not allowed to vote or participate in politics.¹⁴ On the other hand, we must admit that the eighteenth century was a period of shifting attitudes towards gender, the era in which women began to demand their rights. Women became more courageous also in the field of literature, notwithstanding that they were often publishing anonymously.¹⁵ Such literary activity, trying to contribute to the improvement of women's position, has been put down also to the two authors who I am going to occupy myself with in the thesis.

¹¹ See Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, 101.

¹² Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, 104.

¹³ Richard Terry, "Key Critical Concepts and Topics," in *The Eighteenth-Century Literature Handbook*, ed. Gary Day and Bridget Keegan (Bodmin: MPG Books, 2008), 124-125.

¹⁴ See Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, 29.

¹⁵ See Barron and Nokes, "Market, Morality and Sentiment," 31.

3. Fanny Burney

The author of *Evelina* (1778) was born on 13 June 1752 into an exceptionally talented family of Charles Burney, a musician and organist, and his wife Esther Sleepe.

Although the family was not of noble lineage, Charles Burney soon became a respected member of society. Margaret Anne Doody describes Dr Burney as ‘a nobody, a self-made poor man who by charm, effort and literary as well as musical talent pushed himself into the rank of a “gentleman”’.¹⁶ Very interested in art, he always supported his children in artistic development. It was her father’s influence and artistic acquaintances that to a great degree contributed to Fanny’s later success as a novelist.¹⁷

Fanny was the only one of the siblings who could not read by the age of ten; she was also very shy and reticent when not in the familiar company of her family and friends.¹⁸

After her mother’s death, Fanny was in such a state that her father decided not to send her to a French school together with her older sister Hetty, sending the younger sister Susan instead. Fanny herself stayed at home in the company of her two main moral models, her father and his friend Samuel Crisp, a very important person in the life of Frances Burney, called familiarly ‘Daddy’ Crisp¹⁹ by the Burney children and, even more affectionately, the ‘dearest of men’ by Frances.²⁰ During the absence of her beloved sister Susan, who was Fanny’s best friend and also the first critic of Fanny’s works, Fanny learned to read and started to write down her own thoughts.

Writing made Frances happy and helped her organize better her thoughts and opinions. However, she also often felt guilty because writing, especially the writing

¹⁶ Margaret A. Doody, “Burney and Politics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 94.

¹⁷ More on this subject in Peter Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹⁸ See Judy Simons, *Fanny Burney* (Hampshire: Macmillan Education, 1987), 5.

¹⁹ Austin Dobson, *Fanny Burney: Madame d’Arblay* (London: Macmillan, 1903), 15.

²⁰ Annie R. Ellis, ed., *The Early Diary of Frances Burney, 1768-1778* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1913), 31.

of novels, was understood as ‘the result of an overactive imagination fantasising on improper subjects’.²¹ She was also afraid of being different, since it was the ideal of every young woman in the eighteenth century to be a good wife and mother rather than a writer.²² In addition, the second wife of Charles Burney was not very approving of her stepdaughter’s writing so Fanny had to be careful not to be discovered by her.²³ Such experiences with the second Mrs Burney, together with the mother’s absence during the adolescence of the heroine, had as its result that the intrusion of unpleasant women is a recurring theme in Fanny Burney’s novels.²⁴ It is also not surprising that, in conditions like this, Frances at the age of fifteen decided to burn her own works, including the one which included the idea of the later *Evelina*.²⁵

Frances was a woman of unconventional opinions. Above all, she took a specific stance towards marriage. As she said to Mr Crisp, she was ‘determined never to marry without having the very highest value and esteem for the man who should be her lord’.²⁶ Pure, unconditional love was what Fanny wished, not only when she was sixteen and wrote it down in her diary, but also later in life:

For my own part, I vow and declare that the mere pleasure of having a great affection for some one person to which I was neither guided by fear, hope or profit, gratitude, respect, or any motive but mere *fancy*, would sufficiently satisfy me, and I should not at all wish a return.²⁷

Still it was probably not only her longing for pure love that led her to the decision to live in celibacy. It is known that Fanny Burney was a complicated personality. On the outside, she seemed to be supporting the traditional standards of the behaviour of women. On the other hand she herself was repeatedly violating it. What contributed to her decision not to marry was her desire to be fully free and not to be subordinated

²¹ Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 18.

²² See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 6.

²³ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 66.

²⁴ See Kate Chisholm, “The Burney Family,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12.

²⁵ See George Justice, “Burney and the Literary Marketplace,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 148.

²⁶ Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 59.

²⁷ Ellis, *The Early Diary of Frances Burney*, 11.

to a husband. Burney's heroines, since they are depicted as self-conscious, dynamic and active women, are evidence of Fanny's hidden feminist sympathies; as well as is her description of a society that is depicted as a place where only men can protect the woman and guarantee her a rank and living.²⁸

A great change in Frances Burney's life came after the publication of *Evelina or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* in 1778. Although Fanny Burney did not want to be acknowledged as the author and thus had it published anonymously, the real author of the successful piece was soon discovered. All of a sudden, Fanny became a sought-after member of society parties and her acquaintance was made with some of the most important people of the artistic world. The friendship with Mrs Hester Thrale and Dr Samuel Johnson and their positive response to *Evelina* was the best evaluation for Fanny Burney.²⁹

Fanny Burney soon found out that everything, as well as success, has its counterpart. The writing of the second novel, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), started in 1780, was much more complicated for the writer. As a shy woman, Frances now knew that she would never again write only for herself and her family, and that everybody would expect another successful work.³⁰

A period of grief was to begin in the life of Fanny Burney. Soon after the death of her beloved 'Daddy' Crisp, Fanny's great friend and advisor Dr Samuel Johnson died. Moreover, she fell out with Mrs Thrale because she disapproved of the latter's marriage to Mr Piozzi.³¹

The following years were little more than hard work and unpleasant relationships. Appointed Dresser to the Queen, Frances had nearly no time to occupy herself with writing and was always restricted by protocol. To make things even worse, there was her intolerable colleague Mrs Schwellenberg who did everything to discourage Fanny from her work. During this part of Fanny's life, there were also several men keeping in touch with her who nevertheless never proposed, probably because of her humble origins and lack of money.

²⁸ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 6.

²⁹ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 9.

³⁰ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 10.

³¹ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 136.

The service to the Queen soon resulted in health problems and after five years at Court, Fanny, with the Queen's permission and a pension of £100, gave up her position.³²

Less than a year later came a big shift in the life of the writer. She met a group of French refugees, and immediately fell in love with one of them, the Comte Alexandre D'Arblay.³³ It was the first time that Fanny disobeyed of her father who did not approve of the relationship: as Judy Simons calls it, a 'match between a middle-aged spinster and a penniless refugee'.³⁴

Regardless of her father's advice, Fanny married Alexandre D'Arblay in July 1793 and their son Alex was born only one year later. The marriage was very happy: Burney's niece said that she had never seen such a blessed match.³⁵ The only problem for the family was money. Because her husband was not allowed to work in England, their only income was Fanny's pension from the Queen. To better the situation, Frances got down to work on her third novel, *Camilla, or a Picture of Youth*, which was published in 1796.³⁶ Notwithstanding that the novel failed to satisfy the critics, dedicated to the Queen, *Camilla* became a bestseller.³⁷ One of the people who bought the novel was Jane Austen.³⁸

Fanny's beloved sister Susan died in January 1800. Soon after that Comte D'Arblay decided to return to France in order to reclaim his property. Fanny followed him several months later with the plan to return back to England in a year and half. However, because the war between England and France was renewed, she was forced to stay ten long years.³⁹ In addition, Fanny was suffering intolerable pains in her breast, the result of which was a mastectomy undergone without anaesthetic in

³² More on this subject in Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*.

³³ See Betty Rizzo, "Burney and Society," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 144-145.

³⁴ Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 13.

³⁵ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 183.

³⁶ See Justice, "Burney and the Literary Marketplace," 156-157.

³⁷ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 14.

³⁸ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 187.

³⁹ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 191-193.

Paris in 1811.⁴⁰ In 1812, when Alex was seventeen, Frances finally managed to return home in order to avoid her son's duty to fight against the English.

At home, Frances started to work on her last novel, *The Wanderer, or Female Difficulties* (1814). Austin Dobson strictly says that 'From a literary point of view, the book was an utter failure'.⁴¹

In 1815, Charles Burney died and his daughter left her native land again.⁴² Her journey to Brussels to take care of her wounded husband became famous because it was not regarded common for a lady to travel for such a long time on her own without male protection.⁴³

General D'Arbly died in 1818. After the loss of her husband, Fanny devoted herself to the work on her father's memoirs, the *Memoirs of Dr. Burney* (1832).⁴⁴ She wholly abandoned society and lived only for her son and family.⁴⁵ In 1837, at the age of forty-three, Fanny's son Alex died of influenza. Fanny outlived him by three years. Having left her papers as a legacy to her niece Charlotte, Frances died in 1840, having lived for eighty-seven years.⁴⁶

Many things can be said about Fanny Burney. Her life was full of contradictions. Successful in writing novels, she repeatedly failed as a playwright. Her respects and affection for the men in her life was exceptional: on the one hand, she was obedient of her father and Mr Crisp; on the other, she is considered to be one of those who helped women come to their consciousness. She was the one who by means of her heroines pointed to problems in society and women's position in it; and who became a famous model for the following generation of writers.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ See John Wiltshire, "Journals and Letters," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 86-87.

⁴¹ Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 195.

⁴² See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 196-197.

⁴³ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 16-17.

⁴⁴ See Dobson, *Fanny Burney*, 198-199.

⁴⁵ See Rizzo, "Burney and Society," 145.

⁴⁶ See Justice, "Burney and the Literary Marketplace," 161.

⁴⁷ More on this subject in Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*.

4. Jane Austen

In discussing writers of the eighteenth century, one of the first names that cross the mind is surely that of Jane Austen. The writer of such exceptional novels as *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and many others, had a surprisingly unexceptional life.⁴⁸

Born on 16 December 1775, she was the second daughter of the Austen family. Finally, the Austens had eight children, six boys, one of whom was born with mental disorder and had hardly any impact on Jane's life, and two daughters, Jane and her beloved sister Cassandra.⁴⁹

Little Jane, in keeping with other new-born babies of the upper classes in those times, was sent to be brought up by a nurse and remained there until the age of two.⁵⁰ It is clear that such an experience influenced the relationship between mother and child, and it was even truer in the case of Jane. According to Claire Tomalin, Jane was 'the child who was uncertain where to expect love or to look for security'⁵¹ and grew up to become 'someone who does not open her heart'.⁵²

There is however no reason to believe that Jane was withdrawn in relation to everybody. Since she had an older sister Cassandra who was for some time her companion in the nurse's house when Jane had need of a mother's love, the sisters created such a firm tie that there was nothing that could divide them.⁵³

Despite the facts mentioned above, it is said that Jane Austen had a beautiful childhood at her home in Steventon. Not only did she have many brothers but their house was always full of other boys, her father's students, who came to stay and study in the house of the Austen family. It is clear that such social group had to influence Jane's view of life and thanks to the continual presence of male friends she created a very specific kind of humour which was later to provide Jane Austen with

⁴⁸ See Claire Tomalin, *Jane Austen* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 6.

⁴⁹ See David Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980), 29.

⁵⁰ See Francis Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen* (London: Macmillan, 1913), 12.

⁵¹ More on this subject in Tomalin, *Jane Austen*, 8.

⁵² Tomalin, *Jane Austen*, 8.

⁵³ More on this subject in Tomalin, *Jane Austen*.

fame.⁵⁴ Although it is thought that Jane's relationship with her mother was marked with the separation in infancy, David Cecil in *A Portrait of Jane Austen* says that it was her mother from whom she acquired 'a sense of comedy and a power of shrewd realistic judgment'⁵⁵; from her father, who was a very clever man, a clergyman and a teacher in one, she learned to feel 'a love of literature and a feeling for style'⁵⁶ and 'from both the confidence inspired by finding herself the child of happily married parents'.⁵⁷ Both Jane's parents can also be found in her writing. Her father, depicted as an intelligent and agreeable man who never constrained his children in their pleasures, seems to create inspiration for Mr Bennet;⁵⁸ in a similar way, Mrs Austen, often suffering from different ailments which were both real and imaginary, seems to be a model for Mrs Bennet.⁵⁹

At the age of seven, though she was not old enough to leave home for studies, Jane was sent to school in order not to be separated from her beloved older sister without whom it was thought she would become extremely sad.⁶⁰ The school soon moved from Oxford to Southampton which was one of the towns where troops stopped during their way back from abroad. Unfortunately, the officers brought an infectious fever to Southampton and Jane, who caught the fever, was endangered and nearly died. The Austens took the sisters home and finally both Jane and Cassandra recovered.⁶¹ After one more attempt to place the girls at school in Reading – where they had more fun than studied – the parents decided to teach the girls at home. It is clear that it was the father George Austen who was responsible for Jane's education. In the end, Jane was well acquainted with literature, spoke French and Italian, played the piano and loved dancing and had all the skills necessary for an accomplished lady. Still, she considered herself to be an uneducated author.⁶²

⁵⁴ More on this subject in Tomalin, *Jane Austen*.

⁵⁵ Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 23.

⁵⁶ Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 23.

⁵⁷ Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 23.

⁵⁸ See G. E. Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times* (London: Methuen, 1917), 40.

⁵⁹ See Mitton, *Jane Austen*, 37.

⁶⁰ See Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and Her Works* (London: Cassell & Company, 1900), 5.

⁶¹ See Tomalin, *Jane Austen*, 37.

⁶² More on the subject in Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*.

As has been mentioned above, Jane Austen's life was not a life of shifts and excitements. She lived in Steventon until the age of twenty five,⁶³ her life was also full of visiting the houses of friends and relatives.⁶⁴ It is said that she was very shy when not in familiar company,⁶⁵ which makes her similar to her model and contemporary, Fanny Burney. Still, she was quite successful with regard to her male admirers. We know for sure that she had several admirers and that she herself once fell in love. It was a nephew of Jane's friend Anna, Tom Lefroy, who got her attention. Though it seemed that Jane's feelings were returned, Tom never proposed to penniless Jane and married another woman of fortune.⁶⁶

It was not only shyness that Jane had in common with her literary idol Frances Burney. Their attitude towards love and marriage was nearly the same. Jane, as well as Fanny, could not consider a marriage without love. That was the reason why she finally rejected a proposal given by her friends' brother Harris Bigg-Wither, notwithstanding that she knew it was probably her last chance to get married, become independent of her parents and have own children.⁶⁷

Since Jane decided not to marry Mr Bigg-Wither, she knew she was likely to remain dependent on her family for ever. The second Austen daughter, Cassandra, was in the same situation. She also fell in love and even got engaged to a clergyman, Tom Fowle, but they were not destined to fulfil their love. After he died of yellow fever during his stay in the West Indies, Cassandra decided not to fall in love ever again. The sisters became even closer, knowing that they would probably be the closest companions for the rest of their lives.⁶⁸

A difficult period was to come in Jane's life. Her good friend Mrs Lefroy died in 1804, followed by Jane's father George Austen in 1805. After the father's death, Jane, Cassandra and Mrs Austen remained without money and it was only the financial support of Jane's brothers that helped them to live in a similar situation to

⁶³ See Tytler, *Jane Austen*, 3.

⁶⁴ More on this subject in Tomalin, *Jane Austen*.

⁶⁵ See Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 68.

⁶⁶ See Maggie Lane, *Jane Austen's World: The Life and Times of England's Most Popular Author* (London: Carlton Books, 1996), 30.

⁶⁷ See Lane, *Jane Austen's World*, 31.

⁶⁸ See Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times*, 14.

before. First the women travelled a lot, visiting their brothers' and friends' households; later they settled at Chawton, their days being enlivened by frequent visits of Jane's beloved nieces Anna and Fanny.⁶⁹

Jane Austen died at the age of 41. Her suffering from a long illness, nowadays known as Addison's disease, came to an end on 18 July 1817. Jane died in the arms of her lifelong companion and beloved sister Cassandra.⁷⁰ The tomb of the writer can be found in Winchester Cathedral in Hampshire.⁷¹

Jane's literary career began in her teens only with the intention of entertaining her family. As far as we know, she loved to read Dr Johnson, who was a friend and advisor to Frances Burney, and was enchanted by the novels of Fanny herself. Jane seemed to have the same gifts, her greatest success consisting in her perfect ability to describe the characters, their manners and the setting in depth. Although Fanny's influence upon Jane is clear, Jane was said to be much more talented than Frances.⁷²

After some juvenile attempts the first novel came. It was *Pride and Prejudice*, originally called *First Impressions* and finished in 1797, which, however, was rejected by the publisher and not published before 1813.⁷³ Jane did not give up after her first failing and was working on *Sense and Sensibility* which was published anonymously as a novel 'By a Lady' in 1811 and brought great satisfaction to the author. Jane, encouraged by the success of *Sense and Sensibility*, revised *Pride and Prejudice* and had it published in 1813.⁷⁴ Soon after that she published *Mansfield Park* (1814). All these novels plus one other, *Northanger Abbey*, published posthumously in 1818, were finished before she was twenty-four, and were only waiting for publication and success.⁷⁵

Later on Jane started to work on *The Watsons* which is a novel inspired by Jane's own contemporary situation of becoming a spinster. The process of writing was

⁶⁹ More on the subject in Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*.

⁷⁰ More on this subject in Tomalin, *Jane Austen*.

⁷¹ See Tytler, *Jane Austen*, 40.

⁷² More on this subject in Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times*.

⁷³ See Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 34.

⁷⁴ Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 156-158.

⁷⁵ See Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 34-35.

however interrupted by the unhappy event of George Austen's death and the novel was never finished.⁷⁶

Although we often hear that Jane Austen became famous after her death, we know that she was popular during her lifetime as well. The biggest evidence of the fact is that 'His Royal Highness was a great admirer of her works'⁷⁷ and 'if she had any other novel forthcoming, she was at liberty to dedicate it to His Royal Highness'.⁷⁸ It happened as soon as possible and *Emma* was published in 1815, being dedicated to the Prince Regent.⁷⁹

As expected by Jane, it was not only the request to dedicate the novel to the Prince Regent that arrived from the court. Soon after, attempts to offer her different subjects for the novels that were also forth coming occurred. Yet Jane Austen remained determined and continued her writing according to her best knowledge and belief.⁸⁰

Though already very weak and ill, Jane did not stop writing. There were two other works to appear, one of them, *Persuasion* (1818), was completed; the last one however remained unfinished and was published under the name of *Sanditon* (1817).⁸¹

It is hard to believe that a writer with such an unexceptional life as was that of Jane Austen left such an uncommon legacy to mankind. If there is something that should be highly appreciated regarding Jane Austen's art, it is her ability to change everyday life into something majestic and special and above all her competence to create a hero out of a modest character.

⁷⁶ See Tomalin, *Jane Austen*, 182.

⁷⁷ Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 42.

⁷⁸ Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 42.

⁷⁹ See Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 42.

⁸⁰ See Tomalin, *Jane Austen*, 247.

⁸¹ See Cecil, *A Portrait of Jane Austen*, 190.

5. Common Features

After having introduced the lives and fates of both writers and before their early-works are examined in detail, we should briefly summarize what Frances Burney and Jane Austen had in common in their lives. It was not only their solitude, shyness and anxiety about being famous that connected these two ladies. There are many other things that the two writers had in common and which further projected into their works.

First of all, we have to talk about their families. We already know that both the writers had beautiful relations to their fathers who were their guides and supporters. Such relationships clearly occur in both *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice* as well as the authors' approaches to their (step)mothers.

Next, both women were exceptionally independent and both were advocates of at that time quite unusual opinions. Their view of patriarchal society and its ridiculous rules are one of the most important themes in their novels. The heroines that are in no way ordinary young ladies perfectly represent the writers' mocking of a hypocritical society in which it often happens that those with higher status are more uneducated than their social inferiors.

Both Fanny Burney and Jane Austen also had problems supporting themselves. It is thus not surprising that the matter of money and inheritance plays such an important role in their novels and that both *Evelina* and *Elizabeth* are obliged to find a suitable husband to provide them with the means to live. On the other hand, we perfectly know that our heroines, both real and fictional, appreciated nothing more than pure love.

It is no coincidence that Jane Austen admired Fanny Burney's writing. As I will demonstrate in the thesis, we are going to see many affairs, both mentioned above and perfectly different, in which Jane Austen was inspired by Frances Burney. I am also going to show how Jane Austen surpassed Fanny Burney and which features led to her becoming more popular than her predecessor.

6. The Two Novels

6.1 Plot Overview - *Evelina*

To briefly summarize the plot of *Evelina or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778), we can say that Miss Caroline Evelyn marries Sir John Belmont who, soon after he recognizes this match is not bringing him much wealth and benefit, destroys the marriage certificate which is the only proof of their matrimony. Miss Evelyn then returns to her guardian, the man who brought her up, Mr Villars. In these circumstances, Evelina, or by another name Miss Anville, is born. Dying, Miss Evelyn asks Mr Villars to take care of Evelina and to raise her as well as he did with Caroline herself.

When Evelina is seventeen, she is about to enter city society for the first time in her life. Her first acquaintance with city manners is communicated to the readers via letters which Evelina writes to others, in most cases to her guardian, Mr Villars. During her stay in London and later in Bristol, Evelina for the first time experiences the feelings of embarrassment and insecurity, of being pursued by several men of diverse behaviour, but also of beautiful sensations. After many experienced struggles, she finally marries a very rich nobleman called Lord Orville with whom she is totally in love, later on, she is also acknowledged as a daughter by Sir John Belmont, and, on top of everything, she also finds a new friend in her newly-found brother.

6.2 Plot Overview – *Pride and Prejudice*

Pride and Prejudice (1813) is hardly a novel that needs to be introduced. It tells the story of young Elizabeth Bennet, who happens to fall in love and finally marry a rich man, Mr Darcy, who she used to detest at the beginning of their acquaintance.

6.3 *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice*

Although the novel of *Evelina* is not as well-known as its successor *Pride and Prejudice*, apart from a very similar plot with a happy end, it carries many

concordant features and the same more or less hidden messages. In the next pages, I am going to approach several of them.

First of all, I would like to mention that there are several passages that are absolutely the same in *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice*. For example, the famous ball scene when Mr Darcy speaks in an unflattering way about Elizabeth is not an invention of Jane Austen. In this case, the author herself admits that the scene, in which Darcy says about Elizabeth that ‘She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other man,’⁸² is taken from Burney’s novel and that she used it for ‘reader’s redoubled enjoyment.’⁸³ Just to make the reader of the thesis familiar with the part of *Evelina* I am dealing with, it is the interview between Lord Orville and another gentleman, evolving in the following way:

‘By Jove,’ cried the man, ‘she is the most beautiful creature I ever saw in my life!’

Lord Orville, as well he might, laughed, but answered, ‘Yes; a pretty modest-looking girl.’

‘O my lord!’ cried the madman, ‘she is an angel!’

‘A *silent* one,’ returned he.

‘Why ay, my Lord, how stands she as to that? She looks all intelligence and expression.’

‘A poor weak girl!’ answered Lord Orville, shaking his head.⁸⁴

Later on, we can undoubtedly find similarities in the mischievous behaviour of Mr Wickham and Sir Clement Willoughby. Neither of them hesitates to use deceit and lies to depict their rivals as unworthy men. Sir Clement Willoughby sends Evelina a very unsuitable letter, pretending it is a letter from Lord Orville, and can be satisfied by Evelina’s reaction: ‘Never shall I cease to wonder how he could write it. [...] Is it not astonishing, that any man can *appear* so modest, who is so vain?’⁸⁵ Charming Mr Wickham contents himself with the spoken word. He twists his life story so that he appears to be the injured and Mr Darcy the evil-doer. ‘I had supposed him to be

⁸² Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. R. W. Chapman (1813; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), 12.

⁸³ Janine Barchas, *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen: History, Location, and Celebrity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 142.

⁸⁴ Fanny Burney, *Evelina* (1778; London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1946), 31.

⁸⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, 242.

despising his fellow-creatures in general, but did not suspect him of descending to such malicious revenge, such injustice, such inhumanity as this!’⁸⁶ is Elizabeth’s reaction to Wickham’s fairy tale about Mr Darcy. Since we know in which manner the novels end, it is clear that both issues are later revealed and explained.

I definitely would not like to compare Mr Darcy with Sir Clement Willoughby, but there is one thing in which they think in the same way. The explanation given to Evelina from Willoughby as to the reason why he wrote the letter pretending to be written by Lord Orville is that ‘the happy Orville, who you are so ready to bless, – had made me believe he loved you not, – nay, that he held you in contempt.’⁸⁷ It highly resembles the manner in which Darcy thinks about the love of Elizabeth’s sister Jane towards his best friend, Mr Bingley. When Elizabeth upbraids him for having destroyed the happiness of the two lovers, Darcy defends himself saying: ‘I remained convinced from the evening’s scrutiny, that though she received his attentions with pleasure, she did not invite them by any participation of sentiment.’⁸⁸

There is also a noticeable resemblance in the speeches of the heroines, when one of them, Evelina, claims: ‘I hate Lord Orville, – he is the last man in the world in whose favour I should be prejudiced.’⁸⁹ Elizabeth does not want to remain behind and confirms: ‘I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed on to marry.’⁹⁰

Studying the novels, it can soon be found that there are many similar characters. With respect to the great spectrum of characters the authors are dealing with, I am going to point out only the most significant correspondences. Such can be seen between Evelina and Elizabeth’s sister Jane. They are both very innocent and by no means suspicious. Both girls believe in the correctness of all people; however, the others are perfectly aware of such a ‘weakness’ of Jane and Evelina. ‘My dearest Miss Anville,’ said he [Lord Orville], gravely, ‘I see, and I adore the purity of your mind, superior as it is to all little arts, and all apprehensions of suspicion; [...].’⁹¹ In a

⁸⁶ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 80.

⁸⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, 361.

⁸⁸ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 197.

⁸⁹ Burney, *Evelina*, 249.

⁹⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 193.

⁹¹ Burney, *Evelina*, 338.

similar manner, Elizabeth addresses Jane, trying to warn her against people that could easily misuse Jane's characteristics:

Oh! you are a great deal too apt you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in any body. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.⁹²

Not to deal only with the main protagonists, we can also talk about the common features of certain proud relatives of Mr Darcy and Lord Orville: 'Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them, such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank.'⁹³ This is Jane Austen's description of Lady Catherine. Mrs Selwyn, Evelina's excellent companion, describes the self-centred Mrs Beaumont as a woman who '[...] for, chancing herself to be born of a noble and ancient family, she thinks proper to be of opinion, that *birth* and *virtue* are one and the same thing.'⁹⁴

The life experience of both authors is something that very much reflects in the novels. Forgotten and overlooked by her dying mother, Fanny Burney writes the story of Evelina who is motherless.⁹⁵ What can however seem strange to a reader familiar with Fanny Burney's love for her father is that, in the novel, Evelina's biological father is depicted as a man not caring of his child and refusing to meet and acknowledge her as a daughter. In response to Lady Howard, a friend of Evelina's guardian Mr Villars who is trying to solve the issue of Evelina's parentage, Sir John Belmont writes about his daughter: 'As to the young lady, whom Mr. Villars so obligingly proposes presenting to me, I wish her all the happiness [...].'⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it could provide little satisfaction to the reader that Sir John eventually turns out to be better than he was regarded before and that he finally positively responds to the letter which his former wife Caroline wrote before she died: 'Evelina,' he cried, 'she charges me to receive thee; – wilt thou, in obedience to her will, own for thy father the destroyer of thy mother?'⁹⁷ However, in the end, apart

⁹² Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 14.

⁹³ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 162.

⁹⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, 262.

⁹⁵ See Rizzo, "Burney and Society," 132.

⁹⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, 146.

⁹⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, 358.

from appointing her the heiress of his fortune, he does not want to become Evelina's close acquaintance.⁹⁸

On the other hand, Evelina's love and admiration for her guardian Mr Villars is boundless. It is very probable that a model for this character was the above-mentioned family friend of the Burneys, 'Daddy' Crisp. The exceptionally strong relationship between Evelina and Mr Villars is signalled by the warm welcome of the two when Evelina returns home from London:

I sprung forward and, with a pleasure that bordered upon agony, I embraced his knees, I kissed his hands, I wept over them, but could not speak: while he, now raising his eyes in thankfulness towards heaven, now bowing down his reverend head, and folding me in his arms, could scarce articulate the blessings with which his kind and benevolent heart overflowed.⁹⁹

Even Evelina's love for Lord Orville seems to spring from his resemblance to Mr Villars. In one of her many letters to the guardian she writes:

I could wish that *you*, my dearest Sir, knew Lord Orville, because I am sure you would love him; [...] I sometimes imagine, that when his youth is flown, his vivacity abated, and his life is devoted to retirement, he will, perhaps, resemble him whom I most love and honour.¹⁰⁰

The same is Mr Villars' devotion to his nurse-child. He often calls Evelina by names such as 'the child of my bosom! – the comfort of my age! – the sweet solace of all my infirmities!'¹⁰¹

Since Jane Austen's family life was very similar to Fanny Burney's, it is hard to say whether the author of *Pride and Prejudice* was more inspired by her own life story or by Evelina's, while creating Elizabeth's relatives and family. It was probably the combination of both that gave rise to Elizabeth's perfect relationship with her ironical father.

⁹⁸ See Burney, *Evelina*, 352.

⁹⁹ Burney, *Evelina*, 237-238.

¹⁰⁰ Burney, *Evelina*, 67.

¹⁰¹ Burney, *Evelina*, 236.

When Elizabeth still dislikes Mr Darcy, and finds out that he has destroyed her sister's possible match with Mr Bingley because he disapproved of the behaviour of the Bennet family, she first of all justifies Jane and then continues, saying: 'Neither could any thing be urged against my father, who, though with some peculiarities, has abilities which Mr. Darcy himself need not disdain, and respectability which he will probably never reach.'¹⁰² To depict the tie between Lizzy and her father as really firm, Jane Austen writes about Elizabeth's feeling while her already beloved Mr Darcy is in Mr Bennet's library to ask permission to marry his daughter:

She did not fear her father's opposition, but he was going to be made unhappy, and that it should be through her means, that *she*, his favourite child, should be distressing him by her choice, should be filling him with fears and regrets in disposing of her, was a wretched reflection, and she sat in misery [...].¹⁰³

The dissuasion that is given to both girls against their beloved is another thing that could be considered the same in both novels. Mr Villars does not hesitate to communicate his opinion on Evelina's meeting with Lord Orville in a very direct way. 'You must quit him! – his sight is baneful to your repose, his society is death to your future tranquillity!'¹⁰⁴ is the way in which he responds to Evelina's enthusiastic letters about Orville. Elizabeth's father is much less strict in his advice. When he gives her the consent to marry Mr Darcy, he only says:

But let me advise you to think better of it. I know your disposition, Lizzy. I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior.¹⁰⁵

Happily, the girls are finally disobedient of such advice and the reader is satisfied, reading about Elizabeth and Evelina who are painting their consequent happiness to their by now gratified father Mr Bennet and guardian Mr Villars.

As to Elizabeth's mother, she is definitely inspired by the real mother of Jane Austen about whom it is said that she was very often ill and considered a hypochondriac by

¹⁰² Burney, *Evelina*, 187.

¹⁰³ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 375.

¹⁰⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, 286.

¹⁰⁵ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 376.

her daughter.¹⁰⁶ Mrs Austen is being mocked throughout the whole novel; still, from my point of view, one of the best satirical descriptions of Mrs Bennet appears in one dialogue at the very beginning:

‘Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.’

‘You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.’¹⁰⁷

For Jane Austen, Mrs Bennet was ‘a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; [...]’¹⁰⁸

To continue with Fanny Burney, her beautiful relationship towards Mr Crisp is not the only one which can be felt in *Evelina*. We already know that Fanny’s sister Susan was her best friend. Since Evelina does not know her father and does not have any idea about having a brother, Miss Mirvan, a girl of Evelina’s age, becomes Miss Anville’s best friend. The mutual reliance of the girls is such that Evelina writes to Mr Villars: ‘Indeed, I conceal nothing from her, she is so gentle and sweet-tempered, that it gives me great pleasure to place an entire confidence in her.’¹⁰⁹

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen’s perfect relationship with her sister and lifelong companion Cassandra is obvious. Opening the heart to her sister and talking about the confusion she felt when she found out that Wickham was lying and she was doing an injustice to Darcy, Elizabeth tells Jane:

I was very uncomfortable, I may say unhappy. And with no one to speak to, of what I felt, no Jane to comfort me and say that I had not been so very weak and vain and nonsensical as I knew I had! Oh! how I wanted you!¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ See Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times*, 38.

¹⁰⁷ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 5.

¹⁰⁸ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Burney, *Evelina*, 145.

¹¹⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 226.

After having mentioned similar scenes and the resemblance of the characters of *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice*, I would like to talk about the messages that the novels should communicate to the readers.

The main issue Fanny Burney is dealing with and wants to point out is a critique of the class system.¹¹¹ The society in which *Evelina* enters is a hypocritical place where money and origin are placed above everything else. *Evelina* is a well-educated, decent girl who is, however, looked down on because she is not of noble origin. Perfectly aware of her situation, *Evelina* admits: ‘Since I, as Mr. Lovel says, am *Nobody*, I seated myself quietly at the window, and not very near to any body [...].’¹¹² Fanny Burney’s effort to ridicule the class system is signalled also in *Evelina*’s first letter sent to Mr Villars after the ball where she meets Lord Orville. Very shameful of her having no money and noble roots, *Evelina* writes:

But how was I startled, when she whispered me that my partner was a nobleman! This gave me a new alarm; how will he be provoked, thought I, when he finds what a simple rustic he has honoured with his choice!¹¹³

Being of no fortune nor prospect of inheriting any, *Evelina* would need to marry a rich man because ‘no other realistic solution can guarantee both freedom of movement and dinner on the table’ to a woman.¹¹⁴ It thus seems quite natural that *Evelina*’s newly acquired French grandmother Madame Duval is trying to match *Evelina* with her relative, Mr Branghton. As Madame Duval comments upon her intention:

I have had grander views for you, myself, if once I could get you to Paris, and make you be owned; but, if I can’t do that, and you can do no better, why, as you are both my relations, I think to leave my fortune between you, and then, if you marry, you never need want for nothing.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 47.

¹¹² Burney, *Evelina*, 266-267.

¹¹³ Burney, *Evelina*, 26.

¹¹⁴ Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 28.

¹¹⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, 225.

Another discourse in which Evelina's pitiable situation is perfectly depicted is the interview between two of Evelina's admirers, Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby, the latter of which states:

I believe that not even the philosophy of your Lordship would recommend me to a connection of that sort, with a girl of obscure birth, whose only dowry is her beauty, and who is evidently in a state of dependency.¹¹⁶

The same issue is crucial for Jane Austen.¹¹⁷ Her mother, who wants to secure her five daughters with some living in case their father dies, is in continuous pursuit of potential husbands and 'if a smart young colonel, with five or six thousand a year, should want one of my girls, I shall not say nay to him.'¹¹⁸ The issue of fortune is so important that it is placed above everything else. Colonel Fitzwilliam, Darcy's relative and one of Elizabeth's admirers, explains his not proposing to Elizabeth by saying that 'there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money.'¹¹⁹ The idea of Mr Darcy's upper-class approach towards Elizabeth is given by the fact that he 'had 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.'¹²⁰

It is not only in the context of marriage that the Bennets feel they are considered inferior. As well as in Fanny Burney, Jane Austen writes about the strange class system rules in general. Bingley's sisters do not hesitate to mock the relatives of the Bennet girls who earn their living by trade and not from the income of an estate:

'I think I have heard you say, that their uncle is an attorney in Meryton.'
'Yes; and they have another, who lives somewhere near Cheapside.'
'That is capital,' added her sister, and they both laughed heartily.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, 322.

¹¹⁷ See Lorna Clark, "The Afterlife and Further Reading," in *The Cambridge Companion to Frances Burney*, ed. Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176.

¹¹⁸ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 29.

¹¹⁹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 183.

¹²⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 52.

¹²¹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 36-37.

It is however not only the rigidity of the class system itself that Fanny Burney deals with. Another theme is also perfectly connected with ridiculing society: that is Fanny Burney deals with social awkwardness. Knowing that ‘nothing is so delicate as the reputation of a woman,’¹²² Evelina is permanently afraid of making a mistake, violating the rules of etiquette and always blushing. Although she, inexperienced, commits a few mistakes, it is not she herself who should feel ashamed of. On the other hand, her newly acquired family headed by Madame Duval, who does not hesitate to stay undressed in bed while having breakfast in the company of an unrelated man and feels not guilty of speaking badly of her granddaughter’s tutor Mr Villars who taught Evelina everything,¹²³ is definitely a company to feel ashamed of.¹²⁴ Evelina herself speaks about the family as ‘so low-bred and vulgar, that I should be equally ashamed of such a connection in the country, or any where.’¹²⁵ There is another quote that makes Evelina’s opinion of her family members perfectly clear. Once she writes to Mr Villars: ‘I am sure I shall not be very ambitious of being known to any more of my relations, if they have any resemblance to those whose acquaintance I have been introduced to already.’¹²⁶ Proceeding in the book, readers can even see Evelina’s uneasiness about her family deepening, word for word she writes to her guardian: ‘I fear you will be sick of reading about this family; [...] Happy shall I be, when I quit them all, and again return to Berry Hill!’¹²⁷

Elizabeth Bennet, as well as Evelina, has many reasons to feel ashamed of her family. The behaviour of nearly all the relatives is awkward and does indeed bother the two oldest Miss Bennets very much. There are many unbearable moments connected with Jane and Elizabeth’s relations in *Pride and Prejudice*. One of the most intolerable situations for them is the evening when the ball at Netherfield, Bingley’s seat, takes place. Jane is, luckily for her, too engaged in conversation with Mr Bingley; Elizabeth, on the other hand, is becoming really desperate while observing the behaviour of her relatives. The one who contributes to Elizabeth’s feeling of shame the most is her cousin and admirer, Mr Collins. Although not

¹²² Burney, *Evelina*, 152.

¹²³ See Burney, *Evelina*, 61 – 62.

¹²⁴ See Simons, *Fanny Burney*, 35.

¹²⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, 88.

¹²⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, 65.

¹²⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, 166.

acquainted with Mr Darcy, he decides to salute him because he wants to meet the nephew of his beloved benefactress, Lady Catherine.¹²⁸ Not to fall behind, Elizabeth's and Jane's younger sister Mary is trying to charm the audience with playing the piano and singing, though her 'powers were by no means fitted for such a display; her voice was weak, and her manner affected.'¹²⁹ To complete the disaster, Mrs Bennet is not talking about anything else than of her 'Jane's marrying so greatly,'¹³⁰ though there is no reason to consider Jane and Bingley's future engagement a certainty.

To Elizabeth it appeared, that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success; [...].¹³¹

The one who very much perceives and criticizes such behaviour of the Bennet family is Mr Darcy.¹³² On the other hand, later on he himself 'looked a little ashamed of his aunt's ill breeding, [...],'¹³³ when she behaved in a proud and arrogant way.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to speak about Burney's and Austen's insinuation of the feminist ideas in their novels. Being considered two of the first writers trying to awaken self-consciousness in women, it is clear that the novels should convey that kind of message.

In my opinion, it is more Fanny Burney who undoubtedly deals with the feminist issue. It for the first time appears already at the very beginning of the novel, when Evelina communicates her first experience of the ball. She critically observes that 'The man, as they passed and repassed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands.'¹³⁴ Fanny Burney even stiffens up when the arrogant Captain Mirvan, the father of Evelina's best friend, emerges in the novel. When Lord Orville asks the girls in the theatre how they

¹²⁸ See Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 98.

¹²⁹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 100.

¹³⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 99.

¹³¹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 101.

¹³² See Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 198.

¹³³ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 178.

¹³⁴ Burney, *Evelina*, 25.

like the play, Captain Mirvan starts up: ‘What signifies asking them girls? Do you think they know their own minds yet?’¹³⁵ and then turns round to his daughter and threatens her: ‘I charge you, as you value my favour, that you’ll never again be so impertinent as to have a taste of your own before my face.’¹³⁶ Anyhow, Fanny Burney is not satisfied yet. When her heroine travels to Bristol, Burney provides her with a very self-conscious female companion, Mrs Selwyn. Mrs Selwyn’s behaviour attracts the attention of all, and irritates the men of every party. When Sir Clement Willoughby disapprovingly comments upon Mrs Selwyn’s taste for satire and Evelina asks him whether he objects to such a thing, he only replies: ‘Yes, my sweet reproacher, in a *woman* I do; in a *woman* I think it intolerable.’¹³⁷ To conclude the discourse of Fanny Burney’s feminist sentiment, I would like to mention one more comment of a man of Evelina’s Bristol party:

[...] for a woman wants nothing to recommend her but beauty and good nature; in every thing else she is either impertinent or unnatural. For my part, deuce take me if ever I wish to hear a word of sense from a woman as long as I live!¹³⁸

In comparison with Fanny Burney’s *Evelina*, it is much more difficult to find some traces of feminist views in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. Rachel Brownstein in her book *Why Jane Austen?* (2011) suggests that Jane Austen’s feminism can be seen already at the very beginning of the novel in the fact that Elizabeth’s mother calls her husband ‘Mr. Bennet’ while Mr Bennet calls his wife simply ‘my dear.’ In Brownstein’s opinion, such an addressing carries an element of Mrs Bennet’s subordination to her husband.¹³⁹ Since already on the first page of the novel itself we can see Mrs Bennet calling her husband ‘my dear’ as well, I personally do not identify with such a point of view. According to my own opinion, we can find Austen’s feminism rather in Lady Catherine de Bourgh’s comment upon the practise connected with inheritance. Talking to Elizabeth, whose father’s fortune is entailed to her cousin, she says: ‘Your father’s estate is entailed on Mr. Collins I think. [...] I

¹³⁵ Burney, *Evelina*, 102.

¹³⁶ Burney, *Evelina*, 102.

¹³⁷ Burney, *Evelina*, 318.

¹³⁸ Burney, *Evelina*, 336.

¹³⁹ See Rachel M. Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 23.

see no occasion for entailing estates from the female line.’¹⁴⁰ Though Jane Austen does not express her feminist view so openly, there is one other part in the book that seems to be ridiculing the man’s position and a woman’s possible influence upon it. In the conclusion of the novel, Jane Austen, talking about Mr Darcy’s sister, claims that ‘By Elizabeth’s instructions she began to comprehend that a woman may take liberties with her husband, which a brother will not always allow in a sister more than ten years younger than himself.’¹⁴¹

7. Conclusion

Having spoken about the period Jane Austen and Frances Burney lived in, their families, education and destinies, having talked about the things Madame D’Arbly and Jane Austen were similar at and what they had in common, and finally, having analysed and mentioned several parts and common features of *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice*, it is time to comment upon the popularity of both writers.

Seeing that Fanny Burney was Jane Austen’s model in so many ways, the reader must ask why Jane Austen is still so popular, or rather why her popularity is still increasing, while her contemporary Madame D’Arbly is hardly remembered by anyone. Is there anything special in the novels of Jane Austen and, in particular, the most popular one, *Pride and Prejudice*? Is Jane Austen’s language and style so outstanding that it makes her novels exceptional? In short, why are we still, exactly two hundred years after *Pride and Prejudice* was published for the first time, so interested in Jane Austen’s stories?

Reading different essays upon this subject, a reader may be at first disappointed because many critics attribute Jane Austen’s survival and success to a very simple thing. According to several of them, it was the desire of her family to preserve Jane Austen’s legacy that contributed to the writer’s fame. For example Katherine Sutherland says that ‘It was the biography by Austen-Leigh, her nephew, rather than a critical revaluation or upturn in the reading of the novels which began the process

¹⁴⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 164.

¹⁴¹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 388.

that made Jane Austen into a special cultural commodity.¹⁴² A popular American writer and Austen critic, Henry James, suggested that it was the greed of publishers and others that saw a great potential to earn money in Austen's novels:

Responsible, rather, is the body of publishers, editors, illustrators, producers of the pleasant twaddle of magazines; who have found their 'dear', our dear, everybody's dear, Jane so infinitely to their material purpose, [...].¹⁴³

However probable are the opinions mentioned above, we must also find the reasons why Jane Austen's writing was more appreciated by several of her contemporaries as well; why her friends such as Dr Isham admired her *Pride and Prejudice* and 'shall not like Madame D'Arbly's new novel half so well.'¹⁴⁴ Not only was she celebrated by Sir Walter Scott,¹⁴⁵ but *Pride and Prejudice* was praised by Lord Byron's fiancée, Annabella Milbanke, as 'the "most *probable*" fiction she had ever read.'¹⁴⁶

Indeed, it is probably Jane Austen's adherence to real-life on which her fame is based. In contrast to Burney's *Evelina*, *Pride and Prejudice* is not a pure Cinderella story.¹⁴⁷ Though the novel is a story about two young women, Elizabeth and Jane, that after so many difficulties closes with a happy ending and the double marriage of the Bennet sisters to rich noblemen, and *Evelina* is a story about a poor girl struggling to win love and finally getting married to Lord Orville, still there can be found more rationality and economic subtext in Austen's story than in the one by Madame D'Arbly. It is known that Sir Walter Scott, though he appreciated the novel very much, criticized it for Elizabeth's marrying Mr Darcy rather from prudential reasons than from pure love.¹⁴⁸ Francis Cornish in his Austen biography writes:

¹⁴² Kathryn Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, 11.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Malden, *Jane Austen* (London: W. H. Allen, 1889), 77.

¹⁴⁵ See Malden, *Jane Austen*, 78.

¹⁴⁶ Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 41.

¹⁴⁷ See Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 42.

¹⁴⁸ See Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 42.

The female philosophy of a hundred years ago was not passionate; it aimed at making the best of the institution of marriage, not disregarding income, station and convention; it took sentiment by the way, [...].¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, the same biographer on the same page states that ‘nothing can be more natural and satisfactory than the relation of mutual confidence at once established between Elizabeth and Darcy.’¹⁵⁰ It seems that Jane Austen provided the contemporary readers exactly with everything they wanted. The combination of a little of the Cinderella story and a little of reality seems to have done the trick.

Austen’s art to depict the real world can be perceived also elsewhere in the novel. Kathryn Sutherland says that ‘It was as if Austen were motivated by a simple desire to reproduce the world visible around her, [...]’¹⁵¹ Sarah Tytler considers Austen’s characters ‘men and women whom our grandfathers knew, whom we know and visit, like and dislike, marry and refuse to marry.’¹⁵² Jane Austen’s magic consists in her perfect depiction of real life. Her characters are so vivid that we can imagine the heroes going on horseback to the city to have their hair cut and their beards shaved.¹⁵³ The same seems to be true of Austen’s capacity to describe the places her novels take place in. Janine Barchas suggests that Jane Austen was especially brilliant in her descriptions, that her ‘smallish mentions of streets differ from the wide-angled descriptions in, for example, Frances Burney’s *Evelina* (1778), a known favourite of Austen’s.’¹⁵⁴ Jane Austen’s descriptions of villages, houses, parks, gardens, hedgerows and landscapes are of such a high-quality that the reading of Austen’s novels can be a way of visiting England and recollecting home for the Englishman abroad.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 121.

¹⁵⁰ Cornish, *Jane Austen*, 121.

¹⁵¹ Sutherland, *Jane Austen’s Textual Lives*, 16.

¹⁵² Tytler, *Jane Austen and Her Works*, 54-55.

¹⁵³ See Sutherland, *Jane Austen’s Textual Lives*, 22.

¹⁵⁴ Barchas, *Matters of Fact in Jane Austen*, 63.

¹⁵⁵ See Sutherland, *Jane Austen’s Textual Lives*, 51.

There is one important thing that should be mentioned in order to distinguish Austen's writing from that of her contemporaries. As we can read in the biography of Charles Malden:

None of the great trio of her sister writers – Miss Burney, Miss Edgeworth, or Miss Ferrier – ventured to omit the moralising which our ancestors considered necessary to counteract the baleful effects of being amused, and their works, in consequence, are little read by a generation which prefers drawing its own moral to finding it ready made.¹⁵⁶

Still, it is Jane Austen who is considered to be one of the authors whose works implicitly carry important moral messages and a set of values that are worth saving.¹⁵⁷

In addition, Jane Austen offers her readers an amusing insight into the world of gossips. Gossiping is a very popular hobby up to the present day, as there are not many people who do not like talking about others – whether they be friends, enemies, family members or neighbours. Austen's concern for gossips is still very up-to-date because we are all still very interested in what others do and above all afraid of what they think of us. According to Rachel Brownstein, it is this exact phenomenon that shapes our personality; and this is the reason why we consider Austen's characters similar to us. Thus, we are sympathizing with Elizabeth's not being considered beautiful enough by Darcy, by Darcy's displeasure when he finds out how evil Elizabeth thinks he is, or with Lizzy's panic when she finds out that Lydia has eloped and realizes that such an incident could destroy her and her sisters' reputation and future.¹⁵⁸

The last but one important key to Austen's success is hidden in her art of writing. Jane Austen herself 'emphasized the importance of "the best chosen language."¹⁵⁹ She was the author who wrote an 'accessible body of works, the lucidity of whose style persuaded readers of their nearness to life, [...].'¹⁶⁰ It seems that it was the

¹⁵⁶ Malden, *Jane Austen*, 76-77.

¹⁵⁷ See Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, 48.

¹⁵⁸ See Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 146-148.

¹⁵⁹ Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 54.

¹⁶⁰ Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, 27.

writer's language, her perfect usage of dialogues and conversations and her utilization of more everyday language than was the norm of the period that has also led to her success.¹⁶¹

It seems though that the most important aspect of Austen's novels and their popularity has not been mentioned yet. Since we have already talked about her sense of real-life, we must consider the capacity of the author to depict the reality of everyday life to be the clue to Austen's fame. Considered in depth, her novels have proved their worth in different periods and particular situations. It is known that Austen's novels were read by British soldiers when fighting in France during the Great War. *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* and other stories were the nurseries of patriotic sensation, and the reminders of home, mediated by Jane Austen works, gave the soldiers some kind of determination and strength to keep fighting for their country. On the other hand, the essentially trouble-free plots of the novels were operating as a kind of balm and escape for the soldiers' minds. Such contributions have been not, and probably will never be, forgotten by her readers and seem to be the main reason why the author is still so popular and praised as a national writer.¹⁶²

All in all, I would like to conclude the topic of Jane Austen's surviving legacy with a quote from Brownstein's book:

Jane Austen remains on the collective mind partly because her novels have shaped our culture, and ideals, and our feelings, creating an accessible alternative world – because of what Trilling¹⁶³ called the hope she holds out, that we can be different, intelligent and loving, and learn to know and value distinction, and have it, as well.¹⁶⁴

However straightforward the conclusion of my thesis may appear to be, it really seems that Fanny Burney simply provided the inspiration 'that Austen brought to perfection.'¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ See Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, 274.

¹⁶² More on the subject in Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Textual Lives*, 51-54.

¹⁶³ Lionel Trilling was an American literary critic.

¹⁶⁴ Brownstein, *Why Jane Austen?*, 68.

¹⁶⁵ Quoted in Sabor, ed., *The Companion to Fanny Burney*, 168.

8. Resumé

Tématem mé bakalářské práce jsou dvě významné anglické autorky přelomu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století Fanny Burneyová a Jane Austenová, především pak jejich dvě díla, prvotiny *Evelina* (1778) od Fanny Burneyové a *Pýcha a předsudek* (1813) od Jane Austenové.

V začátcích práce je stručně shrnuta historicko-kulturní situace, která panovala v Británii v době, kdy obě autorky žily a psaly a kterou byly životy i dílo obou žen značně ovlivněny.

Zajímavé životní osudy obou spisovatelek se výrazně zrcadlí jak v díle Madame D'Arblay (Fanny Burneyová), tak v románech Jane Austenové. Jelikož se souvislosti mezi životy autorek a jejich dílem zdají být podstatnými, jsou v bakalářské práci rozebrány životy obou spisovatelek. Malým příkladem vlivu životů autorek na jejich díla může být jejich krásný vztah k sestřám a k otci, který je velmi dobře znát ve vztahu hlavních hrdinek k jejich rodinným příslušníkům. Frances (Fanny) Burneyová, stejně jako Jane Austenová, měla velmi osobitý názor na společnost, ve které se pohybovala. Satira společnosti je tedy prvkem, který je v románech obou autorek velmi častý. Stejně tak se v jejich dílech projevuje postoj autorek k otázce úlohy a postavení žen ve společnosti a k jejich ekonomické situaci. Všechny tyto okolnosti, ve kterých se životy i názory Jane Austenové a Frances Burneyové shodují, jsou rozebrány v páté kapitole.

Samotná analýza románů *Evelina* a *Pýcha a předsudek* je založena na podrobném zkoumání situací, povahových rysů postav a více či méně skrytých poselství, jež se objevují shodně v obou románech. Z toho, že Frances Burneyová byla prokazatelně velkým vzorem Jane Austenové, lze usuzovat, že pro mnoho prvků objevujících se v románu *Pýcha a předsudek* bylo inspirací právě dílo Fanny Burneyové. Obě knihy mají poměrně stejnou dějovou linii. Hlavními hrdinkami obou románů jsou dvě mladé ženy, nacházející se z ekonomického hlediska v nepříliš příznivé situaci. Příběhy obou protagonistek nakonec po mnoha peripetiích a nedorozuměních končí sňatkem s velmi bohatým šlechticem. Nicméně to není pouze společný děj, co spojuje oba romány. Společné znaky nás provázejí napříč celými díly, počínaje shodnou scénou z plesů v úvodech knih, kdy se oba budoucí ctitelé a manželé hlavních hrdinek o těchto ženách vyjádří nelichotivě. V průběhu příběhů narážíme na

mnoho druhů postav, vztahů a problémů, kterými se zabývají shodně obě autorky. V románech obou spisovatelek je také znát jejich podobný vztah ke společnosti a názor na problémy doby.

V závěru práce je pak zmíněno několik důvodů, proč dílo Jane Austenové přežilo až dodnes a je stále populární, zatímco literární počiny její současnice a vzoru Fanny Burneyové jsou většinou společností zapomenuty. Austenové úspěch je založen na mnoha faktorech, z nichž nejvýznamnějšími se zdá být její schopnost dokonale popsat život v Anglii a tím podněcovat ve čtenářích pocit vlastenectví, a zároveň um vytvořit víceméně bezproblémové zápletky, které poskytují čtenáři únik z reálného světa plného potíží do přátelského světa spisovatelčiných hrdinek.

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Anotace

Autor: Petra Velichová

Katedra, fakulta: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, FF UP

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Charakteristika: Bakalářská práce srovnává romány *Evelina* a *Pýcha a předsudek* od anglických autorek Fanny Burneyové a Jane Austenové. Romány jsou analyzovány z hlediska prvků, které se objevují shodně v obou dílech a které byly s největší pravděpodobností převzaty Jane Austenovou právě z *Eveliny*. Zároveň práce pojednává o faktorech, které přispěly ke stále trvajícimu úspěchu Jane Austenové.

Annotation

Author: Petra Velichová

Department, Faculty: Department of English and American Studies, FF UP

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Characteristics: The bachelor's thesis compares the novels of *Evelina* and *Pride and Prejudice* by English authors Fanny Burney and Jane Austen. The novels are analysed from the viewpoint of the features that appear in both works and that were most likely taken by Jane Austen directly from *Evelina*. The thesis also deals with the elements that contributed to Austen's continuing success.