

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

Pedagogická fakulta

Katedra anglického jazyka

**ŠTĚPÁNKA ONRÁČKOVÁ**

III. ročník – kombinované studium

Obor: Speciální pedagogika pro 2. stupeň základních a střední školy a anglický jazyk se  
zaměřením na vzdělávání

**Charakteristika a srovnání hrdinek románů Jane Austenové - Emma, Elizabeth**

**Bennet, Fanny Price**

**The comparisons and contrasts of heroines in Jane Austen's novels – Emma,**

**Elizabeth Bennet, Fanny Price**

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Milena Vodičková, Ph.D.

OLOMOUC 2012

## **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

Souhlasím s využitím své bakalářské práce pro studijní a výukové účely.

Štěpánka Ondráčková

V Olomouci dne 2. března 2012

## **Poděkování**

Děkuji PhDr. Mileně Vodičkové, Ph.D. za odborné vedení bakalářské práce, poskytování cenných rad, připomínek a metodické vedení práce a v neposlední řadě za pomoc při vyhledávání potřebné literatury.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>page</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>1. Elizabeth Bennet</b> .....	7
1.1 The story line of Pride and Prejudice.....	7
1.2 Elizabeth's values and relationships .....	8
1.3 The development in the character of Elizabeth.....	11
<b>2. Emma Woodhouse</b> .....	14
2.1 The story line of Emma.....	14
2.2 Emma's values and relationships .....	14
2.3 Emma's world of illusions.....	19
2.4 The inner evolution of Emma.....	21
<b>3. Fanny Price</b> .....	24
3.1 The story line of Mansfield Park.....	24
3.2 Fanny's values and relationships with the other characters in the novel....	25
3.3 Fanny as a contradictory heroine.....	28
<b>4. Comparisons</b> .....	30
4.1 The attitudes of the heroines to the members of their families.....	30
4.2 Comparisons of the personalities of the three heroines.....	31
4.3 The turning point in the lives of the heroines.....	33
4.4 The relationship between the heroines and their male partners.....	34
4.5 The issues of money, marriage and feminism .....	35
4.6 The position of the heroines within the social order.....	37
4.7 My view on the three heroines.....	37
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	39
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	40
<b>Abstract</b> .....	42

## Introduction

Jane Austen is one of the greatest authors of so called “domestic novels”. According to Nenadal (in Austenova 2004, p. 362) she founded the line of slightly ironic way of portraying bourgeois homes, which W. M. Thackeray or A. Trollop continued. She had a chance to see particularly this world around herself. Jane Austen was born in a family of a clergyman as the seventh child in the family. There were five brothers and one sister. The situation concerning boys was not really bad they were able to do military service or served the Royal Court. However, girls were limited by two possibilities, they could become teachers and governesses or they got married, which was commonly considered much better option.

Although Jane Austen never got married she did not become embittered. She preserved the attitude of a good-humored view of life that was not actually very rich in events.

Broad community of readers then indulged in quite different literature style. It was known as “a gothic novel” characterized by a complicated story, a cheap schematization of awkwardly created characters that were divided into purely evil or victimized ones. So the work of Jane Austen was born not only as a negative reaction to the fashion of that time, nevertheless as the interest in the miniature world of bourgeois parlours and the atmosphere of their micro-worlds, which was not still touched by the industrial revolution.

Jane Austen focuses on the heroines on the threshold of a mature life, entering it independently, testing qualities of their personal integrity and morally clean character. Moreover, Austen heightened her stories to comedies, in which she points at petty behaviour of the society pursuing one and the only aim – to get married.

Despite all of this, Jane Austen's books are slightly different with original heroines. The aim of this work is to compare three heroines of Jane Austen's books, namely Emma Woodhouse, Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price.

## **1.Elizabeth Bennet**

### **1.1 The story line of Pride and Prejudice**

Elizabeth Bennet is the main character of Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The story is set in a village manor in a family of a country gentleman. Elizabeth was born as the second of five daughters, whose mother set a target to herself to marry the daughters to amiable and ideally, wealthy men. The story starts with the arrival of Mr. Bingley and his sisters as well as his influential friend Mr. Darcy at the nearby manor. Mother Bennet sees Mr. Bingley as a suitable husband candidate for her oldest Jane. Elizabeth watches and also takes part in partly comic and partly sad series of events when Mrs. Bennet shows herself a silly and simple woman, Mr. Darcy is pictured as an arrogant and proud man who detests Mrs. Bennet, on the other hand, he falls in love with Elizabeth. Elizabeth is so prejudiced towards Mr. Darcy that she is not able to see his good traits. There is a long way for them to follow in their search for happiness.

However, despite every inconsistency of relationships amongst all the main characters, Elizabeth and Darcy undergo certain changes and are able to accept and tolerate each other. Moreover, thanks to their self-knowledge and mutual appreciation they can begin their life together happily.

### **1.2 Elizabeth's values and relationships**

Elizabeth is a witty, smart girl with a nice figure and brightly grey eyes that mirrored her playfulness and intelligence. Typical for her was a sharp humor in certain situations. She was able to laugh at herself too. Tomalin (2007, p.161) describes

Elizabeth as a sunny heroine and a superb creature, who uses humour as both defence and attack. Her personality radiates the warmth, which from my point of view causes why readers are attracted particularly to this novel. According to Tomalin (2007, p. 162), Elizabeth's intelligence and beauty mingle and in fact, mean the same. Furthermore she explains that the combination of Elizabeth's qualities such as energy, wit, self-confidence give cause to dramatic moments in which a reader finds Elizabeth in action, laughing, teasing, contradicting and refusing to comply with others. Miles (2003, p.38) says that Elizabeth is provocatively insincere when she claims equality between her father and Mr. Darcy.

At the same time he suggests that, however, Elizabeth is exceptional she still belongs to "her" class. Values, attitudes and everything about her betray her – the way she speaks, dresses, moves.

She likes to watch how people act, she has to think about them and their motives. She looks for reasons and consequences that lead to their particular behaviour. In my opinion, she sometimes thinks too much. She prides herself on her ability to analyze past events and people's characters but unfortunately she misleads herself with respect to the personality of Mr. Darcy.

She is strongly bonded with her father and older sister Jane. She understands her father even without words. She sees his unhappy and unequal relationship with the mother. However, she is able to recognize the father's weak traits too. She talks with him quite often, she even dares persuade him to cancel his decisions, nevertheless, with no success. She is the father's favourite as well as Jane is hers. They do not have any

secrets between each other, except Elizabeth does not tell painful facts about the reason for Mr. Bingley's leaving the country and his long silence. She condemns foolish attitudes and behaviour of her mother and other sisters whose only sense of the entire life is to chase after potential husbands. The main embarrassment for Elizabeth is that her mother and sister Lydia are as vulgar, stupid and regrettable as Mr. Darcy thinks they are. However, she is too polite to formulate, even in the privacy of her own mind, the wish that her mother would drop dead, but she undoubtedly feels something like it. Elizabeth cannot also forget about Lydia. She is envious of Lydia, because Lydia succeeds in getting Wickham while she does not.

Elizabeth acts courageously when she refuses Mr. Collins's proposal and has to repeat it once more because he shows to be an intrusive, narrow-minded person. She is brave enough to resist mother's reproaches. Last but not least was the moment when Elizabeth resolutely faces threats of Darcy's rich and influential aunt Lady Catherine. According to Miles (2003, p.41), Elizabeth is convinced of the importance of inner qualities and personal credits. This exactly provides the support to her ability to withstand Lady Borrough's attack. This means, that when she is sure that her views and decisions are right she is firm and insisting. Tomalin (2007, p. 163) agrees that Elizabeth represents a clear moral person in the book, who though never steps over the rules of society. Elizabeth does not question obvious financial reality that separates her from Darcy. On the contrary, she baldly promotes the opinions of members of provincial middle class.

In my opinion, however, Elizabeth and Jane are a little bit superficial. They are interested in men's appearance, their charm, wit and good manners in the first place, anyway. This explains why Mr. Wickham becomes Elizabeth's dear friend even though she does not know him well. Moreover, she likes him because Mr. Wickham eagerly supports her dislike towards Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth is ready to believe everything that contributes to Darcy's bad reputation. She has an ill opinion of everyone connected with Darcy. She is so prejudiced.

Mr. Wickham is, actually, the one person in the book who successfully manipulates Elizabeth. Although it is obvious that Elizabeth wants to believe Wickham and then the question is risen to what extent she really is manipulated.

Elizabeth likes reading books. She probably has a good judgment on things and events, which results in her independency concerning her opinions. Almost no one is able to persuade her to change her opinion. It seems to me that she is rather stubborn and a bit too realistic, even cynical at times. Here comes up the question why Elizabeth and her personality were in disagreement with established standards of women's situation in the society. She does not represent the generally accepted image of a woman and her possibilities and duties. However, she knows that she cannot break through common rules. She must have been dissatisfied and confused when she saw the inconsistency of the world and instability of human characters. She strongly disapproved of Charlotte and Mr. Collins's wedding. She neither excused her friend for getting married such an unpleasant and silly man just because of Charlotte wanted the security of married life even though she did not love him. According to Tomalin (2007,

p. 163) the notion of marriage as a form of prostitution is surely present in Elizabeth's mind. That is probably why she refused marriage without love. Whether Elizabeth was right to blame Charlotte for being egoistic or a hypocrite is hard to say.

In addition to all these reasons there should be said that only a few occupations were opened to women and these were generally undervalued.

Nevertheless, this matter among many others proves how up-to-date issues Austen tackled in her novels.

### **1.3 The development in the character of Elizabeth**

On the contrary, thanks to the process of inside changes in Austen's main characters Elizabeth falls in love with Mr. Darcy. After he proposes Elizabeth so conceitedly and shows her cruelly how low her family were to him, he unintentionally strengthened her distaste for him. A partial change occurred when Elizabeth saw Darcy in his own environment. She was surprised by his unexpectedly friendly behaviour and the following story-line of consequences made her look at Darcy and his character differently. What appeared to be arrogance, bad temper and inclination to manipulative behaviour now exposed Darcy as a man of principle, his firmness, shyness and the true care for a friend. Nevertheless, I would like to express my personal doubt whether it is possible to observe the person so differently within such quite a short time. Whether love and hate stand so close even in novels. After all, Elizabeth was an unusually ordinary girl who was attracted not only by Darcy's morality but his masculine appearance and at last his beautiful properties significantly influenced Elizabeth in her

opinion on Mr. Darcy. Lascalles (1941, p. 160) explains that the couple is able to achieve the happy ending after they reach a climax of mutual hostility and after that they are made to head for the mutual understanding and friendship. Miles (2003, p. 118) explains this process a bit differently. He states that the personality of Mr. Darcy helps to the whole process of Elizabeth's self-knowledge through the social relationship and at the same time Miles refers to the moral novel. Further he states that Elizabeth refuses Darcy because he puts outward values above inner ones. However, as Elizabeth brings herself closer to Darcy himself and his values, similarly, Mr. Darcy brings himself to her moral inner values.

Elizabeth understands his character better when she visits his home, Pemberly. The place cultivated with the taste, without ostentation symbolized Darcy's character, and Miles (2003, p. 119) refers to Anglican evangelicalism here.

The possible answer to my doubt mentioned above can be the following. Elizabeth's falling in love does not have to be the sign of hypocrisy and vanity because of the eighteenth century passion for landscaping, the grounds of an estate could be an index to the owner's taste and personality and secondly, the well-being of farmers and tenants depended on the personality and managerial skills of the owner. Therefore it might be possible that after Elizabeth sees the manor and hears the housekeeper praise her master, she realizes his values and she does not have to look at him through his unfriendly manners. And if she longed for his property so much, she would probably accept his proposal before, because she definitely knew how rich he was.

To conclude my doubt, the fact, that Sir Walter Scott took this reason for Elizabeth falling in love with Mr. Darcy as a basic truth, should be sufficient explanation.

## **2. Emma Woodhouse**

### **2.1 The story line of Emma**

The story of this novel is also set in the country. Emma is a member of landed gentry and it can be said that she is very high on the social ladder in the community where she lives. She has only a father. Her mother died and a governess, who brought her up, got married and moved to a new home. Emma stayed alone and because she has the lively spirit, she is soon bored carrying for the father only. Besides she is really confident about her ability to match couples. She considers her first success as a matchmaker the marriage of her governess. So encouraged, she takes a naïve girl called Harriet under her wings in order to find a respectable husband for her. The first disillusion comes when Emma finds out that Mr. Elton courts her instead of Harriet. Neither a shameful event with Mr. Elton nor the fact that she hurts Harriet makes Emma stop. Not even her long-time friend Mr. Knightly can discourage her from such a foolish entertainment. After some time Emma begins to intrigue again. In the meantime, she falls in love at least she thinks she does. She is really surprised when she finds out that it is only illusion. When Emma discovers that she could lose her true and only love she immediately comes to her senses and stops intriguing. Moreover, she sincerely regrets what she caused. All is well that ends well, and this novel ends with three weddings.

### **2.2 Emma's values and relationships**

Emma is a pretty, rich and bright young woman. Austen (1994, p.7) says that she was simply of a happy disposition. She, too, is stubborn. However, it does not mean that she

is obstinate. She is not only white or black. She has both positive and negative traits of character. She is self-confident and witty. She loves her father and tries to protect him against all the troubles. She often uses tricks to persuade her highly anxious father. Although she is manipulative, the good point is that she never exposes him to any danger or discomfort. She is a perfect hostess although she grew up without mother. She was supposed to be self-reliant and because her governess Mrs. Watson was rather a friend than the missing parent Emma does not have anybody who would look after her and guide her. Sir Walter Scott describes Emma with these words: "Miss Woodhouse walks forth, the princess paramount superior to all her companions in wit, beauty, fortune and accomplishments, doated upon by her father and Mrs. Weston, admired and almost worshipped by more humble companions of the whist table." ()

Moving a bit back to the matter of Emma's growing up alone, according to Miles (2003, p. 52), Mr. Woodhouse resigned from the morally strong parent. Then Emma was left to herself and she learned to conclude situations in the wrong way. Her conclusions sprung from the society as a whole and reading of novels. These all nourished her inclination for intrigues.

Emma was bored so she chose an illegitimate girl and of unknown parentage called Harriet as a friend. Simple and naïve Harriet, who had just a pretty face, was not an equal partner for Emma. And Emma knew it. She chose her for a purpose. She intended to choose a husband for Harriet from her own class, which happened to be impossible in the end. She claimed the right to decide on behalf of Harriet, which was very arrogant of her. Actually, Emma wanted to demonstrate to everybody in her

surroundings that she achieved everything she wanted. In fact, she did not care for Harriet very much she just wanted the others to see her infallible. Emma manipulated Harriet as she needed, however she wanted to believe that she was doing it for Harriet's own good. Sir Walter Scott (1815) humorously states that Emma decided to become a matchmaker for the common weal, though without thinking about her own marriage.

From my point of view, Emma shows the considerable amount of naivety when she takes Harriet, the girl with such a background, as an object of her effort. Lscelles (1941, p. 69) clarifies that the young woman as Emma, without experience, living in the little society where almost everything goes agreeably according to the rules, could only have acquainted with illegitimacy as an interesting situation in books, similarly infidelity looked as a comic incident to Emma because she only knew these things from her reading. This might explain Emma's naïve choice of here unsuitable friend.

Nenadal (in Austenova 2004, p. 365) explains Emma's reasons and motives differently. He sees Emma as a typical girl who had to act as an adult quite early. Although she is predestined to live an easy and happy life, because she is beautiful, clever, rich and has a comfortable home and she also has a happy personality, she experienced too few worries and disappointments, which would help her to mature. Exactly these people believe that it is possible to draw not only their lives but also lives of the others. Emma's behaviour gives the impression of a series of cute mistakes made by a high-society girl, whose the most inward desire is to be good to other people and help them. This character feature is the more cute and comic the more unaware of her feelings Emma is.

Miles (2003, p. 77) contradicts the opinion above and believes that as for preservation of idyllic social order in Highbury, Emma presents the most disturbing and the most dangerous element. That is because she does not know where she belongs and whom she loves. Emma is also dangerous to the society because of her position in the society, her intelligence and beauty. The source of her misunderstanding of the class ideology is Emma's insufficient education and that is why she is so dangerous to social and political values at that time.

Further he states that Emma behaves considerably irresponsibly towards the society when she helps enforce the illegitimate claim of invisible wealth. However, she does not want to have anything in common with the consequences. Miles (ibid) adds that Emma's period of regency, since Emma's governess - Miss Taylor leaves, until Mr. Knightly marries Emma, is a period of chaos.

RJ McGill (2007) agrees that Emma was filled with the sense of her own superiority so she plotted and planned to elevate her new friend Harriet's social position, sadly, in vain. More sadly, she does not realize the extent of her failure and the results of such a harmful behaviour. The only person who tries to stop her is Mr. Knightly. Emma's father sees her flawless in every way.

Again Sir Walter Scott (1815) describes Emma as a conceited divine, who does not listen to Mr. Knightly, the only person who dares to reprove her and continues with her plan for Harriet. She manages to divert the suitable marriage for Harriet, when a farmer Mr. Martin proposes her, and what is more Emma, instead of Harriet, succeeds in receiving Mr. Elton's proposal.

Another not very pleasant feature of Emma's character is her belief that she should be the most admired person in the surroundings. She gives the impression that her self-confidence is on the verge of the conceit. It is firstly because of her social position and secondly, she knows that she is clever and talented. However, she is unable to finish anything. This might mean that she is a bit spoiled or volatile. If she was a bit more persistent she could not have disliked Jane Fairfax so much. Emma could not forgive Jane better education, especially her fabulous playing the piano. She was jealous of Jane's beauty and good manners too. What annoyed Emma most was the inability to get close to Jane. Neither Mr. Knightly helped this having set Jane as an example for Emma. Consequently, Emma "teamed up" with Frank Churchill and publicly mocked and offended Jane on the base of groundless speculations.

Sheryl Craig (2001) believes, that everybody admires Jane Fairfax because of her talents and beauty and intellect -everybody, but Emma. The members of Woodhouse family would welcome if Jane was Emma's companion. However Emma sees the whole matter differently. Emma primarily objects to Jane because she is reserved to her.

Further Jackson (2005) adds that Emma rejects Jane because Jane is superior to her. There is the contrast between Emma's disorientated behaviour and Jane's self-discipline. Emma has the advantage in her wealth while Jane is highly evolved and independent person though without money. In contrast, Emma's friendship with undeveloped and dependent Harriet means Emma's own limitations.

### **2.3 Emma's world of illusions**

The surprising and a little comic fact is that however Emma tries to manipulate some of the people near her she does not see that she is being manipulated very cleverly too. She is proud of her judgment but there she fails too. It means that she is not a good observer of people's characters as she claims. She tries to think and reconsider everything what happened and tries to follow her inner conclusions, but she is forced to change her judgments several times, which is always accompanied by remorse and promises that she will not interfere as a matchmaker with the lives of other people. She does not realize that she herself is the only rival to her.

Miles (2003, p. 52) states that if there are any obstacles they are found in the heroine herself. Emma does not realize it because she does not know herself. Moreover, she is unable to get to know well other characters of the story and that is the reason for depressing failure of her predictions concerning matchmaking.

Claire Tomalin (2007, p.252) agrees when she says that Emma has her inner voice, which tells her exactly what to do, but the reader can see that the inner voice is consistently wrong. It betrayed her when she thought that it was the question of time when Mr. Elton proposes Harriet, further it let her believe in the scandalous story about Jane Fairfax, which turned out to be a lie and it told her to flirt with Frank Churchill as insensitively as he flirted with her.

Emma tried to work as a matchmaker eagerly, however she claimed she would not marry. She does not need a husband. She refuses to have a suitor because she would feel endangered in her little world where she rules as an absolute ruler. However, her

close friends except the father and Mr. Knightly, of course, would like to see Emma dating Frank Churchill. At first she is pleased with his courtship, at least her behaviour seems like that. After some time she also finds out that her feelings are not true. She was mistaken again, however, somehow she feels delighted. The thought that Emma does not need a husband can be noticed mainly in the first part of the book. She actually feels, there should be something more in the relationship. More means love. She realizes very well too that because she is wealthy she can afford to be possibly unmarried and no one will disdain her.

Emma is blind to everything she does not want to see unless her close friend and a suitor reproves her. Obviously, it does not come to her mind that she loves him and he loves her, actually.

Nenadal (in Austenova 2004, p.266) states that Emma is trapped in the vicious circle when she is deciding between the reason and emotions. Her antipathy and affection stand against objectiveness. Emma stands in the circle alone. The only person who knows about her blunders and failures and who sees her immaturity is Mr. Knightly. Seeing Emma without the rose-coloured spectacles gives the chance to grow into a deep and pure relationship.

Lascelles (1941, p.76) confirms the above opinion saying that Emma's world of "misunderstanding and misinterpretations of clues" is wrapped into "the foil". And this "world of Emma's fancy fades in the clear, cool light of the day".

It is possible to make the conclusion with the assistance of Karin Jackson (2) words stating that Emma's dilemma is Emma herself and her world created of illusions and

her own fancy. She is absorbed in it so deeply that she fails to recognize even her affection to Mr. Knightly. The roots of all this are the trust in her own judgment and the false perception of reality. Interestingly, Jane Austen created the word “imagineist” to indicate Emma’s personality. Further, Jackson implies that Emma must learn that other people have their own life too apart from her imaginations what it should be, and must accept this.

#### **2.4 The inner evolution of Emma**

The crucial moment of Emma’s evolution takes place during the trip to Mr. Knightly’s manor. There she watches gloomily Harriet talking vividly with Mr. Knightly. And after Harriet confides that she fancies him, the possibility of Knightly and Harriet’s marriage is what she dreads most. In order to suppress her disgruntlement she behaves very badly towards Miss Bates, what is more she conspicuously flirts with Frank Churchill. After Mr. Knightly reprimands her angrily, she leaves in tears convinced that she might lose him forever. Only this can help Emma open her eyes widely and admit finally all the mistakes she made and how many people she hurt. And this is the first step towards her self-knowledge and happy relationship with the beloved man.

Karin Jackson (2005) concludes that when Emma sees her failures and sees how she hurts people around her as well as herself she gradually becomes mature. The moral development suggests Emma’s social role should be diminished. When, finally, Emma is able to realize the truth she can evolve morally and into a really integrated person. Through this process she gains more than loses. If she loses at all. To the mentioned above Jackson highlights the slowness of the process of Emma’s maturity. According to

Jackson (2005), Emma seems to be literally reluctant. However, the short span of Emma's involvement is what keeps the reader tied to the story. Jackson also agrees that Emma makes progress from delusion to self-recognition. Emma's wrong judgment of the characters of the story including Mr. Elton, Jane Fairfax, Frank Churchill and finally Mr. Knightly and, of course, herself indicates the lack of understanding the world around her and also her inner world. She is deceived by her own emotions. If the reality is not perceived objectively, unhappiness is the result, and only comes to the end when the truth emerges and this gives the impulse to the settlement of the relationships and ethical behaviour.

Miles (2003, p. 65) again sees this turning point a little differently. Emma undergoes the whole line of acknowledgements and she is convinced of every one being the last one. This hasty conclusion brings her to the surprising discovery that the previous blunder was the last. The climax comes when she is humiliated again and she resigns to the possibility of the lover relationship between Harriet and Mr. Knightly. Then she is stupefied when Mr. Knightly proposes to her. The most important to Emma is to find the right place in the social order.

I personally share the conclusion made by Craig (2001) when she states that Emma at last is able to like Jane Fairfax as well as to realize not really a good choice of a companion in Harriet. And that the evil was caused by ignoring the inner lives and values of the people around Emma.

I believe it is necessary to mention that finally Emma regretted every bad deed she "committed". And this predestines her to be forgiven by the reader, because it is the

sign of humanity and one should forgive the others eventually. Moreover Emma was young and the youth has the right to be airy-fairy from time to time. So, Emma gives the impression of more natural and more modern heroine than the others are. I daresay that Emma is a timeless heroine with plenty of positives and, of course, a lot of negatives. To sum it up, the mischievousness belongs among women's features of a character. And who would not resist, sometimes? Like Emma said.

### 3. Fanny Price

#### 3.1 The story line of Mansfield Park

Fanny is a girl who comes from a poor family. Her wealthy uncle and aunt decide to help the family of Price and take the oldest daughter, nine-year-old Fanny to their manor called Mansfield Park, which is managed by the Bertram. Fanny is a frail child and can be equal her cousins neither in appearance nor in education. The cousins overlook Fanny and she is treated, more or less, as a maid and the aunt's companion. The certain Mrs. Norris, also Fanny's aunt, takes significant part in people's lives in Mansfield Park. While Mrs. Bertram either ignores or behaves quite kindly to Fanny, Mrs. Norris uses her as a girl for everything. The master of the house seems to be an impartial man however he is so strict and high-principled that even his four children, including Fanny, are frightened of him.

The only person who is very friendly, kind and helpful to Fanny is the younger male cousin Edmund, the future priest. After a period of time he finds Fanny bright and intelligent girl, so he helps her with the education, for example he teaches her how to read and write and supplies her with books. Gradually, Fanny falls for Edmund.

The arrival of Crawford siblings means the turning point in lives of all people in Mansfield Park. Bertram's sisters are both charmed by Henry Crawford, which leads to rivalry and envy between them. On the other hand Edmund falls in love with Miss Crawford, which gives rise to Fanny's jealousy.

During the time the two families spend together and in connection with the events, which took place there, Fanny refuses Henry's proposal. Although Henry looks to love

Fanny with the true love, Fanny does not reciprocate his feelings and after some differences of opinion between Edmund and Mrs. Crawford, both, brother and sister, leave Mansfield Park for London. The angry uncle sends Fanny home in order to keep her wits and change her mind.

After Henry elopes with one of the Bertram sisters and eventually, Edmund finds out the true character of Mrs. Crawford and at the same time appreciates Fanny's moral credits, Edmund arrives at Fanny's parents and takes her to her real home, where Mr. and Mrs. Bertram expect her impatiently. The bond between Fanny and Edmund expresses sharing the same way of life and moral values.

### **3.2 Fanny's values and relationships with the other characters in the novel**

Fanny as a little girl is very shy, very ordinary, uneducated and weepy all the time. She feels inferior compared with her cousins who lose the previous interest in Fanny when they find out about her ignorance and overlook her. When Fanny moves in she gets a small room in the attic, which represents her small world, which should be enough to her. In the new world she was ignored by contemporaries on one hand, while on the other hand she was exploited and bullied by her uncle and the aunts. She was greatly homesick because at she meant something, she was the oldest and she missed the joy and warm relationship with her brothers and sisters altogether. Ellwood (2003) compares Fanny's native home as a place where she had, despite the poverty, the important status of the oldest child in the family and above this, the relationship between her and brother William gave her the feelings of mutual love. On the contrary,

at Mansfield she, as the youngest, was constantly “a victim of ongoing verbal battering” (Austen, 2008, p. 19) and the room, where Fanny lives, recalls a deserted island.

Edmundson (2002) sees Fanny as an unusual heroine in comparison with the others. She is quiet, passive, too afraid to say anything, feeling rather as an outsider and spending her time in the room in the attic, where she cries very often. She reminds white colour of Fanny’s room, which means Fanny’s innocence. According to Despotopoulou (2004), the location of her room has its own significance too. It should represent Fanny high-mindedness, in the contrary with the view of the Bertrams. They consider the place as poor as Fanny is.

I would be a little skeptic to the idea of the resemblance between high-mindedness and Fanny’s room referred to as the highest room in the house, because her life takes place mostly in the other parts of the house as well as the most important events in the novel.

The only representative of good, besides Fanny, is Edmund. He is the only person in the house who notices that Fanny is unhappy and totally lost in the world completely strange to her at first. He is the only one who helps her, teaches her, gives advice and, lately, protects her. He accepts Fanny the way she is and moreover he appreciates her. His acting provides the breeding ground for Fanny’s affection and love for Edmund.

Edmundson (2002) also adds that Edmund is the first person, to whom Fanny opens emotionally. They share their feelings. They become the truest allies and Fanny supports Edmund in his choice of the future profession of a clergyman.

In the contrast to the character of Edmund stands Mrs. Norris who treats Fanny the worst way of all. She bullies her, she treats her almost as dirt.

Ellwood (2003) suggests that Mrs. Norris represents evil which does not allow Fanny to grow her self-esteem and lets her constantly down, feeling that she is the last one in the whole family. Edmund and Mrs. Norris are the great antipoles in the relation to Fanny, symbolizing goodness and cruelty.

The arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Crawford as well as the theatrical performance has the great significance for Fanny's evolution. Edmund and Fanny are used to discussing various issues and so exchange their opinions. Fanny finds out about Edmund's affection towards Mrs. Mary Crawford. She can see the real intentions of Mary. However, she does not act, she just feels sorry, dissatisfaction and envy. As if she would do everything what she is said. Although she has her own opinion, she agrees with the others every time and suppresses her opinions inside. Suddenly, she openly refuses to take part in the play, which every body is looking forward to, even Edmund agrees finally. This situation suggests that Fanny is stable in her opinions Edmund, on the contrary, is weak and rather easily changes his attitudes.

Robert Miles (2003, p. 31) states that however Fanny is considered to be one the highest ideals, she also is tormented by envy, jealousy and maliciousness. Her inner herself is dynamic because there is the contradiction between her feelings and the things she decides to do eventually. The tension between desires and moral values is noticed.

Lascalles (1941, p. 67) notices that despite Fanny's childish dependence on Edmund she is consistent with her moral principles and she is steady to respect them.

### **3.3 Fanny as a contradictory heroine**

After reading Austen's biography by Tomalin (2007, p. 229) it is certain that the character of Fanny aroused considerably different views. She mentions Lionel Trilling and his defence for Fanny stating that she is a Christian heroine, who supports Edmund's wish to become a clergyman. And Tony Tanner praises Fanny for her stillness, quietness, weakness and self-retraction as opposed to the Crawfords (Tomalin, 2007, p.230). However, despite Tomalin (ibid) agrees with Tanner she also finds Fanny both, heroic and a prig. Finally, Tomalin (ibid) states that Reginald Farrer accuses Austen of a radical dishonesty and he sees Fanny as "cold, self-righteous, rigid with prejudice, the most terrible incarnation we have of the female prig-pharisee" (Tomalin, 2007, p.229).

According to Miles (2003, p. 54), Fanny knows herself right from the start and also knows who she wants to marry. It is her who exposes the true character of Mary, who realizes that she manipulates Edmund and it is Fanny, who finally teaches Edmund about his delusive feelings. What I cannot "swallow" is the fact that despite she loves Edmund and catches Mary out, she still plays her friend and companion. I cannot imagine any woman to act like this on the basis of moral and Christian values. Where she behaves highly morally is the part of refusal of Henry's proposal and nearly reaches his atonement, Miles (2003, p. 124) adds.

The second and the last significant occurrence was her enforced comeback home. Despite her horrible parents, noisy and dirty home, disgusting food, she stayed steady, because she did not accept Henry and what is more she heightened her self-confidence and independence.

Tomalin (2007, p. 233) and Ellwood (2003) agree when consider the greatest moment of heroism her defiance of Sir Thomas and he sends her to the exile to Portsmouth, where she is steadfast in her ideas. Her return to Mansfield Park is actually a celebration of her credits. She proves to be the only one who deserves love and appreciation.

## **4. Comparisons**

### **4.1 The attitudes of the heroines to the members of their families**

I would start to compare the three heroines according to the relations to the members of their family, further their attitude to an authority, that is represented by their beloved men, further, the possible turning points in their lives referring to the changes in their characters and whether they went through some evolvment, lastly, their position within the social system and my view of the impact of the characters on a reader.

Interestingly, all the heroines seem to have mothers who do not reach the moral level of their daughters, they are ashamed of them, because they are vulgar, silly and actually no real help to them. Which can be considered as if they had no genuine mother as Emma did not have. According to Tomalin (2007, p. 6), Jane Austen was given to a strange woman in the village to look after her, when she was only six months old and this affected her life and influenced her perspective on the character of a mother in a whole. The characters of fathers stand considerably better compared to the mothers' ones. Except Fanny's father who is drunk and cares for nothing. Fanny is ashamed of him too, and what is more, she is frightened of him. On the contrary, Elizabeth and Emma love their fathers although they are not faultless indeed. The bond that is the strongest is the bond with one of their siblings. Elizabeth has a really close relationship with her sister Jane, Fanny adores her brother William and Emma, although Miss Taylor, later Mrs. Weston, is not her real sister, she actually has all the attributes of such a sister. As Austen (2007, p. 3) writes, there was an intimate almost sisterly relationship

between them. There, again, we can find the similarity with the Austen's life. Jane Austen was very close to her sister Cassandra. Nevertheless, all the three heroines act more or less independently, according to their persuasion, because when it comes to the point, they do not have anyone who they could talk to about intimate stuff. There is no one who could give some advice or who they could rely on. Even Elizabeth cannot tell Jane the whole truth about her changed feelings towards Mr. Darcy.

#### **4.2 Comparisons of the personalities of the three heroines**

As for the personality of each heroine, Elizabeth and Emma have more in common. Both young women are of a lively disposition, witty, clever, romantic souls, self-confident and blinded, partly by their own importance (especially Emma) and by the fact that they know about their strong points. Next to them, Fanny is quiet, sitting, reading, contemplating, sewing, she is unsatisfied with the others very often, but she stays passive anyway.

It might seem to be a detail, but what I miss is the interest in art with all the heroines. They do not paint, play the piano not very well, Emma even does not read and what is more they do not assign any importance to art. At least they like beauties of the countryside.

Anyway, they are smart and insistent on their rights and decisions and this concerns Fanny too. She is steady in her resolutions. The difference is that Elizabeth and Fanny are good observers of human characters. Actually, Fanny is absolutely right in everything. Elizabeth makes a mistake in two cases only (her opinion of Mr. Darcy and

Mr. Wickham), however, Emma makes one blunder after another. The only persons who can influence their opinions are their future spouses. Mr. Darcy and Mr. Knightly are steady with their attitudes, however Edmund is not. In the contrast, Fanny is the one who is sure of her conclusions. Surprisingly, Edmund is the person who needs to be led.

What they have in common is definitely their urge to find a real love so they refuse the men they do not love despite all the consequences emerging from it. For Elizabeth and Fanny it is their family member's remorse, for Fanny her refusal means even exile in Portsmouth, for Emma it is the feeling of shame and humiliation deep inside after so many mistakes and misunderstandings. Miles (2003, p. 142) says that Austen's heroines refuse the consumer way of life. Therefore they refuse men who they do not love. The ways of the refusals are different. Fanny says her No quietly and steadily. Emma refuses Mr. Elton loudly, in an offended way. Elizabeth refuses Mr. Collins courteously and patiently, while Mr. Darcy is refused, by Elizabeth, angrily.

Nenadal (2004, p. 365) implies what these heroines have in common and he states that the answer to the question is simple. They have courage to behave according to their common sense and sensitivity.

Miles (2003, p. 18) concludes that Elizabeth, Emma and Fanny belong to the group of heroines, beside the groups of comic characters and characters somewhere in between. Fanny Price embodies the ideals of Englishness at that time. She is generally considered to be one of the greatest ideals of Austen's works. The Austen's novel itself is a dynamic space where characters of different groups interact and a reader is encouraged to stick

to the heroine. The heroines are charming and complicated. The illusion a reader gets about a heroine serves the purpose of the novel. A reader is bound with the environment of the novel, only in which the complexity of the heroine is preserved otherwise a reader cannot understand the nature of the heroine and her actions in connection with the consequences of the story. The heroines are able to learn from mistakes and change during the story.

#### **4.3 The turning point in the lives of the heroines**

Each heroine goes through the turning point and this experience helps change her in the sense of improvement. Elizabeth changes after the trip to Pemberly where she is able to see Mr. Darcy in the different light and starts to doubt all her prejudices against him. Also Mr. Darcy gets to know the rest of Elizabeth relatives who are intelligent and have good manners, which helps him accept Elizabeth. In Emma the change occurs during and after the trip to Box Hill. When she abominably behaves to Jane Fairfax and Miss Bates, Mr. Knightly sends her home condemning the way she treated the women mentioned above. Emma feels embarrassed and realizes her true feelings towards Mr. Knightly. She also does not want to admit Mr. Knightly courts Harriet and she herself makes the scales fall from her eyes to see all her mistakes.

Unfortunately, it is hard to mark the twist in a relationship between Fanny and Edmund. Fanny loved Edmund right from the start and sustained her position. The person who has to come to recognition is Edmund. When it finally happens he takes Fanny back home to Mansfield Park, which is the turnover indeed.

Miles (2003, p. 65) agrees that the twists in Emma come after she realizes she loves Mr. Knightly and is reconciled with the destiny while awaiting Mr. Knightly and Harriet to make a match and is amazed and feels happy when Mr. Knightly proposes her and instead of Harriet. Further, Miles (2003, p. 119) considers the twist in Elizabeth when she realizes she was mistaken about Mr. Darcy as well as he was mistaken about her. And, finally, the twist in Fanny comes when Mr. Crawford causes the catastrophe that is followed by common recognition of the real values that fall upon Fanny. He describes these heroines as the ones who reject consumer way of life.

#### **4.4 The relationship between the heroines and their male partners**

Although all the heroines look to be more or less independent their roles, with the reference to the persons who are authorities to them, are subordinate. Tomalin (2007, p. 253) suggests that there is a relationship – the master and the pupil between Emma and Mr. Knightly and surprisingly, Emma is satisfied in this position. The relationship the tutor vs. the pupil belongs to Fanny and Edmund. Although, this position is also satisfying to Fanny, it changes and on the contrary, Fanny leads Edmund. However, it is interesting when Tomalin (2007, p. 235) states, that Fanny's brother William is the true hero in Fanny's life. Similarly, in their relationship the same subordinate relation and adoration can be seen as we see with Edmund. As for Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, such a simple and similar relation is not easy to find. It seems to me that she respected Darcy for his steady moral values, his taste and willingness to help. She takes a stand neither for a pupil nor an endless adorer. She is able to see his bad traits. According to

my reading, this is the most equal relationship between the heroine and her suitor of these three relationships.

#### **4.5 The issues of money, marriage and feminism**

Speaking of equality, Fanny and Elizabeth are not equal to their marriage partners referring to their financial situation. Emma is the exception.

Moving a bit back and bearing in mind what is mentioned above, it is understandable that the attitudes of the heroines to marriage is more or less positive. Marriage is the only way to leave home respectably or to escape from horrible parents. And the most importantly it is the way to financial security, as we can see with Elizabeth and Fanny.

According to Stockton (2000), Gilbert and Gubar suggest the importance of marriage as the only accessible way to escape the parents and creation of their own identity. They also state that it is easy to persuade Austen's heroines to look for a husband, because they are "literally or figuratively motherless". Even though the heroines see how unsatisfying the marriage can be, they are still decided to search for male protection especially because of the financial support.

The access to money is important to each of our heroines. Even to Emma. Without money she would be unimportant and without a good chance to marriage.

Feminism or feministic tendencies appear to be the controversial issue concerning Austen's novels as well as her heroines. In Tomalin (2007, p.) Anthony Trollope claims Austen's heroines are women representing happy and sweet households, which could

serve as an example for others. On the other hand some feministic critics with Depostopoulous (2004) find a sort of mental loneliness that makes Austen's heroines unable to share all their feelings, and in this way they hide the feministic opinions. She argues that the character of Fanny may not seem to carry any sign of feminism because of her passivity and timidity. However, the opposite is true. Although Emma and Elizabeth have a bigger share in their households than Fanny has, Fanny's personal evolution is not affected by any male influence or interference which is possible because of her strict moral limits that she set herself. So, she succeeded in making her personal space "uncontaminated" by any male interference. Another of feministic features could be Elizabeth's wish to be treated as "a rational creature" rather than as "an elegant female".

According to my reading and my reasoning, the heroines' standpoints to marriage, in the relation with feminism, is not very clear. They act independently because they have to, they have no other chance, especially Elizabeth and Fanny. However looking closer they are still dependent, mainly on their parents. And this results in looking for a suitable husband. One could object that they refuse the suitor they do not like, but the fact is that still they look for a husband. They do not want to become spinsters without any social respect. With a husband on their side they escape from parental dependence. A husband provides them with financial security and a certain form of freedom, but they become dependent again this time on a husband. So, eventually, they exchange one form of dependence for another, which I do not consider to be a goal of a feminist.

#### **4.6 The position of the heroines within the social order**

The social order and the position in it appear to be important to our heroines too. In this respect the heroines stand quite differently. Elizabeth knows exactly her place in the society, she is not ashamed about it, however, when she “talks back” to Lady Catherine and so refuses to give up on Mr. Darcy, she rebels against the social order. The reward is getting a beloved man. Quite differently, Emma negates the social order when longs to marry illegitimate Harriet to a nobleman. She only accepts it when its violation could threaten her personal love intentions. The reward for its acceptance is Mr. Knightly. Thirdly, Fanny knows her place within society, accepts the social order, she is silent, but still hopes, and the marriage with Edmund as a member of a higher class is a reward for her perseverance.

#### **4.7 My view on the three heroines**

To sum it up, I would guess that Elizabeth and Emma are more favourite heroines than Fanny. And I suppose, Elizabeth could be accepted in the most positive way. Especially because of her humour, liveliness and temperament. She has actually only one or two, let us say, not very good traits. Also the other characters of the novel, depicted in a funny way, contribute to the popularity of the novel as well as its heroine. From my point of view, Austen created a type of a girl who everybody would like to have as a friend.

On the contrary, I believe that Emma would not be accepted that easily as a friend, as she was accepted positively neither by literary critics nor by readers in general.

However, her character is created with the most complexity and it obviously results in a certain controversy concerning Emma's character. Nevertheless, in my opinion she is the closest to present young women. Of course, there are readers who would hate Emma because of the different reasons, but certainly the other half of readers would adore her because the time spent with Emma and her father, Miss Bates, Mrs and Mr Elton too, is filled with laughter and simply good entertainment.

Last but not least comes Fanny, definitely less favourite than Emma and Elizabeth. Indeed the most controversial, the most ideal, the furthest to a present reader, who either reads the novel without any obvious interest, without any decided opinion or is disappointed how much Fanny differs from the other amusing, girlish heroines of Austen's. And honestly, I cannot imagine who would like to have such a prig as Fanny is as a friend.

## Conclusion

The heroines of novels by Jane Austen are more or less similar to heroines of contemporary novels and what is more, similar to ordinary young women of our time. They also face the problems which Elizabeth or Emma try to solve. Our society is also focused on success and a good financial background and then real love in relationships is obviously a hot topic even nowadays. Furthermore the modern woman should be an independent, free, courageous person, who is able to express her own opinions independently and who is expected to be persistent. The modern woman is expected to solve her problems independently. Such an image of a modern woman is very similar to Elizabeth, Emma and even Fanny.

On the other hand, nobody is faultless, the contemporary, independent woman are vain and jealous too. They act rashly sometimes. Just like Elizabeth, Emma or Fanny.

The proof of timelessness of the heroines in novels by Austen is even the fact that her novels have survived centuries and they are still attractive to a reader.

## Bibliography

- AUSTEN, J. *Emma*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1994. ISBN 0140620109
- AUSTEN, J. *Mansfield Park*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1994, ISBN 0140620664
- AUSTEN, J. *Pride and Prejudice*. Harmondsworth : Penguin Books, 1994. ISBN 978-014-062321-5
- AUSTENOVÁ, J. *Emma*. Praha : Academia, 2004. ISBN 80-200-1236-2
- CRAIG, S.B. *Money in Emma* [online]. Jane Austen Society in North America, 2001 [citovane 28. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web: <<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol22no1/craig.html>>
- DESPOTOPOULOU, A. *Fanny's gaye and the construction of feminine space in Mansfield Park* [online]. Modern Language Review, July 2004 [citovane 29. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web: [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7026/is\\_3\\_99/ai\\_n28245747/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7026/is_3_99/ai_n28245747/)
- EMUNDSON, M. *A Space for Fanny: The Significance of Her Rooms in Mansfield Park* [online]. Jane Austen Society in North America, 2002 [citovane 29. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web: <<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol23no1/edmundson.html>>
- ELLWOOD, G. *Such a Dead Silence* [online]. Jane Austen Society in North America, 2003 [citovane 30. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web:<<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol24no1/ellwood.html>>
- JACKSON, K. *The Dilema of Emma: Moral, Ethical, and Spiritual Values* [online]. Jane Austen Society in North America, 2005 [citovane 28. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web: <<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol21no2/jackson.html>>
- LASCELLES, M. *Jane Austen and Her Art*. London : OUP, 1941
- McGILLS, R.J. *RJMcGill's Reviews* [online]. October 2007 [citovane 27. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web: <<http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/7531277>>
- MILES, R. *Jane Austenová*. Brno : CDK, 2003. ISBN 978-80-7325-188-8
- TOMALIN, C. *Jane Austen*. London : Penguin Books, 2007. ISBN 978-0-1410-3513-0

SCOTT, W. *Emma* [online] Quarterly Review, October 1815 [citovane 27. prosince 2011].

Dostupne na World wide Web: <<http://onlyanovel.wordpress.com/austen-reviews/>>

STOCKTON, K. *Place in Austen's biography* [online]. The Victorian Web, July 2000 [citovane

30. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web:

<<http://www.victorianweb.org/previctorian/austen/gender.html>>

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE, *The Republic of Pemberly* [online]. Jane Austen Info Page

2004 [citovane 27. prosince 2011]. Dostupne na World Wide Web:

<<http://www.pemberley.com/>>

## ANOTACE

<b>Jméno a příjmení:</b>	Štěpánka Ondráčková
<b>Katedra:</b>	Katedra anglického jazyka
<b>Vedoucí práce:</b>	PhDr. Milena Vodičková, Ph.D.
<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2012

<b>Název práce:</b>	Charakteristika a srovnání hrdinek románů Jane Austenové – Emma, Elizabeth Bennet, Fanny Price
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	The comparisons and contrasts of heroines in Jane Austen's novels – Emma Elizabeth Bennet, Fanny Price
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Bakalářská práce je zaměřena na hrdinky tří románů Jane Austen – Emmu, Elizabeth Bennet a Fanny Price, jejich celkovou charakteristiku, charakteristiku prostředí, ve kterém žijí a také postav, se kterými přicházejí do kontaktu. Srovnání hrdinek jsem provedla na základě jejich vztahů k rodinným příslušníkům, autoritám, které představují jejich vyvolení muži, na základě postavení hrdinek ve společenském systému, které ovlivňuje otázku sňatku bez lásky, důležitost finančních prostředků v jejich životech. V neposlední řadě se také zamýšlím nad tím, zda hrdinky Austenové mají feministické tendence.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Emma, Elizabeth, Fanny, charakteristika, srovnání, autorita, sňatek, láska, peníze, postavení ve společnosti, feminismus
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Thesis is focused on the heroines of the three novels by Jane Austen – Emma, Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price, their complete description, the characteristics of the places where they live and the other characters the heroines deal with. The comparisons were made on the base of the relationships between the heroines and other family members, the authorities represented by their suitors and also based on the situation of the heroines within the social system, which tackles the issues as marriage without love, the importance of money in their lives. Last but not least is the question whether the heroines of Jane Austen show some feminist tendencies.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Emma, Elizabeth, Fanny, description, comparisons, authorities, marriage, love, money, the situation within the society, feminism.

<b>Přílohy:</b>	0
<b>Počet stran:</b>	43 stran
<b>Jazyk:</b>	Anglický jazyk, English language