

All of the six finished novels of Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey*, have one important feature in common, a heroine. It is rather interesting to look at the individual heroines more closely as each of them has a distinctive personality. Although it is often argued that Austen only manages to describe “a small section of society locked in an almost timeless present in which very little will or can change,”¹ this is exactly the reason why she is such a popular author. The world of Jane Austen is captivating especially because the author explores “human nature in many forms and many situations”² and because her works possess the power to “transcend time and place.”³

As Carol Howard mentions, Jane Austen was “a careful observer of human motivation and social interaction”⁴ and by exploring the world of the heroines, the reader can observe many interesting issues such as various patterns of behaviour. Austen is indeed concerned mostly with the behaviour of the heroines under the influence of the surrounding society. Emma, Elizabeth, Catherine, Marianne, Anne and Fanny inevitably share certain features and similar patterns could also be found in the narratives. The motivation for the behaviour of the heroines is directly influenced by the environment and as they are distinct from one another, it is not possible to perceive them as if they all belonged to the same category. Marilyn Butler, the author of *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, suggests that the heroines can be divided into two categories on the basis of their depiction with regard to their position and behaviour in the surrounding environment.