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Bakalářská práce

Contemporary British Women Writers with Respect to the
Tradition of the English Novel

Současné britské autorky a jejich vztah k tradici
anglického románu

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Abstract: The aim of the thesis is to characterise the work of a contemporary British female author Jojo Moyes in the context of the English novel tradition from the beginning of the 19th century. The thesis focuses first on the characteristics of early works written by Jane Austen and the elements that the works of the authors have in common. The thesis tries to analyse the works of both authors in context of their time and concentrates on portraying the characteristics of the main heroines in Jane Austen's novels in comparison to Jojo Moyes' novels, which address the matter of love relationships and social roles in lives of the main heroines. In the end, the thesis compares the writing process of both authors and analyses the popularity of feminist literature and romance in contemporary literature.

Key Words:

Heroines, social class, Jane Austen, Jojo Moyes, feminism, society, novel

Anotace: Cílem práce je charakteristika tvorby současné britské autorky Jojo Moyesové v kontextu tradice anglického románu od počátků 19. století. Práce se soustředí nejprve na charakteristiku prvních románů Jane Austenové a na společné znaky tvorby obou autorek (Moyes, Austen). Práce se pokusí charakterizovat díla obou autorek v kontextu doby jejich vzniku a zaměří se na portrét a charakteristiku hlavních hrdinek románů Jane Austenové ve srovnání s romány Jojo Moyesové, které se zabývají otázkou citových vztahů a společenských rolí v životě hlavní hrdinky. Práce se v závěru bude zabývat porovnáním tvůrčího vývoje obou autorek, a dále podrobí analýze tematiku popularity feministické literatury a žánrovou oblibu romance v současné literatuře.

Klíčová slova:

Hrdinky, společenská vrstva, Jane Austenová, Jojo Moyesová, feminismus, společnost, román

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Introduction

The aim of my bachelor thesis is to characterise the work of a contemporary British female author Jojo Moyes in comparison to the 19th century novelist Jane Austen. The thesis begins with a general overview of the 19th century and also gives an insight into the feminist beginnings. Then, the thesis introduces life and work of Jane Austen in context of the 19th century politics, development and social possibilities. The thesis concentrates mainly on the events in her life that influenced her writing career. Her novels are separated into early and critically acclaimed works.

Secondly, the thesis focuses on Jojo Moyes, her original work experience and journey of becoming a novelist. Her process of writing, gaining inspiration and themes are then compared to Jane Austen's style. In the following chapter the thesis also compares the 19th and the 21st century heroines. Three books by each author are analysed and in the last subchapter, two heroines from both centuries are compared.

In the end, the thesis examines influence of Jane Austen's novels on nowadays' society. It points out the fact that Austen's popularity grow by time and even in the 21st century her books still have a lot to offer. The thesis concludes the general popularity of romance genre nowadays, not only as a means of relaxation but also as a support system for readers who search for a feeling of understanding.

1 Insight into the 19th Century

1.1 Political and Social Situation in the 19th Century

In the 19th century Great Britain was in the spot lights. From the beginning of the century the country was under the rule of the Hannover dynasty. The king during Jane Austen's lifetime was George III. Even though Britain lost its American lands, they were a colonial empire at the beginning of Industrial Revolution and on top of that heading to business development. People were travelling and experiencing foreign culture. However, Britain was still far away from calling itself a developed and democratic country. Only every eighth Briton had a voting right and women had basically no rights. The political system of two Parties and parliamentarianism was in its roots.¹ Besides the life joys of the middle and upper class, there were people suffering from hunger. Britain was still at war with the United States and also had some conflicts with France. The difference between men and women's society roles had never been as significant as in the 19th century. Earlier it was common for women to take part in the family business. When the business was held in the house, women could easily help out. However, with the industrial progress, men started to commute to factories and offices and women were left at home to oversee the household.²

The end of the century was not the brightest for England. With the French Revolution and American liberation movements as pamphlets by Thomas Paine, Britain was not the idealist place for radicalism, yet there was a ripe for rebellion, mainly due to the difference between social conditions of gentry and common people.³ After the execution of Louis XVI, England declared in 1786 war to France.⁴ The French Revolution changed the view on some things. The revolutionary also stood for women rights as for example their own choice of life partner.⁵

Between the years 1789 and 1815 there were not many old regimes left. All traditional guarantees of loyalty as the dynasty's legacy, historical law or religious

¹ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 31-33

² <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century>

³ GÜNEY, Ajda and Mehmet Ertuğ YAVUZ. The Nineteenth Century Literature and Feminist Motives in Jane Austen's Novels. E-Journal of New World Sciences Academy, 2008, p. 526

⁴ MALETZKE, p. 69

⁵ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 59

compactness were questioned.⁶ The British king had mental illness, so in 1810 he was replaced by his son George IV, who was called Prince Regent. The ‘old’ king George lived for another 10 years and despite of his absolutism and bad colonial politics remained a popular ruler. His son, however, was not popular at all. When he died in 1830, the monarchy was at its very bottom. George IV was keen on art, culture and was quite eccentric. That was not good for the abroad politics but the boom of fashion and theatre was huge. When he passed away his brother William IV ruled for seven years and then Queen Victoria was crowned.

1.2 Women Rights, Authors and the Feminist Beginnings

One of the first to demand equal rights and proper education for women was Mary Wollstonecraft. In 1792 she wrote a work called *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In this work she defends ways in which men should treat women. They should not look down at them, they should take them as equal friends, someone they can confess to. They should give their wives the possibility of any work or study. Education was one of Wollstonecraft’s main topics.⁷

In the 19th century, the characteristics of men and women lay upon the ideology of Separate Spheres. Women were considered physically weaker but morally stronger, that is why they were supposed to take care of everything at home.⁸

At the same time Jane Austen started writing her juvenilia.⁹ Two decades later she fought for the women with her critical and mocking style as a published author. She did not fight openly but with her sharp pen and major thoughts hidden in between the lines. A publishing female author at the beginning of the 19th century, although anonymous, was a sign of change. However, the process was very slow, women did not immediately start to be seen as equals to men. In 1918, for example, women got the chance to enter the House of Commons in London, but they rarely did so until the end of the century.¹⁰ It has been a step by step process which is still not finished nowadays but the very first starts could be dated to this period.

⁶ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 146

⁷ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 69

⁸ <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century>

⁹ MILES, p. 8

¹⁰ TALBOT, Mary. Language and gender: second edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010, p. 187

2 Jane Austen

2.1 Jane Austen's Biography

Jane Austen is one of the most read authors nowadays, yet in her time she was criticized for her style and the topics she was dealing with. Was the society back then so different from today's or were they simply scared of what was written in between the lines of her books? Now, more than 200 years after her first books were published, it is hard to tell but it can be definitely said that Jane Austen was a very important figure in British literature and with her topics also in history.¹¹

She was born on 16th of December 1775 in Steventon to a family of a pastor George Austen and Cassandra Leigh. She had seven siblings and was the second youngest. Thanks to Mr Austen's social status coming with his profession, and his relation to the owners of the manor and surroundings in Steventon Mr and Mrs Knight, the family was taken for gentry, a social class right below the nobility. The social status provided the family with invitations to prestigious social events but they were never visited by the nobility in return. We can see that in Austen's books, mostly in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*.¹²

As she was from eight children but six of them were boys, it was only natural that Jane and her sister Cassandra had a very strong bond. In 1781, when Cassandra was ten years old, she was sent to Oxford to be educated by a governess. Jane was only seven in that time but refused to stay at home. The governess moved to Southampton and took the girls with her. After that, the girls attended one more school in Reading but had to leave because the fees were too high for the family. When they returned home, Cassandra was 14 and Jane 11 years old. The time spent together plays a key role, the sister love is an important part in Austen's novels.¹³

After getting back home, Austen's travelling era was practically to end. She lived a peaceful ordinary life. For women as Austen the future was quite simple. She had two options. Either get married or become a governess. From her letters we can see the things she was dealing with on daily basis and it can be surprising that the hand that

¹¹ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 6

¹² MALETZKE, p. 23-28

¹³ MALETZKE, p. 51-54

wrote these quite boring letters is the same hand that created characters such as Lady Bertram or Norris.¹⁴

She started writing when she was 12 years old. She did not write just to entertain herself, Austen was determined to publish. She wrote secretly but harshly from the very beginning. Virginia Woolf once wrote that Austen knew what she wanted to do in her life from the start, she had very little illusions about the others and none about herself. She was a very contradictory person and a hard nut for everyone who was trying to understand her. On one hand, there is this family-based calm and I-know-my-place lady, on the other hand a tough woman with firm opinions and sharp pen, who was never willing to step down from what she believed in. Even in her early work, she tore down love, friendship, loyalty and good manners but at the same time she was childishly sentimental with describing and probably believing in all those big life clichés.¹⁵

As a 21 years old girl, Jane experienced affection for someone for the first time. She fell in love with Thomas Lefroy. He was an Irish law student, unfortunately not so wealthy and because Jane's income was not worth mentioning as well, his aunt forced him to leave for Ireland, finish the studies and find more acceptable wife. The film industry popularized it and in *Becoming Jane* (2007) Lefroy is described as Austen's only true love, relationship which was not favoured and that is the reason she never got married. The reality is not so tragic, nor romantic. There were different reasons for Austen's not-getting-married decision and she did not remain sad for a long time. She met Samuel Blackall, who actually showed more fondness but was not wealthy as well so their relationship ended in a similar way.¹⁶ In this period Austen wrote *First Impressions*.

Even though she never had a family on her own, she had a lot of family drama in her life. As she had a lot of siblings, she became aunt of seven children just during their stay in Steventon. In 1801 the Austen family moved to Bath. They had been there for a stay twice before already and Jane did not forget to criticize the local conditions in her *Northanger Abbey*.¹⁷ She was not pleased with the family moving there but her parents were old and sick. Her brother James took over the presbytery in Steventon. During the years spent in Bath, Austen did not write any stories or novels, there are also not many

¹⁴ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 59

¹⁵ MALETZKE, p. 73

¹⁶ MALETZKE, p. 99-103

¹⁷ MALETZKE, p. 109, 110

mentions about her letter correspondence. However, Harrison Bigg Wither proposed to her. He was not the luckiest match, not the smartest but had a kind heart. She agreed, at first. Next day, she turned the engagement down. It would mean marriage and children without love and the end of her writing career.¹⁸

1805 reverend George Austen passed away. Besides the sadness it brought to the family, it meant no economical provision for the three Austen ladies. The brothers were willing to put some money aside for them but the amount could not be called decent. They had to move into a smaller house and dismiss almost all their servants. They left Bath, were moving and staying with relatives. After that period, they moved in with her brother Frank to Southampton. Jane was 30 back then. Her creativity was at a standstill there, too. She kept busy mostly with family business as for example the death of one of her brother's wife.¹⁹ 1808 she was proposed one more time, this time by priest Edward Bridgese. She refused him as well.²⁰ 1809 the three ladies moved for the last time – to Chawtone. This place became the salvation for Jane Austen's writing soul, she started rewriting her old works and finally in 1811 *Sense and Sensibility* was published. Her writing ambitions started to be fulfilled just six years before she died. Only her closes family knew what Austen was occupying herself with, they read her books only in the family circle. However, the name 'Jane Austen' never appeared on any cover of the books, at least not until she died.²¹

Especially *Pride and Prejudice* was a huge successes, Austen's income was about 250 pounds. That meat not just more money for her casual expenses but also the luxury of going on trips and giving gifts to her close ones. Despite that, she wrote in her letters that she wanted more.²² Interestingly on the other hand, she never wanted her real name to be revealed.

Jane started to faint in 1816, the reasons were mostly psychosomatic – her brother's bankruptcy or the fact that she had to take physical care of him.²³ Despite the pain, she finished her last but one novel *Persuasion*. In 1817 she got better and wrote her last piece *Sanditon*. For one last time she tried to do what she was excellent at –

¹⁸ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 123, 136, 137

¹⁹ MALETZKE, p. 141-165

²⁰ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 9

²¹ MALETZKE, p. 167, 177

²² MALETZKE, p. 199

²³ MALETZKE, p. 241

laugh at the world and herself in between the lines. She did not finish the novel. She died in Winchester after a long sickness on 18th of July 1817 at the age of 43. The death was expected and Austen was probably reconciled with it. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral and on her grave was written a quote from Bible: ‘She opens her mouth with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue.’ There is no mention of her being a writer.²⁴

It took more than 50 years until Austen was rediscovered. Her nephew James-Edward Austen-Leigh published *A Memoir of Jane Austen* and introduced his aunt to the new generation.²⁵ He described his aunt as a calm person, whose life was not full of exciting or unexpected events. The general opinion was that she had a peaceful life and she had no idea what was going on behind her area’s borders.²⁶ Her nephew introduced her as an innocuous lady, who wrote innocuous novels and that is probably why she gained a good reputation back then. Because back then that was, what they wanted her to be. She was loved by the Victorian society as she is cherished after another century nowadays but from a different perspective and for different reasons.

2.2 Austen’s Style

‘Anyone, who desires to know the secret life of extensive and remarkable British nobility, which does not exist anywhere else in the world, has to read Jane Austen.’²⁷

Jane Austen is sometimes described as impersonal, other readers cherish her personal ironic style of writing. She was satiric but her attitude to her characters can be seen through it. She generally created three types of characters: main characters, grotesque types and something in between the two categories. As for the main characters we can name Elinor Dashwood, Elizabeth Bennet, Fanny Price or Emma Woodhouse. For instance Mr Collins, Isabella Thorp, Mrs Norris or Mrs Elton belong to the grotesque group. When reading the book and getting to know the characters, the reader naturally chooses and forms an attachment to the main heroine.²⁸

Austen never concentrated on descriptions of surroundings. She assumed that the houses, mansions and landscape were perfectly known. With this approach she differs

²⁴ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 249-255

²⁵ MALETZKE, p. 263

²⁶ ENRIGHT, Dominique. Moudrost a vtip Jane Austenové. Praha: LEDA spol. s.r.o., 2014, p. 8

²⁷ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 192

²⁸ MILES, p. 21, 22

from some other authors of the 19th century. When there are some references to the house which the characters make, it does not say much about the house but in reality about the characters themselves. Austen also did not write much about the characters' physical appearance. All we basically know about Elizabeth Bennet is that her eyes were beautiful. Mr Darcy was 'tall, dark and handsome'. There is always just a small hint, the story works on a dialogue and monologue form and yet as soon as the character opens their mouth, we have a perfect idea of them. Austen's characters change according to the society they are in. They are dynamic and tensed. They are tensed because they have to act differently than they feel. There is a tension between what is moral and what they truly want. Dynamic because they are able to learn, get to know themselves and change.²⁹ The reader is then in a quite complicated situation how to estimate the character. The reader needs to base the opinion about the character also on the observation of how the character sees others. What Elisabeth Bennet says about Mr Darcy actually tells the reader more about her than him.³⁰

Austen's observational talent was unquestionable, she could sense the absurd situations and irony was not strange to her. She loved parody, making fun of people and sharing these with her family. She observed the human characters around her, she was noticing their behaviour and could really see beneath. However, her novels should not be seen just as 'laughing at people's imperfections', they are full of moral roles.³¹

Austen was criticized for not leaving her comfort zone. There was so much going on in the world, bad things as well, but she never felt the need to address them in her works.³² When she addresses military or navy, she is always looking at the men only as potential partners. They are on service to prove their worthiness for winning the English wives.³³ It is also thought that Austen could not describe male characters in her works truly because she never experienced being with men alone, so she could not tell how they acted when they were not with the ladies.³⁴ However, she was growing up with father and six brothers.

²⁹ MILES, Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 31

³⁰ MILES, p. 43

³¹ ENRIGHT, Dominique. Moudrost a vtip Jane Austenové. Praha: LEDA spol. s.r.o., 2014, p. 10

³² MILES, p.143

³³ https://isistatic.org/journal-archive/ma/52_01/garbitelliandkries.pdf

³⁴ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 138-140

2.3 Early Work

It was common to write in Austen's family. All members did. And then, in the evenings they read it to each other. Already in the beginnings, Jane's work was fun and sharp but no one really thought of her as about a very special writer. She started with short novels in letters, namely for example *Love and Freindship*, *Frederick and Elfrida* or *Three Sisters*. The satire in her early works was simple yet. The humour is in the egoism the characters use in communication, even though they appreciate the character of each other and respect each other. Austen was 12 when she started to write but her path did not change since. Already back then she knew the tone her novels should be written in and she did not change that much ever since. Austen never needed to leave the shores of England in her stories, she was very patriotic. The fact that she had never left England probably partly caused that her works are autobiographic and the early characters are quite similar to those in her later successful and well-known works. She was not so open and direct as in her later works but the tendency is the same - brave heart and criticism of hypocrisy.

Her early works are called Juvenilia. The bridge between these and her later works is her *History of England*, where she criticises British kings through their biographies. The most cherish piece of her early work is *Lady Susan* which she never dared to publish and it was not released until 1871. It was criticised and Susan is considered to be Austen's only amoral heroine and quite carrion. She dedicated her early works to her family members.

In 1795 she started her new novel *Elinor and Marianne*. Just one year later she started with her later most famous novel, back then called *First Impressions*. Her father thought that *First Impressions* were finished and wanted to publish them even if he had to pay the costs. However, the publisher was not willing to publish it and Austen started her next novel, *Northanger Abbey*, instead. Through the main characters in this book Austen expressed her sadness about romance and love novels not being taken seriously. The literature trends were scary stories at that time and that was just something Austen would not write.³⁵

Her next book was *Watsons*, which was quite similar to the *Pride and Prejudice* but in this novel the main character finds her love straight and easily. However, Austen

³⁵ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 75-88

stopped writing it after five captures and *Watsons* were added to the *Memoir* published by her nephew.

2.4 Successful Work

There is a standard frame of Austen's six most famous novels. Forbidden love creates a social disharmony, but the marriage that is at the end of the novel brings everything to the standardised order.³⁶

In 1812 she started rewriting *Elinor and Marianne* into *Sense and Sensibility*. The story is about sisters Dashwood, one very sensitive and full of life and the other very calm, rational and careful, both experiencing love disappointment. In the end the rational one gets married for love, the naive one marries an old family friend and gentleman. The reader can not feel particularly happy for neither of them, unfortunately. Even the marriage of Elinor, the one meant to be from love, does not feel happy. The story is strongly autobiographical and it might have been better, if she left the sisters unmarried but close to each other as the Austen's sisters were in reality. The book was published in 1811 and was accepted very warmly. The audience appreciated that the anonymous author was not trying to look into the world of nobility. She described real middle class.

Her second published novel *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1813 and became a huge success, however, Austen was not absolutely satisfied with the book. She asked her sister Cassandra, as her closest adviser, if there should not be something added, something not directly connected to the plot, maybe she was even willing to rewrite the story a bit for the second edition.³⁷ The *Mansfield Park* was slightly different from the first two novels. It was not so successful but the public generally liked the main protagonist. *Mansfield Park* and then *Emma* were not sold so well but there were no bad critics on the novels either.

She did not live up to see the reactions to her next novels. *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion* and *Sanditon* were published posthumous. *Sanditon* was published as the last one in 1925.³⁸

³⁶ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 51

³⁷ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 178

³⁸ MALETZKE, p. 273

2.5 Reactions on Her Works and Acceptance of Her Novels

Jane's family was very enthusiastic, the male part of the family was helping with the editing and publishing, something woman could not do herself in the 19th century. The women, especially Cassandra and Mrs Austen, read the books, had additional recommendations but mostly they enjoyed Jane's reading to their neighbours. They were having fun, when Jane read her novels to other people, pretending she was reading just some coincidental book, she was enraptured with.³⁹ When her neighbours found out that she was the author, they started to be more careful in front of her and they also started to find their personalities in Austen's characters.

Her later work was well accepted by the critics and other writers as well. Walter Scott appreciated her realistic style. He said that she could perfectly and with fun describe the ordinariness of everyday life. She was a master in capturing the atmosphere. She did not need any masquerade or artificial action to make the story interesting. One female writer said that she thinks that Austen's work is the most believable one she ever read.⁴⁰ There was of course also some negative criticism. Mark Twain for example said: 'library without a single book by Austen is a really good library, and there do not even need to be any other books.'⁴¹

She was celebrated the most about 50 years after her death when her nephew published her memoir. There was some private correspondence attached as well and critics were pleased with the picture it formed about Austen.⁴²

Nowadays she is looked at from a bit different perspective. There are many works published which view Austen as a contemporary author – someone who writes for living. From today's perspective Austen's contribution is taken more seriously. She is viewed as respected author.⁴³ For some people Austen is a 'bridge' between primitive past and complicated present.⁴⁴ Furthermore, she is taken as someone who defines England.⁴⁵

³⁹ MALETZKE, Elsemarie. Jane Austenová: životopis. Praha: H&H, 2009, p. 178-180

⁴⁰ MALETZKE, p. 234

⁴¹ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 48

⁴² MALETZKE, p. 264

⁴³ MILES, p. 19

⁴⁴ MILES, p. 188

⁴⁵ MILES, p.182

What might be a little disappointment for today's readers is when they try to get more information about Austen and for example read her private correspondence. In her letters she deals with the things she laughs at in her novels. She uses irony as well, it is still her style of writing, but the reader might think that she would not engage herself with these topics at all. It is understandable, she did not know much else and was living in a small social circle but it destroys the picture of feminist smart brilliant Jane Austen a bit.

Lastly, it is interesting that Jane Austen is loved by her readers not only as an author and not only for her books but as a personality as well. She is respected as a person. Despite her impersonal style and nature, readers get a picture of a beautiful character.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ MILES, Robert. Jane Austen. Tavistock: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2003, p. 13

3 Jojo Moyes, a Comparison to Jane Austen

3.1 Biography

Pauline Sara Jo Moyes was born on 4th August 1969 in Maidstone, Kent, United Kingdom. She was the only child of Elizabeth J. McKee and James C. Moyes who were both artists.⁴⁷ Already before going to university, she held several jobs from the journalistic area, although she was not really sure what she wanted to do in her life. She for example typed statements in Braille for blind people or wrote brochures for a holiday company. She did not go to college until she was 23, then did her bachelor at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College (University of London). The job she had at that time helped her gain a grant financed by The Independent newspaper to finish her studies with a postgraduate newspaper journalism course at City University (also University of London) in 1992.⁴⁸ She had been working at The Independent from then on. In 2002 she decided to become a full-time author.

She lives on a farmhouse in Great Sampford, Essex with her husband, journalist Charles Arthur, and their three children. One of her sons is deaf. On their farm, they have a dog and horses, which she likes to ride.

3.2 Career

Apart from one year working in Hong Kong in 1994, Moyes worked for The Independent for ten years. However, in 2002 she decided to quit her job and become a permanent novelist. It was after she gave birth to her first child and realised she cannot have the busy work life she had until that moment. First, still working at The Independent and with the baby, she started to write in her free time. She wrote her three first books like this. When book number four gained publishers' attention, she quit her job.⁴⁹ It was a big change for her because she left the pulsing London environment for a very calm English countryside. She admits she had to have therapist sessions because being at home all the time drove her crazy. The doctor advised her to get an office so that she would have to get ready and go out every day.⁵⁰ That helped Jojo a lot. She got herself an agent too.

⁴⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/11903979/Jojo-Moyes-I-turned-down-the-Bridget-Jones-column.html>

⁴⁸ https://openlibrary.org/authors/OL1478799A/Jojo_Moyes

⁴⁹ https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/884.Jojo_Moyes

⁵⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCnYcXY4fbs>

As already mentioned, her fourth book gained publishers' attention but her first three books got rejected. She was not successful from the start. Jane Austen also did not have success with her first novels but unlike Moyes, she did not want them published. She was not satisfied with her work and rewrote it first. Jojo's first published book was *Sheltering Rain*. Since then another thirteen books written by Jojo were published.⁵¹ She won the Romantic Novelist's Award twice. The first one in 2004 for *Foreign Fruit* and the second one in 2011 for *The Last Letter from Your Lover*.⁵²

Jojo Moyes became world-wide known in 2012 when her book *Me Before You* was published. It has been nominated for Book of the Year at the UK Galaxy Book Awards and has since gone on to sell over 8 million copies worldwide. It is a book about a quadriplegic and a girl who is taking care of him. Will cannot accept his new life, he feels like life is over for him but Luisa makes him see the world from a different perspective. The main message of this book is *live!* If you are lucky enough to have a life, live it so that you do not have any regrets.⁵³ The movie adaptation was released in 2016 and Jojo was the one who wrote the screenplay for it.⁵⁴ Interestingly, the director was also female so the three main positions, author, scriptwriter and director, were filled by women, which is unusual.

3.3 The Author's Writing Style in Comparison to the 19th Century Novel

Moyes revealed that when approaching a new story, the first thing she has to do is get to know her characters. When she has a rough idea who her main characters are going to be, she develops a history for them. It is not just about where they are from or who they are related to, she need to be sure about details as well. The strategy also is not to start with writing the perfect first sentence. It is about realising what the book is really about.

Another key factor apart from getting to know your character is in Moyes' opinion the ability of creating a tension by keeping the lovers apart until the end of the story. It makes the reader desire for resolution though out the book. Moyes finds this task harder than it would be in the past because everything is easier nowadays and there

⁵¹ <https://www.jojomoyes.com/books/>

⁵² <http://www.webbiography.com/biographies/jojo-moyes>

⁵³ https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/884.Jojo_Moyes

⁵⁴ <https://www.jojomoyes.com/about-jojo/>

is not much which cannot be dealt with. For example distance is no obstacle at all, people are also more direct nowadays. Moyes claims Jane Austen a master in this style of writing and the biggest influencer for her as far as relationships go.⁵⁵ In *Pride and Prejudice* everything the reader wants from the beginning of the book is Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy to be together. However, they will not, not until the end of the story. There are many obstacles keeping them apart.

Interestingly, Moyes indicates that class difference can be still problematic nowadays but not in terms of a couple to be together. However, there is still a feeling of class difference and people's views on it according to her. She says that especially in England people still hold to class as a key factor for future life. She admits that Britons still make quick judgements about random things as someone's shoes or which school they went to.⁵⁶ It then reflects into literature as well. Englishness has not left the English fiction.⁵⁷

She is criticizing these stands but also uses it widely in her books. In her most famous novel *Me Before You* Will Trainor comes from an upper-class family and Luisa lives at her parents' house, supporting them financially. In *The Girl You Left Behind*, a novel about two women stories connected by a painting, Liv is a widow of a famous architect and Sophie a waitress. This contrast makes the story intriguing.

Another aspect which has not change completely is the perception of women writers. In the 19th century they were not allowed to publish, that is why they chose to use a pseudonym or leave their books authorless. Nowadays the books are classified as 'women's commercial fiction' which refers not to the audience but the author. Woman contemporary fiction is still perceived as less substantial than literature written by men. Moyes says that being put into this box does not mean that the author cannot address more serious topics. For her personally what she is called is not important as far as she can pass on a message and possibly make her audience laugh, cry and think.⁵⁸

She admits that she sometimes also suffers from procrastination and what works for her the most is writing very early in the morning. She has days when she writes

⁵⁵ <https://www.redonline.co.uk/red-women/red-chat/a511090/jojo-moyes/>

⁵⁶ https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/884.Jojo_Moyes

⁵⁷ BRADFORD, Richard. *The Novel Now: Contemporary British Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 187

⁵⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/21/jojo-moyes-interview-me-before-you-puccini-fiction>

pages, other days she is not capable of a single word. She cannot force herself to write based on what the public would like to read the most, she must always stay true to her heart and write what she feels is right.⁵⁹ When she was writing *Me Before You*, she did not have a contract anywhere so what she created was a pure passion, she was not stressed due to any deadline. In order to write the screenplay to the book, she attended a crash scriptwriting course. She found it very interesting being on the set. She says that being a scriptwriter is a different experience because in the script everything not absolutely essential must be cut out. Sometimes it is not just parts of scenes but the whole sections.⁶⁰ Making it too long would get people bored and cutting off some scenes does not ruin the story because while watching it, the audience do not require imagination.

When Moyes finishes a book, she needs to feel the emotions. She says that if she does not feel it, her readers will not either. Her biggest support is her husband who is the first person to see what she has written. In Austen's life it was her sister Cassandra.

Jojo admits she struggles a bit with the term 'romance writer' because it is filled with a little lightweight, lack of appreciation. Nevertheless there are many great romance novelists. She knows she writes commercial fiction but puts everything into it.

In some of her books, Jojo creates two plot lines separated by time, setting and circumstances and lets the first story affect the second one. This is very complex conception which is getting more popular nowadays. Jane Austen always kept her chronological line of one story. Moyes usually guides the heroine from the second story to discover an object which will make her want to explore what is its history. She then finds out about a heroine, who dealt with some similar issue as she is dealing in the moment and by getting to know her, she better understands herself and finds her answers. In books like this Moyes never sets her first plot line further than World War I. She argues that she would not be able to do a qualitative research for her story. It is hard to gather historical authentic and true information, although as the story is more ancient, it makes the reader feel more mysterious about it.

She sees inspiration all around her. Basically any person who is in a room with her can potentially offer a good story but when she starts creating a story in her head it

⁵⁹ <https://www.redonline.co.uk/red-women/red-chat/a511090/jojo-moyes/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MiagIYc9IQ>

has to come from an idea or information which does not let her sleep. In case of *Me Before You* it was a story of a young British rugby player paralysed in a collapsed scrum who chose assisted suicide at the Swiss Dignitas clinic in 2008. She understands the controversial difficulty of the topic and had to be very careful to put forward all sides.⁶¹

Another important thing is researching for the novel. It of course depends on the book. For example for *The Ship Of Brides*, which takes place on an aircraft carrier, she spent time on board an aircraft carrier in order to feel the atmosphere to write it convincingly. For *Silver Bay* which is a book about whale watching in Australia, she actually went whale watching to Australia. For *Me Before You* she spoke to quadriplegics and did a lot of research through Youtube. For *The Horse Dancer* she visited Le Cadre Noir, which is an ancient riding academy in France.⁶²

This is a big difference compared to Jane Austen. She never travelled out of England and in her works she only described what was known to her. She focused on middle class countryside life and the themes and topics that were common for it in the 19th century. World was limited for women back then but it is hard to say if Austen was provided with the opportunities to travel and write about various topics, would she take them up. She does not give an image of adventurous women, she rather seemed satisfied with her topics.

On the other hand Austen knew what she wanted to do in her life from her childhood age but becoming a novelist was not a clear first choice for Moyes. From nowadays view it can be again attributed to different possibilities and world perception.

Jojo is realistic and knows that not every reader will like every book she writes, she experienced the same with other novelists. However, she feels a slight satisfaction because after *Me Before You* gained fame, people turned to the backlist and started reading her previous books as well.

Nowadays the commercial propagation also has a significant role. When the author has already published and is popular, their new books are promoted and long-expected. Reviews also contribute to reader's aspiration to read the book. Last but not

⁶¹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-3610842/Me-Jojo-Moyes-hit-novel-hits-big-screen.html>

⁶² https://www.goodreads.com/interviews/show/884.Jojo_Moyes

least the cover affects the customer as well. Nice cover can capture attention and tell the reader about the story and style.

Moyes' books are not aimed to be autobiographical but she says that one cannot actually write without revealing something of them. She sympathizes with her characters and has her favourites.⁶³

⁶³ <https://www.redonline.co.uk/red-women/red-chat/a511090/jojo-moyes/>

4 Heroines of the 19th and the 21st Century

The first brief glance at both authors creates a similar impression. Both are British woman writers, romance novelist, living and writing in the English country. The two hundred years between them, however, make a big difference. Moyes can travel, explore, find inspiration and when she has an idea, she can create a work unlimitedly.

Their heroines can be equally brave, independent and smart but sadly they cannot express it or use their potential the same way. It is not just about society limitations but also about the author's experience which affect them. The heroines do not necessarily have to be autobiographical but it is another factor to look at. Without a wide range of opportunities Jane Austen used her books and heroines as a means of expressing herself. Her heroines are autobiographical. They are witty, intelligent, articulate and attractive, they are independent in certain ways but Austen does not encourage passion or rebellion.⁶⁴ That is something which modern novels incorporate. With the attributes Austen's protagonists gain and knowing they are autobiographical, it leaves a certain impression of her superior thoughts of herself among others.

Moyes on the other hand claims no active autobiographical elements. However, writers use their pen to express themselves so it is unlikely that Moyes would not put a part of herself into her characters. She admits that writing without revealing something of her is impossible. She needs to empathize with her characters in order to write from their viewpoint.⁶⁵ Moyes is not interested in gilded stories and rich people's lives. Her characters are often very ordinary and hold unglamorous jobs. There are personal reasons for it. Jojo worked many jobs that differed significantly and it showed her a lot about human nature. She is curious about stories of people who struggle to get somewhere, to achieve something in a society that tells them they cannot succeed.⁶⁶ The following subchapters introduce and compare some of the heroines of both authors.

4.1 Elinor Dashwood

Elinor Dashwood is the lead character of Austen's first published book *Sense and Sensibility*. Determining the lead character is not as easy as in her other novels

⁶⁴ <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/videos/jane-austen-gender-and-morality>

⁶⁵ <https://www.redonline.co.uk/red-women/red-chat/a511090/jojo-moyes/>

⁶⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/sep/21/jojo-moyes-interview-me-before-you-puccini-fiction>

because Elinor's sister Marianne appears in the book quantitatively as much as her sister. Each of the sisters ought to represent one of the characteristics from the title of the book. Elinor symbolizes pure sense and Marianne sensibility. This thought, however, is disproved by Ashley Bonin, who claims both sister being sense as well as sensible to a certain level.⁶⁷

Marianne is spontaneous, talkative, she acts the way she feels and disregards social norms. She is not willing to change her manners just because the society would expect her to. She gives an impression of recklessness without thinking of consequences. In contrast to Marianne, Elinor is thinking, smart, she is perfectly aware of what is appropriate and what is not in their social circles. She is cautious, calm and never expresses her most inner feelings. Due to these meritorious attributes, Elinor is considered, as well as almost every Austen main character, an autobiographical heroine.

Austen never concentrates on physical appearance in her novels, in *Sense and Sensibility* we only know that Marianne is slightly prettier than Elinor but both sisters are beautiful. She also does not address their character directly in the novel. What they are like the reader understands from their acts. For example, Marianne is not able to tell a lie or something she cannot identify herself with completely so her sister always has to step in and save the conversation by answering for her. Being a naive dreamer for example suggests her opinion on relationships. She claims that the man she chooses cannot like something just because she likes it, he needs to love everything as deeply as she does. She clears this attitude when Edward Ferrars admires Elinor's paintings. Elinor and Edward are in love but they do not show it which Marianne disapproves. Austen does not address the love relations in the novel directly. The reader never knows what the male character is doing when he is not with the heroine, also there are no descriptions of heroine's thoughts flow about what he might be doing in the moment or if he really loves her. The reader only knows that Elinor deeply cares for Edward from her increasing interest in conversation when someone mentions him but she never makes it obvious.

⁶⁷ <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1151&context=tor>

4.2 Elizabeth Bennet

Elizabeth Bennet is the lead character in *Pride and Prejudice*, probably the most famous Jane Austen's novel. She is very pretty, however, the beauty in their family is her sister Jane. Mr Bennet has five daughters and Elizabeth is the second eldest. He father openly admits that Lizzie is his favourite daughter and that apart from her and her sister Jane, the rest of the family members are not characters to be proud of. Elizabeth is very smart and enjoys intelligent conversations, mostly when she can secretly offend her companions and make fun of them. She is very judgemental and easily makes a picture of others based on first impression. That is why the novel is named *Pride and Prejudice* because Elizabeth is both proud and has prejudice against the others, mainly against Mr Darcy. Her future husband is absolutely the same. At the beginning they both despise each other and are too proud to acknowledge their mistake. They look at each other judgmentally partly because of class perception. Elizabeth sees a wealthy proud and rude man, Darcy a common dull girl coming from an awful family. Darcy actually disrespects her most for her family members. As the story continues, both of them change emotionally and they start to look more like the other.

The reader does not perceive Mr Darcy's change directly but through Lizzie's eyes. Elizabeth is again autobiographical character who is thoughtful and controls the household with her sense. In this novel one of the main motives is marriage. 'It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.'⁶⁸ The book starts with this very famous sentence and indicates the story line of the book. For different characters in the book, marriage means and represents different things. Charlotte for example expects provision. She had never wished for love and pragmatically from her point of view the only thing a woman can do is to have a family. On the other hand for Lizzie and Mr Darcy it is about virtue. They are equals.⁶⁹ Elizabeth despises the expectations of her lifetime and refuses to marry without true love so when Mr Collins proposes to her, she turns him down. Austen wants a modern love for the main heroine. Love based on respect and support. The kind of love that is commonly expected in nowadays relationships. Elizabeth appears as a character combination of Elinor and Marianne.

⁶⁸ Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 1

⁶⁹ https://isistatic.org/journal-archive/ma/52_01/garbitelliandkries.pdf

4.3 Fanny Price

Fanny Price from *Mansfield Park* differs from other Austen's heroines. She is an opposite of Elizabeth Bennet. In the novel, she is portrayed from ten to eighteen years of age. It is not usual for Austen to use her novel as a description of a life journey of a small girl. The book starts with Fanny moving in with her wealthy uncle's family. She is from nine children and her mother is not capable of taking care of all of them. Fanny is a shy, scared little girl taken from her home environment. In her new home they are not particularly mean to her but also do not show much fondness for her.

Fanny is physically described as small, a bit chubby with unclean skin. She seems simple and not very thoughtful and the fact that her cousins do not want her around and make fun of her only makes it worse. She is not in a good environment to grow healthily. Her only support is Edmund, one of her cousins. He treats her nicely and she forms a very warm bond to him. When she is eighteen, she is sent to her birth house for three months. There she has an opportunity to grow, she realises she was idealizing her old home and understands that her true home is Mansfield. Her virtue is slowly growing worth. By years at Mansfield she gains a little more respect of her new family and they start to view her as equal. Due to years when she could not express herself and just silently observed everything, appeared more like a servant than a member of the family, she grows thoughtful and understands the world around her deeper.

Austen wrote her first versions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* in 1790s however, *Mansfield Park* was published 1814, which explains the significant difference in theme, heroines and topics of the books. It was a different period and Austen wanted to address different issues. The book is not about Fanny's individual life journey, it is about class and privilege. Her individual development might have been different, however, the morality at *Mansfield Park* does not enable it. She grows antisocial and moralist. At every turn she is reminded that her presence in the house is conditioned by the social betters there.

This novel is more serious and misses easy criticism the previous novels have. Austen includes topics as Methodism, trade and colonies in India supplemented by capitalistic business.

4.4 Ellie Haworth

In *The Last Letter from Your Lover* Moyes does not focus on depiction of her heroines, the book is not about understanding the protagonist through the story. Moyes wrote a masterpiece plot, she rather created a story which is breathtaking, complex and fast paced.

Ellie as one of the heroines from *The Last Letter from Your Lover* is a contemporary journalist who finds a love letter in her newspaper's archive. In the letter an unknown man appeals on his lover to leave her husband and be with him. Ellie is personally touched by the topic because she is currently in a relationship with a married man. She decides to find out more about the couple and their story.

Meanwhile the second plot takes the reader to 1960s to meet Jennifer Stirling who had a car accident and does not remember anything. She has a rich and successful husband Larry who travels a lot, they have an amazing house, many friends and their life looks perfect. Even though Jenny starts to remember her life before the accident, something seems to be missing and she does not have a sense of belonging. After some time she finds out she had a lover named Anthony and wanted to leave her husband. She had the accident when she was on her way to him. When she realises it she wants to leave Larry again but he tells her a lie about Anthony being dead. Her life falls apart and she lives in this lie for four years. Then she meets Anthony on a social event. During these four years he thought she did not want him and she thought he was dead. However, time passed by, Jenny has a daughter and cannot imagine leaving her. When she changes her mind and runs to Anthony, she is told that he left for Kongo as a reporter.

The novel is a complex story in combinations of retrospective and chronology. Ellie finds all of their love correspondence, manages to find Jennifer and in the end also Anthony, who never actually left for Kongo. The lovers meet again after being forty years apart. Ellie sees an inspiration in their story and rethinks her life. She leaves her married lover.

She might not seem like the lead protagonist because her story takes minor part in the extent of the book, however, she is the contemporary heroine, her story can be still influenced and develop and she in a way connects the parts of the book together.

Moyes shows her readers social differences in times which are only forty years apart. When Ellie meets Jennifer she is ashamed of her way of speaking, she is fascinated by Jenny's appearance and photos and memories she has. Society has developed a lot in terms of equality from the second half of the 20th century which Jenny comments by describing her married life to Ellie.

4.5 Liv Halston

In *The Girl You Left Behind* Moyes created even more complicated plot when she set her two heroines a century apart and made it impossible for them to meet. It however creates more mysterious tension. Olivia is a 21st century heroine living alone in a beautiful modern house. Her husband, a famous architect, passed away four years earlier. He once bought her a painting of a woman who reminded him of her. Liv does not see the resemblance, however, after her husband's death the painting represents a safe harbour for her soul. She is bound to it so when a Trace and Return Partnership company invites her to return the painting to its original owners she is willing to fight back no matter the consequences to protect what is dearest to her.

In 1916 in a small town St Péronne, which is under German occupation, the second heroine Sophie Lefèvre is running a hotel with her sister. Their husbands are on the front. German commandant is blown away by Sophie's portrait hanging on the hotel's wall. The portrait was painted by Sophie's husband Edouard and for her it represents hope for reunion. It also reminds her of the woman she used to be. Sophie is a strong character, she is calm, rational, very smart, always taking care of everyone else. When she receives a message that her husband has been send to a camp, she is determined to do anything to save his life. She is aware of her influence on the German commandant and promises him whatever he wishes in exchange for her husband's freedom. A few days after, she is taken away by the Germans and no one ever hears about her again.

Both of the heroines are strong and proud women with no fear. For both of them the painting represents happy times with their loved ones and in the certain period of their lives it is the only thing they cherish. The legacy process becomes more complicated for Liv when she finds out that one of the representatives of Trace and Return Partnership is a man she met recently and fell in love with. However, she is determined to succeed and claims the painting rightfully hers. In the end evidence proves that the painting was given to the commandant, not stolen by the Germans so the restorations do not apply and Liv can keep the portrait. It is also revealed that the commandant kept his word, freed Edouard and sent Sophie to him. They spent the rest of their lives in Switzerland.

Moyes again chose a complicated structure of time framing. In both of the books she does not concentrate on picturing the heroines, she presents them to the reader through their stands and actions the way Austen did. In *The Girl You Left Behind* she also brought up the interesting topic of restorations.

4.6 Louisa Clark

Louisa is the lead character of Jojo Moyes' most famous novel *Me Before You*. Due to the novel's and later movie's enormous success, Moyes wrote two sequels for Louisa's story so the reader can appreciate her character development throughout three books. Louisa is a small town girl, who never really thought about her ambitions, she lives in a detached house with her parents, grandfather, sister and her son. She is in a long-term relationship with Patrick, whom she does not really love and she never realised how different they actually are. Everything changes when the café Lou works at closes and she needs to find a new job. Her father is unemployed as well, mother is at home taking care of their grandfather and it is expected from Lou to take the responsibility and secure them financially.

Lou gets a job in a family of wealthy Trainors in their mansion. She is supposed to take care of their only son William, who had an accident two years earlier and became quadriplegic. She gets the job despite her lack of experience because Will's mother believes she could bright up his days. Lou is very unconventional. She is positive all the time, smiling, does not make her head with troubles and also dresses very extravagantly. Will despises her at first but she wins his heart with her kindness

eventually. She makes him more open-minded, kind and makes him see the good in the world despite his handicap. He on the other hand shows her that there is more in the world than one small town. He pushes her to want more, have goals and plans. Although they fell in love, Will does not change his mind and wants to leave for Switzerland, where he wants to end his life because even though he gained a lot with Louisa, he still misses purpose in his new life and cannot find peace with it.

Even though Louisa loses her love, she gains new perspective, becomes strong and determined and in the two sequels the readers can follow her story with a feeling of Will's guidance.

4.7 Elinor and Louisa

Both of the heroines play a significant role in their families. Louisa is providing for her family financially, Elinor is controlling her sisters and mother so that they do not spend too much on unnecessary things. She is reasonable and knows what they can afford.

They are daughters and sisters. Both, Elinor with Marianne and Louisa with Treena, have a very strong bond. They were growing up together, relying on each other. They know how to work together and support each other. Elinor and Marianne have a third sister Margaret, who is younger and therefore does not share such a strong bond with her two sisters. She also does not play a significant role in the novel. In some aspects Elinor is more like Treena and Louisa like Marianne.

Elinor is the lead character and Treena just a supporting one, she does not appear in the novels so often, however, she is very important for the main protagonist. They are both smart and do not react spontaneously or emotionally as their sisters. They realise that family is important and has to be put first. Treena can see that their parents need support, not just financial one, but also the help in the household. Elinor is the most sensible one in her family, she even tells her mother what they can and cannot afford, what is unnecessary luxury for them and always thinks ahead about the consequences in the future. It is the same with Treena.

Marianne and Louisa do not obey social rules, they do not act according to other people's expectations. They are true to their hearts and do what it tells them. They give a slight impression of foolishness and irresponsibility. Especially Marianne has to be

controlled by her sister in public because she sometimes acts inappropriately. Treena is for Louisa more of a support system, a person she can talk to and rely on.

Both Treena and Marianne experience that there is not just one love for life. Marianne learns a lesson from her love disappointment with Willoughby and adopts less sharp opinions. Treena also develops. She has a son, however, in the third book (*Still Me*) realises she is attracted to the same sex.

Before meeting Will, Louisa does not know what love can be. She is in a relationship but more likely because she does not know anything else than being with Patrick. Even when she starts working with Will, it is not a love for the first sight. Their relationship changes by getting to know each other and they start falling for each other slowly. It is impossible to track the relationship of Elinor and Edward because they are in love already at the beginning of the book. It is a secret no one publically knows.

Will comes from a wealthier family but in does not represent an obstacle in the novel. If he did not decide to end his life, there would be no reason for the couple not to be together. Elinor and Edward are in the same position, however here money and social status plays its role. Edward is expected to find himself a pretty wife with good dowry. It turns out that he has been engaged for four years and even though he loves Elinor he cannot turn it down. In the end his fiancé Miss Steel decides to marry his brother and Edward can be with Elinor. If it did not turn out that way, Edward would be obligated to marry Miss Steel. His virtue and social status would not allow him otherwise.

The reader sees a bigger emotional evolution in Louisa's life in books number two and three. Will leaves her money and wishes she starts living boldly. She is learning to let go of fear, she is dealing with her grief but at the same time tries to live up to Will's expectations. She also meets a new man, Sam.

It cannot be said that one of the heroines has an easier life than the other. They are both experiencing love, heartbreak, disappointment, stages of uncertainty, however the society does not allow them to open about it the same way.

5 Finding Inspiration in Jane Austen

As already mentioned, Austen's works did not enjoy a big success in her life time, she was rediscovered by the public via her nephew and his memoir, however, it was still no success compared to how Jane Austen is popular nowadays. It puts Austen into unique position where she has a wide fan base and is also taken for a classic writer with strong position in literary science. Her works have been put through every kind of critical, historical, and theoretical analysis but they have also been adapted for television, radio, theatre and movies.⁷⁰ Sequels and spin-offs are being launched and people around the world are finding inspiration, understanding and help in her novels. Moyes implies that reading classics, and romance particularly, can be good for human's soul. People going through hard times are looking for hope, comfort and understanding in heroes, heroines and authors. The heroines in Austen's novels are good, honest and true. They are decent people who end up in uncomfortable situations without it being their fault which gives contemporary readers, who struggle with something, hope that everything will turn up right in their lives as well. Austen's facility for helping people overcome their problems culminated into books as *The Jane Austen Book Club* written by Karen Joy Fowler, in which characters deal with problems through asking 'what would Jane Austen do?'⁷¹

It is not just fans and general public who find inspiration in Austen, contemporary writers profit as well. Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) became an ultimate sensation. The main protagonist struggling between independence and need for Prince Charming, whom she in the end finds in a man she had despised totally at the beginning, is a story very similar to Jane Austen's most famous novel *Pride and Prejudice*, moreover with the character's name – Mark Darcy.

However the inspiration is not always just marginal. It is also connected with revisionism and reinterpretation. Sequels as *Emma in Love: Jane Austen's Emma Continued* (1996) by the contemporary British author Emma Tennant are being published. These books build on Austen's plots and characters and create a new possible destiny for the heroine. Novels that use the literary heritage of Jane Austen's prose can change the picture the reader created while reading the original novel and the

⁷⁰ <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846719/obo-9780199846719-0081.xml>

⁷¹ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7535768/The-healing-power-of-Jane-Austen.html>

author can be criticized for inability to create an original work. Tennant opens up about topics which she feels could not be brought up in Austen's life time.⁷² It is up to the potential reader to decide if they want to discover a potential continuation or rather stay with the picture Austen created for them. Another example is contemporary author Anita Brookner, who died 2016. She was criticized for her flat Jane Austen style. Her women characters tend to have same manners and she seems to deal with similar topics in similar environment, which her feminist co-writers found rather strange.⁷³ Austen's fiction is limited due to gender and historical circumstances but it makes Brookner's books insipid, which indicates that it is also the period which forms the impression of the book. Because when reading Austen, it is also the contradiction of what she could and what she did, which wins the reader's heart.

⁷² BRADFORD, Richard. *The Novel Now: Contemporary British Fiction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 132

⁷³ BRADFORD, Richard, p. 126, 127

Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to introduce a contemporary British author Jojo Moyes in the context of British feminist literature mainly in comparison to Jane Austen. Due to the literary analysis of the works written by both authors and the secondary literature the thesis was able to reach the following results.

Both authors lived in different times which provided them with different possibilities for publishing their novels. They did not gain immediate success with their writing and Jane Austen did not even live to see her full popularity. Jane Austen had to publish anonymously and could not express herself to full extent. In her works she concentrated on depicting middle and upper class in the British society at the beginning of the 19th century. Her surroundings were an inspiration for her novels, partly due to the fact that she had never travelled out of England. Jojo Moyes' stories on the other hand find place all around the world. They are very complex and usually have more than one time line.

Heroines of both authors are strong independent women with true heart, sharp sense and talkative manners. Jane Austen's heroines are considered to be autobiographical. They are middle class women with strong sense for family who are however not willing to follow social expectations of their time. Jojo Moyes' heroines differ throughout her works. Because of her wider opportunities, she can gain inspiration from various sources and also do a research for her stories.

Jane Austen probably did not mean to influence people or set hopes for change in the perception of women in her time but she definitely influences and supports women around the world through her stories nowadays. Both of the authors are well-known and readers find inspiration, understanding and sympathy in their novels, or simply use the books for relaxation and escape from everyday lives.

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List of Attachments

1 Austen's work (Jane Austen. Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia [online]. 16. 2. 2019, 3:07 [2. 3. 2019]. Retrieve from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Austen#List_of_works)

2 Moyes' work (Books. Jojo Moyes[online]. 2019 [2. 4. 2019]. Retrieve from: <https://www.jojomoyes.com/books/>)

Attachments

1 Austen's work

Novels

- Sense and Sensibility (1811)
- Pride and Prejudice (1813)
- Mansfield Park (1814)
- Emma (1815)
- Northanger Abbey (1818, posthumous)
- Persuasion (1818, posthumous)
- Lady Susan (1871, posthumous)

Unfinished fiction

- The Watsons (1804)
- Sanditon (1817)

Other works

- Sir Charles Grandison (adapted play) (1793, 1800)
- Plan of a Novel (1815)
- Poems (1796–1817)
- Prayers (1796–1817)
- Letters (1796–1817)

Juvenilia — Volume the First (1787–1793)

- Frederic & Elfrida
- Jack & Alice
- Edgar & Emma
- Henry and Eliza
- The Adventures of Mr. Harley
- Sir William Mountague
- Memoirs of Mr. Clifford
- The Beautifull Cassandra
- Amelia Webster
- The Visit
- The Mystery
- The Three Sisters
- A beautiful description
- The generous Curate
- Ode to Pity

Juvenilia — Volume the Second (1787–1793)

- Love and Freindship
- Lesley Castle
- The History of England
- A Collection of Letters
- The female philosopher

- The first Act of a Comedy
- A Letter from a Young Lady
- A Tour through Wales
- A Tale

Juvenilia — Volume the Third (1787–1793)

- Evelyn
- Catherine, or The Bower

2 Moyes' work

Novels

- Sheltering Rain (2002)
- Foreign Fruit (2003)
- The Peacock Emporium (2004)
- The Ship of Brides (2005)
- Silver Bay (2007)
- Night Music (2008)
- The Horse Dancer (2009)
- The Last Letter from Your Lover (2010)
- Me Before You (2012)
- The Girl You Left Behind (2013)
- One Plus One (2014)
- After You (2015)
- Paris for One and Other Stories (2016)
- Still Me (2018)