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Satire on other literary works in the work of Jane Austen

Satira na jiná literární díla v díle Jane Austen

(bakalářská práce)

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

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List of Abbreviations

e.g. *Exempli gratia*: a Latin expression meaning “for example”

etc. *Et cetera*: a Latin expression meaning “and other things”

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1. Introduction

As the main theme of my bachelor thesis I chose satire in the work of great English women writer of 18th century, Jane Austen. In this thesis I will focus particularly on her literary satire, which appeared especially in her *Juvenilia* but is evident also in her mature works.

Firstly, in short Jane Austen's biography, I will try to point out facts, events, situations and persons, both relatives and writers, which could have had influence on her writing. In the next part I will give a chronological list of Jane Austen's works, from her *Juvenilia* to her later novels. This list should show how her literary style and themes, in which she was interested, changed and matured with time.

Then I will define what satire is. I will describe its functions and historical development together with examples of famous satirists. I will also try to explain position of women authors and satirists from historical point of view. After that I will focus on satire, humor and comic which appeared in Jane Austen's work. I will point out what she satirized and how her satire looked. I will also try to explain her attitude to happy endings in her novels.

In the last part I will give examples of literary satire in the work of Jane Austen. I will explain which literary genres she satirized. I will also try to analyze 4 examples of her work which contained literary satire, *Love and Freindship*, *History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters* I will try to show how her literary satire looked and how it worked.

2. Jane Austen's biography with regard to facts which influenced her writing

In the first part of my Bachelor thesis I would like to give short account of Jane Austen's life and its parts and events, which influenced her writing.

2.1 Family Relations

Jane Austen was born on 16th December, 1775 at Steventon in Hampshire and died after the year long illness on 18th July, 1817. She was the seventh child and the second daughter of Reverend George Austen and his wife Cassandra. Jane has six brothers and one sister. Life of big families with many children seemed to be an inspiration for her, because big families such as Bennets, Morlands or Dashwoods appeared in her works.

Love of family, tenderness, affection and strong relationships among siblings were very important for Jane Austen as it is apparent not only from her letters but also from her work.

All of her brothers except George, her second brother who was invalid, were successful men. Her eldest brother James was a clergyman, Frank and Charles joined the Royal Navy and Edward was in age of sixteen adopted by wealthy childless relatives as their heir. Her last and as it is said her most favorite brother Henry had several careers. He was soldier, banker and clergyman. He also helped Jane with publishing of her books. The fate and careers of her brothers but also their names were great inspiration for Jane Austen when she was writing and creating her male characters. We can find in her books clergymen (e.g. Edmund Bertram, Edward Ferrars, Mr. Collins, Mr. Elton etc.), sailors (e.g. William Price, Frederick Wentworth), soldiers (e.g. Mr. Wickham, Colonel Brandon) and in her

novel *Emma* we can also find the character of Frank Churchill, who has similar fate to her brother Edward.

Jane Austen's only sister Cassandra was not only her sister but also a friend, confidante and supporter. These two girls were inseparable from the early childhood. As their mother observed: "if Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate."¹ After the death of Cassandra's fiancé she never married as well as Jane Austen. These ladies spent almost all their lives together and when they were separated they were writing letters to each other frequently. These letters even if most of them were destroyed by Cassandra herself are one of the very few links and hints about the life and personality of Jane Austen which we have. Cassandra took care about her sister during her illness and was with her at the time of her death. She showed such close relationship between sisters e.g. in case of Elizabeth and Jane Bennets or Dashwood sisters.

2.2 Places and People

Places where Jane Austen grew up and people who she met also influenced her work. She spent all her life in England and never traveled abroad. In her works she never described places, people, things or situations which weren't familiar or known to her.

Jane Austen spent her childhood and her early adult life in the country in the village of Steventon in Hampshire and her last years and days in the village of Chawton. The neighbourhood in the village was usually small and society and number of families to visit were limited. From time to time it had to be very tiring to visit still the same people, see the same faces, hear the same stories, jokes and listen to news which weren't new at all. She chose for her writing this monotonous social world where almost never happened something impressive and she mastered in description of those conditions. "Jane Austen is commonly and rightly credited with perfecting, if not inventing, the novel of ordinary life, the

¹ Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and her works* (London: Cassel and Company, 1961) 5.

kind of novel in which the smallest and most commonplace incidents are made significant in the consciousness of the heroine.”²

In the age of twenty-five she moved into the Bath and then into the Southampton. She also visited London. Those places also occurred in her works. Description of Bath and its places, society and habits could be found in works e.g. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* and the harbor city such as Southampton might be found in *Mansfield Park*, where the city of Portsmouth was described. The social circles of London were described in *Sense and Sensibility*.

But even if Jane Austen spent most of her life in country and loved it so much that she was very unhappy when she had to move to Bath, nature didn't play any significant role in her work. She didn't put detailed description not only of places or sceneries but also of interior in her books not like e.g. Ann Radcliffe. The main theme of her books is the human nature and human and social relationships. One of her greatest abilities was very authentic creation of her literary characters that they resembled real persons which one could have met in real life. Even though Jane Austen denied her inspiration in reality and when were her characters compared to real persons she said that: “she was too proud of her gentlemen to admit that they were only MR. A. or Colonel B.”³ But even if she took inspiration in real persons she always did it with respect. Even her mocking and playful humour couldn't be taken in very offensive way because she never truly insulted anybody in her novels.

Her ability to describe truly human nature was praised by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay who compared her skills with William Shakespeare: “Shakespeare has neither equal nor second, but among the writers who, in the point which we have noticed, have approached nearest to the manner of the great master, we have no hesitation in placing Jane Austen, a woman of whom England

² Douglas Bush, *Jane Austen* (New York: Collier Books, 1975) 57.

³ Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and her works* (London: Cassel and Company, 1961) 48.

is justly proud. She has given us a multitude of characters, all in a certain sense commonplace, all such as we meet everyday.”⁴

2.3 Education

Another thing which definitely helped to shape Jane Austen’s writing was education. We can imagine that her parents with so many children and pupils couldn’t provide her any great education. Situation in the house could be similar to what was described by Jane Austen in e.g. *Pride and Prejudice*, when the education of Bennets girls was discussed: “Who taught you? Who attended to you? Without a governess you must have been neglected”, says Lady de Bourgh. “Compared with some families, I believe we were, but such of us as wished to learn never wanted the means. We were always encouraged to read, and had all the masters that were necessary.”⁵

Jane Austen had little formal schooling. At the age of seven was sent with Cassandra to the school in Southampton but the girls felt dangerously ill, probably from typhus, and were taken home. Later they were sent to the boarding school in Reading where they learnt probably some spelling, needlework, French along with dancing and playing piano. Description of such a school might be found in *Emma*: “a real, honest, old-fashioned boarding school, where a reasonable quantity of accomplishments were sold at a reasonable price, and where girls might be sent to be out of the way, and scramble themselves into a little education, without any danger in coming back prodigies.”⁶

2.4 Reading

Jane Austen’s education and especially the reading depended largely on her close relatives. Thankfully the family was literary one. All family members were great novel readers. As the author herself wrote in one of her letters they were: “great novel readers and not ashamed of being so”⁷. In Jane Austen’s era was

⁴ Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and her works* (London: Cassel and Company, 1961) 52.

⁵ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 127.

⁶ Jane Austen, *Emma* (Lodon: Penguin Books, 1994) 24.

⁷ G.E. Mitton, *Jane Austen and her times* (London: Methuen, 1917) 121.

reading of novels, which were by many scholars considered not very valuable sort of literature, often mocked and criticized. It was also pointed out that most of the novel readers were women and their intelligence or capability to understand and appreciate literature of better quality than novels were considered lower than that of men.

Jane Austen was not only a proud novel reader and writer but she also wrote so called *Defense of the Novel* which appeared in her earlier novel *Northanger Abbey*. “Yes, novels – for I will not adopt that ungenerous and impolitic custom so common with novel-writers of degrading by their contemptuous censure the very performances, to the number of which they are themselves adding, joining with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works [...] Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another, we are injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literature corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers [...]”⁸

We can't be absolutely sure what was Jane Austen's literary taste and who were her favourite authors. There were just a few hints and mentions about her reading in her novels and letters. One of her favorite moral writers was essayist Samuel Johnson. The fact could be seen e.g. in her letters where she called him: “my dear Dr. Johnson”⁹. Jane Austen was inspired also by the works of Samuel Richardson, especially from his *Sir Charles Grandison*. Among her favorite poets belonged William Cowper with his poetry of everyday life of countryside and George Crabbe. She was also familiar with the work of Walter Scott. After reading *Waverley* she wrote: “Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair. He has Fame and Profit enough as a Poet, and

⁸ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 24.

⁹ Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) 43.

should not be taking the bread out of other people's mouth. I do not like him and do not mean to like Waverly if I can help it, but I fear I must."¹⁰ From women novel writers she admired Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth. She mentioned their works *Cecilia*, *Camilla* and *Belinda* in her *Defense of Novel*. The evidence of fact that Jane Austen was also a reader of gothic fiction is apparent from *Northanger Abbey*, her famous literary satire, which was aimed at this particular style and one of its famous representatives Ann Radcliffe. She was also familiar with the work of Oliver Goldsmith, especially with his *History of England*. It was one of the books which she mocked and satirized in her *Juvenilia*.

Another mention about Jane Austen taste in reading could be found also in her novels. She often used literature and reading as means of dialogs. She could also use literary taste to describe nature of her characters. There was mention of Marianne admiration of William Shakespeare and William Cowper poetry in *Sense and Sensibility*. In *Emma* Harriet recommended to Robert Martin to read Ann Radcliffe's *Romance of Forrester* and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*. In *Mansfield Park* was a big deal of conversation about the preparations for the theatrical performance of Mrs. Inchbald's *Lover's Vows*. Sir Walter liked to read about his family's lineage in *Baronetage and Peerage* in *Persuasion*. And during conversation between Anne Elliot and Captain Benwick about reading there was also a mention of Walter Scott's poems *Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake* and Lord Byron's poems *The Giaour* and *Bride of Abydos*. *Northanger Abbey* which was one of the Jane Austen's books where was the most mentions about literature we can find e.g. Matthew Lewis' *The Monk*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Eliza's Parsons *The Mysterious Warning* and *The Castle of Wolfenbach* and Samuel Richardson *Sir Charles Grandison*. In her juvenilia *Love and Freindship* was a mention about work of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and William Gilpin's *Tour to the Highlands*.

But even though Jane Austen read great deal of books she described herself in a letter to Mr. Clark, librarian of Prince Regent as: "a woman who, like me,

¹⁰ Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) 48.

knows only her mother tongue and has read little in that...A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable [...] and I think I may boast myself to be with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress”¹¹. But even though this comment looked very humble it might be also seen as one of Jane Austen’s jests. Because royal librarian sent her several suggestions on theme of her next novel. But Jane Austen didn’t like them very much. She wrote this polite answer in which she described her imperfections so to prevent him from other advices. The theory that her humble description of herself was only a joke was supported by her writing short satirical piece called *Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters*.

¹¹ Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) 41.

3. Jane Austen and Her Writing

Now, I would like to give chronological list of Jane Austen works with short description of each of them.

3.1 Juvenilia

When was Jane Austen only eleven or twelve years old she started to write stories and plays which were dedicated to the members of family and were meant for her amusement as well as of the family and close friends. Those writings were inspired in her own reading of popular fiction. She was collecting these stories and made transcripts of them and later they were put into publication as *Volume the First*, *Volume the Second* and *Volume the Third*. These writings called *Juvenilia* were written somewhere between years 1787 – 1793.

Even though Jane Austen herself was speaking about her earlier works as about childish, innocent amusement but also a great waste of time, we now see them as a unique evidence of her development as an author.

Style of *Juvenilia* is mostly satirical, mocking and comic. She was writing farces which were based especially on the bad literary style and especially on sentimental novels, but she criticized also some social issues as e.g. marriage negotiations.

It is remarkable to see such literary talent in such a young girl. In her *Juvenilia* Jane Austen's showed not only her language abilities, writing and narrating skills as well as taste for irony and comic but also a great observation and sensibility. She was able to recognize common mistakes and vices in popular literature and wrote great biting and mocking satiric pieces which she sometimes

pushed at the edge of absurdity. She often used epistolary style, which was very popular among novelist at that time.

Among her most significant juvenilia belongs *Love and Freindship a novel in series of letters*, which was dedicated to her cousin Eliza and which was exaggerated version and burlesque on sentimental novels.

Then it is *The History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st*, which was accompanied by illustrations of her sister Cassandra. It is parody of popular books about history.

Three Sisters, story which was a wedding gift for her brother Edward and which mocked matchmaking and was a sharp satire on so called marriage marketing that was common thing in that time. Young ladies from good but relatively poor families married, often older gentlemen, only for money and financial support. Women's situation in that period wasn't easy. They didn't have many choices how to live their lives if they didn't have rich parents. If they wanted to escape parental supervision and be independent on them they had only few chances how to do it. They either profitably married or if they didn't marry and were educated they could work as governesses of children in rich families. This job was usually badly paid, working conditions weren't easy and governesses weren't much respected. If they weren't educated and family was in the need of money they had to work e.g. as maids. Jane Austen, who was in similar situation herself, was well aware of those marriage negotiations and mentioned it many times in her novels in rather critical way. Sometimes she even described it as a hunt of young ladies for a rich husband. It declared ironic comment at the beginning of *Pride and Prejudice*: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife ... he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters."¹² She also described such a marriage for money in the case of Charlotte Lucas. The

¹² Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 1.

different situation of heiress of great fortune who could make the decision not to marry and be independent was presented in case of Emma Woodhouse. But not always had girl from rich family the chance to become heiress, because it was usually the son or other male relative who inherited the fortune. It was described in the case of Bennets and Dashwoods sisters. But Jane Austen wasn't only woman who pointed out and criticized this situation. Famous feminist Mary Wollstonecraft compared marrying for money with legal prostitution. This marriage marketing could be seen also from different point of view. As from the women's one young ladies were looking for rich husbands who could provide them decent living and they were literally selling themselves. From the men's point of view it was men, usually older, who were buying young, healthy wives with relatively high potential of giving them heirs.

The last I would like to mention but not the least is *Lady Susan*. This novel had a special position among other *Juvenilia* because it was sometimes considered as one of Jane Austen's earlier complete mature works which she never put into the publication. It was a novel in letters which described plans and schemes of attractive, intelligent but manipulative widow who was able to do anything possible to get married get married her daughter and maybe herself as well. It was published first published by her nephew in 1871 in *Memoir*. Here I would like to mention that even though that *Lady Susan* wasn't work of literary satire it found, with high probability, its roots in another famous novel. It is very likely that Jane Austen was inspired for writing this novel by Choderlos de Laclos and his *Dangerous Liaisons* which was published in France in 1782. Because character of Lady Susan Vernon resembled very much that of Marquise de Merteuil. These two characters shared a lot of similar features. I would like to point out few of them. Both women were attractive, intelligent and selfish widows for whom marriage was just the way how to get money and title. Death of her husbands wasn't any tragedy for them but beginning of their independence, because they both liked liberty and hated limitations. These two women had also great self confidence and they were very well aware of their powers especially over men. They liked to flirt and play with them. Lady Susan as well as Marquise de

Merteuil had strong sense of superiority and they manipulated others for their own purposes. They didn't care at all about feelings of others, because they considered them as signs of weakness. They both had also similar attitude to reality and its shaping. They saw lie just like different version of truth. These two characters had a lot in common even though the actions of Marquise de Merteuil were more destructive and fatal than those of Lady Susan Vernon because Jane Austen novel ended up with some kind of anticipating happy ending. Though it is highly probable that Jane Austen read *Dangerous Liaisons* and found an inspiration in them, *Lady Susan* can't be definitely not seen as a copy of a novel of Choderlos de Laclos.

3.2 Mature works

Jane Austen writing changed with age. She grew more mature and matured also her style. Her sharp satire melted and softened little bit and became gentler and kinder. Earlier interest in literary satire changed and she found inspiration in her own social world and social relationships and she changed literary satire for social satire. Her novels became more serious in tone but there still remained comic aspect in them.

But there is a problem with tracing clearly Jane Austen's development as a writer because her earlier mature novels weren't published chronologically and we can't say for sure when, how, how much or if they were rewritten or revised. Jane Austen mature writing could be divided into two periods. The first one begun around year 1795 to the year 1798 and the second one is dated between the years 1811 – 1816 when she lived in Chawton. Four of her novels were published during her life. But she never signed her works. They were printed as novels written by a Lady.

3.2.1 Earlier works

Sometimes around a year 1795 when Jane Austen finished her first longer epistolary letter *Lady Susan* she begun to work on another novel in letters called *Elinor and Marianne*. This story was later rewritten into the shape of narrative

form of novel and also renamed and in the year 1811 was published as the first of Jane Austen's novels under the name of *Sense and Sensibility*. Unfortunately the first manuscript didn't survive and because of that we can't say how many changes were done before the publication of the novel. This novel was a story about two Dashwood sisters, the older one, Elinor, represents the sense and the younger one, Marianne, represents the sensibility.

Jane Austen began to write her next and probably most famous novel *Pride and Prejudice* in 1796, first under the name *First Impressions*. The change of the name was very likely inspired by Fanny Burney's *Cecilia*. For in *Cecilia* it is declared: "The whole of this unfortunate affair has been the result of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE," which last words are repeated twice on the same page, each time in large type so that they catch the eye."¹³ It was first offered by her father, who compared it to Fanny Burney's *Evelina*, to London publisher in 1797 but he declined it. It was published two years after her first novel came out, in 1813. The story followed life of sisters Bennets, especially Elizabeth, Jane and Livia, and their love stories and ways to the marriage.

The last from Jane Austen's earlier works is called *Northanger Abbey*, first written under the name of *Susan*. The story was written in 1798 and it was sold to publisher in Bath in 1803 but he never published it. In the year 1816 Henry Austen negotiated with the publisher and bought the novel back for its first prize, ten pounds. After the business was done he informed the publisher that he sold the novel of now famous writer of *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel under the name *Northanger Abbey*, which was chosen by Henry Austen, was published posthumously together with her last novel *Persuasion* in 1818. The novel was Jane Austen's mature work which was in tone most similar to her *Juvenilia*. It is satire on sentimental but mainly gothic novels.

3.2.2 Later works

¹³ G.E. Mitton, *Jane Austen and her times* (London: Methuen, 1917) 130.

Jane Austen's first novel of her second period was *Mansfield Park* which was finished in 1814. It is considered by many reviewers and readers to be the most complex and also most serious novel but on the other hand it is also said that it almost lacks comic and ironic humor which was so typical for the author. Story followed life of Fanny Price who grew up in the Bertram family.

Second mature work which was written in 1815 was *Emma*. In contrast with her other later works such as *Mansfield Park* or *Persuasion*, *Emma* in her comic tone reminded the most her earlier works. Jane Austen was invited, during her stay in London, by librarian of Prince Regent to his London residence and he requested her that she should dedicate her next novel to the Prince Regent who was her great admirer. The next novel published and which contained the dedication was *Emma*. The novel described the troubles of Emma Woodhouse, the keen matchmaker.

Last of Jane Austen finished novels which was published posthumously in 1818 together with *Northanger Abbey* was *Persuasion*. It is sometimes called as novel of second chance. This second chance was given to main character Anna Elliot.

Before her death Jane Austen began to work on another novel with title *The Brothers*. She finished only eleven chapters of the novel. Her family renamed the story as a *Sanditon* and it was completed in 1975 by another Lady.

There can be found differences between Jane Austen's earlier and later novels. The earlier ones which were written sometime around her early twenties reminded her *Juvenilia*, short sharp satires. Earlier novels could be considered more spontaneous than the later ones. They were written in more humorous and playful tone. Even though that in later novels could be found many funny passages, basically they were more serious in tone. Also their structure was more polished and carefully built up as the one of earlier novels.

4. Satire and women satirists

In this part I would like to define the word satire, its functions and development. I would also try to explain position of the women satirist especially in history.

4.1 Satire

Satire is an artistic form in which human vices, follies and abuses are ridiculed by means of burlesque, irony, sarcasm, parody, caricature, exaggeration and other forms. Even though that satire is mostly funny or comic her function in society is not humorous at all. Its main purpose is to reform or improve the society and things which are satirized. It could be considered as some alarm or warning of public conscience which always point out absurdity or evil in the society. It always shows what is wrong in society and what should be changed. Literary satire might be part of e.g. epigram, anecdote, mock heroic narrative, novel or absurdist drama. We can find satire mainly in literature or drama but it could be also found in visual arts such as caricature or nowadays in movies or TV programs.

The term satire comes from Latin word *satura* which meant miscellany or medley. There was and until today still is used false etymology of the word. Some people connect the word satire with Greek word *satyr*, half male and half goat who was companion of gods Pan and Dionysus.

First famous satires can be found in the work of Greek playwright Aristophanes who is sometimes called Father of Comedy and in his plays he mocked the social situation and social life in Athens. But the term satire or *satura*

was first used by Roman rhetorician Quintilian who also described satire as the Roman literary art even though it developed earlier in Greece. Great influence on development of satire had two Roman poets Horace and Juvenal. Two main types of satire are named after them— Horatian and Juvenalian. Horatian or comical satire is kind of comedy. It criticizes follies of society with the use of playful, mild and gentle humour. It uses wit and mockery. On the other hand Juvenal or tragic satire criticizes social evil. It is often pessimistic, bitter and sarcastic. There is also less emphasis on humour. Another type of satire which has its roots in Ancient Greece is Menippean satire which combines prose and verse. It is comic satire and often uses parody.

The genre of satire continued its development also in Middle Ages. Satire was written by so called goliards, clerical students who criticized mainly the Church. Their poetry could be found e.g. in *Carmina Burana*. Among the greatest satirist who satirized society of Middle Ages belonged e.g. Geoffrey Chaucer with his *Canterbury Tales*, Giovanni Boccaccio with his *Decameron*, Francois Rabelais with his *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Thomas More's *Utopia* or Erasmus Rotterdamus' s *Praise of Folly*, which was critic on Church. In Elizabethan Age dramatist Ben Johnson wrote satirical plays called "comical satyres", we can found some examples of satire also in the work of Shakespeare.

During the Age of Enlightenment which placed emphasis on rationality the genre of satire was very popular. The most important English satirists were Jonathan Swift and his social satire *Gulliver's Travels* or quite shocking *Modest Proposal*, Alexander Pope with his *The Dunciad* in which he celebrates goddess Dullness, Daniel Defoe with his *The True-Born Englishman* which criticized xenophobia or English Libertin John Wilmot, the earl of Rochester. Another famous satirist was also French playwright Molière with his famous plays *The Misanthrope* or *The Miser*.

Development of satire continued also in 19th century and 20th century. We can found it e.g. in the work of Charles Dickens, G.G. Byron, William Makepeace

Thackeray or Mark Twain. It is also visible in plays of G.B. Shaw. In the postwar period is noticeable the Juvenalian satire in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* written by George Orwell, Aldous Huxley 's *Brave New World* or in *Clockwork Orange* written by Anthony Burgess. One of the most popular modern satiric writers is Terry Pratchett with his series of books about Discworld.

In the 20th century thanks to the technical development we can find form of satires also in movies or TV programs. The most famous satires are *The Great Dictator* with Charlie Chaplin who parodies Adolf Hitler or Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* which is satire on army, scientist and politics. Today is also very popular the cartoon serial *South Park* or *The Simpsons* which satirizes problems of American society or controversial movies with Sasha Baron Cohen.

4.2 Women satirists

As it is visible from this short list of the most prominent authors of satire there is not any woman. There of course exist women who wrote or write satire, Jane Austen is the great example of it, but there are reasons which explain the fact that they are not considered or mentioned in the lists of greatest satirists and we should look for them in history. The first problem should be in the fact that satire was a literary form and it is well known that woman's writing was for a long time considered as something inappropriate in the society ruled by men. The first women writers weren't considered equal and their efforts were often sneered by men. Firstly women wrote just in privacy or they published their books anonymously or under male pseudonyms, like Brontë sisters or George Eliot, because they wanted to be taken seriously. One of the reasons why was difficult to become a professional writer was the problem of money and financial independence. Even Virginia Woolf wrote in her famous essay *A Room of One's Own* that woman who wants to write a fiction must have her own room and money to be independent. So it was relatively easier to become a writer for a woman from rich family than from the poor one. Another reason might be the fact that satire always concerned problems of society. It dealt with public issues and its main purpose was the change or reform of the society. But any men never asked

about women's opinion on the public situation. Women were allowed to have opinions only about domestic issues such as bringing up the kids, cooking, sewing or dressing. No man was interested in their opinion about public affairs or about politics. Satires were also often very controversial. And the controversy was something that well mannered lady should have avoid. First women who wrote satire did this mostly anonymously or they adopted such a style of satire which wasn't very controversial or alarming and which society could accept, like satire of Jane Austen. Among first women satirist belonged e.g. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who was friend of Alexander Pope but wrote a satire on one of Pope's work and he turned against her and satirized her in many of his writings, or Aphra Behn who was one of the first professional women writers. Another famous woman satirist was Jane Collier who wrote *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* which was an advice book which taught how to tease one's acquaintances and was inspired by Jonathan Swift. As the time progressed and women's rights and position in society changed, situation of women writers improved as well. Nowadays we can find many women who write satire, not just books but they also work in newspapers or magazines. Satire became women's business as well as men's. Among the most important female satire writers in 20th century belongs e.g. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Muriel Spark, Stella Gibbons.

5. Satire, Humor and Comic in the Work of Jane Austen

Now, I would like to explain how satire of Jane Austen looked in general.

One of Jane Austen most valuable characteristic as a writer but also as a human being which couldn't be ignored was her great sense of humor, and her sense for comic, satire and burlesque. She had delicate sense for irony, and ready wit. It appeared not only in her novels but also in her correspondence, especially between her and her sister. We could also place Jane Austen to the line of great humorist writer. Her humor is usually gentle and not cruel. She didn't sneer or laugh at human faults with any bad or cruel intentions. She was not afraid to be whimsical but she pointed out with her wit the ridiculous elements of human nature by her clever and tender sense of humor. "Free from illusion about humanity, she did not condemn or despise it with cynical sneer, nor on the other hand make use of sentiment to cloak what she saw was to be vile. Her love of what is lovable is as clearly expressed as her contempt for what is despicable."¹⁴

Jane Austen was representative of Horatian type of satire. She was a great observer of human nature and the small imperfections, follies and common nonsense of human beings was the main target of her playful humor, gentle mocking and satire. As it was said by Mr. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*: "For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbours, and to laugh at them in our turn?"¹⁵ She was satirist but wasn't reformer. Even if she criticized some social problems especially that related to women she never did it in radical way. She never criticized political systems and never asked for a change in society. Her

¹⁴ Francis Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1913) 48.

¹⁵ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 278.

satire wasn't controversial, but funny. We can imagine that Jane Austen's attitude to the satire and her mocking character was similar as the one of Elizabeth Bennet: "I hope I never ridicule what is wise or good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, do divert me, I own, and laugh at them whenever I can."¹⁶

6. Jane Austen - satirist or romantic

Jane Austen was great satirist but all of her novels are, except for her ready wit, also read and appreciated among readers, especially among the women ones, as lovely romantic stories. I would try to explain what might have been Jane Austen motivation for this kind of ambivalence.

Even though Jane Austen wrote satires and some of her works, especially *Juvenilia*, were very sharp ones, there is one fact which turned her satiric, mocking self into romantic and idealistic self. It was her strong inclination for happy endings in her novels. Her heroines at the ends of novels always married the men they loved and lived happily ever after. Despite of fact that she was aware of women's situation in society and she knew that marriage usually wasn't romantic affair but only a contract. Despite of fact that she often criticized and satirized the marriage marketing, hunting for rich husband and marrying for money and not for love, she always let her heroine had her happy ending. The reason for it might be just the fact that she was well aware of the things I mentioned. She knew that there were not much happy endings in real life, especially for women in that period. She knew that happily ever after existed only in fairy tales and that life was much darker and cruel. She might have been inspired by her own life and life of her sister as well. They both never married. Her sister lost her fiancé and never found another one. Reasons for which Jane Austen never married are not completely clear but there exist few theories. It could be unhappy love, love for her sister and decision to stay with her or her desire for independence. But no matter what was her real reason for staying unmarried the one thing is true, she or her sister didn't have their happy endings in

¹⁶ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 43.

real life. Before Jane Austen became a writer and also after that, she was a keen reader of novels. And she definitely realized that in the world of novel, which awakes our fantasy and offers us the escape into the dream world, everything could happen and that development of the story and its ending depends only on the author. We can now forget for a while about Jane Austen the witty writer and think of her as about a woman who dreamed about perfect love. Millions of women all over the world love to read romantic stories just because they want to escape the reality of everyday world and dream about perfect men and never ending love. We can very well imagine that Jane Austen, despite her witty, ironical and satirical self, was also at least one of these women and even though her real life was different, during her writing she lived in her fantasy lives of her heroines and that she experienced her happy endings through her literary characters.

7. Burlesque and satire on other literary works in the work of Jane Austen

One type of satire which appeared in the work of Jane Austen and which I would like to particularly point out was literary satire and burlesque. This type of satire appeared especially in her *Juvenilia* but it could be found also in her mature works. She satirized especially two literary genres: sentimental and gothic fiction, which I would like to briefly explain. Except these two genres she also mocked books about history

Such satire which is critically directed to the other literary works is often presented by means of imitation or parody. Jane Austen used two types of burlesque in her works: in e.g. *Northanger Abbey* “the contrasts between false and true is reflected in the career of character whose expectations, derived from fiction, are challenged and found false by experience.”¹⁷ “The other of these two burlesque patterns which have scope for subtlety, some fictitious situation or course of action is translated into terms of actual life.”¹⁸ As it is e.g. in *Juvenilia Love and Freindship*. Difference between these two types of burlesque is that in the first type is necessary that character realizes difference between reality and fiction. In the second type, which actually parodies the literary style is not necessary such character’s awaking.

7.1 Sentimental novel

¹⁷ Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) 56.

¹⁸ Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941) 57.

This literary genre grew very popular during 18th century. Sentimentalism and sentimental literature were reactions on rationalism which spread over Europe during Age of Enlightenment. It preferred feeling and emotions over thinking and passion over reason. It also introduced new ideal of love which was romantic, consuming, eternal, full of desire but also full of suffering. Sentimental novels relied on emotional responses of readers. They were based on sentiment, struggle of innocence against evil, sensibility, suffering and distress of hero but more often of heroine. Such sensible heroine was virtuous but rather naïve creature. She had a good heart and was easily moved by suffering of others. Sentimental fiction was full of tenderness and pathos and scenes that should evoke tears in readers. Among main representatives of this genre belonged e.g. Samuel Richardson with his *Pamela* or *Sir Charles Grandison*, Henry Mackenzie and his *The Man of Feeling*, Fanny Burney's *Evelina* or Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. As well as they were popular they were also criticized and satirized. One of the greatest satirist of sentimental novels was e.g. Henry Fielding. In his novel *Tom Jones* satirized novels of Samuel Richardson.

7.2 Gothic novel

They were very popular in second half of 18th century and they popularity continued to the beginning of 19th century. The name gothic novel was inspired by architectonic gothic style which was revived in that period as well. The stories of novels were usually situated in gothic castles, houses, monasteries and abbeys. The same genre could be found e.g. in France under name le roman noir or in Germany under name Schauerroman. Horace Walpole could be considered as father of gothic novel, because his *The Castle of Otranto* was first work of gothic fiction which set off the popularity of that literary style. Gothic novel was a combination of horror and romance which should have evoked terror, fear and thrill in reader with help of means which could be nowadays considered as stereotypes of gothic novel. The settings were usually some old haunted houses or castles, or graveyards with dark and mysterious atmosphere full of dead. There were sense of supernatural which was represented by ghosts and hereditary curses, there were also plenty of monsters and supernatural creatures such as werewolves

or vampires. Usual feature in gothic novels, especially written by women, was a heroine, damsel in distress, who was rather courageous but sensible and who had to overcome various obstacles and had to struggle with wicked schemes of villains. Others famous writers of gothic fiction except Horace Walpole were e.g. Mathew Lewis with his *The Monk* or Ann Radcliffe. Her novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Italian* were very popular. She used technique of explained supernatural which means that all the supernatural things she presented in her novels had rational explanation. Even though the popularity of gothic fiction slowly came down its influence on literature was great. It gave the world dark and mysterious Byronic hero. Its influence and atmosphere are also visible in the work of Brontë sisters, Mary Shelley, or Edgar Allan Poe.

8. Examples of literary satire in the work of Jane Austen

Now I would like to analyze 4 works of Jane Austen and point out how her literary satire worked.

8.1 *Love and Freindship*

At the age of fourteen Jane Austen, who was keen novel reader, must have inevitably come across sentimental novels. Jane Austen was a young girl with witty mind, and sharp pen who was able to realize almost unhealthy sensitivity of those novels and was able to make great fun of them and point out the flaws of such a romantic narrating. One of her sportive writings, epistolary novel, *Love and Freindship* was biting satire aimed directly at such novels and at cult of sensibility. We can say that the young author hit the nail right on the head. The story which was introduced as thrilling tale with horrible happenings was thanks to the Jane Austen's sense for irony made into great burlesque which provoked fits of laughter.

She read definitely great variety of books which inspired her but we can suppose that the main inspiration she found in the novel *Laura and Augustus, An Authentic Story, In a Series of Letters* by a Young Lady. She borrowed not only the names of the main protagonists but also an epistolary style which had the function of the warning, but also some of their misfortunes.

Jane Austen wrote *Love and Friendship* in kind of strategic way. It seems as if she made a list of main elements which repeated frequently in sentimental

novels and which could have been considered as stereotypes of sentimental fiction and she simply mocked them. I chose several examples on which I try to point out how her mocking and satire functioned. These examples are: characters, sensibility, fainting, love, friendship and storyline.

One of the things that Jane Austen in *Love and Freindship* satirized was characters of sentimental novels. She mocked especially positive ones and their spotless perfection. She mentioned in one of her letters that such perfection evoked in her feelings of sickness and wickedness. Those characters, particularly hero, heroine and villains, were always easy to distinguish if we consider them as opposites to each other. Hero was always positive character. He was sensible, virtuous and good hearted. On the other hand villain was always negative character with cruel heart and dishonest intentions. But Jane Austen seemed to change this polarity because her characters are not strictly black or white ones. Especially her heroine, hero and all the characters which should be entirely positive are pictured more in the negative way. It almost looked like if author wanted to make them more imperfect so that they resembled more real human beings. Because, no matter how virtuous and sensible people are, they are never perfect. They have their mistakes. But Jane Austen, with her ready wit and great sense for irony made those mistakes and negative features laughable. Some of those mistakes were e.g. hero's weak knowledge of geography and even weaker sense of direction. Paying debts was also considered by those supposedly noble characters as something so vulgar that they would have blushed to just think of it. On the other hand they had no moral problems with stealing. Neither nature of heroine was left error free. She not only felt antipathy and dislike to several persons but she didn't have the smallest problem admitting it. It was something that proper heroine of sentimental novel never did.

If Jane Austen made a decision to mock sentimental novels she definitely must have ridiculed feature which was the most typical for those novels and it was sensibility. This quality was among writers and readers of sentimental novels

considered to be the most valuable virtue of heroine or hero. But Jane Austen was surely, even if at that young age, well aware of fact that too much of sensibility could cause troubles and that employment of reason, at least from time to time, is important as well. For mocking sensibility she chose very specific way. Every character in the story, which showed just a little bit of common sense, was by sensible heroine considered a villain. It happened in case of Augusta, McDonald and Sir Edward. Through his character Jane Austen also mockingly commented on readers of sentimental literature who succumbed to influence of it. During his dialogue with son, who was talking rather passionately than reasonably he concluded: “Where, Edward in the name of wonder did you pick up this unmeaning gibberish? You have been studying novels, I suspect.”¹⁹

One of the evidences of heroine’s sensibility in sentimental novels was her ability or maybe talent in fainting. It is probable that in that time originated popular proverb which states that every proper lady faints at least once a day .It played important role in *Love and Freindship* as well. Every reaction of heroine, but especially of her friend, on distress ended with fainting. And it was this feature of sentimental novels which Jane Austen satirized most bitinglly and sharply. She let Sophia died because of her continuous fainting. It is her warning last speech that made great fun of fainting in sentimental fiction. “My beloved Laura take warning from my unhappy end and avoid the imprudent conduct which had occasioned it [...] Beware of fainting fits [...] Though at the time they may be refreshing and agreeable, yet believe me they will in the end, if not too often repeated and at improper seasons, prove destructive to your constitution. My fate will teach you this [...] I die a Martyr to my grief for the loss of Augustus [...] One fatal swoon has cost me life [...] Beware of swoons, Dear Laura [...] A frenzy fit is not one quarter so pernicious, it is an exercise to the body and if not too violent, is, I dare say conductive to health in its consequences. Run mad as often you chuse but do not faint.”²⁰

¹⁹ Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 80.

²⁰ Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 98.

Another thing that Jane Austen satirized, as it is visible from the title, was love and friendship as they were pictured in sentimental novels. Friendship was always presented as feeling that grew up quickly and was entirely unconditional. Friends always confided to each other and were always ready to help and support each other. All those ideals Jane Austen ridiculed in this work, especially the quick progress of new friendship and the confiding part. This mockery is visible in the scene describing first meeting of heroine, Laura, and Sophia: “We flew into each other’s arms and after exchanging vows of mutual friendship for the rest of our lives, instantly unfolded to each other most inward secrets of our hearts.”²¹ Love in sentimental novels was presented as fateful and never ending always. Lovers lived only for their love. They were always full of sentiments, ready for overcoming obstacles and for making sacrifices. Those romantic visions of perfect love, undying faithfulness and romantic naivety were also something that Jane Austen mocked. E.g. during dialogue of Edward and his sister this naivety came out clearly as he expressed: “Did you then never feel pleasing pangs of love, Augusta? Does it appear impossible to your vile and corrupted palate, to exist on love? Can you not conceive the luxury of living in every distress that poverty can inflict, with object of your tenderest affection?”²²

Last thing I would like to point out but definitely not least which Jane Austen satirized in *Love and Freindship* was storyline of sentimental novels with its plots. Main story focused on adventures of heroine or hero. They had to deal with different misfortunes and overcome a lot of obstructions to reach their happy ending. Jane Austen collected all frequent plots and happenings, such as forcing into marriage, death of parents, marriage with fortune hunter or imprisonment and death of hero. She put all of them together and let her heroine experienced all those adventures and disasters. But during all her narrative she kept highly satirical tone. Some of those events were so ridiculous that they were drawn

²¹ Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 84.

²² Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 82.

almost at the edge of absurdity. It happened e.g. in story when heroine met her lost grandfather. “At his first appearance my sensibility was wonderfully affected and e’er I had gazed at him a second time, an instinctive sympathy whispered to my heart that he was my grandfather [...] I threw myself on my knees before him and besought him to acknowledge me as his Grand Child. He started, and after having attentively examined my features, raised me from the ground, and throwing his Grand fatherly arms around my neck.”²³ But because Jane Austen wanted probably pointed out the absurdity of this situation she decided that one grand child is never enough, author wrote the immediate acknowledgement of three others: Sophie, Philander and Gustavus.

In *Love and Freindship*, which is one of Jane Austen’s first works, young author demonstrated her talents that made her famous at her adulthood. She in the short piece of fiction presented not only her delicate writing that improved with age but also ready wit, biting and sharp humor and sense of ridicule which are so important for satirist. It is incredible that all of this could have been found in such a young creature further to it in a woman.

8.2 History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st

After that Jane Austen finished her satire on sentimental novels she aimed her sharp pen on next target. It is for sure that she read books about history, at least those written by Alexander Hume or Oliver Goldsmith. And at the age of fifteen she completed her lively parody on such a historical writings and schoolroom history books from that time, especially on popular Oliver Goldsmith’s *History of England from the Earliest Times to the Death of George 2nd*. She satirized especially importance of role of authors which they played during writing. She also criticized their objectivity or lack of dates they mentioned in their books. She mocked style in which were the books written so they looked more like some historical novel than serious book about historical events. This

²³ Jane Austen, “Love and Friendship,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 89.

parody was dedicated to her sister Cassandra and was accompanied by her sister's portraits of English monarchs.

Now, I would like to quote small part of Goldsmith's *History of England* as an example of the literary style of books about history which Jane Austen satirized. "Northumberland, also, who found his affairs desperate, and that it was impossible to stem the tide of popular opposition, attempted to quit the kingdom, but he was prevented by the band of pensioner guards, who informed him that he must stay to justify their conduct in being led out against their lawful sovereign. Thus circumvented on all sides, his cunning was now his only resource, and he began by endeavouring to recommend himself to Mary, by the most extravagant protestations of zeal in her service. He repaired to the market place in Cambridge, and proclaiming her queen of England, was first to throw up his cap in token of joy. But he reaped no advantage from this mean duplicity, he was the next day arrested in the queen's name by the earl of Arundel at whole feet he fell upon his knees, begging protection with the most abject submission."²⁴

At the very beginning of her *History of England* Jane Austen wrote declaration in which she mocked authors of books about history. She wanted to point out that they were the ones who chose how the book should have been written and which historical events and characters should be mentioned. And it was this kind of power which authors had over readers that Jane Austen satirized. She described herself as: "partial, prejudiced and ignorant historian"²⁵ and she also announced that: "there will be very few dates in this History"²⁶. But, as also

²⁴ Oliver Goldsmith, *History of England from the Earliest Times to the Death of George 2nd* (London: Caxton Press, 1825) 226.

²⁵ Jane Austen, "History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st," *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 134.

²⁶ Jane Austen, "History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st," *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 134.

authors of historical books did, she found it important to mention a dates. She actually chose one, but she did it really carefully and of course with great sense of humor. This date was connected with the sad history of Anne Boleyn. “Tho’ I do not profess giving many dates, yet as I thing it proper to give some and shall of course make choice of those which it is most necessary for reader to know, I think it right to inform him that her letter to the King was dated on the 6th of May.”²⁷

In the book Jane Austen gave reader basic information about the monarchs and events of their reigns as proper author of such books should have done. But again she turned that basic feature of books about history upside down. All of those information were useless because she in most cases added that she didn’t remember the names of important persons or reasons why historical events happened. “During his reign, Lord Cobham was burn alive, but I forget what for.”²⁸

Another mockery was aimed at sources that authors used during writing of their books. Jane Austen had her sources too. But she rather cited William Shakespeare than any reliable historical sources. “He afterwards married the King’s daughter Catherine, a very agreeable woman by Shakespeare’s account.”²⁹ But English playwright wasn’t the only author who inspired her. She also mentioned book *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle*. As another reliable source in her historical overview she often cited, as an ignorant author, her own opinions or the ones of her relatives and friends which she adopted. All of her likings and sympathies were of course exaggerated and mockingly expressed in rather ignorant way as they were considered the only right ones. “I suppose you know all about the wars between him and the Duke of York who was of the right side, if you do not, you had better read some other history, for I shall not be very diffuse

²⁷ Jane Austen, “History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 138.

²⁸ Jane Austen, “History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 135.

²⁹ Jane Austen, “History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 135.

in this meaning by it only to vent my spleen against, and shew my hatred to all those people whose parties or principles do not suit with mine, and not to give information.”³⁰

As she started, she also finished. Even at the end, when Jane Austen explained, what was her main reason for writing her own book about history of England, she continued with ironical comments which ridiculed the role and position of authors. “My principal reason for undertaking the History of England being to prove the innocence of the Queen of Scotland, which I flatter myself with having effectually done, and to abuse Elizabeth, tho’ I am rather fearful of having fallen short in the latter part of my Scheme.”³¹

When Jane Austen was growing up the main object of her satire changed. She focused mostly on social satire. But we can find another example of literary satire also in her mature works. It appeared in her novel *Northanger Abbey*.

8.3 Northanger Abbey

The biggest evidence of literary satire in Jane Austen mature work appeared in her novel *Northanger Abbey*, which was written as satire on sentimental but especially gothic fiction. She mentioned several gothic novels in the story, which were described as horrible narratives e.g. Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk*, Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, Eliza’s Parsons *The Mysterious Warning* and *The Castle of Wolfenbach* but she aimed her mockery on one particular novel. It was *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe. The satire was directed especially on the literary style of gothic novels, their rather complicated and unrealistic plots and on the fact how those novels influenced young and inexperienced mind of its readers. She also mocked heroines of gothic fiction and other stereotype features. But, even though she satirized those literary genres, she read them herself and it was

³⁰ Jane Austen, “History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 136.

³¹ Jane Austen, “History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st,” *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 145.

very likely that she enjoyed reading them. In *Northanger Abbey* also appeared her famous *Defense of Novel*.

One of the greatest mockeries in the novel is aimed at heroines of gothic novels. Similar mockery on their spotless perfection appeared already in *Love and Freindship* and Jane Austen continued it with her ironical commentaries also in *Northanger Abbey*. This ridicule appeared at the opening of the novel when Catherine Morland was at the beginning of her career as heroine and continued by small hints and comments through whole novel to its end. In introduction Jane Austen satirized all talents, abilities and qualities and at the end all triumphs of heroines of gothic fictions. They were usually described as beautiful, sensible almost fairy creatures, with great ability to learn new things very quickly. They were also very talented in arts such as painting, composing sonnets and playing the musical instruments. Catherine on the other hand was in her childhood more tomboy than sensible girl, she weren't considered beautiful and she didn't find any passion in gardening and flowers. To her ability to learn is said that: "she never could learn or understand anything before she was taught, and sometimes not even then, for she was often inattentive, and occasionally stupid."³² She wasn't talented in arts and as author mentions: "the day which dismissed the music master was one of the happiest of Catherine's life"³³. Fortunately her abilities and tastes improved with age as well as her looks. Even though she wasn't able to write poetry, she liked reading. And as Jane Austen ironically stated Catherine read all books that were necessary for her career of heroine and learned all important quotations e.g. from works of Pope, Gray and Shakespeare. As to her musical tastes she was able to listen to musical performance without any greater problems. This whole ironic commentary which was absolute contradiction to all heroines of gothic fictions is nowadays seen as kind of literary self – portrait of young Jane Austen. During the novel she mocked also great suffering from pangs of love and from remorse that all heroines had to undergo: "And now I may dismiss my heroine to the sleepless couch, which is the true

³² Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 2.

³³ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 2.

heroine's portion; to a pillow strewed with thorns and wet with tears. And lucky may she think herself, if she get another good night's rest in the course of the next three months."³⁴At the end of the novel when was Catherine Morland coming back home Jane Austen returned once again to her mocking commentaries on the life of true heroine. Compared to heroines of gothic fiction her return was very infamous. She didn't have husband with title, and she wasn't any wealthier than at the moment when she left home.

If I mentioned Jane Austen's mockery of heroines of gothic fiction I would also like to point out other character in the novel which played important role from satirical point of view. It was hero, Henry Tilney. He could be seen as one of the main author's instruments through which she could openly express her satire and irony. It was him who whimsically pointed out the necessity of heroine having a journal and what girls like Catherine usually wrote in it. And this mocking continued with his so called appreciation on women letter writing. He was also the one through whom Jane Austen made fun of genre of gothic fiction. His next function was also that of Catherine's mentor, because it was him who explained her difference between reality and fiction.

As I already mentioned, Jane Austen was keen novel reader and she wrote its defence in this novel. Except for justification of novel as a literary style and novel writers she also tried to defend its readers and criticized the hypocrisy of those people who read the novels in private but slandered them on public. For the defence of readers she chose to confront literary tastes of her characters. Her hero, smart charming and amusing Henry Tilney, enjoyed reading novels. He admitted that he read them maybe more and with greater pleasure than most of young ladies. As Henry Tilney said: "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid."³⁵ On the other hand as if she wanted to support Henry Tilney's theory she created character of boastful and dull John Thorpe. He represented one of the hypocrites, who denied that he read

³⁴ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 72.

³⁵ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 86.

novels and thought them the loss of time. Even though it was visible that he read few of them, it was clear that he didn't understand literature as well as he didn't understand anything else.

Another thing that Jane Austen satirized in this novel was influence of romantic literature on the minds of young ladies. Such an influence could have had sometimes bad consequences as it is pictured in the case of Catherine. When she was, by Isabella Thorpe, introduced to the gothic fiction she became so addicted to them that she stopped to differentiate between reality and novel. As the consequence of it she invented almost detective story in her fantasy and accused General Tilney from imprisonment or even more death. But thanks to Henry Tilney who opened her eyes Catherine realized her mistake and understood that real life and fiction were two different worlds. Jane Austen wrote in her explanation, why adventures of novel didn't mix with real life, especially with the English one. "Charming as were all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and charming even as were the works of all her imitators, it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for. Of the Alps and Pyrenees, with their pine forests and their vices, they might give a faithful delineation; and Italy, Switzerland, and the south of France might be as fruitful in horrors as they were there represented. Catherine dared not doubt beyond her own country, and even of that, if hard pressed, would have yielded the northern and western extremities. But in the central part of England there was surely some security for the existence even of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age. Murder was not tolerated, servants were not slaves, and neither poison nor sleeping potions to be procured, like rhubarb, from every druggist. Among the Alps and Pyrenees, perhaps, there were no mixed characters. There, such as were not as spotless as an angel might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad."³⁶

³⁶ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 169.

That influence of novels on young ladies' minds was also connected with their youthful naivety and maturing. At the beginning of the novel Catherine was young inexperienced girl who befriended older and more informed and word wise Isabella Thorpe. But at the same time as she realized the difference between reality and fiction she also disclosed Isabella's insincerity and realized that not everyone who looked like our true friend really is one. And that the world is full of hypocrisy. She matured from her naivety to greater rationality.

Despite all those things that Jane Austen satirized, *Northanger Abbey* is first of all satire on gothic fiction and especially on novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Jane Austen used similar technique as in the case of *Love and Freindship*. She again picked several frequent features that appeared in gothic fiction and mocked them. But compared to *Love and Friendship* when she satirized sentimental novels in general, this time she used hints that pointed directly at Ann Radcliffe's novel. Now I would like present few of Jane Austen's ridicules.

One of the things, which were common in gothic fiction, was mysterious setting. Novels usually took place in some old, dark, haunted house, castle or monastery. Jane Austen knew this fact and let her heroine to dream about such mystic place. First such a mockery was written in case of trip on Blaize castle, which was presented as old, historical building. But Blaize castle was, despite of its name, nothing else than a mansion, which was built in 18th century. Next ridicule was actually mentioned in title of novel itself. *Northanger Abbey* was supposed to be old, obscure and inhospitable place. As Catherine dreamed: "Its long, damp passages, its narrow cells and ruined chapel, were to be within her daily reach, and she could not entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun."³⁷ But she was greatly disappointed because abbey, even if it was old building, has been renovated and also furniture was modern. The mention of nun in Catherine's vision of abbey was one of connections with *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. One of

³⁷ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 116.

the important characters in the story was mad nun, later it was discovered that it was Signora Laurentini, who was considered to be dead.

One of the greatest mockeries aimed at gothic fiction took place during journey from Bath to Northanger, in which Henry Tilney teased Catherine. He told her story about what she should have expected in abbey. His story was based on great knowledge of gothic novels. Jane Austen satirized the fact that usual development of gothic stories was always same and, after reader read few of them, also very predictable. There were always mysterious chambers, suspicious furniture, lousy weather old servants, unexpected deaths, ghost stories and most of all some brave, dauntless heroine who disclose all the mysteries of the house and the family. During Henry's narrating appeared again several hints, which pointed out its connection with *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. One of the adventures, which Henry described, was: "In repassing through the small vaulted room, however, your eyes will be attracted towards a large, old-fashioned cabinet of ebony and gold, which, though narrowly examining the furniture before, you had passed unnoticed. Impelled by an irresistible presentiment, you will eagerly advance to it, unlock its folding doors, and search into every drawer [...] At last, however, by touching a secret spring, an inner compartment will open, a roll of paper appears, you seize it, it contains many sheets of manuscript."³⁸ It reminded the scene from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* when old St. Aubert asked, before he died, his daughter Emily to look for some private papers and destroy them. As we read the instructions he gave Emily it becomes clear where Jane Austen found her inspiration: "The closet, which adjoins my chamber at La Vallee, has a sliding board in the floor. You will know it by a remarkable knot in the wood, and by its being the next board, except one, to the wainscot, which fronts the door. At the distance of about a yard from that end, nearer the window, you will perceive a line across it, as if the plank had been joined; the way to open it is this. Press your foot upon the line; the end of the board will then sink, and you may slide it with ease beneath the other. Below, you will see a hollow place [...] That closet, my dear, when you return home, go to it; and, beneath the board I have described, you will

³⁸ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 133.

find a packet of written papers. Attend to me now, for the promise you have given particularly relates to what I shall direct. These papers you must burn and, solemnly I command you, without examining them.”³⁹ Another connection with Ann Radcliffe’s novel could be e.g. name of old servant, Dorothy which remained similar servant from *The Mysteries of Udolpho* called Dorothee.

Jane Austen continued in her mocking of common features of gothic fiction. She employed also suspicious furniture, old chests in this case, bad weather and mysterious papers in her story. And she made her heroine succumb to her own imagination and made her believe that she is in the same situation as heroine of gothic novel. The whole scenes ended both with irony. There were only some bed clothes in the chest, in first case. And in the second one, the papers which Catherine found weren’t of any importance but simply an inventory of linen and washing bill.

Together with suspicious furniture Jane Austen satirized also old mystic family portraits of persons who died mysteriously. These portraits usually resembled hero or heroine. This fact Catherine expected when she was going to see portrait of dead Mrs. Tilney, but she was, once again, disappointed. Such likeness between dead person on portrait and living one was another connection between satire in *Northanger Abbey* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Heroine, Emily, looked like Marchioness de Villeroi. At the end it was discovered that they were relatives, aunt and niece.

Last but not least thing that Jane Austen satirized in her novel and which I would like to mention was villain. In gothic novels he was always described as cruel and cynical man, usually with aristocratic origin and with mysterious past. His dishonest schemes always involved heroine, its future destiny and endangered her life. Jane Austen made her villain from General Tilney whom Catherine suspected of terrible crimes such as death or at least imprisonment of his wife. Those suspicions, which were based mostly on Catherine’s personal feelings,

³⁹ Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 75.

turned out to be untrue. Jane Austen once again made fun of stereotype of gothic novel. This plot was also inspired by *Mysteries of Udolpho*. There was a mention about General: “It was the air and attitude of a Montoni!”⁴⁰ In Ann Radcliffe’s novel Montoni, cruel, scheming Italian, imprisoned his wife because he wanted to blackmail her and then caused her death. He also had very dark intentions with Emily. Even though General Tilney could be seen little bit as a villain if we take in consideration his behavior towards Catherine at the end novel and also the fact that he was against her marriage with Henry.

Northanger Abbey was one of Jane Austen’s mature works, which most resembled her *Juvenilia* in its tone. The reason might have been that even though it was published so late it was written much earlier. She used her great and sharp wit and irony and wrote a lovely satire on Gothic fiction. Jane Austen “in the most barefaced and liveliest manner, parodies and makes fun of Mrs. Radcliffe’s romances, which she has praised so highly elsewhere, and this example of the humorist’s satire shows how free it is ordinarily from illiberality and harshness. She laughs merrily here at what she really esteems, the merits of which in another light she is the first to acknowledge.”⁴¹

8.4 Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters

It is probable that during her career Jane Austen got many advices and suggestions concerning her writing. It is not clear how much those hints irritated her but it is for sure that especially one of those suggestions annoyed and also inspired her that she wrote this short, biting piece of literary satire. That advice was given by Mr. Clark, royal librarian. He suggested that Jane Austen should have written her next novel about clergy. And as he was a clergyman himself, he also kindly offered that Jane Austen might have taken his life for inspiration. When she politely declined he suggested her another theme, this time history of Saxe-Cobourg. Jane Austen answered him in her usual playful style, when she

⁴⁰ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) 157.

⁴¹ Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and her works* (London: Cassel and Company, 1961) 168.

described herself as not very educated woman who was not suitable writer for such a great task.

Not long after that correspondence was hold, she wrote *Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters* which is some kind of manual, list of important facts which every author should have been aware of if he wanted to write a novel. Jane Austen once more picked those stereotype features of sentimental fiction and satirized them.

As in her previous works, *Love and Friendship* and *Northanger Abbey*, she mocked the character of heroine. In her description she enumerated virtues and qualities of heroine and she also ironically pointed out that such a gentle creature, with which every man had to fall in love, was incapable of having any vices such as wit. "Heroine a faultless Character herself, perfectly good, with much tenderness and sentiment, and not the least Wit, very highly accomplished, understanding modern languages and (generally speaking) everything that the most accomplished young women learn, but particularly excelling in music, her favourite pursuit, and playing equally well on the piano forte and harp and singing in the first stile."⁴² Wit as vice, Jane Austen, very witty woman herself, described in the case of heroine's friendship with witty lady, which was considered as unthinkable.

Jane Austen also ridiculed plenty of novel features such as setting, naming of novels, happy endings or relationship between daughter and father, who should have been, of course by the merest chance and without any connection with Mr. Clarks, a clergyman.

⁴² Jane Austen, "Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters," *Catherine and other writings*," ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 230.

Jane Austen mocked especially adventures, misfortunes, troubles and sufferings of heroine which she experienced during her frequent travels. During her travelling, according author, she should have met hero who was as perfect as she was, and who often saved her from the hands of villain. As Jane Austen noted she had to escape at least twenty times.

One of the things that Jane Austen also satirized was pathos, so common in sentimental novels, which was usually connected with death. As she bitingly described it in the case of the death of heroine's father: "poor father, quite worn down, finding his end approaching, throws himself on the ground, and after 4 or 5 hours of tender advice and parental admonition to his miserable child, expires in a fine burst of literary enthusiasm."⁴³

Since 1789, when Jane Austen finished *Northanger Abbey*, it looked that she dropped literary satire and changed it for social satire. This short piece which reminded in its style her *Juvenilia*, was written in 1816. It is a proof of fact that even though Jane Austen focused her literary interest on other things, she, now famous author herself, felt the necessity to refer to some of the ridiculous elements that still appeared in novels. She also wanted to point out that even though she was a writer of novels, she beware of those stereotypes of sentimental fiction, despite of all the good advices and suggestions.

⁴³ Jane Austen, "Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters," *Catherine and other writings*, ed. Margaret Ann Doody and Douglas Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 232.

8. Conclusion

In this bachelor thesis I tried to define Jane Austen as a satiric writer, especially literary satirist. From the modern point of view women writers from her times are considered as pioneers of women fiction. And Jane Austen was one of them. Those women had to struggle for their place on the sun. They had to publish their work either anonymously, as Jane Austen, or under male pseudonyms if they wanted to be taken seriously. It took a long time than women were accepted as equals by men, not only in real life but also in literature. And satire was for a long time considered as men's business. If women wanted to write satire and express their wit and perspicacity, they had to choose a theme that wasn't very controversial. And this exact thing Jane Austen did.

She wrote and satirized things that were well known to her. She never dealt with themes such as science or politics in her novels. That doesn't mean that she wasn't interested in them. It just wasn't proper for a lady to express her opinions about such things. She engaged herself especially in social satire, but in her *Juvenilia* and some of the mature works she also employed a genre of literary satire.

Jane Austen satirized especially genres of sentimental and gothic fiction, but also books about history. She mocked spotless characters, complicated plots, sensibility, naivety and stereotype features of those novels. In her *Juvenilia* she employed parody as its main instrument. In *Love and Freindship* she wrote parody on sentimental fiction in general. On the other hand in *History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st* she parodied role of authors of books about history. In *Northanger Abbey* she used the affect of confrontation between the world of gothic fiction and reality for expressing satire. In *Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters* she returned again to the style of playful parody of sentimental fiction.

Even though that Jane Austen is nowadays considered especially as author of romantic stories with happy endings, she was rather ironic witty writer, who employed in her fiction playful humour, and not the author of novels full of adventures, sensibility or pathos. All her plots were based on real life so it was easy for reader to identify himself not only with the story but also characters. Jane Austen even if she had little bit of romance in her soul she was a keen satirist. She wrote burlesque not only in her novels but she also ridiculed events of everyday life. The reason why was humour so important for her as in her writings or in her life, and why she could never change her small villages and country people for great world of sentimental, gothic or historical novel she explained, of course in comical way, the best herself, in the letter to Mr. Clarks:

“I am fully sensible that (such a romance) might be much more to the purpose of profit or popularity than such pictures of domestic life in country villages I deal in. But I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life , if it were indispensable for me to keep it up and never relax into laughing t myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed in again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Jane Austen, *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. Deidre Le Faye (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) 312.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá satirou v díle Jane Austen, zejména pak satirou literární.

První část práce je zaměřena na literární vývoj autorky. Stručná biografie, která je rozdělena na čtyři části, přibližuje některé z okolností, jako byla například rodina či výchova, které hrály v jejím životě důležitou roli a jejichž vliv je v díle Jane Austen patrný. Poté následuje krátký chronologický přehled, ve kterém jsou uvedena díla autorky, každé se stručným popisem a vysvětlením. U *Juvenilia Three Sisters* je například podrobnější výklad toho, čemu se v Anglii říkalo “marriage market”. Dále pak je například u novely *Lady Susan* nastíněna její podobnost se slavnějším literárním dílem francouzského autora Choderlose de Laclose *Dangerous Liaisons*.

Druhá část práce se zabývá satirou jako samostatným literárním žánrem. Jsou zde definovány její základní funkce a druhy. Poté následuje stručný přehled historického vývoje s příklady nejslavnějších satiriků. Dále pak je z historického hlediska vysvětlena pozice žen satiriček a vývoj ženské satiry. Následuje definice satiry v díle Jane Austenové a vysvětlení jejího rozpolcení mezi sociální satirou a touhou po šťastných koncích.

Ve třetí části je pak definována literární satira v díle Jane Austen, spolu s definicemi literárních žánrů, které kritizovala. Poté následují analýzy čtyř jejích děl, *Love and Freindship*, *History of England from the reign of Henry the 4th to the death of Charles the 1st*, *Northanger Abbey* a *Plan of a Novel according to Hints and from Various Quarters* na kterých je pomocí příkladů, přirovnání a citací přiblíženo, co autorka satirizovala a pomocí jakých prostředků.

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Anotace

Příjmení a jméno autora	Veronika Vřetionková
Název katedry a fakulty	Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky, FF UP
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Charakteristika	Hlavním tématem této bakalářské práce je satira v díle Jane Austen, zejména pak tou literární. Na základě analýzi čtyř autorčiných děl se pokouší definovat, co autorka satirizovala a pomocí jakých prostředků.
Author	Veronika Vřetionková
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Characteristics	Main theme of this bachelor thesis is satire in the work of Jane Austen, particularly literary satire. On the base of analysis of four author's works it tries to define what she satirized and which means she employed.