

JANE AUSTEN. LIFE AND CREATIVITY

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Nowadays we take a notice that people are not interested in literature, especially in classic literature. If the modern students or adults know something like this at least about domestic writers and poets (from school lessons with an insistent teacher), they have no idea about a foreign literature or the foreign writers.

Therefore in the present article we have for an object to popularize the literature at all and the classic foreign literature in the narrow sense of the word: we will be talking about the creativity of the great British writer – Jane Austen, that we want to introduce to the readers.



Jane Austen was an English novelist whose works of romantic fiction, as known as “novels of morals”, set among the landed gentry, earned her a place as one of the most widely read writers in English literature, her realism and biting social commentary cementing her historical importance among scholars and critics. She absolutely passed ahead of her time. When there was the epoch of the romanticism with demonic characters and heavy passions, she wrote about a living in the province, that is why her creativity was unvalued by her contemporaries enough. However, the creativity of “incomparable Jane” (cit. Walter Scott) is continued to be like as a lively tradition in our XXI century, her estimations from the novels, in “which was expressed the strongest sides of the human mind” and was shown “a sincerest knowledge of the human nature”, have not been lost its importance till this days. At this time, her books are recognized as masterpieces, which are winning the audience because of its unsophisticated sincerity with a deep psychological penetration in the characters’ souls and an ironic “English” humour. They are considering that Jane Austen is the “first lady” of English literature. In addition, her works are obligatory to study in every university or high school in the United Kingdom.

As a rule, if you want to understand deeply the essence of works by some author, you should explore the facts of his or her biography, family, the course of life and all that, which was important to him or her, because the private experiences, worries, thoughts and ideas are realizing exactly in novels, essays, letters and so on.

Firstly, we are going to explore the main landmarks of Miss Austen’s life in the present work. Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at Steventon rectory and publicly christened on 5 April 1776. Biographical information concerning Jane Austen is “famously scarce”, according to one biographer. Only some personal and family letters remain (by one estimate only 160 out of Austen's 3,000 letters are extant), and her sister Cassandra (to whom most of the letters were originally addressed) burned “the greater part” of the ones she kept and censored those she did not destroy. Other letters were destroyed by the heirs of Admiral Francis Austen, Jane's brother. Most of the biographical material produced for fifty years after Austen's death was written by her relatives and reflects the family's biases in favour of “good quiet Aunt Jane”. Thereby scholars have unearthed little information since, so do we.

According to some information, Austen's parents, George Austen (1731–1805), and his wife Cassandra (1739–1827), were members of substantial gentry families. Cassandra was

a member of the prominent Leigh family. George was descended from a family of woollen manufacturers, which had risen through the professions to the lower ranks of the landed gentry. On the one information, he had an academic degree in Oxford, on the other information, George Austen served as the rector of the Anglican parishes at Steventon, Hampshire and a nearby village, but in any event he was an erudite, tasteful and intelligent person. So, they knew the properly gentry families, which were glad to receive them. The Austens were a large family: there were six sons and two daughters, Jane was last but one child. Until the father's death in 1805 they didn't require, I mean, The Austens were well provided for.

It should be stressed, that Jane and her sister Cassandra were just home-schoolers, but she was interested in reading and tested of the pen, when she was merely twelve. Perhaps as early as 1787, Austen began to write poems, stories, and plays for her own and her family's amusement. Austen later compiled "fair copies" of 29 of these early works into three bound notebooks, now referred to as the *Juvenilia*, containing pieces originally written between 1787 and 1793. There is manuscript evidence that Austen continued to work on these pieces as late as the period 1809–11. Among these works there were a satirical novel in letters titled "Love and Freindship", in which she mocked popular novels of sensibility, and popular historical writing "The History of England" by Oliver Goldsmith, a manuscript of 34 pages accompanied by 13 watercolour miniatures by her sister Cassandra.

Nevertheless, she was glad to sort out the home cares. They say, she kept an equal and an amiable temper, frequently smiled until her cloud last days (she died because of a terrible illness – a cancer or the Addison's illness, now it's difficult to make out), although, she lived in isolation and went out seldom. And she was favourite to every member of the family – nephews and nieces, brothers, mother and especially her father.

Neither she nor her sister had been married. When Cassandra was 24, her groom Thomas Faul died in West-India because of yellow fever, so she never had been married so far. When Jane was thirty, she got on ladies' cap announcing that she is a spinster, in spite of some day she was refuse a proposal of marriage. We do not know, did Jane loved somebody or not. She preferred locking out her soul and heart and speaking frankly only in her books.

In 1796 Jane began her first earnest novel and ended it in 1797(in August). It was "The first impressions", which was printed only in 1813 as a well-known "Pride and prejudice". After three months, she began "Sense and sensibility" and ended it alike in one year. There are two periods in Jane's creativity, separated by a long interval: 1795–1798 when the earlier novels were written, and 1811–1816, when they were prepared to print and three last novels were written.

So long as she published anonymously, "by a Lady", she had not the great literature fame, but three of her novels was printed twice in her life, they praised a lot "Pride and prejudice", while Walter Scott gave high praise to her "Emma".

It should be mentioned, we would describe Jane Austen's life more structured and broadly in our work.

Secondly, we will also explore these six famous novels of a British authoress in the chronological order with a brief survey of them.

Thirdly, we will intend to adduce the statistics of the novels' screenings, I mean, all of them, that are associated with authoress' works. So long as we live in high technological epoch, we have a lot of filmings and expositions since 1938 ("Pride and prejudice" starred with Curigwen Lewis), till Indian exposition of "Emma"(2010).

We will dwell at length on the work of Robin Swicord, because her film "The Jane Austen Book Club" is interesting with its main idea: situations from Jane Austen's masterpieces are simply fitting to our modern life in the XXI century, it means that the issues she raised at the XIX century are timeless verities.

Besides, there are some films about Jane Austen and her life. For example, “Becoming Jane”, starred Anne Hathaway, and “Miss Austen Regrets” with Olivia Williams, which show a living and worries, meetings and balls, loving and sense.

To sum up, Miss Austen is a master on the matters of everyday life, a master of a persons’ delicate detailed representation through the lenses of irony, humour and easy discourses, she is showing to us the history of feeling and souls, the struggle of blacks and lights in a human temper, with it, perhaps, the history of national specimen through the little piece of person’s life.

All of us should know and keep in mind such people, like Jane Austen. And we should improve our literature taste, to correct our morality. Why? In order to become better.