



(Il romanticismo)

Mary Shelley: biography



Mary Shelley was born in London in 1797. She was the daughter of two radical thinkers: William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft, who died after her birth. This event shaped her life and when her father later remarried, this caused her great suffering. Mary did not receive any formal education, but from an early age, she received great intellectual stimulus, in fact her father's house was a meeting point of famous philosophers, writers and poets, such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. There is an anecdote about her as a young girl; it seems that she used to hide behind a sofa while Coleridge read aloud his poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which exercised a great influence on her novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*.

The secret relationship between Mary and Percy Shelley

In 1814 Mary met the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and the two began a relationship even though he was married and had two children, for this reason Godwin strongly opposed their relationship. Eventually the two

lovers eloped to France and then Switzerland, but they had to return to England due to financial problems. Because of these actions, Mary was banished by society, even by her own father who refused to speak to her for some time. Later Mary and Percy Shelley returned to Switzerland with Claire, Mary's stepsister who at the time had a relationship with Lord Byron. In Switzerland Percy Shelley rented a country house on the shores of Lake Geneva near Villa Diodati, where Lord Byron used to stay. It was here that Mary conceived the idea for the book that would make her famous, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. One rainy day the group of friends, including John Polidori, an English writer and physicist, entertained themselves by reading ghost stories; at one point Byron suggested they each write a horror story and this was the spark that led Mary to write *Frankenstein*, that was published anonymously in 1818. In the meantime, Percy Shelley's wife Harriet committed suicide and later he married Mary. The two moved to Italy where Mary gave birth to a son, Percy Florence, their only child to survive infancy.

Percy Shelley's death and Mary's last works

In 1822 her husband drowned during a storm while sailing near Livorno. Mary Shelley returned to England with her son, where she continued to write novels, among them *Valperga* (1823), a historical novel set in Medieval Italy, and *The Last Man* (1826), a story about the destruction of mankind by a plague until only one last surviving man is left. She also published an edition of Percy Shelley's *Poetical Works* in 1839. She died in London in 1851.

Jane Austen



Jane Austen was born in 1775 in Hampshire.

Her father was the rector of the village. She was mostly educated at home. Jane began writing prose and verse at an early age. She lived in the beloved countryside marked. In 1811 she publishes **Sense and Sensibility**, then **Pride and Prejudice**, **Mansfield Park**. Jane Austen died in 1817.

The novels' setting and characters: Chronologically she belong to the romantic period, but her realism place her in line with the tradition of the 18th century. Jane Austen's novels described scenes as three of four families in a country village. Her novel are set in the provincial world of Southern England which she knew from her own experience.

Main characters belong to rural middle class, landed gentry and country clergy and they are very precisely described. They are characterized by the age, income, marital situation and prospect and social position. Her characters are lively round characters and show the author's fine psychological insight. With irony, wit and keen she explores human emotion and behaviour. This was the world which characterized England before the industrial Revolution. Jane Austen was an acute observer, she described her small provincial world with precision of a miniaturist. Her characters reveal themselves very largely through dialogue, which is only apparently the ordinary conversation of everyday life. Jane Austen is careful in the selection of an idiom suited to the person who is speaking.

The theme of love: Sense and Sensibility: In her first novel, Sense and Sensibility, two sister, Elinor and Marianne, lead a country life. The only disturbing element is love, not passionate or tragic love, but the polite exchanges between the two sexes. She rejects a purely romantic and sentimental view of love. The theme of marriage: Pride and Prejudice: In Pride and Prejudice describes the small world of a few families living in a country village, engaged in their routine of visits, balls, walks and gossip. Jane Austen want to satirise another side of love: the desperate search for a husband, at all costs. The first chapter is centred on the description of Mrs Bennet's interest in the arrival of Mr Bingley. He is an excellent prospective husband for one of her five daughters. The novels' plots: All Jane Austen's novels centre on the experience of a young woman who, through a series of errors and delusion, develops in her understanding of herself and of other people. All the books end with the young woman's happy marriage. Dialogue and irony: Austen's descriptions of life depend on dialogue and irony. It does not illustrate a moral. She uses an omniscient third-person narrator. Her irony is always gentle, expressed in nicely balanced and acute observation. Jane Austen smiles gently at human frailties. Unromantic quality of her work: Jane Austen's insistence on morality, her interest in society and its values, and the didactic strain in her art, are all qualities very different from the qualities of most Romantic art. She admired the Augustan classics.

I ROMANZI DI JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen's novels.

Jane Austen's best novels are set in provincial middle class England and are based on simple plots usually centred on love stories between genteel young women and men.

Jane Austen's characters lead a quiet country life, the only disturbing element is love, not passionate or tragic love but the polite exchanges

between the two sexes.

Austen satirizes the exaggerated sentimentality of contemporary novels, and rejects a purely romantic and sentimental view of love.

In *Pride and Prejudice* she satirizes another side of love: the desperate search for an husband. Young women of Austen's time had limited socially prescribed options open to them regarding their future. Because of the extremely limited options a woman had in order to earn a living, marriage was essential for financial and social well-being. In the world of *Pride and Prejudice*, marriage is a necessity. If a woman remained unmarried for the rest of her life, she would remain dependent on her relatives, living with or receiving a small income from her father, brothers or any other relative that could afford to support her.

JANE AUSTEN: AMORE

The central theme of the novel concerns itself with marriage, as indicated in the ironic opening line of the book. Throughout the novel, it is not the man seeking the wife but more so Mrs. Bennet seeking an husband for her daughters.

So the most common theme in Jane Austen's novels is love, and in particular, the marriage. Romance is central in most of her written works, such as in *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*.

The pursuit for true love was often depicted to have passed through a series of turmoil and rejection, of heartbreak and anguish; but the perpetrators of love stood victorious in the end.

All of Jane Austen's novels centre on experience of a young woman who develops her understanding of herself and of other people. All the books end with the young woman's happy marriage.