

Analysis of romance genre in literature

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



I have read the following three novels: Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte, Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen and Me Before You by Jojo Moyes. These books appealed to me as they represent a realistic image of love and romance in showing that life is often more complicated than we initially assume it to be. In today's world, generally speaking, people are looking for love in their relationships within their family, friends and partners. It was fascinating to discover the contrasts around the theme of love in the 18th century novels by Bronte and Austen as compared with a modern day setting in Me Before You. A definition of romance literature quoted from Wikipedia is “ a literary genre developed in Western culture which focuses on the romantic relationship between two or more people”. Within the confines of a novel, romance is explored in the narrative and protagonists fight for their true love by overcoming obstacles on their life's journey. This genre centres on loving one's partner for their personality and not on the basis of their appearance. The Romance genre is explored through the journey and life stories of characters in the 18th century as well as modern day.

All three novels do not depict a typical modern-day love story where a couple meets one another, falls in love, then experiences a simple problem that is needing to be resolved and ends in a happy marriage. Instead, the couples in these novels face quite challenging dilemmas and need to exert much effort and fortitude in order to achieve their long sought-after happy ending.

Bronte's protagonist, the young adult Jane Eyre, undergoes a realisation of who her true love ultimately is meant to be, simultaneously, embarks on an inner journey of her own and faces various struggles along the journey. One of the major obstacles that she faces is the fear of 'losing herself'. This fear

provides the motivation for Jane to reject a marriage proposal from Mr Rochester. By experiencing these dilemmas, Jane was able to undergo quite a development within herself which was also a test of her self-sufficiency. Bronte has shown that one of the major obstacles the protagonists had to overcome was the fighting within herself as she had to feel independent enough to be part of a loving relationship with Mr Rochester. Similarly, the novel *Pride and Prejudice* also explores the idea of overcoming dilemmas to achieve true love.

The main love story is between Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist, and a gentleman of higher social standing, Mr. Darcy. Austen shows the various obstacles that the couple has to overcome in order to realize their true love for each other such as the author introduces Lady Catherine de Bough (Darcy's aunt) as the antagonist as she asks Elizabeth to refuse Mr Darcy's proposal due to her lower social standing. This expresses the importance of social status in the 18th century. Even though social status was so prominent in the 18th century, it still played a minor role in modern day as another obstacle Moyes highlights in the novel *Me Before You* is social status. Louisa Clark's family holds the perspective that she is inadequate socially in terms with Will Traynor.

In the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen also shows the love relationships between the other Bennet daughters such as Lydia Bennet and Wickham and Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley. By introducing the other love relationships, Austen reinforces the genre of romance as the other two couples also have to undergo difficult struggles to remain together. In contrast with the two

18th century novels, Moyes has depicted the genre of romance quite differently. It provides a more realistic image of love in modern day society where a happy ending is not realised between the two partners. The protagonist, Louisa Clark, embarks on a journey as carer to Will Traynor, a man who has been left a paraplegic after an accident. Louisa and Will slowly fall in love, but Will faces severe disability, depression and thoughts of suicide. His depressive mental state ultimately results in becoming a difficult obstacle for the two lovers to overcome.

Therefore, Moyes, Bronte and Austen have assessed the genre of romance similarly as it depicts the obstacles that couples had to overcome and also the fact that the couples loved each other for who they really are and not on the basis of their social status and looks. For example, in *Jane Eyre*, even though Mr Rochester loses his eyesight, Jane still truly loves him. In *Pride and Prejudice*, even though Elizabeth has lower social standing than Mr Darcy, he still truly loves her and in *Me Before You*, even though Will is paralysed and in a wheelchair, Louisa still truly loves him. These examples and ideas reinforce the meaning of love in Romance Literature, that is, Romantic love consists of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles towards the goal of achieving lasting love.

The novel that I enjoyed reading the most was *Me Before You* as it is a depiction of a modern day love story and thus provides a context that I can relate to more realistically. It was quite interesting for me to see how Louisa fell in love with Will despite his severe disabilities and how all that mattered to her in the end was his personality and not his physical limitations. This

novel also shows how the modern-day value of familial support regardless of hardships is instrumental in communicating love and support towards a person overcoming physical disabilities. I would like to end off with a quote that summarises the key idea of Romance Literature: “ the theme of love revolves around the fact that love is not truly just on face value and that the most perfectly suitable person might not be the prettiest or the richest or the one with the similar background but the one with tolerance and patience and a similar heart. ” Thank you.