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Popular Image of the Contemporary British Urban Community

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## Zásady pro vypracování

Diplomandka se ve své práci zaměří na populární obraz současné městské kultury. Jejím úkolem bude charakterizovat nejprve populární kulturu a žánr populární literatury, kterému se věnuje, tj. chick-lit. Kulturní kontext bude zaměřen především na otázky genderové, případně spojené se sociální identitou. Tato charakteristika pak bude propojena s teorií identit. Zjištěné teoretické poznatky budou reflektovány ve vybraných populárních dílech.

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## **ANNOTATION**

This thesis deals with typical features of Chick lit, social changes in the nineties, and the complex theory of identity crisis introduced by psychologist Erik H. Erikson. Apart from this theory, other identities are applied in the analytical part to *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Helen Fielding, a contemporary female writer, and the author of *Bridget Jones' Diary* wrote this book in 1996 and was written for the masses. Therefore, a question arises whether features of Chick lit, social changes, and especially a complicated theory of identity crisis can be found and applied to the book which was written for a wide group of readers belonging to all social classes.

## **KEYWORDS**

identity, Chick lit, popular culture, Bridget Jones, the nineties, society

## **NÁZEV**

Populární obraz současné britské městské kultury

## **ANOTACE**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá typickými znaky chick-lit, sociálními změnami probíhajícími v 90. letech a teorií týkající se krize identity, kterou představil psycholog Erik H. Erikson. Kromě této teorie jsou v knize *Deník Bridget Jonesové* analyzovány i další identity. Helen Fielding, současná spisovatelka a autorka *Deníku Bridget Jonesové*, napsala tuto knihu v roce 1996 a byla určena pro běžné čtenáře. Otázkou tedy je, zda se můžou znaky chick-lit, sociální změny a složitá teorie krize identity objevit v díle, které bylo napsáno pro tak širokou skupinu čtenářů ze všech sociální vrstev společnosti.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

identita, chick-lit, populární kultura, Bridget Jones, 90. léta, společnost

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims at analysing the presence of identity crisis and other identities in a book called *Bridget Jones' Diary*. This book was written by a contemporary female writer – Helen Fielding. Moreover, *Bridget Jones' Diary* belongs to popular literature and its subgenre Chick lit. Therefore, not only identity crises together with other identities are applied to analysis of the book, but also the main features of this literary genre and the language itself. Furthermore, the most significant social changes that took place in Britain in the nineties are compared with the way of living of characters in the book. However, the main purpose of this thesis is to find out whether such a complex theory concerning personal identity is presented in such an often underestimated book written for the masses.

The structure of this paper is divided into a theoretical part and an analytical part. The theoretical part comprises three chapters, which establish the background necessary for the analysis. The first chapter provides the development and history of popular literature and Chick lit. Definitions and typical features are mentioned together with the literary critics of this genre. The second chapter focuses on the main social changes and the lifestyle of common people living in the nineties in Britain. This chapter covers the most significant milestones of this decade; for instance, the political changes, the way of living, and statistical data about marriages, divorces, birth rate, and other topics related to society. The third chapter explicates a series of identities: the main part of this chapter deals with eight stages of personal identity while the second one examines other identities, especially class, territorial and gender identities.

The analytical part consists of three chapters as well. The first chapter examines the typical features of popular literature and Chick lit in *Bridget Jones' Diary* by showing short extracts from the book. The second chapter deals with the question of whether characters in the book share the same or a similar way of living as people living in a non-fiction world in the late nineties in Britain. The third chapter analyses characters based on the theory of identity crisis introduced by Erik H. Erikson. The book tells the story of Bridget who deals with the constant pressure put on her by others as she is single. She copes with finding a boyfriend while going through complicated relationships all the time. Consequently, she struggles with her identity because she is not sure where she belongs. Apart from Bridget, other characters cope with different issues. The identity crises and class, territorial, and gender identities are analysed in the book.

# 1. POPULAR LITERATURE AND CHICK LIT

The history of writing and reading books is genially long. The desire of people interested in reading is either to educate themselves and improve their knowledge or to escape from the world full of negative issues and focus on better and more positive stories.

According to statistics, expenditure on books in the United Kingdom was £3,337 million.<sup>1</sup> Chick lit is one of the genres that have been bought by readers as well. At the same time, it belongs to popular genres, for which escapism from the world is the most typical feature.

Popular literature is favoured as it is written for the masses. It is easy to follow, and countless people find it entertaining. However, defining popular literature is not as simple as it may seem. Definitions provided by literary theorists differ. As stated by Berberich, several literary theorists defined “popular literature”. This is how Raymond Williams defines it. “Popular” means “belonging to the people”, “widely favoured” or “well-liked”. Scott McCracken’s definition of the term “popular literature” is almost the same as the previous one, but it is only expressed in other words: “fiction that is read by a large number of people”. From the point of view of Christopher Pawling, popular literature is “paraliterature” that is surrounding the small core of intellectual literature.<sup>2</sup> Generally, the definitions of literary theorists confirm what has been stated. Popular literature may be read by the vast majority of people without any issues. It is also not considered to be the most difficult genre. Consequently, it gained great popularity among people of all social classes. Even people belonging to the working class can easily comprehend the content of these books.

The beginnings of popular literature were not as simple as the content of the books themselves. Based on the definitions mentioned in the previous paragraph, this kind of literature was not regarded to be of very high quality at first. Therefore, it took decades or even centuries officially to accept this style of writing as a real literary genre. According to Berberich, the roots of popular fiction go a long way back into the nineteenth century in a form of serialization – a form of a publication known as numbers which were invented in the seventeenth century. Charles Dickens’ books were published in this form in the nineteenth

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<sup>1</sup> “Consumer spending on books in the United Kingdom (UK) from 2005 to 2020,” Statista, last modified September 1, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/475882/consumer-spending-on-books-united-kingdom-uk/>.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Berberich, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to popular fiction*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 3–5.

century.<sup>3</sup> Especially detective fiction, a typical genre of Charles Dickens, was widely spread among readers of popular literature those days. Apart from detective fiction, McCracken also mentions another genre, science fiction which became well-known in the society of the nineteenth century as well.<sup>4</sup> These two genres were at the top of the list of literary genres during the Victorian era.

Typical features of Victorian era literature are distinctions among social classes, progress in science and other fields, and, of course, industrialization. The impact of the industrial revolution does not only reflect economic and technical development. But at the same time, it has a huge effect on the style of writing due to social changes. As Berberich stated, the sporting papers, tales of the supernatural, and narratives of crime were the typical popular genres at the beginning of Victoria's reign.<sup>5</sup> All the popular genres mentioned so far, are written in a form of prose. As for poetry, there is only minor interest. As stated by Linley, poetry decreased during the Victorian era compared to novels. The reason for a decrease in poetry is progress in science and technological processes.<sup>6</sup> Most people living at this period wanted to enjoy their free time. They preferred reading easy books to long and difficult poems.

Genres and preferences of people kept changing. Therefore, at the beginning of the twentieth century, other genres started to gain popularity among people. As McCracken states, romance and gothic horror dominated at that time. However, these genres have developed into evolving sub-genres. In the case of detective fiction, the new sub-genre became hard-boiled detection. As for romance, it was Chick lit.<sup>7</sup>

Chick lit together with romance fiction will be studied in this thesis. Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones' Diary* (1996) is a typical representative of Chick lit, and it will be examined in the analytical part of this thesis in detail. At first, it is necessary to start with a brief introduction to romance and its history. According to McCracken, the first form of popular fiction is romance. This genre has been taken least seriously since the beginning of literary studies, even though it has a long history, and goes into the ancient world with the epic narrative.<sup>8</sup> As it was mentioned in the article, the epic narrative is written in form of a poem,

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<sup>3</sup> Berberich, *The Introduction to fiction*, 12–14.

<sup>4</sup> Scott McCracken, *PULP Reading popular fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Berberich, *The Introduction to fiction*, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Victorian Poetry, Winter, 2003, Vol. 41, No. 4, Whither Victorian Poetry? (Winter, 2003), pp. 536.

<sup>7</sup> McCracken, *PULP Reading popular fiction*, 20.

<sup>8</sup> McCracken, *PULP Reading popular fiction*, 21.

it is a long poem with heroic deeds.<sup>9</sup> Later, in the Middle Ages, a new type of narrative came into existence; chivalric romance.<sup>10</sup> The term “chivalric romance” is explained in one of the articles. Typical themes of chivalric romance are stories of knights, young girls in distress, or even magic.<sup>11</sup> Both, the form and the language of romance have been changing. According to Priest, in the medieval “romance” of the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the texts were written in vernacular languages, especially in Old French. The reason for the usage of these languages was to differentiate the books from those written in Latin.<sup>12</sup> The original or the first novels were written in various languages. Those old works would be impossible to read nowadays since so few people would be able to comprehend them. Fortunately, authors began to write primarily in English later on.

In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the publication of books became much easier. Popularity among people rose due to availability of buying or borrowing books. Moreover, the content was changing to meet the needs of all kinds of readers, especially women. McCracken states that romance started to be marginalized in the modern era, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the 1930s on, this was due to an association with popular romantic fiction when there was a huge mass-market formula publishing. Another reason was the female readers and their interests in love, imagination, or desire.<sup>13</sup> Characters and themes were changing. Books were no longer unavailable. Consequently, this genre gained new readers and became popular.

Romance fiction has developed throughout the centuries. Current romance fiction differs a lot compared to, for example, the chivalric or epic narrative. Defining today’s romance fiction can be complicated as there are various points of view on this genre. According to Kablé, Radway claims that romance fiction is “ideal romance” focusing “on a single, developing relationship between heroine and hero.” Regis defines it as “a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines.” Romance Writers of America characterized this genre as “a central love story” and “an emotionally-satisfying and optimistic ending.”<sup>14</sup> Another definition is stated by Priest – the

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<sup>9</sup> "Epic Poetry", Poem Analysis, last modified 14 December 2021, <https://poemanalysis.com/genre/epic-poetry/>.

<sup>10</sup> McCracken, *PULP Reading popular fiction*, 75.

<sup>11</sup> “Chivalric Romance,” Poem Analysis, last modified November 4, 2021, <https://poemanalysis.com/genre/chivalric-romance/>.

<sup>12</sup> Hannah Priest, “Journal of Popular Romance Studies”, review of *The History of a Genre*, by Dana Percec, October 2014.

<sup>13</sup> McCracken, *PULP Reading popular fiction*, 75.

<sup>14</sup> Jayashree Kamblé, *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction*, (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

word “romance” refers to patterns of sentiment, emotion, behaviour in non-platonic relationships but also, this word can be connected with idealization, fantasy, and fictionalization which has almost nothing in common with a personal love.<sup>15</sup> Based on provided definitions, it is certain that the main themes of romance fiction are love and relationship between two people. However, there can be other features, too, as is stated by Priest.

Although romance fiction is considered to be one genre, it has developed into various subgenres that depend on the setting, plot, or narrative elements. According to Kamblé, in the 1970s, especially in the United States, this genre became so popular among readers that it was divided into two structurally different sub-genres. The first one was called “single-title” romances. Here the novels were unnumbered and flexible in their storytelling. The second sub-genre was called “Harlequin Regency”. The setting has changed as well during that time. In the beginning, the setting of romances began as narratives of contemporary life in Britain. Later, a few historical novels were included, especially those referring to life in the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, romance fiction also expanded into other sub-genres. For instance, paranormal romances with supernatural elements appear together with vampires and shapeshifters. Another sub-genre was erotic romances with sexual encounters and love. And lastly, inspirational romances based on Christian love stories.<sup>16</sup> Romance fiction has developed into various sub-genres in every century. According to Berberich, the new sub-genres hybridized from other genres, for instance, historical fiction, science fiction, mystery, and adventure fiction. Broadly speaking, contemporary romance relates to post-World War II settings, where heroines are emotional and more self-reliant. Therefore, the women are either divorced, older, or with teenage children. Later it was spawned into a new sub-genre – Chick lit.<sup>17</sup> Romance had to undergo many changes until Chick lit was introduced.

Romance fiction has its sub-genres and so does Chick lit. According to Butler and Desai, Chick lit is divided into other sub-genres that are present on the market these days. They are Jewish Chick lit, and black Chick lit. There is also a special sub-genre with its subsections, and it is called assistant lit together with Hollywood-assistant lit. Shopping lit is

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<sup>15</sup> Priest, “Journal of Popular Romance Studies”.

<sup>16</sup> Kamblé, *Making Meaning in Romance*, 25–26.

<sup>17</sup> Berberich, *The Introduction to fiction*, 58.

also worth mentioning as one of the sub-genres of Chick lit.<sup>18</sup> This genre is complex and owing to its diversity, the books cannot be classified as one genre.

Chick lit became a part of popular genre at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Salinas-Moniz, Chick lit as a genre appeared in the 1990s and the typical readers were women. Therefore, it is mainly considered as women's fiction. This genre is very often perceived as "light" reading.<sup>19</sup> The first book of this sub-genre is Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones' Diary* (1996) although some typical features of this subgenre can also be found in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.<sup>20</sup> There are some similarities between those two books.

Although there is almost a 200-year difference between *Pride and Prejudice* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*, these books still have something in common. According to Heß, there are several parallels between both works such as the female characters and their relationships. Both, Bridget and Jane, hold love and marriage in high regard. Both these characters also come from a specific family background. On top of that, they had both been hurt by men, and therefore they do not trust them and have some prejudice against them.<sup>21</sup> The content of these two books is very similar. There is a difference though. While Jane Austen was one of the first writers who was writing in a feminist way, Helen Fielding lives in a modern society where almost everything is possible when it comes to relationships. Most people are more tolerant and open to new lifestyles than they used to be in the past. And thus, these issues are not surprising to modern readers and society, however, they certainly were in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when speaking about *Pride and Prejudice*.

Chick lit protagonist usually deals with issues of modern womanhood and has some typical qualities which make her the typical representative of the Chick lit genre. The main characteristic features of female protagonists in this genre are stated by Montoro. He claims that women worry about their weight, appearance, they need to own fashionable clothes, shoes, and accessories. Also, what matters apart from their look is class, sex, race, and nationality.<sup>22</sup> In another definition, Smith states that the protagonists are young, single, heterosexual, born in America or Britain. They are in their twenties or thirties, and they live in

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<sup>18</sup> Butler, Pamela, and Jigna Desai. "Manolos, Marriage, and Mantras Chick-Lit Criticism and Transnational Feminism." *Meridians* 8, no. 2 (2008):3. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40338745>.

<sup>19</sup> Felicia Salinas-Moniz, *Feminist Teacher*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2011), pp. 83–85 [https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/femteacher.22.1.0083?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/femteacher.22.1.0083?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>20</sup> Berberich, *The Introduction to fiction*, 58–59.

<sup>21</sup> Juliane Hess, "Pride and Prejudice versus "Bridget Jones' Diary," GRIN, November 8, 2021, <https://www.grin.com/document/177677>.

<sup>22</sup> Rocío Montoro, *Chick Lit The Stylistic of Cappuccino fiction*, (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 65.

metropolitan areas. The demographic setting and the story itself usually reflect the author of the book.<sup>23</sup> Ferriss states that Chick lit refers to modern literature for women who are either in their late twenties or thirties and who are looking for a perfect partner. Comparing Chick lit to the typical novel, there is a contrast in the independence of women as female protagonists in Chick lit go to work every single day.<sup>24</sup> It is logical since women did not work in the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their rights and social position differed. Women's rights improved in the 1960s and due to the feminist movement, women are quite equal to men in many things these days.

Stereotypically, beauty was thought to be quite significant for lots of women throughout the centuries. Some women wanted to be attractive to men just like the main protagonist of *Bridget Jones's Diary*. She was often on diets; she wanted to change her body and lose weight to look better. Contrary to this, there is also another type of woman. These protagonists are mothers, responsible for their children. They do not have much time to focus on such unimportant things in their life like physical attractiveness or weight. For Chick lit writers, the physical attractiveness of the heroines is a key feature. As stated by Ferriss, the heroine must be neither too stunning nor too ordinary-looking but something between. Simply the heroine must be original, and the readers should see something extraordinary to admire her. If she was too beautiful and flawless, the readers might start to hate her. This would have disastrous consequences for the writer as nobody would be interested in reading the book.<sup>25</sup> It is the same in real life. When somebody tries to be perfect in everything, most people are not interested in being a friend or a partner with such a person. The true beauty lies inside. It means that people can be beautiful without necessarily being physically attractive. Bridget is aware of this fact but as a society put pressure on her, she mainly cares about her appearance. This is the message in Chick lit books: people should not only care about their appearance but there are other more important things too.

A typical scenario for the Chick lit genre is the love plot. According to Ferriss, the novel centres on a love plot but it differs according to the protagonist's age and marital status. Typically, the lovers or couples are heterosexuals. However, there is almost no likelihood that the story ends with a wedding. The story usually culminates in mutual declarations of love

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<sup>23</sup> Caroline J. Smith, *Cosmopolitan Culture and Consumerism in Chick Lit*, (UK: Taylor & Francis e-Library), 2007, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Suzzane Ferriss, Mallory Young, *Chick Lit, The New Women's Fiction*, (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, LLC, 2006), 24.

<sup>25</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 59.

after several months or even years full of misunderstandings between the man and the woman. When it comes to earlier women's novels, there is a huge difference between heroines and their level of sexual experience and attitudes towards sex. In Chick lit novels, sex scenes are hard to find, however, the characters do not have a problem talking and joking about it. The women happily discuss their orgasms and G-spots with each other with no shyness. In the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century novels though, sex or even confession of being in love with a man was taboo until the woman received a proposal of marriage.<sup>26</sup> Thanks to great changes, these topics are no longer absurd for most people in today's society. However, some people may find these themes too personal, so it cannot be claimed that sex is no more a taboo in today's world.

Not only do Chick-lit protagonists and plots bear some typical features of this women's fiction but also language and the style of writing. According to Ferriss, the language is rich in its satiric employment, and the invention of contemporary slang and lingo.<sup>27</sup> Ferriss also mentions the regular usage of metaphors and similes. Although they tend to be silly, the author tries to describe serious emotions through them. The text full of metaphors and similes is descriptive language. In terms of narrative structure, novels follow literary models and techniques. The informal style is prototypical, and it has some features of the epistolary form of writing that comes from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, Chick lit novels are reminiscent of the stream-of-consciousness technique which was used by Virginia Woolf and other modernists. Therefore, it is easy to understand, and readers have a true feeling of being inside the mind of the characters.<sup>28</sup> This is an exact example of the book *Bridget Jones's Diary* written by Helen Fielding. Although it is written in form of a diary and not letters, the structure is similar.

Women have been considered weaker and more dependent on men than men themselves for many centuries. It is the same with the Chick lit genre as the books are written by women and for women. Throughout the years, Chick lit has come across constant criticism as it was considered too simple and without a deeper thought or content. As Hurd states in his essay, a novel and a sitcom have much in common as both have been considered merely in popular forms. Although the novel developed and became a part of a literary genre, critics saw it as a "low" form of writing. The novel was not regarded as literature until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When it comes to sitcoms, it has remained a low culture and has not been

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<sup>26</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 49–51.

<sup>27</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 64.

<sup>28</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 64–67.

considered a popular genre since it only appears on television – the least prestigious medium. A sitcom is ranked the most subordinate position when compared to other television programmes.<sup>29</sup> To be more specific, the way how Chick-lit novels are seen is described in a work written by Mary Ryan. She said: “If we replace the word «sitcom» with «chick lit», and the word «television» with «fiction» the piece would also perfectly describe the position of Chick lit.”<sup>30</sup> It is a great simile. Television has many channels that provide various documentaries, news, films, series that people can choose from. At the same time, fiction is divided into many genres, some of them are highly valued and some of them less.

As mentioned earlier, popular literature was dealing with criticism. Matthew Arnold was one of the most significant critics of culture and popular literature. As stated in the article, Matthew Arnold belonged to a group of Victorian poets and became the first modern critic. He has influenced many literary critics, for instance, T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, or Alen Tate. He also established the first sociological school of criticism.<sup>31</sup> Matthew Arnold influenced many writers and was successful both, in writing his poems and in criticizing the literature. According to Storey, Matthew Arnold defined the culture as “the best that has been thought and said in the world”. What is meant by this definition is that every person who actively reads and studies culture will gain knowledge of culture through it. From the 1860s until the 1950s, the cultural agenda of Matthew Arnold remained dominant. One of his pieces of work, *Culture and Anarchy* is based on binary opposition. “Anarchy” represents several thoughts of Matthew Arnold. It is a synonym for popular culture and working-class culture and at the same time, it refers to the industrial working class and their eruption in politics in the late 1860s. He claims that the main goal of culture is to get rid of difficulties in our lives through culture.<sup>32</sup> Storey states that according to Mathew Arnold, the function of culture lies in a fresh and free play of the best thoughts and this can be achieved by reading a book, a letter, or even simple newspapers.<sup>33</sup> In other words, culture has developed from leisure activities of people, and the main purpose of culture is to help people escape from their world full of negative issues and relax after work.

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<sup>29</sup> New Literary History, Autumn, 2006, Vol. 37, No. 4, Attending to Media (Autumn, 2006), pp. 761–762.

<sup>30</sup> RYAN, Mary (2010): “Trivial or Commendable?: Women’s Writing, Popular Culture, and Chick Lit” [online article], 452<sup>o</sup>F. Electronic journal of theory of literature and comparative literature, 3, 70–84, [Consulted on: dd / mm / yy], < <http://www.452f.com/index.php/en/maryryan.html> >, 12.

<sup>31</sup> “Matthew Arnold as a Literary Critic”, accessed November 30, 2021, <https://www.lsj.org/literature/essays/arnold>.

<sup>32</sup> John Storey, *Cultural theory and popular culture*, (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 1998), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Storey, *Cultural theory*, 7–8.

Matthew Arnold was not the only famous critic of literature. F. R. Leavis also became a well-known critic of this field, influenced by Matthew Arnold. Storey states that F. R. Leavis formed his attitude towards a popular culture with his three books in the 1930s. These three books contributed to a new approach toward popular culture which was called Leavisite. He believes that “culture has always been a minority keeping”. After the Industrial Revolution, the culture was spread into two streams: a minority culture and a mass civilization. The mass civilization or culture is consumed by uneducated people.<sup>34</sup> Both critics pointed out that the culture is usually for the masses, in other words, for people belonging to working class. Popular culture is considered low as it is consumed by common people mostly. If it were “high culture”, not everyone would be able to understand it and consequently, it would not become so popular among people.

Dwight Macdonald had his theory of mass culture. According to Storey, Macdonald’s theory says that the culture is divided into two cultures: “high culture” and “mass culture”. “Mass culture” is also known as “popular culture” but the second term is not believed to be accurate enough. Therefore, he prefers using the term “mass culture”. This term does not only refer to popular genres in writing. It also developed into new media such as: radio, movies, comic books, television, or science fiction. Owing to advanced technologies, cheap production of books or music, the culture became easily accessible for most people. It also existed in previous centuries, however, there were some differences between these two cultures. It was known as “Folk art”, which lasted until the Industrial Revolution. “Folk art” was shaped from below, by people to suit their needs without any other intentions. When it comes to “mass culture”, it was shaped from above, by workers who were hired by businessmen with the participation to the interest between buying and not buying.<sup>35</sup> Based on the provided explanation, the intention of “mass culture” is not only to entertain people but also to make a profit. Furthermore, folk culture was about the people themselves and to preserve their culture.

Culture has a long history and due to literary critics, the development of culture has been observed in many studies. To sum up, what was claimed by previous critics, the main function of the culture is to amuse people from all social classes and to help them escape from the reality. Culture is not only associated with theatre or books but simultaneously, with advanced technologies like television, radio, or newspapers. Therefore, popular culture is not

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<sup>34</sup> Storey, *Cultural theory*, 4–5.

<sup>35</sup> Storey, *Cultural theory*, 22–23.

seen as high culture because television or newspapers are not pieces of art. Especially, television became part of popular culture since most people own televisions, and they rather prefer watching films and documentaries to reading books.

Not only has been culture criticized by many critics, but Chick lit itself has its critics. According to Ferriss and Young, the presence of criticism was as common as ubiquitous pink covers of the books. Chick lit is often associated with the term “trashy fiction”. Also, British authors, like Beryl Bainbridge and Doris Lessing were huge critics of Chick lit. They described this genre as: “a froth sort of thing”, or “just wastes time”. Lessing suggested that the authors of Chick lit should have written stories about themselves instead of helpless girls who are drunken and only worried about their weight.<sup>36</sup> These women critics did not accept the style and content of Chick lit books.

Every coin has two sides and so does the approach to Chick lit. Popular literature and Chick lit have been frequently criticized. However, there are also defenders and fans of this genre. If there were not any fans, Chick lit would not be so popular nowadays. As stated by Ferriss and Young, despite constant criticism, the Chick lit books earned more than \$71 million in 2002. Film producers are another group of people who support the Chick-lit genre. They make films based on the books, such as two versions of Bridget Jones novels. On top of this, defenders of this genre have established their websites, both in The United States and in Britain.<sup>37</sup> Every literary genre is criticized for different reasons, Chick lit has both, supporters and critics of these kinds of books.

In conclusion, this chapter described the historical background of popular literature, the development of Chick lit, and the typical features of this genre. Moreover, the most well-known critics were introduced together with the general criticism of this genre.

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<sup>36</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Ferriss, Young, *Chick Lit*, 2.

## 2. LIFE AND CULTURE IN BRITAIN IN THE 90s

Life in Britain during the nineties developed and changed in many aspects, such as politics, technological advancement, lifestyle, or even the approach to taboo topics like homosexuality. This period was similar to the sixties, the era of rock and pop music, youth culture, and hippies. The second chapter focuses on the main changes of the nineties that are also presented in the book - *Bridget Jones' Diary*. This book will be used as a primary source in the analytical part of the thesis.

The nineties were full of social, technological, and political changes. It was a decade full of hope, euphoria, and turbulence as Britain was experiencing a great time. According to Arday, in 1997, the magazine *Vanity Fair* published a front-page article with the headline "London Swings! Again!" People in the nineties believed that love and peace would reign once again. Later, Britain gained a new nickname "Cool Britannia".<sup>38</sup> People in the nineties felt the same way as they did in the sixties.

Before New Labour became the leading political party, there had been a long period of the Conservative party under Margaret Thatcher and John Major from 1979 to 1997. According to Black, the best period of Margaret Thatcher was in the 1980s when she was at the height of her power. She won the election with a large majority in 1983 and in 1987. The Conservative party won the next election again in 1992, this time under John Major. It held on office until this party was defeated by New Labour in 1997.<sup>39</sup> As Arday states, Conservatives widened the economical differences between poor and rich people, creating further inequities among people. The British were not satisfied until a new party won the election.<sup>40</sup> Young, Pedaliu, and Kandiah claim that Tony Blair, in his full name, Anthony Charles Lynton Blair, was elected after the death of John Smith as a leader of New Labour party in 1994. In 1997, he became the Prime Minister and in 2001 and 2005, he won the elections again. He was a successful leader for being intelligent, and for having an intuitive feel for politics. Moreover, he was the only British Prime Minister who brought religious belief into politics as he was a Catholic. However, he adopted a pragmatic and non-ideological outlook. In one of his speeches, he said:

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<sup>38</sup> Jason Arday, *Cool Britannia and Multi-Ethnic Britain*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Jeremy Black, *Britain since the seventies Politics and Society in Consumer Age*, (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2004), 7.

<sup>40</sup> Arday, *Cool Britannia*, 2.

I am a British patriot, and I am proud to be a British patriot. I love my country. I will always put the interests of my country first. The Britain in my vision is not Britain turning its back on the world – narrow, shy, uncertain. It is a Britain confident of its place in the world, sure of itself, able to negotiate with the world and provide leadership in the world.<sup>41</sup>

Tony Blair had to reconstruct and change the thinking of Old Labour party. Although he had to deal with many issues, he became strong and tough enough to manage them. As Applebaum states, Tony Blair had to reinvent the left in a post-Thatcherite Britain and a post-communist Europe. The original British Labour party was socialist. Some members still believed in nationalized industry, state housing projects, and a “fair” society with high taxes. Tony Blair reorganized this party into New Labour.<sup>42</sup> The difference between Old Labour and New Labour was explained in the article. New Labour wanted to emphasize social justice instead of social equality which used to be Labour’s focus in the past. Tony Blair introduced other ideas, such as equality of opportunities, minimum standards, and in 1999, he introduced the minimum wage for all people.<sup>43</sup> He helped to improve the situation in Britain in the nineties and became a successful leader of this time.

The number of marriages, divorces and birth rate changed throughout the decades. The term “family” means a unit that consists of more than one person. When two people marry, they become a new unity, in other words, “a family”. According to statistics, the highest marriage rate number was 82.3 per 1,000 for men and 97.9 for women in 1971. After only one decade, there was a rapid decline in marriages, and it fell to 51.7 for men and 64 for women per 1,000 in 1981. The lowest marriage rate was in 1997, with the numbers: 28.4 for men and 35.6 for women per 1,000.<sup>44</sup> The new lifestyle influenced people in many ways and one of them was the importance of marriages. Many people followed different priorities, such as their career or travelling, and time for marriage was postponed.

The age of the first marriage has changed as well. According to Addison and Jones, the age was constantly rising but to contrast this statement, the lowest age of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in 1971 when the mean age was 24.6 for men and 22.6 per 1,000 for women. In 1997, the average age of couples who married for the first time was 29.5 for men and 27.5 per 1,000 for

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<sup>41</sup> John W. Young, Effie G. H. Pedaliu, Michael D. Kandiah, *Britain in Global Politics Volume 2 From Churchill to Blair* (UK: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2013), 199–203.

<sup>42</sup> Applebaum, Anne. “Tony Blair and the New Left.” *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 2 (1997): 46.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/20047936>.

<sup>43</sup> “Old Labour vs New Labour: Labour’s ever-changing colours,” Alevelpolitics, January 20, 2022,  
<https://www.alevelpolitics.com/ukgovernment/oldvsnew-labour>.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Addison, Harriet Jones, *A companion to contemporary Britain 1939–2000*, (USA: Blackwell, 2005), 50.

women.<sup>45</sup> Based on the provided statistics, it is certain that some people wanted to enjoy their youth as single people and avoid being responsible for other people. One of the examples is the main protagonist Bridget Jones who is still single at the age of thirty-two.

Once the person finds a partner and marries him or her, most of the couples have at least one or more children during their lives. According to statistics, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the birth rate was 28.2 live births per 1,000 population in England but due to war and other social changes, the birth rate fell in 2001 to 12 per 1,000 in England. The reasons for this decline are uncertain as they are complex, and it is hard to point out what contributed to such a decline the most. However, there are some speculations. Some people associated the decline with the introduction of birth-control pills from 1961. This cannot be the main reason though as the decline had appeared before. Another reason might be the legalization of abortion from 1967. Of course, these new methods could have influenced the birth rate. Based on the studies, the main factors were after all social, economic, and cultural changes.<sup>46</sup> Due to the development of women's rights and social changes, people became more independent, and they could plan themselves whether they want to start a family or not.

The length of marriages has changed throughout the years, together with the age, the number of marriages, and a number of children as proven in the previous paragraphs. Family issues and arguments in a relationship between partners lead, in some cases, to a divorce. As statistics show, divorce was quite rare until the end of the seventies. The costs were high, and people who filed for divorce usually belonged to the upper or middle class only. Working-class people could not afford to pay the divorce expenses. Therefore, they only lived separately but still as officially married couples. The Divorce Act 1969 came into force in 1971. It contributed to easing divorces. The divorce was possible to obtain after two years of separation when both partners agreed. If one of the partners was against the divorce, the couple had to live separately for five years as proof that the marriage had broken up. The divorce rate in England and Wales was 13.4 per 1,000 married people in 1985. Later at the end of the century, it finally stabilized, and the numbers were very similar, not higher.<sup>47</sup> Both men and women living in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century had different conditions than people living earlier. Therefore, they are not so afraid of leaving the family and filing for divorce. In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, Bridget's mother and father have

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<sup>45</sup> Addison, Jones, *A contemporary Britain 1939–2000*, 50.

<sup>46</sup> Addison, Jones, *A contemporary Britain 1939–2000*, 42,45.

<sup>47</sup> Addison, Jones, *A contemporary Britain 1939–2000*, 50–51.

problems in their relationship that almost result in divorce. One more character, Mark Darcy, is divorced, who used to live with a Japanese woman.

Nevertheless, Britain has gone through many changes. Society started to be more open to many topics such as homosexuality, especially at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Homosexuality used to be a taboo word and illegal act in the previous centuries. Due to a great cultural revolution, which took place in Britain in the sixties, the rights and approach to homosexuals have changed. Although the rights have improved, people belonging to this community still had to overcome criticism and other issues during the nineties. The position of homosexuals grew better, but still, there are and will be some people who will not accept homosexuals.

It took a long time for homosexuals to be accepted by the majority of people in society, and for heterosexual and homosexual couples to set similar rights. As it was stated in the article, Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was introduced by the Conservative Government by Margaret Thatcher. This Act was against homosexuality and banned “promoting sexuality” or “pretended family relationship”. Consequently, teachers were not allowed to teach about homosexuality at school because all educational materials were prohibited as they were considered as propaganda. Section 28 was repealed by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2003. Another Act was called Civil partnership Act 2004 which allowed to enter the binding partnership of homosexuals, it was similar to marriage. Later the freedom of homosexuals developed and due to Marriage Act 2013, homosexuals could marry in England and Wales. It was possible in Scotland one year later, in 2014, and Northern Ireland Act 2019 made same-sex marriage legal in 2020.<sup>48</sup> The development of approaches and rights of homosexuals has not stopped yet. It will probably take a longer time to set equality among all couples in the world no matter what someone’s sexual orientation is. One of the main characters from the book *Bridget Jones’ Diary* is Tom. He is gay and Bridget’s close friend.

Homosexuals had and still have different rights and rules compared to heterosexual couples. According to Kamlé, in 1994, the age of consent for homosexuals was set at the age of 18 while heterosexuals’ consent to sexual intercourse was valid at the age of 16 in Britain.<sup>49</sup> Later, some people tried to set equality among homosexuals and heterosexuals. As stated in the article, The Sexual Offences Act 2000 set the legal age for both groups and it

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<sup>48</sup> Steven Dryden, “A short history of LGBT rights in UK,” British Library, December 7, 2021, <https://www.bl.uk/lgbtq-histories/articles/a-short-history-of-lgbt-rights-in-the-uk>.

<sup>49</sup> Kamlé, *Making Meaning in Romance*, 116.

was set to the age of 16. In Northern Ireland, this Act was accepted in 2008.<sup>50</sup> Equality in the age of consent has not been set until the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the UK.

The position of women, from the point of view of their financial independence, has improved. Most women were not only housewives but also hard-working workers who built their careers in the nineties. That is the reason why most women were financially self-sufficient and did not only rely on their husbands or partners as it used to be common in the previous centuries. According to McRae, in twenty years from 1975, the number of employed women increased. In the seventies, there were about 40 per cent of married women and 30 per cent of unmarried women who had to rely on their husbands or partners as they were economically inactive. From 1979 to 1997, the number of unemployed women fell by one million to 4.6 million. One-fifth more women found a full-time job in 1997 and one-quarter more women started having a part-time job than in 1984. When it comes to men, the number of men working was without great changes between the years 1979 and 1997. Consequently, there is a growing polarization and inequality between two-earner and no-earner households. Between 1979 and 1995, the average income grew by 40 per cent.<sup>51</sup> Working women were no more plain housewives whose main task was to take care of their household, husband, and children. They had a desire to be successful and to achieve a lot more in their life apart from having a happy family life.

This resulted in lots of changes in the whole society. As stated by McRae, by 1997, one-third of highly educated and middle-class women were promoted and started working as managers and at higher positions in other fields. Many of these women have never had a child or they delayed childbearing until they achieved their goals and built their careers. Forty per cent of born babies belonged to mothers who were over 30.<sup>52</sup> The biggest difference between women living in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is women's independence. In today's modern life, many women aspire to be successful. They want to achieve goals, like studying at a university, having a degree, then finding a great job, having children, and happy life. There is much bigger pressure on women than there used to be in the past.

As many women started working full-time, the income of most families living in the nineties grew higher. Markets were full. According to Black, the rise of supermarkets started

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<sup>50</sup>"Human sexuality and relationship," BBC, December 7, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z99whyc/revision/1>.

<sup>51</sup> Susan McRae, *Changing Britain families and households in the 1990s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5–7.

<sup>52</sup> McRae, *Britain in the 1990s*, 7.

in the 1950s. This rise gradually continued in the following decades as lots of people were interested. Consequently, by 1992, shopping centres comprised 16 per cent of total shopping space in Britain. The biggest shopping center in Europe was built in 1999. It was called Paisley's and had 900,000-square-foot.<sup>53</sup> The shopping centers were new and attractive. Many people started buying lots of goods. This new modern lifestyle resulted in great consumerism. The expenditure in the UK is presented from the year 1935 to 1995. The output data can be found in the Appendix.<sup>54</sup>

Based on the statistics, people started not only buying goods but also travelling across the country and the world. Consequently, travel expenses increased. On the other hand, the consumption of tobacco in 1990 decreased compared to the year 1965. In contrast to tobacco, the consumption of alcohol increased, as illustrated in the table. People spent the most money on alcohol in 1995. It was £27.857 billion. When compared to the year 1965, consumption was twice lower than in 1995. When it comes to vehicle running costs, cars have become a big part of our lives and therefore, the expenditure was much higher than in the 1940s or the 1950s. Priorities changed, and as the income increased so did the costs and desires of people who lived in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the main female protagonist, Bridget, likes spending money on alcohol and cigarettes.

The history of smoking cigarettes is long. It is not a coincidence that the first people who brought tobacco to America in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were British. This might be one of the reasons why smoking was still popular in Britain in the nineties. Both men and women smoked in the past, however, they had different reasons to start smoking. According to Berridge, from the feminist point of view, women started smoking because they were less confident than men and wanted to overcome this issue, or they were constantly under stress. Advertisements also contributed to such great popularity of smoking among people. They easily persuaded people to start or continue smoking.<sup>55</sup> Of course, the above-mentioned reasons were not the only ones that led to smoking. Moreover, men had a big favor in smoking as well, so it cannot be claimed that the advertisements focused mainly on women.

As Graham states, smoking prevalence was recorded in Britain in the late forties for the first time. Fifty-three per cent of people aged 16 and over living in Britain were smokers.

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<sup>53</sup> Black, *Britain since the seventies*, 12–13.

<sup>54</sup> Addison, Jones, *A contemporary Britain 1939–2000*, 228.

<sup>55</sup> Virginia Berridge, *Constructing Women and Smoking as a Public Health Problem in Britain 1950s–1990s*, (USA: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), 337.

To provide detailed data, the number of men smoking was 65 per cent while when it comes to women, 42 per cent were active smokers. By 1992, there had been a huge decline in smoking. Data showed that only 28 per cent of the population were smokers. The proportion was almost the same. It was 28 per cent of women and 30 per cent of men who admitted being smokers.<sup>56</sup> The popularity of smoking decreased during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the nineties. As for the main protagonist, Bridget Jones, she was trying to give up smoking many times but unsuccessfully.

Many people have had a liking for drinking alcohol for many centuries. Reasons why people like drinking are either to enjoy time with friends or to escape problems. Drinking alcohol has deep roots. As stated by Cool, before coffee or black tea became popular, it was mostly alcoholic drinks that were consumed in Britain. Especially during the Roman period, when alcohol was much safer to drink than water. Water had to be boiled, otherwise, it would cause some health problems. Therefore, people found it easier to drink alcohol instead.<sup>57</sup> Although water is now safe to drink without having to boil it, people are still interested in drinking wine or other alcoholic products nowadays. There was a long study concerning the consumption of alcohol per week. According to Smith and Foxcroft, during the nineties, consumption of alcohol per week slightly increased especially when speaking about women. However, men have still been bigger drinkers than women throughout the decades and centuries. In 1998, men's average consumption of alcohol was 17.1 units per week which rose to 18.7 units per week in 2006. When it comes to women, the increase was much more striking when compared to men. In 1998, the average consumption was 6.4 units per week which rose to 9.9 units in 2007.<sup>58</sup> The term "unit", when speaking about alcohol, is defined in a dictionary: "A measure of alcohol equals to 10ml of pure ethanol, which is roughly a half-pint of beer, a glass of table wine or a shot of spirits."<sup>59</sup> The female protagonist, Bridget Jones, is a big fan of alcohol, too. One of her New Year's resolutions is to give up this vice.

Some people are not only addicted to smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol. Also, being online most of the time of the day became a new phenomenon in the late nineties. Modern technologies play a significant role as advanced technologies allow us to be in touch

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<sup>56</sup> Hilary Graham (1995). *Cigarette Smoking: A Light on Gender and Class Inequality in Britain?*. *Journal of Social Policy*, 24, pp 509-527 doi:10.1017/S0047279400025411, 512-513.

<sup>57</sup> H.E.M COOL, *Eating and Drinking in Roman Britain*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 129.

<sup>58</sup> Lesley Smith, David Foxcroft, *Drinking in the UK* (UK: Joseph Rowntree foundation, 2009), 25.

<sup>59</sup> The Free Dictionary, "A unit of alcohol", accessed January 19, 2022, <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/unit+of+alcohol>.

with people from all over the world. It saves time if people use the technology wisely, and lastly it is an endless source of information.

Before having a close look at computers being a part of everyone's life, it is necessary to introduce a short history of the internet. According to Curran and Seaton, the development of the internet started in the 1970s and went through four phases. In the first phase, at the beginning of the seventies, the internet was mainly used by scientists who were only either exchanging research data or sending emails among other scientists. The second phase took place in the eighties when not only scientists were the main users of the internet but also other people. The internet was widely spread, and it entered its subcultural and proto-commercial phase. New "virtual communities" and business networks were formed at that time. People saw the internet as a life-changing invention. The third phase lasted from the later eighties to the mid-nineties. The main change was the transformation from a subcultural phase. This resulted in commercial use. In 1993, new software was introduced. It became widely spread among people as it was available and more accessible. After a few years, the giant Microsoft contributed to the success of the web and became very popular. The last phase started in the mid-nineties. Net advertising became a huge part of the internet and many people started using the internet in everyday life.<sup>60</sup> Also, in *Bridget Jones' Diary*, computers and e-mail communication among employees appeared in many scenes as it was a part of their job. Moreover, this book was written in the late nineties when technology started playing a significant role in people's lives.

Apart from computers and the internet, also telephone ownership rose to a high level as the communication on phone was much easier than on the computer. According to statistics, in 1972, 42 per cent of households owned a phone while by 1991, 90 per cent of households spent money on phones. In 2000, a company, Vodafone which was established in Britain, became the largest phone company in the world.<sup>61</sup> In the 1990s, technological advancement started and has continued until these days. Nowadays, almost everyone owns a smartphone, and life without technology is unimaginable for lots of people.

Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, and spending time being online can lead, in some cases, to health problems, especially obesity or overweight. Statistics based on the BMI index show that since 1993 the percentage of adult inhabitants of England who are either obese or overweight has risen from 52.9 per cent to 64.3 per cent. When it comes to obesity, it

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<sup>60</sup> James Curran, Jean Seaton, *Power without responsibility*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 252–253.

<sup>61</sup> Black, *Britain since the seventies*, 31–32.

has risen from 14.9 per cent to 28 per cent. Age also plays a significant role as people aged 65 to 74 are the most likely to become obese or overweight. On the contrary, people who are the least likely to be obese are those aged 16–24 when 56 per cent of them have normal weight and 37 per cent have an issue with obesity or being overweight.<sup>62</sup> Bridget Jones finds herself overweighted, therefore her New Year's resolution is to lose weight and change her body.

In the conclusion of this chapter, Britain experienced many significant milestones during the decade of the nineties, especially when speaking about politics or social changes. People's rights and opportunities increased. Consequently, Britain became much more powerful, and the British were satisfied and happier than in the previous decades.

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<sup>62</sup> Carl Baker, Obesity Statistics, 2021, 5.

### 3. SERIES OF IDENTITY AND IDENTITY CRISES

This chapter focuses on the introduction into identity, mainly into personal identity. At the very beginning, the term “identity” is explained and introduced, subsequently, eight stages of an identity crisis are examined in detail. These were introduced by Erik Homburger Erikson in his theory. This theory is based on eight stages that every individual goes through during his or her life, from birth to death. Furthermore, other identities are examined as well.

Before going into greater detail, it is important to explain what identity is. Although it can seem to be a word that everyone understands, there are many approaches to this term. As stated by Jenkins, the non-sociological meaning of the word identity offers a Latin root – *identitas*, from *idem*, in other words, “the same”.<sup>63</sup> Etymological roots were explained but there is still a sociological approach to identity. According to Hall and Gay, the traditional way of defining identity is “in all-inclusive sameness, seamless, without internal differentiation”. However, identities are difficult to define as they are constructed across different discourses and positions. They represent subjects that are constantly in a process of change. Globalization and migration disturbed and changed the “settled” character of cultures and inhabitants of countries. “Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation.”<sup>64</sup> Not only does identity represent subjects but at the same time a person’s identity.

Jenkins also expresses his viewpoint to the term “identity” as “a process of being and becoming.” Apart from this short definition, there is one more sentence defining identity. “Identity denotes the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectivities.”<sup>65</sup> In other words, identity can be perceived from many perspectives such as various characteristics and qualities which connect individuals as well as groups and create a specific identity. However, there is one condition when a group is to be made. There must be at least one individual who creates the group. Therefore, the following part of this chapter focuses on individuals and their personal identity and stages.

Erik H. Erikson, a Danish-German-American psychoanalyst, and psychologist came with a theory that focused on the psychological development of human beings, especially on the development of identity and identity crisis. According to Erikson, identity crisis may also

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<sup>63</sup> Richard Jenkins, *Social identity*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 16.

<sup>64</sup> Stuart Hall, Paul Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, (London: SAGE publications, 1996), 4.

<sup>65</sup> Jenkins, *Social Identity*, 16–18.

be identified as the psychosocial aspect of adolescence. Every person must get through an identity crisis until he or she develops mental maturation and social responsibility. However, it cannot be achieved without all eight stages. Although identity crisis might seem to be a negative connotation, in fact, it is not. Going through crises is a turning point and a crucial period of increased vulnerability in our life. Therefore, it bears such a name.<sup>66</sup> All stages of identity crisis affect people's lives and they build and develop their identity in the future.

As already mentioned, eight stages of development will be described further. The reason for providing all this information about the theory in detail is that it will be used as the main source for analysis of *Bridget Jones' Diary* in the analytical part of this thesis. As stated by Erikson, the first crisis concerns *Trust* and *Mistrust*. This stage comes during the first year of life. The relationship between an infant and a mother plays a significant role as it influences the infant's whole life. It results either in *Trust* or *Mistrust* with other people and himself/herself. No matter how much food or demonstrations of love the infant gets, it rather depends on the quality of the maternal relationship. If the child has a mother who fails to meet the baby's basic needs, it results in a sense of mistrust. The loss of mother love for the infant can lead either to acute infantile depression or to a mild, but chronic, state of mourning which can lead to depression for the rest of the infant's life.<sup>67</sup> Although one might think that the infant is just a small baby and cannot be affected so much, Erikson does not agree with this and has a contrasting opinion. Therefore, every mother should pay attention and provide her child with a positive and warm relationship.

As for the second stage of identity, Erikson's theory defined it as a stage of *Autonomy* versus *Shame and Doubt*. This stage starts in early childhood when the dependent child experiences *autonomous will* for the first time in his or her life. During this stage, the child learns to act and decide about some things on its own. If parents enable the child to act freely, the child will become an independent and decisive individual. However, a *sense of shame and doubts* can be developed when there are too many restrictions put on children, and when parents decide instead of their child. Consequently, it results in a sense of inadequacy and self-doubts. Moreover, such children become undecided.<sup>68</sup>

In the third stage, the main task for a child is to find out what kind of person he or she might become one day. This stage deals with the conflict between *Initiative and Guilt* which

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<sup>66</sup> Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), 91–96.

<sup>67</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 96–107.

<sup>68</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 107–114.

is a typical period for preschool years, between the ages of three and five. A three-year-old child feels more comfortable and confident in some acts than before. For instance, walking seems to be a thing of ease or as for languages, he or she can easily understand others. Therefore, the child asks a huge number of questions to become familiar with the world around it. If parents are willing to answer all questions, this stage is successfully completed. It leads to sense of purpose. If this stage fails, it leads to a sense of guilt and children see their mistakes as a personal failure.<sup>69</sup>

The following fourth stage concerns *Industry* versus *Inferiority* and it is a time of middle childhood, between six and eleven years of age. Children are ready to learn quickly, and they tend to imitate things they see. Therefore, they are attached to some people as they see them as models or heroes. For instance, they admire their teachers, their parents, or even the parents of other children. Their desire is to be like them, they want to become teachers, garbage men or policemen one day. However, children need to be left alone with books, films, or television. Sooner or later, they will become dissatisfied as they are not able to make things perfect. This is called the *sense of industry*. If the children are praised for being able to make new things, they will become skilful, and later they will not have an issue with an obligation. Also, there is a *sense of inferiority* that lies in the inner conflict inside of every child. The child still wants to be at home with his or her parents and not to attend classes at school. It is quite a difficult time for children. No matter how big their will and wishes are, what matters is the background of their parents. This factor affects their worth as a pupil, and later it influences their character development. If this stage fails, it leads to feelings of uselessness and resistance to work.<sup>70</sup>

The first four stages appear during childhood. The fifth stage unfolds during adolescence. It is called *Identity* versus *Identity Confusion*. It is a time when young adults experience intimacy with the other sex. Moreover, they are trying to find out who they are as they are uncertain about their adult roles. Their models are not parents or teachers anymore as in the previous stage. They are trying to become the best person on their own. However, if the person fails, he or she will become confused about his or her *identity*.<sup>71</sup> Who we are, where we belong, and what our *identity* is, are not simple questions. Burke and Stets expressed the definition of *identity*.

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<sup>69</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 115–122.

<sup>70</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 122–127.

<sup>71</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 128–135.

An *identity* is the set of meanings that define who one is when one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person.<sup>72</sup>

What Burke and Stets claim is that each person possesses multiple identities as everyone has multiple roles in society, such as a student, a worker, a parent, or a spouse.<sup>73</sup> Every person has a different role. Consequently, the roles naturally change several times during our life, and our behaviour is affected by the life stage in which a person is.

Moreover, there are not only multiple roles and identities. At the same time, there are social categories. It is not always easy to find out to which category the person fits the best. According to Stets and Burke, the choice of social category or identity is partly determined as everyone is born into an already structured society that consists of social categories. They exist owing to other contrasting categories. Each person becomes a member of a particular social category, however, every person has their own self-concept of uniqueness. Self-categorization equals the formation of one's identity. From the point of view of self-categorization in social identity theory and identification in identity theory, it means that the self can take itself as an object and classify itself from other classifications of social categories.<sup>74</sup> The social categories and individuals are closely connected as the categories would not exist without individuals. According to Hogg and Abrams, groups play significant roles in creating an individual's identity as people around us have a huge impact on our identity.<sup>75</sup> Some characters from *Bridget Jones' Diary* are confused and lost in their identity for various reasons. Nevertheless, it will be examined in detail in the analytical part of this thesis.

Three more stages are left to go through when people reach adult age. The sixth stage concerns *Intimacy* versus *Isolation*. *Intimacy* does not only relate to sexual but also to psychological intimacy among friends and between partners, of course. If the person knows his or her *identity*, they are ready to build a deep and permanent relationship, not only friendship. However, when youths do not trust themselves, it leads to the incapability of accomplishing an intimate relationship. Moreover, it usually results in a deep *sense of isolation* in late adolescence or early adulthood. Consequently, the person will never feel

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<sup>72</sup> Peter J. Burke, Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>73</sup> Burke, Stets, *Identity Theory*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Stets, Jan E., and Peter J. Burke. "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2000): 224–225. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2695870>.

<sup>75</sup> Michael A. Hogg, Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 2.

himself or herself since he or she suffers from painful problems and inferiority.<sup>76</sup> As for the book *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the main character, Bridget Jones, wishes to find an ideal partner, and her desire is to get rid of *isolation* and live a “normal” family life.

The seventh stage is called *Generativity* versus *Stagnation*, this stage differs in the focus of people on others, rather than themselves. A mature person, approximately between 40 and 65 years, wants to be helpful and at the same time, he or she longs for being needed by other people. This desire is caused by evolution. The main purpose of *generativity* is to establish and guide the next generation. On the other hand, there are some individuals whose priorities differ. Consequently, the concept of *generativity* can be replaced, and it leads to ego-interests and a libidinal investment. In other words, the crises can result in a *sense of stagnation* for which boredom and stereotypes are the typical features.<sup>77</sup>

The last stage concerns *Integrity* versus *Despair*. As it is the last stage and all stages come consecutively, the eighth one comes with old age. After going through all previous stages, the person is almost at the end of his or her life. This is the right time to appraise the things that have happened to him or her during their whole life. “*Integrity*” is a stage when an individual has taken care of his or her family when the person has adapted himself both to positive and negative experiences that he or she has had so far. *Integrity* is the acceptance of every significant person in life. The person knows that he or she cannot change someone's fate as it is their responsibility. On the other hand, some people lack the gathered ego or those who lost it. These people have regrets, and during all previous stages, they had negative results. This leads to *despair*. The individual realizes that it is too late to start a different life again and it leads to many regrets. The *despair* is hidden, and the person shows his dissatisfaction or disgust with how the person behaves to particular people.<sup>78</sup>

To sum up all stages of an identity crisis, it is a lifelong process full of changes and challenges. Whether the stages are successfully accomplished or failed, depends on many factors. For example, family background, group of friends, colleagues at work, or the whole society in which the person lives.

The main part of the last chapter in the theoretical part is dedicated to identity crisis. The reason for introducing such a complex theory by Erikson is purposeful. It will be an interesting experiment to apply such a complex and complicated theory to the book, *Bridget*

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<sup>76</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 135–138.

<sup>77</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 138.

<sup>78</sup> Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, 139–140.

*Jones' Diary*, written by Helen Fielding. This thesis focuses on an underestimated popular literature, and at the same time on a plain genre Chick lit. Mostly Bridget, the main protagonist, but also other characters, will be analyzed in detail from the perspective of identity crisis in the analytical part of this thesis. Therefore, the personal point of view is explored, whereas the second part concentrates on other identities. These identities focus on class, territorial and gender identities that relate to society.

Not only is personal identity important to mention, but other identities can be applied to this book. Although there will be five identities mentioned, only three of them, class, territorial, and gender identities will be described in greater detail. The reason for introducing only some of the mentioned identities is that not all identities occur in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. According to Smith, there are multiple identities and roles such as familial, territorial, class, religious, ethnic, and gender. Typical features of the territorial identity are that regions fragment into localities, and localities themselves are divided into separate settlements. However, regions are difficult to define from the point of view of geography as there are multiple centers in the region, not just one center.<sup>79</sup> The geographical distribution of regions and cities is complex, however, the capital city of Britain is London. According to Storry and Childs, London is a center of business activities, there is a “square mile” of banks and offices and in 1996, over 7.2 million inhabitants lived in London. Consequently, London became even more remarkable for having the highest population in Europe.<sup>80</sup> The reason for mentioning London is that Bridget and other characters live in London.

The following identity is the category of social class. “Class” is defined as a social relationship where at least two or more social classes in a society are present. Later, a new name was created for this – class identity, in other words, collective identity. Both ethnic and religious identities strived for the inclusion of two or more social classes within the communities, especially the religious ones. The religious identity itself is based on socialization and communication, while social identity emerges from production and exchange. Moreover, religious communities are closely related to ethnic identities. Therefore, a purely religious community can result in a new ethnic community.<sup>81</sup> Social classes are highly connected with other communities, and it might lead to a decline in distinction among classes. As mentioned by Storry and Childs, Britain has been considered a class-ridden

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<sup>79</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, (London: Penguin Group, 1991),4–7.

<sup>80</sup> Mike Storry, Peter Childs, *British Cultural Identities*, (Routledge: London, 2002), 55.

<sup>81</sup> Smith, *National Identity*, 4–7.

society for many years. However, when Margaret Thatcher was holding the post of Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, Britain was no more seen as a class-ridden society but rather “a classless society”. Thatcher’s father worked as a shopkeeper. Therefore, she gave hope to everyone who did not come from an upper-class family and wanted to rise to the top of British society. Although a division of social classes slowly started to fade away, British people were still influenced and used to belonging to a particular class. As statistics show, 90 per cent of people living in Britain still associate themselves with a particular class. More than half of the population, 52 per cent, are convinced that a strong division between classes still exists.<sup>82</sup> Even in *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, the social distinction is present as most of the characters come from the upper or middle class. The analytical part will prove this statement as social class will be examined in detail.

Not only do people associate themselves with social class but also with gender identity. As stated in an article, a personal conception of oneself as male or female is characterized as gender identity. The outward manifestations of personality that reflect gender identification are referred to as gender roles. Gender roles are expressed by the behaviour and appearance of an individual. Sex and gender are two different terms. Sex is a biological concept that is based on the individual’s sex characteristics whereas gender is associated with a process involved in identity and social role.<sup>83</sup> As for the social roles, according to Blackstone, there are many traditional viewpoints on how men and women should behave in a society. For instance, women are supposed to be more nurturing than men. Men are presumed by traditional social roles to be leaders of families and have a great job. In other words, they should be a breadwinner and make important decisions.<sup>84</sup> Although these social roles of men and women seem to be stereotypical and no longer present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, written at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflects these classical social roles.

To conclude this chapter, all eight stages of personal identity crisis needed to be pointed out together with other identities. All identities originate in people’s minds or personal experience. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide necessary information that concerns identities. Later, they will be applied in the analytical part to characters from *Bridget Jones’ Diary*.

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<sup>82</sup> Storry, Childs, *British Cultural Identities*, 177–178.

<sup>83</sup> Shuvo Ghosh, “Gender Identity,” Medscape, December 09, 2020, <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/917990-overview?reg=1>.

<sup>84</sup> Blackstone, Amy. 2003. "Gender Roles and Society." Pp 335-338 in *Human Ecology: An Encyclopedia of Children, Families, Communities, and Environments*, edited by Julia R. Miller, Richard M. Lerner, and Lawrence B. Schiamberg. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO. ISBN I-57607-852-3.

#### 4. FEATURES OF CHICK LIT IN *BRIDGET JONES' DIARY*

The first chapter of the theoretical part focuses on the main features and history of Chick lit and popular literature. The second chapter covers social and political changes, and the last chapter addresses theory of identity crisis and other identities. The following part of this thesis is divided into three chapters, too. Every chapter refers to the same chapter from the theoretical part. Mentioned facts, statistics, and theories about identity crisis will be applied to a book written by Helen Fielding. The book is called *Bridget Jones' Diary* and is written in a humorous and lighthearted style – a typical representative of the Chick lit genre.

*Bridget Jones' Diary* has become the most popular romantic book written in the last several decades. As stated in the theoretical part, before Chick lit was introduced, romance fiction was a leading genre when speaking about books for female readers. There were several definitions of romance fiction mentioned and one of them is “a single developing relationship between a heroine and a hero.” Another viewpoint of this genre was defined as “a central love with a satisfying and optimistic ending”. These definitions fit the description of *Bridget Jones' Diary* because Bridget's main difficulties include complicated relationships and attempts to build a real and permanent relationship, not just the platonic one. As she cannot find a partner, she tends to worry about dying alone one day and being eaten by dogs. However, there are two men with whom Bridget becomes involved in two romantic relationships. One of them is her handsome and charming boss, Daniel Cleaver, who is not only interested in having a relationship with Bridget. He has an affair with a woman who is younger and more attractive than Bridget. When she finds out the reality of their relationship, Bridget starts dating another man after some time. The other man is Mark Darcy, who works as a human-rights barrister and meets Bridget at a New Year's party. They have known each other since their childhood. There are two love triangles. One of them is Bridget who is in love with Daniel, but Daniel loves another woman and at the same time, he dates Bridget. The second love triangle is created when Bridget cannot decide whether to love Daniel or Mark. Bridget's situation and her relationships correspond with the typical features of romance. The plot follows the prescribed pattern of romance style of writing.

There is no doubt that *Bridget Jones' Diary* and *Pride and Prejudice* have much in common. It is a kind of reinvention of *Pride and Prejudice*. As stated by Heß in the theoretical part, there are several parallels between both works such as the female characters and their relationships. Both, Bridget and Jane, hold love and marriage in high regard. They have both been hurt by men, and therefore they do not trust them and have some prejudice

against them. It is believed that Helen Fielding was inspired by Jane Austen, the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, as one of the main characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary* bears the same name as in *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Austen gave a name to one of the characters – “Fitzwilliam Darcy”. Helen Fielding only changed the first name when she created a character who is called “Mark Darcy”. Apart from the use of the same names, both Bridget and Elizabeth share the same issues. Both are single, and they deal with the pressure that is put on them by others. Although Elizabeth Bennet is much younger than Bridget Jones, being single at their age seems to be weird and not usual. However, there are certain differences between the two heroines. Bridget lives in a modern society where people do not have to fight for freedom, and Bridget takes it for granted. As *Pride and Prejudice* was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Elizabeth had to fight for having freedom. Another difference is that Elizabeth is clever and disciplined while Bridget seems to be naïve and without self-control.

Chick lit developed from romance fiction as a new sub-genre. Smith described a typical protagonist of Chick lit as a young, heterosexual woman who is in her thirties and was born in America or Britain. This is an example of Bridget as she was born and grew up in Britain, and she lives in a flat in London as a single woman. She is thirty-two years old and deals with finding a perfect partner for the rest of her life.

Another typical feature of this genre provided by Montoro explains that women in Chick lit worry about their weight, appearance, and clothes as their biggest worry is to look fantastic in every situation. It follows that the main protagonists are usually superficial. They spend a lot of money on fashionable clothes and accessories. This is the case of Bridget, too. She is not satisfied with her body, so one of her New Year's resolutions is to lose weight. She is not as obsessed with shopping for new clothes, as she prefers spending money on other things, such as food, alcohol, or cigarettes. One of her New Year's resolutions is:

I WILL NOT waste money on: pasta-makers, ice-cream machines or other culinary devices which will never use; books by unreadable literary authors to put impressively on shelves; exotic underwear, since pointless as have no boyfriend.<sup>85</sup>

She is aware of her bad habit which is buying too many useless things. She thinks that there is no point in buying nice underwear when she does not have a boyfriend. She becomes sceptical, and many activities and other issues seem to be meaningless.

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<sup>85</sup> Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, (Kent: Picador, 2001), 2.

Bridget is a young, and funny woman with a great sense of humour. She is open-minded, well-liked, and has plenty of good friends who love her. However, she underestimates herself, especially due to her appearance. She is constantly on diets as she believes she is overweight. She thinks that she would have a better life if she lost some weight. Being single for a longer time does not help Bridget's low self-esteem. She lacks appreciation by a man, therefore, she is convinced that nobody is interested in her. "Oh, why am I so unattractive? Why? Even a man who bears bumblebee socks thinks I am horrible."<sup>86</sup> Bridget tends to forget that appearance is not everything. Moreover, she has a tendency to overlook her positive qualities. She rather focuses only on her looks. As stated by Ferriss, the heroine must be neither too stunning nor too ordinary-looking but something between. Simply the heroine must be original, and the readers should find something extraordinary in her to admire her. Helen Fielding created this character as somebody extraordinary and original because many women could identify themselves with Bridget as she deals with everyday issues in relationships and at work as a casual woman.

As *Bridget Jones' Diary* was written in the late nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sex is no more a taboo word in a community of friends. Even for some people, it is not a taboo topic to talk about with strangers. Therefore, this topic appears several times in the book. However, as stated by Ferris, sex scenes are hard to find in the Chick lit genre but talking and joking about sex is not such a big issue for most of the characters in the book. To prove this statement, here are some examples of sentences that occur in the text. "Yesssss! Yesssss! Daniel Cleaver wants my phone no. Am marvellous. Am irresistible Sex Goddess."<sup>87</sup> Daniel Cleaver is Bridget's boss who finally invites her to go on a date with him. There are other characters, like Cosmo, who do not find it difficult to ask Bridget about her personal life. "So, bellowed Cosmo, pouring me a drink. 'How's your love-life?'"<sup>88</sup> The question is personal, therefore, Cosmo is seen as rather tactless. He asks questions as if he was Bridget's best friend. From this example, it seems that asking someone about their love life is perceived as asking "how are you doing". Not only did Cosmo ask Bridget these kinds of questions but also Jeremy – another friend of Bridget's. He said: "Getting a bit of a shag, old girl?"<sup>89</sup> Jeremy's behaviour is similar to Cosmo. Although he knows Bridget well, he should respect her privacy. The last example to defend occurrences of this topic is Bridget's mother. After returning home from

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<sup>86</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 16.

<sup>87</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 26.

<sup>88</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 40.

<sup>89</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 41.

holidays with her friends, she decides to enjoy the rest of her life. She wants to make up for her “lost time”. “‘I’m going out, darling’, she said. ‘I’m going out to get laid.’”<sup>90</sup> Bridget’s mother easily expresses her needs without feeling embarrassed. Moreover, she explicitly shares it with her daughter. Ferriss claims that in novels written in the 18<sup>th</sup> or the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sex or even confession of being in love with a man were taboo until the woman received a proposal of marriage. *Bridget Jones’ Diary* was written in 1996, and attitudes towards sex and the confession of being in love with somebody were entirely different. Daniel Cleaver is married but still feels for Bridget. “‘I’m married,’ he said. ‘But Bridget, I think I love you.’”<sup>91</sup> This would be such a daring act in the previous centuries to declare one’s love for somebody else when one of them is married.

As Ferriss mentions in the theoretical part, Chick lit is written in a typical style. Authors use an informal style of writing full of slang expressions. When speaking about Helen Fielding, similes and metaphors and slang words occur countless times in her book that belongs to this genre. To begin with the slang words, there are several examples. One of them was used by Bridget when she suspects of being pregnant. On one hand, it is a tempting idea to have a child and become a responsible mother. On the other, she cannot imagine not going to parties with her friends. “No more nights out with the girls, shopping, flirting, sex, bottles of wine and *fags*.”<sup>92</sup> The word “fag” is a slang word for a cigarette. Another example is the word “crap” which is used by Sharon, Bridget’s close friend, who represents a feminist character in *Bridget Jones’ Diary*. She is not afraid of expressing her opinion straightforwardly. “Oh, that is just such *crap*, you cowardly, dysfunctional little schmuck.”<sup>93</sup> The last example of slang words is a phrasal verb “bugger off”. This verb occurs when Bridget is desperate as she still does not have a boyfriend. She dreams of a potential man, a doctor, who would become a suitable and perfect partner for her. “I could take his messages, tell patients wanting night visits to *bugger off*, cook him little goat cheese soufflés, then end up in a foul mood with him when I am sixty, like Mum.”<sup>94</sup> Bridget loves using informal language and she is great at imagining hypothetical situations.

Metaphors are also worth mentioning. Mrs. Jones, Bridget’s mother, goes through difficulties in a relationship with her husband. She calls Bridget and says: “‘Darling, call me

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<sup>90</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 48.

<sup>91</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 111.

<sup>92</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 119.

<sup>93</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 21.

<sup>94</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 49.

immediately. My nerves are *shot to ribbons*.” It relates to the psychological state of being sad and disappointed. She asks for help and support from Bridget. Although Mrs. Jones still treats Bridget like a small girl, she calls Bridget for help and advice when she deals with relationship issues. Bridget patiently listens to her even though Mrs. Jones is not very supportive of Bridget every time she copes with some problems.

Another typical feature of Chick lit is the occurrence of similes. As Bridget suspects that she would be pregnant, she decides to take a pregnancy test. She sees a thin line on the test, and she immediately starts thinking she is expecting a baby. Moreover, Bridget likens the thin blue line in her way. “There in the little window was a thin blue line, *bold as brass*.”<sup>95</sup> Not only does Bridget deal with complicated situations that suddenly come but also with her mother. Relationship issues are not the only problems Mrs. Jones deals with. Generally, she goes through many crises. One of them is not having a career. She takes care of her family and does housework her whole life. Right now, she feels that she needs to change it. The simile is: “I feel like a grasshopper who sang all summer.”<sup>96</sup> She likens herself to a grasshopper. The *grasshopper’s singing* represents the daily routine in Mrs. Jones’ life while *all summer* stands for her whole life. Mrs. Jones lives in the present and does not care about the future as grasshoppers do. However, she realizes the boredom and stereotype of her life.

As for language, most characters express themselves informally as this book was written in a humorous and light-hearted style. Generally, Chick lit is known for being written in an informal style, and *Bridget Jones’ Diary* is not an exception. Bridget does not like some of her friends’ partners much. For instance, Tom’s boyfriend, Jerome. She sees him as an insufferable and pretentious man. It is her birthday, and she thinks of inviting her friends to a party. Tom wants her to invite his boyfriend as well. She replies: “Course Jerome’s invited, yer *ninny*.”<sup>97</sup> Other examples of informal words are “a bloke” or “duck out”. These words are used by Sharon when she speaks about types of men.

At which point Sharon started on a long illustrative list of emotional fuckwittage in progress amongst our friends: one whose boyfriend of thirteen years refuses even to discuss living together; another who went out with a man four times who then chucked her because it was getting too serious; another who was pursued by a *bloke* for three months with impassioned proposals of marriage, only to find him *ducking out* three weeks after she succumbed and repeating the whole process with her best friend.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 118.

<sup>96</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 71.

<sup>97</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 80.

<sup>98</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 20.

She criticizes men all the time. If everyone thought the way she does, no woman would ever find a boyfriend.

“Nightie” and “telly” are other examples. Both these informal expressions appeared in one sentence. “The thought of going home, putting my *nightie* on and turning on the *telly* began to seem irresistibly attractive.”<sup>99</sup> Two more examples are to be mentioned to prove the fact that *Bridget Jones’ Diary* is full of informal words. Instead of “urinate”, an informal expression “wee” is used in a situation when Bridget is in the bathroom where she wants to find out whether she is pregnant with Daniel Cleaver or not. “It was his responsibility too and he wasn't having to spend £8.95 and hide in the toilets trying to *wee* on a stick.”<sup>100</sup> Bridget loves using informal words all the time. Another example is the word “loo”. “Had just gone into *loo* when phone rang again.”<sup>101</sup> Although Bridget comes from the middle class and is in touch with people belonging to either middle or upper classes, she speaks in an informal way.

Similes, metaphors, slang words, and informal expressions are pointed out here to confirm that *Bridget Jones’ Diary* belongs to popular literature and is full of typical features of Chick lit. That is why quite a long part of this chapter focuses on stated examples.

Ferriss also states that Chick lit has some features of the epistolary form of writing that comes from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. *Bridget Jones’ Diary* is written in a form of letters. Bridget tells the story through her diary. It starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and ends on the 26<sup>th</sup> of December. Almost under every date, there is information about her weight, consumed alcohol, a number of smoked cigarettes, and calories. For instance: “9st 5 (state of emergency now as if fat has been stored in capsule form over Christmas and is being slowly released under skin), alcohol units 5 (better), cigarettes 20, calories 700 (v.g.)”<sup>102</sup> Almost under every date, the reader is provided with information that is essential for Bridget.

Romance Writers of America characterized this genre as “a central love story” and “an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending.” It is also the case of *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, as it ends with a summary of Bridget’s progress. It relates to her New Year’s resolution. She finally managed to find the man of her life.

Have finally realized the secret of happiness with men, and it is with deep regret, rage and an overwhelming sense of defeat that I have to put it in the words of an adulteress, criminal's

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<sup>99</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 99.

<sup>100</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 118.

<sup>101</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 130.

<sup>102</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 19.

accomplice and G-list celebrity: 'Don't say 'what,' say 'pardon,' darling, and do as your mother tells you.'<sup>103</sup>

After the whole year full of failures but also successes, Bridget matures and learns a lesson from all the experience she gained during this year. Firstly, people should not care about their weight so much. Secondly, people and especially women should believe in themselves and be confident. She is no longer single, and she builds a relationship with Mark Darcy.

To conclude this chapter, based on the examples mentioned throughout, it is certain that Helen Fielding followed a classical style of Chick lit. Although many critics underestimate and criticize this genre, Helen Fielding chose many interesting informal and slang words which contributed to ease in reading this book.

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<sup>103</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 307.

## 5. LIFE OF CHARACTERS AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN *BRIDGET JONES' DIARY*

The second chapter of the analytical part focuses on cultural changes and lifestyle of the main characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary* living in the nineties. There were real statistics provided in the theoretical part which will be applied to the book and the characters in it. The main purpose of this chapter is to prove that even characters in the book, in other words, not people from the real world, live similarly as people living at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Politics went through many changes during the nineties, especially when speaking about New Labour party and a new leader Tony Blair. However, if the reader does not know anything about what was happening in Britain in the nineties, nobody learns almost anything from the book as political situation is not depicted in Chick lit books. There are only a few names that relate to politics. However, if the reader is not interested in politics, he or she might be confused. In the book where the political situation is a bit described is when Bridget is tired and decides to take a nap. "It's so hot. Maybe I'll just close my eyes for five minutes. Catnaps are said to be an excellent way of reviving oneself. Used to excellent effect by Margaret Thatcher and Winston Churchill."<sup>104</sup>

As claimed earlier, *Bridget Jones' Diary* belongs to Chick lit, therefore it is written in a simple way for people from all social classes. This might be the reason why Helen Fielding did not include politics as she did not consider it an important topic for her book.

Love is the most representative topic that appears in most of the books, of course. As Chick lit developed from romance fiction, it is logical that the topic will be included in every Chick lit book. There are several married couples, such as the best friends of Bridget's parents – Colin and Pamela Jones, but also other friends – Una and Geoffrey Alconbury or Malcolm and Elaine Darcy. All these couples have been married for quite a long time and they have adult children. Bridget feels lost as there is pressure on her to find a partner and get married. Especially Bridget's married friends like Woney, Cosmo's wife, causes Bridget to feel uncomfortable and despair. Woney is not only married, moreover, she is expecting a baby. She does not understand that someone is not married. "Yes, why aren't you married yet, Bridget?" sneered Woney (babytalk for Fiona, married to Jeremy's friend Cosmo) with a thin veneer of concern whilst stroking her pregnant stomach."<sup>105</sup> Also Alex, some guy

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<sup>104</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 145.

<sup>105</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 40.

participating in a party, added some other comments together with Cosmo. Bridget could not do anything as there were too many people niggling at her. “Well, you know, once you get past a certain age . . . ’ Exactly . . . All the decent chaps have been snapped up,’ said Cosmo, slapping his fat stomach and smirking so that his jowls wobbled.”<sup>106</sup> Although Bridget is surrounded by many close and good friends, some of them make fun of her for being single. Fortunately, Bridget is not touchy, and when she does not feel comfortable, she rises above her friend’s biting remarks.

Also, some couples have not been married yet, Bridget is not the only one. As statistics show, the lowest marriage rate was in 1997, with the numbers: 28.4 per 1,000 for men and 35,6 per 1,000 for women. Helen Fielding might be reflecting the real situation among young people of that time in her novel. Age of the couples in the book is not the lowest one as most of them are in their thirties. There is a new trend that couples do not rush to marry their partners. They live happily just in relationships. It is the case of Bridget’s close friends who have partners. The couples are, for example, Jude and Richard, and Rebecca and Martin. Bridget loves spending time with her friends but not together with all couples. It is Bridget’s birthday and she is forced to invite not only people she loves but also their other halves.

Just called Tom who says, very wisely, 'It is your birthday and you should invite exactly and only who you want.' So am just going to ask the following: Shazzer Jude Tom Magda and Jeremy. When I told Jude who was coming she said perkily, 'Oh, so we're bringing other halves?' which means Vile Richard. Also now that it's not just six I will have to ask Michael. Oh well. I mean nine is fine. Ten. It'll be fine.<sup>107</sup>

Bridget gets on well with most of her friends’ partners but she prefers going to cafés or restaurants with her friends only. One of the reasons might be because she is single and cannot complain or talk about men when she is surrounded by her friends’ boyfriends.

A similar situation is when speaking about the birth rate and the number of children in families. According to statistics, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the birth rate was 28.2 live births per 1,000 population in England but due to war and other social changes, the birth rate fell in 2001 to 12 per 1,000 in England. Having children is becoming less popular, as evidenced not only in real life but also in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Only a few young couples have children. Magda and Jeremy are an exception as they became parents. “The birth was great. She'd been telling everyone for months it was going to be a natural childbirth and, ten

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<sup>106</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 40–41.

<sup>107</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 79–80.

minutes in, she cracked and started yelling, 'Give me the drugs, you fat cow.'<sup>108</sup> No more particular situations with children are present in the book, there are only a few situations where children are part of.

Being in a relationship and having a child might cause some issues. It depends on every couple if the partners can solve the situation or not. In some cases, it can even lead to a divorce. Magda and Jeremy are a married couple and have a small child. However, Jeremy starts dating a new woman and Magda finds out that Jeremy is cheating on her. Although most women are emancipated, self-reliant, and financially independent, there are still some situations in which a man is needed. Magda has troubles with her car and is therefore forced to call Jeremy.

'Jerrers!' she yelled into the portable phone. 'Jerrers, you fucking adulterous bastard! How do you open the hood on the Saab!' 'I'm not bloody coming back, you bastard!' Magda was yelling. 'Just tell me how to open the fucking bonnet.'<sup>109</sup>

Based on this example, the relationship between Magda and Jeremy has changed. Magda is angry with him, therefore, she uses vulgar language. The passion or love have disappeared.

There is one character, Mark Darcy, who is divorced. He moved from America back to Britain as a divorced man. Bridget's mother sees him as a potentially perfect partner for Bridget, and that is why she informs her about his divorce almost in the first sentence when she starts speaking about him. Bridget's mother is convinced that Bridget is not able to find a boyfriend on her own, therefore, she decides to help her with it.

Did I mention Malcolm and Elaine are bringing Mark with them to Una's New Year's Day Turkey Curry Buffet? He's just back from America, apparently. Divorced. He's looking for a house in Holland Park. Apparently he had the most terrible time with his wife. Japanese. Very cruel race.<sup>110</sup>

Bridget and Mark have known each other since childhood, however they have not met for a long time. When she meets him at a party, she is not interested in Mark much as he is wearing a funny jumper, and his behaviour is not appealing.

Apart from Mark Darcy, there is another man who is much more interesting for Bridget. It is Daniel Cleaver, the biggest heartbreaker of this book. He cheats on Bridget while he is pretending to be in love with her. Once, he invites her for a glass of wine where he announces new information for Bridget. "The thing is, Suki and I . . . 'I'm sorry, love,' he

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<sup>108</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 70.

<sup>109</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 109.

<sup>110</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 9.

said, taking out his credit card and starting to lean back to get the attention of the waiter, 'but we're getting married.'"<sup>111</sup> Daniel is heartless, selfish, and not worried about hurting someone's feelings. Not only did Daniel hurt Bridget's feelings but at the same time Mark's heart, too. That is the reason why he hates Daniel Cleaver so much. "He slept with my wife,' he said. 'Two weeks after our wedding.'"<sup>112</sup> Daniel is irresponsible and does not care about other people.

Although Smith describes a typical protagonist of Chick lit as a young, heterosexual woman, it does not mean that homosexuals cannot appear in the Chick lit genre. In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, there is one homosexual character – Tom. He is a very close friend of Bridget's. He always gives her advice, and supports her in every crisis with men. Tom regularly takes part in meeting in cafés with other Bridget's friends. All her friends are open-minded, therefore, Tom has never been discriminated against among friends. Although there is no clear evidence of Tom being discriminated, he is aware of his uniqueness in society. "Tom has a theory that homosexuals and single women in their thirties have natural bonding: both being accustomed to disappointing their parents and being treated as freaks by society."<sup>113</sup> For instance, Bridget's mother, Mrs. Jones, does not believe in a different sexual orientation other than the heterosexual one. Of course, she does not denounce homosexuals, but she simply thinks that all people are heterosexuals.

'It's just laziness darling,' was her view on the whole homosexuality issue. 'They simply can't be bothered to relate to the opposite sex. Look at your Tom. I think if that boy had anything about him he'd be going out with you properly instead of all this ridiculous, "friends" nonsense.'<sup>114</sup>

She believes that the reason for having a partner of the same sex is when people want to be interesting and different.

The position of homosexuals has improved since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and so has the independence of women. As McRae states, from 1979 to 1997, the number of unemployed women fell by one million to 4.6 million. One-fifth more women found a full-time job in 1997, and one-quarter more women started having a part-time job than in 1984. When it comes to female characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary*, it is considered a standard to have a full-time job and not be financially dependent on men. When speaking about Bridget,

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<sup>111</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 185.

<sup>112</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 236.

<sup>113</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 27.

<sup>114</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 38.

she focuses on her career as she has plenty of time and no boyfriend. Consequently, she must be hardworking to make a living and become self-reliant. Bridget works in publishing company under a boss, Daniel Cleaver. Una mentions it when introducing her to Mark. "Mark, this is Colin and Pam's daughter, Bridget," said Una, going all pink and fluttery. "Bridget works in publishing, don't you, Bridget?"<sup>115</sup> Another character, Sharon, is the biggest feminist in this book. She is single and does not regard men as men. She is an owner of a company, works hard, and is confident enough to run the company. Also, Jude who is Bridget's close friend has a full-time job. "Jude is Head of Futures at Brightlings."<sup>116</sup> There are not any unemployed Bridget's friends. The only character who lacks a well-paid job is Bridget's mother who is going through a midlife crisis. She decides to start her career for the first time in her life. She believes that it is never too late. Mrs. Jones starts working as a presenter on BBC 1. "And introducing spanking new presenter Pam Jones" said Anne. "Suddenly Single" herself and making her 'TV debut."<sup>117</sup> Mentioned characters – Bridget, Sharon, and Mrs. Jones represent the independence of women in the nineties.

Also, McRae mentions that in 1997 many women never had a child, or they delayed childbearing until they achieved their goals and built their careers. Forty per cent of born babies belonged to mothers who were over 30. Bridget and some of her friends belong to this group, especially Sharon and Bridget. Una, a family friend, is honest with Bridget and warns her of not being as young as she used to be. "Bridget! What are we going to do with you!" said Una. "You career girls! I don't know! Can't put it off for ever, you know. Tick-tock-tick-tock."<sup>118</sup> Bridget is criticized for not having a partner and children quite often by many people. On the other hand, she focuses on her career and earns money, and nobody appreciates this. As she goes through tough times with Daniel Cleaver, her boss, she decides to change her job. At the end of August, she applies for a job, goes to an interview, and gets the job. "Considerably less annoyingly, there was a letter from Richard Finch, the editor of *Good Afternoon!* offering me a job, I think. This is all it said: OK, my darling. You're on."<sup>119</sup> Although she does trust herself when speaking about her appearance, she is quite confident when speaking about changing her job. As she does not have a family, she takes risks and accepts new challenges. She also spends lots of money on new things for herself which sometimes leads to consumerism.

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<sup>115</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 13.

<sup>116</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 19.

<sup>117</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 90.

<sup>118</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 11.

<sup>119</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 203.

Consumerism, of course, has already started in the previous decades, however, many families do not have to deal with a lack of money in the nineties which leads to buying many goods. Not only do they buy essential items but also other goods like clothes or electronics. As stated by Black, by 1992 shopping centers comprised 16 per cent of the total shopping space in Britain. Also, Helen Fielding portrays this topic in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. It is a victory of Europe day and Bridget does not know much information about this day as she does not have grandparents whom she could ask. At the same time, she is single, and there is nobody who is going to celebrate this day. Therefore, she decides to go shopping instead.

I have come home with four things, all them unsuitable and unflattering. One will be left behind the bedroom chair in an M&S bag for two years. The other three will be exchanged for credit notes from Boules, Warehouse, etc., which I will then lose. I have thus wasted £119, which would have been enough to buy something really nice from Nicole Farhi, like a very small T-shirt.<sup>120</sup>

Bridget is spendthrift, moreover, she finds a solution to overcome her issues and lack of confidence with buying new stuff. No matter if the clothes fit, she fulfills her inner needs, and it makes her happy for a short while.

Magda is also obsessed with wasting money and spending it on unnecessary products. “I got the most wonderful Joseph shift dress in there today — red, two buttons at one side at the neck, very nicely cut, £280.”<sup>121</sup> Bridget mentions other information about Magda, for instance, that she goes shopping every day and has eight different kinds of pasta on her shelf. Both, Bridget and Magda, do not suffer from lack of money. When they come across some difficulties, they heal their broken souls by buying things.

When speaking about consumerism, it does not only relate to being obsessed with shopping clothes, but also to other topics. For instance, people can spend their money on housing, food, drinks, or travelling. As shown in table 13.1, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century people started travelling much more frequently than in the past. Therefore, in 1995, the expenditure on travelling and communications in the UK was much higher than in 1935. In 1935, it was \$7.058 billion while in 1995 the amount of money spent on travelling was \$25.296 billion. Although Bridget Jones and other characters have lived in London and around London since they were born, some of them go on holidays abroad. For example, Bridget's mother goes on a trip with her friends. “Mother is bright orange and more opinionated than ever having just returned from a week in Albufeira with Una Alconbury and

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<sup>120</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 122–123.

<sup>121</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 133.

Nigel Coles' wife, Audrey.”<sup>122</sup> She travelled abroad just once only with her friends, therefore, it cannot be claimed that she spends a lot of money on travelling. Bridget also has a chance to travel to Prague with Daniel Cleaver who invites her. Unfortunately, he cancels their trip before they start to plan their holidays. “Daniel walked right up to me by the coffee machine and said, 'Will you come to Prague next weekend?’”<sup>123</sup> Both women and men work full-time, therefore, they can afford travelling. Moreover, all characters come from either a middle class or an upper class.

People not only spend their money on buying unnecessary things but also on things that have a harmful impact on health. Bridget has been addicted to smoking cigarettes for a long time. Buying goods and smoking help her overcome issues she is dealing with. As stated by Berridge, from the feminist point of view, women took up smoking as they were less confident than men and wanted to overcome this issue, or they were constantly under stress. Bridget Jones has tried to get rid of this bad habit several times. Unfortunately, she was able to stop smoking for a few days, but then started again. As Berridge mentioned, women tend to smoke when they are stressed, and this is the case of Bridget. It is her birthday, and she is preparing dinner for her friends. She feels responsible as she has invited many people, and she must prepare everything on her own. “All of which leaves a clear half-hour to get ready so no need to panic. Must have a fag.”<sup>124</sup> Bridget is quite often disorganized, therefore stressful situations become a part of almost every day. She deals with what to wear to work as she cannot find suitable clothes. At the same time, her hair is washed and needed to be dried and she does not know what to do first. “V. late now. In despair, have fag and read holiday brochure for calming five minutes.”<sup>125</sup> Bridget wants to change her lifestyle. Therefore, the first out of many other New Years’ resolutions mentioned on the list is to give up smoking. “I will not smoke. I will stop smoking.”<sup>126</sup> Also, a reader can keep a track of the number of cigarettes that Bridget smokes every day. The statistics are provided at the beginning of every day in her diary. For instance: “On Tuesday, 3 October, 8st 12, alcohol units 3 (v.g.), cigarettes 21 (bad), number of times said word 'bastard' in last twenty-four hours 369

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<sup>122</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 37–38.

<sup>123</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 75.

<sup>124</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 83.

<sup>125</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 93.

<sup>126</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 3.

(approx.).”<sup>127</sup> Although Bridget seems to be chaotic in many situations, she provides us with statistics almost under every date in her diary.

Another favourite activity of Bridget’s is drinking, mainly wine and other alcoholic drinks. She goes to parties with her friends, participates in family parties, or simply drinks wine alone. Bridget is aware of her issue with drinking too much alcohol, therefore one of her New Years’ resolutions is to stop drinking. “I will not drink more than fourteen alcohol units a week.”<sup>128</sup> As Smith and Foxcroft states, a week’s consumption of alcohol slightly increased especially when speaking about women. In 1998, the average consumption was 6.4 units per week which rose to 9.9 units in 2007. Bridget has lots of friends with whom she goes to pubs or parties every week. Bridget Jones’ average consumption per week is 73.7 units of alcohol, which is an immense amount of alcohol. The total amount of alcohol is mentioned in a summary from January to December. They are 3836 units of alcohol.<sup>129</sup> She does not drink only wine but also cocktails and other alcoholic drinks. “Met Jude in the George at three. We were going to go to a Question and Answer session but we had a few Bloody Marys and remembered that Question and Answer sessions have a bad effect on us.”<sup>130</sup> In some cases, Bridget behaves like a teenager and gets drunk almost every time she goes to parties.

Bridget is aware of her compulsive drinking, and she would like to change it. Once, she decides not to drink all night and enjoy the party without alcohol. However, her friends are not used to seeing Bridget sober and calm.

There's nothing worse than people telling you you look tired. They might as well have done with it and say you look like five kinds of shit. I felt so pleased with myself for not drinking but as the evening wore on, and everyone got drunker, I began to feel so calm and smug that I was even irritating myself.<sup>131</sup>

She is disappointed as her friends do not see how much effort she had to make to look great, avoid alcohol and lose weight. She hesitates whether there is still a value the importance of losing weight or denying alcohol.

Drinking too much alcohol, smoking, and eating unhealthy food might lead to putting on weight. Statistics show that since 1993, the percentage of adult inhabitants of England, who are either obese or overweight, has risen from 52.9 per cent to 64.3 per cent. With

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<sup>127</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 328.

<sup>128</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 2.

<sup>129</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 310.

<sup>130</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 202.

<sup>131</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 106.

regards to obesity, it has risen from 14.9 per cent to 28 per cent. Although Bridget is not obese, she worries about her weight very often. She is constantly on diets. Again, one of her New Years' resolutions is to lose weight. "I will reduce the circumference of thighs by 3 inches (i.e. 1½ inches each), using anti-cellulite diet."<sup>132</sup> The book provides lots of information about Bridget's weight, however, the reader does not find out how tall she is. She weighs 9st 3lb at the beginning of the book.<sup>133</sup> Once, she finally achieves an ideal weight. "After eighteen years of trying to get down to 8st 7 I have finally achieved it. It is no trick of the scales but confirmed by jeans. I am thin."<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, it does not last forever and after a few days, she is on a diet again.

Bridget is funny and makes jokes all the time and so do other characters like Daniel Cleaver.

I realize it has become too easy to find a diet to fit in with whatever you happen to feel like eating and that diets are not there to be pick and mixed but picked and stuck to, which is exactly what I shall begin to do once I've eaten this chocolate croissant.<sup>135</sup>

Based on this example, Bridget is not so strict about being on a diet all the time. She likes speaking about it however, she usually eats and drinks what she wants.

'OK, this is it. It's very simple. All you do is not eat any food which you have to pay for. So at the start of the diet you're a bit porky and no one asks you out to dinner. Then you lose weight and get a bit leggy and shag-me hippy and people start taking you out for meals. So then you put a few pounds on, the invitations tail off and you start losing weight again.'<sup>136</sup>

In this situation, Daniel Cleaver makes fun of Bridget and gives her advice to lose weight and at the same time to save money.

Modern communication among people became a part of everyday life as the Internet and phones started to be available even for average people. Making a phone call and sending e-mails are ordinary activities of many characters in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. As Bridget Jones works in publishing, she uses a laptop every day, both for work and for personal messages and e-mails.

Message Jones

You appear to have forgotten your skirt. As I think is made perfectly clear in your contract of employment, staff is expected to be fully dressed at all times.

Cleave

Message Cleave

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<sup>132</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 3.

<sup>133</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 7.

<sup>134</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 105.

<sup>135</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 75.

<sup>136</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 159.

Sir, am appalled by message. Whilst skirt could reasonably be described as a little on the skimpy side (thrift being ever our watchword in editorial), consider it gross misrepresentation to describe said skirt as absent, and considering contacting union.

Jones<sup>137</sup>

Daniel flirts with Bridget at work, especially through messages. Although Bridget stands in a lower position when compared to Daniel, she does not have such respect for him.

An answerphone is used very frequently as well, especially when Bridget wants to leave some messages to her friends or Daniel Cleaver. In this situation, Bridget suspects Daniel of having an affair with a different woman. She decides to leave a message on the answerphone.

“I made it through the day, got home, and in a moment of insanity left a message on Daniel's answerphone, saying (oh no, I can't believe I did this), 'Hi, it's Jones here. I was just wondering how you are and if you wanted to meet for the skirt-health summit, like you said.’”<sup>138</sup> A reader knows Bridget's thoughts, however, Daniel has no clue and gets a neutral message. Even though Bridget speaks straightforwardly in many situations, regarding her communication skills with men, she is not so honest as she does not trust herself.

*Bridget Jones' Diary* portrays the modern lifestyle of young people living in Britain, especially in London. Chick lit focuses on casual everyday situations in which people have to deal with some obstacles. The book is full of topics that are present in the nineties. Moreover, it is not written in a complicated style, and thus, people from all social classes can read it.

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<sup>137</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 23.

<sup>138</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 28.

## 6. IDENTITY OF CRISIS AND OTHER IDENTITIES IN *BRIDGET JONES' DIARY*

The last chapter of the analytical part focuses on application of the theory to *Bridget Jones' Diary*. The analysis is applied especially to Bridget Jones, the main protagonist of this book. Although Bridget will be examined most often, other characters will be investigated as well. The analysis itself is based on Bridget's relationships, experiences, and issues she deals with. Firstly, the identity of crisis which was introduced by Erik H. Erikson is applied, later social and territorial and gender identities are used for the analysis as well.

Based on the theory introduced by Erik H. Erikson, Bridget Jones is going through the fifth stage of crisis. She experiences a tough time in her life, especially, when speaking about her private life. The fifth stage is called *Identity versus Identity confusion*. As stated in the theoretical part, if the fifth stage fails, it leads to confusion and uncertainty about identity. Bridget feels confused and lost in the world due to living alone for a long time. She is incapable of establishing a permanent relationship. She dates her boss, Daniel, with whom she could imagine being in a relationship. However, he does not share the same vision and splits up with her. She feels lost because she is in love with him. Moreover, she does not know what to do. Later, it turns out that their breakup was not so harmful to her. Bridget realizes that she can no longer work with Daniel Cleaver. She leaves her job and finds a new one. This act is a sign of cleaning up her life. If all the misunderstandings and unsuccessful attempts to find love were to be considered, there must be something behind it. The first inception of struggle with men reaches from the first identity of crisis, called *Trust versus Mistrust*. As mentioned in the theoretical part, a mother plays the most significant role during this stage. The mother's task is to build trust in others. Although Bridget was raised by her mother and father, Mrs. Jones underestimates and humiliates her quite often. Therefore, it can be one of the reasons why Bridget lacks confidence and tends to mistrust others.

Auntie Una was just saying the other day: if you'd had something a bit more bright and cheerful on at the turkey curry buffet Mark Darcy might have shown a bit more interest. Nobody wants a girlfriend who wanders round looking like someone from Auschwitz, darling.<sup>139</sup>

Mrs. Jones is very honest, or even tactless in some cases. She is unable to understand Bridget's feelings and she is not aware of the consequences. Bridget becomes less and less confident when she does not see support from her closest family. She does not trust herself,

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<sup>139</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 130–131.

therefore she cannot trust others. She loses hope that someone would fall in love with her. “Oh, why am I so unattractive? Why? Even a man who bears bumblebee socks thinks I am horrible.”<sup>140</sup> Fortunately, Bridget’s friends are always here for her when she needs them. They help her overcome the mistrust and build trust. Also, they always make time for Bridget whenever she calls them. “What? Bridget? I can't hear. Are you in trouble with the police?” ‘No,’ I snuffled. “Me blue line in the pregnancy test.’ ‘Jesus. I'll meet you in Café Rouge in fifteen minutes.’”<sup>141</sup> Sharon meets Bridget immediately when she is in trouble. There is a sign of mistrust. Instead of calling Daniel Cleaver with whom she may be pregnant, Bridget calls Sharon. Tom, a gay friend, is the next Bridget’s relationship coach who gives advice and provides Bridget with tried and tested strategies when it comes to relationships. Bridget tends to call Daniel Cleaver whenever she sees a little affection from his side. Then, she becomes easy prey for him and consequently, the man is no more interested in her. Therefore, she calls Tom to ask him for advice.

Called Tom for second opinion, particularly on whether I should call Daniel over the weekend. ‘Nooooooooo!’ he yelled. He asked me various probing questions: for example, what Daniel's behaviour had been like over the last few days when, having sent the card, he had had no response from me. I reported that he had seemed flirtier than usual. Tom's prescription was wait till next week and remain aloof.<sup>142</sup>

Bridget trusts Tom therefore she tries to follow his instructions and advice. Examples of Bridget’s situations and their solutions confirm that Bridget’s parents built only a little trust in her. However, she trusts her friends, especially women and Tom, but not so much her potential partners.

As for the second identity crisis, it is called *Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt*. As stated in the theoretical part, Erikson points out that this crisis starts in early childhood. If parents enable the child to act freely, the child will become an independent and decisive individual one day. On the other hand, if parents make most of the decisions for their child, it results in a sense of inadequacy and self-doubts. Although readers know Bridget only as an adult person, there are some situations where the reader can find out whether this crisis was successfully accomplished or not.

Come here. What have you got on your face? Haven't you got a tissue?’ ‘Mum,’ I remonstrated as she took a handkerchief out of her pocket and spat on it. ‘You might be charged with a criminal offense,’ I protested as she started to dab at my face.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 16.

<sup>141</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 119.

<sup>142</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 52–53.

<sup>143</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones’ Diary*, 279.

Bridget's mother is convinced that Bridget is, and always will be, her little girl. Mrs. Jones does not consider Bridget an adult person, and still tends to do things instead of her. These little acts lead to inadequacy and self-doubts, and Bridget cannot build her autonomy. In a different situation, the reader can notice that Bridget still doubts herself. The main reason is that she does not have a boyfriend, therefore, she lacks confidence and feels inferior. "Decided to have cappuccino and chocolate croissants on way to work to cheer self up. Do not care about figure. Is no point as no one loves or cares about me."<sup>144</sup> It is Valentine's day and she has not received any Valentine's cards yet. She is desperate and suffers from a lack of love. She solves it by eating chocolate. Moreover, she is convinced that nobody likes her as she did not get any presents. Again, she deals with self-doubts. She cannot cope with being single as she must deal with the constant pressure from society put on her. She wishes to find a partner and have a family as it is one of her life goals. However, the constant pressure from other people does not help her find a partner. "On top of everything else, must go to Smug Married dinner party at Magda and Jeremy's tonight. Such occasions always reduce my ego to the size of snail, which is not to say am not grateful to be asked."<sup>145</sup> She feels uncomfortable around married couples, she feels ashamed. She compares her ego to the size of a snail. In other words, her ego is very small.

Bridget is not the only person to go through the second identity crisis in this book. There is also the person who contributed to Bridget's lack of trust, Bridget's mother. Her whole life, Mrs. Jones has taken care of her husband, Bridget, and Jamie. The main purpose of her life has been to do housework and to live in a perfectly cleaned house. "When she got back she started saying she wanted to be paid for doing the housework, and she'd wasted her life being our slave."<sup>146</sup> Bridget's father complaints to Bridget about Mrs. Jones' behaviour. When Mrs. Jones comes back from her vacation, she realizes that she does not live the life that she wants. Although she is between 60 and 65 years old, she finds the strength and power to change her life and build her autonomy. "You only get one life. I've just made a decision to change things a bit and spend what's left of mine looking after me for a change."<sup>147</sup> She finds a new job and starts building her carrier. "And introducing spanking new presenter Pam Jones' said Anne."<sup>148</sup> Mrs. Jones accepts an offer and starts working on BBC 1. She becomes

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<sup>144</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 50.

<sup>145</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 39.

<sup>146</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 48.

<sup>147</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 54.

<sup>148</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 90.

decisive and independent, which is a signal of the successfully accomplished second stage of an identity crisis.

The third stage is called *Initiative* versus *Guilt*. As stated by Erikson, children go through this stage at preschool age. If this stage is successfully completed, it leads to sense of purpose. If this stage fails, a sense of guilt is developed, and people see their mistakes as personal failures. Bridget underestimates herself all the time. She might have developed a sense of guilt in her childhood. Whenever she fails either at work or in her personal life, she considers it her personal failure.

Oh God, I'm so depressed. I thought I'd found something I was good at for once and now it's all ruined, and on top of everything else it is the horrible ruby wedding party on Saturday and I have nothing to wear. I'm no good at anything. Not men. Not social skills. Not work. Nothing.<sup>149</sup>

Bridget sees everything in a negative way when she makes a mistake. She forgets about her good qualities and skills and rather focuses on the negative ones.

As for the fourth stage, *Industry* versus *Inferiority*, this stage comes in middle childhood. If children are praised for being able to make new things, they will become skilful and confident. They will not have an issue with an obligation. Mark Darcy is one of the other characters who work a full-time job, who does his job properly, and is successful. "He's one of those top-notch barristers. Masses of money."<sup>150</sup> He is educated and experienced, therefore he is aware of his qualities and does not lack confidence. Also, Bridget developed a sense of confidence when speaking about her career. She works for a publishing company together with Daniel Cleaver, her boss. However, when he breaks up with Bridget, she quits the job and starts working in *Good Afternoon!* as a reporter. As no memories from childhood are provided in *Bridget Jones' Diary*, the reader can only assume that Bridget and Mark had been praised by their parents or teachers positively as they found a sense of obligation.

The following fifth stage is called *Identity* versus *Identity confusion*. In this stage, young adult people experience the first intimate relationships and try to find out who they are, in other words, what their identity is. As Burke and Stets claim, each person possesses multiple identities as everyone has multiple roles in a society, such as a student, a worker, a parent, or a spouse. Daniel Cleaver holds the post of multiple roles in his life as he is a worker, a boss of many people, Bridget's lover and Suki's fiancé, and later Suki's husband. As Daniel has multiple roles, it results in going through *Identity confusion*. One of the signs of

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<sup>149</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 224.

<sup>150</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 9.

dealing with *Identity confusion* is when a person goes from one relationship to another. This is the case of Daniel Cleaver as he cannot decide who he loves. "I'm married,' he said. 'But Bridget, I think I love you.'"<sup>151</sup> This confirms his confusion as he thinks that he is in love with Bridget, but he is not sure. Daniel does not only puzzle Bridget but also himself. Also Mrs. Jones, who has been married for a long time to Bridget's father feels confused regarding relationships. She is going through midlife crises. She starts meeting Julio and a tax man who helped her with tax overdue. She starts dating Julian and goes on a vacation with him. She is confused and does not know where she belongs and what the purpose of her life is. However, at the end of this book, she is remorseful and goes back to her husband.

As most of the previous stages were not successfully achieved, when speaking about Bridget, she even deals with the sixth stage – *Intimacy* versus *Isolation*. She loves Daniel Cleaver with whom she is dating. After spending a night together, she wonders if they are still just friends or not. "I am so depressed. Daniel, though perfectly chatty, friendly, even flirty all week, has given me no hint as to what is going on between us, as though it is perfectly normal to sleep with one of your colleagues and just leave it at that."<sup>152</sup> Bridget and Daniel are not able to communicate honestly with each other. She is afraid of asking him, and he does not care about their relationship. Therefore, they behave as nothing has ever happened between them. This situation lasts for several weeks, hence she decides to ignore Daniel and does not care about him. At first, she can deal with it, but later she is depressed. "Oh God, I'm so lonely. An entire weekend stretching ahead with no one to love or have fun with. Anyway, I don't care. I've got a lovely steamed ginger pudding from M&S to put in the microwave."<sup>153</sup> Although she is deluding herself into thinking that she does not care about spending a weekend alone, it is not true. In most cases, she solves her crises by eating chocolate or drinking alcohol which does not have a long-term effect.

Bridget's father experiences the sixth stage, *Intimacy* versus *Isolation*, and the eighth stage *Integrity* versus *Despair*. His isolation begins when his wife decides to start living a new life. She is not aware of the consequences this decision has on her husband. Despite Mrs. Jones' terrible behaviour, Mr. Jones still loves her and does not want to leave her. Therefore, he feels sorry for what has happened between them, and starts to suffer from loneliness.

'When someone loves you it's like having a blanket all round your heart,' he said, 'and then when it's taken away . . . ' and he burst into tears. He was speaking from the granny flat at the

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<sup>151</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 111.

<sup>152</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 67.

<sup>153</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 246.

bottom of the Alconburys' garden, where he's staying, as he says hopefully, 'Just till things are sorted out.'<sup>154</sup>

Mrs. Jones does not merely damage their marriage, she also forces Mr. Jones to move to a granny's flat as she needs freedom and a place just for herself. He has been submissive his whole life. It relates to the eighth stage as Bridget's father goes through *Integrity*. As stated by Erikson, this stage comes with old age. The term *integrity* means a stage when the person has adapted himself to positive but also to negative experience that he or she has had so far. *Integrity* is the acceptance of every significant person in life. This is the case of Mr. Jones as he does not argue with his wife and does not fight for improving the situation of their marriage. He only waits until everything is sorted out.

Erikson's theories of psychosocial psychology have been applied. However, there are not only personal identities mentioned, but also other identities introduced by Smith. He mentions several identities, for instance familial, territorial, class, religious, ethnic, and gender. However, not all identities can be discovered in the book that belongs to Chick lit and popular literature.

One of the identities present in *Bridget Jones' Diary* is the class identity. As stated by Smith, "class" is defined as a social relationship. There have always been at least two or more social classes in a society. Bridget Jones, her family, and her friends belong to the upper class or middle class. There is nobody who would grow up in poor conditions or who would come from the working class. The Darcy's are typical representatives of upper-class people as Mark Darcy works as a lawyer and earns lots of money. Moreover, he studied at Cambridge which is known as a prestigious university in Britain.

Had shock on arrival at the party as Mark Darcy's house was not a thin white terraced house on Portland Road or similar as had anticipated, but huge, detached wedding cake-style mansion on the other side of Holland Park Avenue (where Harold Pinter, they say, lives) surrounded by greenery.<sup>155</sup>

Mark Darcy is divorced and lives in a luxurious mansion. He and his parents are aware of their status, therefore, in some cases, their behaviour seems a slightly formal. For instance, Bridget receives an unusual invitation to take part in Malcolm and Elaine's ruby wedding.

It is one of those mad invitations written in the third person, as if everyone is so posh that to acknowledge directly in person that they were having a party and wondered if you would like to come would be like calling the ladies' powder room the toilet.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 72.

<sup>155</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 227.

<sup>156</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 219.

Although Bridget has spoken to Mark's parents only a few times in her life, she is invited to accompany Mark. She does not want to accept the invitation, but her mother tries to convince her through Mark. "Oh. but he's very clever. Been to Cambridge. Apparently he made a fortune in America . . ." <sup>157</sup> Abundance of money, possessions, and education are the most important values for Mrs. Jones. Bridget does not share the same view as she has a different approach to values. "Our culture is too obsessed with outward appearance, age, and status. Love is what matters." <sup>158</sup> Although Bridget seems to act rather silly in some situations, she is not as simple as one might think. She is not obsessed with money as her mother is. Mrs. Jones wants Bridget to find a rich man so that she could live a happy life without struggles. It is natural as every mother wants the best for her child.

As for the territorial identity, Storry and Childs mention that London is a center of business activities, there is a "square mile" of banks and offices and in 1996, over 7.2 million lived in London. So do characters from this book. "Drove at breakneck speed feeling like I was dying, across grey, rain-sodden London to Magda's." <sup>159</sup> Bridget describes a typical image of London. She loves the place as she grew up there. She has a family in this city, and she goes to parties with her friends very often.

Concerning the last gender identity, the portrayal of stereotypical gender roles appears often in the book as well. As stated by Blackstone in the theoretical part, women should be more nursing than men while men are associated with positions of leaders. In *Bridget Jones' Diary*, Daniel Cleaver and Mark Darcy are examples of these kinds of men. Both hold high positions at work. Daniel works for a publishing company where he is the boss while Mark works as a lawyer.

*Bridget Jones' Diary* portrays the ordinary life of ordinary people living in the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the fact that Chick lit, and popular literature are underestimated very often as they are a literary genre for the masses, they even contain serious topics. Although *Bridget Jones' Diary* was written in a light-hearted and funny style, the book is full of hidden thoughts. Considering the personal and social identities, this book foregrounds the natural process of finding one's identity. Going through identity crises is inevitable for everyone, and even though a person does not complete all identity crises successfully, there are still options to solve the personal issues.

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<sup>157</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 211.

<sup>158</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 82.

<sup>159</sup> Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*, 69.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated the presence of various levels of identity in *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Although Helen Fielding wrote this book in a simple language full of informal words and slang expressions to make it accessible to people of all social classes, the portrayal of various levels of identity was proved in this thesis. Not only was identity crisis analysed in the analytical part, but two more chapters focused on the typical features of popular literature and Chick lit and the main current topics, for instance, politics, social and technological changes, and other developments that took place in Britain at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the late nineties.

As has been already mentioned, *Bridget Jones' Diary* was written in a simple way for the masses and belongs to a genre – Chick lit. The analyses of the first chapter have shown that this book corresponds with the definitions and features of this genre provided by literary theorists. Also, language has been studied in detail and the results are interesting as Helen Fielding did not only write this book in an informal way, but many similes, metaphors, and slang words occurred throughout the whole book. The language used in this book follows a classical style of Chick lit which is enriched with funny jokes.

The second chapter has proved that Helen Fielding portrayed the development and extensive social changes in her book that were present in the nineties. She was inspired by this period as she grew up in a modern world. The statistical data presented in the theoretical part was compared to the characters in the book. Data on marriage, divorces, birth rates, as well as smoking and drinking alcohol, has revealed that the lifestyle of individuals in the 1990s correlates to the characters in the book.

The last chapter has analysed a complex theory of identity crisis introduced by psychologist Erik H. Erikson. He developed a theory comprising eight stages of an identity crisis. The first four stages come during childhood while the remaining four stages appear in adulthood. As for Bridget, the main protagonist, who is in her thirties, all identity crises cannot be applied to her and other adult characters. However, on the grounds of Bridget's and others' acts, some of the identity crises were possible to use for the analyses as well. The behaviour helps to identify whether the stage has been successfully accomplished or not. Although *Bridget Jones' Diary* has been criticized for its simplicity and lack of deeper thoughts, this analysis can oppose all critics of the Chick lit genre. The reasons why Bridget is depressed or why she lacks confidence were clarified in accordance with Erikson's theory of identity crisis. Even though this book is written in a straightforward manner, this thesis

demonstrated that Helen Fielding was able to express serious issues through the characters' acts simply and humorously. And if the reader is familiar with Erikson's theory, he or she may easily apply it to the characters who will no longer be perceived as simple and shallow in the eyes of the reader.

## RESUMÉ

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá zobrazením krize identity a dalších identit v díle napsaném současnou spisovatelkou. Práce je rozdělena na teoretickou a analytickou část. Teoretická část obsahuje tři kapitoly a analytická část se rovněž skládá ze tří kapitol. Každá z kapitol teoretické části směřuje k analýze díla *Deník Bridget Jonesové* (1996) od Helen Fielding. Tato autorka žijící v moderní době na konci devadesátých let v Británii čerpá ze svých postřehů a zkušeností ohledně životního stylu lidí všech věkových kategorií, které v tomto díle zobrazuje.

První kapitola se zabývá podrobným historickým kontextem a vývojem populární literatury, který sahá do 19. století a je spojen s Charlesem Dickensem. Už během Viktoriánské éry se začaly objevovat první žánry populární literatury jako například detektivky, sci-fi nebo fikce s nadpřirozenými prvky. Počátkem 20. století se do popředí oblíbenosti dostává román, který se postupně vyvinul v nový subžánr, a to chick-lit. Tato nová literatura si získala své čtenářky, a tak se na konci 20. století stala velmi populární. Chick-lit byla atraktivní nejenom pro své čtenářky, ale také pro mnoho literárních teoretiků, kteří začali zkoumat tento žánr. Proto se v této kapitole objevuje několik definic samotného žánru, ale také charakteristika protagonistky, hlavní dějové linie a typický jazyk. Autorky chick-lit používají neformální jazyk plný metafor, přirovnání a dalších prvků, a to je jeden z důvodů, proč tento žánr byl donedávna kritizován za svoji jednoduchost a také za povrchnost děje, který neobsahuje hlubší myšlenky. Mezi nejznámější kritiky populární literatury patří Matthew Arnold, F. R. Leavis a Dwight MacDonald. Tito literární kritici sdílí názor, že hlavním smyslem populární kultury je se zabavit a uniknout ze světa plného strastí.

Druhá kapitola popisuje rozsáhlé změny devadesátých let 20. století. Pro mnoho lidí tato dekáda představovala změnu a obrat k lepšímu životu. Tato změna mohla představovat ať už technologický vývoj, politické změny, nebo nový životní styl. V Británii nastává doba, která vzbuzuje v lidech naději v lepší časy. Británie zažívá velkou změnu co se týče politiky, kdy Margaret Thatcher odchází a je nahrazena mladým a úspěšným Tony Blair, který se stal předsedou nové politické strany – New Labour. Nejenom že nastaly převratné změny v politice, ale i v sociální oblasti. Ze statistik, které se týkají počtu svateb, rozvodů i porodnosti vyplývá, že mladí lidé žijící v devadesátých letech 20. století mají jiné představy o životě, než měla předchozí generace. Celkově se životní styl mění, což s sebou přirozeně přináší nové příležitosti. Lidé upřednostňují cestování a svobodu před závazky a dalšími povinnostmi. Postavení a práva žen se neustále vyvíjejí, a tak mnoho žen pracuje nejen na

plný úvazek, ale i některé z nich budují kariéru po vzoru mužů. Vzhledem ke zvýšení finanční úrovně v rodinách stoupá spotřeba zboží a služeb, jinými slovy, společnost se stává konzumní. Tyto trendy zobrazila Helen Fielding ve své knize *Deník Bridget Jonesové*.

Třetí kapitola představuje teorii identit, a to hlavně osobní identitu Erika H. Eriksona společně s dalšími sociálními identitami definované A. D. Smithem a dalšími autory. Teorie od Eriksona je založena na osmi fázích vývoje člověka. Každý jedinec prochází postupně od prvního roku až po stáří jednotlivými krizemi identity, které jsou typické pro proces a vývoj daného jedince. Tyto fáze jsou pojmenovány a jdou po sobě v tomto pořadí: 1. Důvěra vs. Nedůvěra, 2. Autonomie vs. Stud, 3. Iniciativa vs. Vina, 4. Výkonnost vs. Méněcennost, 5. Identita vs. Zmatení identity, 6. Intimita vs. Izolace, 7. Generativita (budování další generace) vs. Stagnace, 8. Integrita vs. Zoufalství. Na základě těchto životních fází se dá usuzovat, zda jedinec byl ovlivněn každou fází, kterou si prošel ve svém životě úspěšně nebo naopak. Tím pádem ponese člověk jak pozitivní, tak negativní následky po celý život. Kromě osobní identity byly představeny další identity A. D. Smithem a to: rodinná, teritoriální, třídní, náboženská, etnická, a genderová identita. Jednotlivé identity, které bylo možné identifikovat v knize *Deník Bridget Jonesové*, byly definovány s větší podrobností.

Následující tři kapitoly se týkají analytické části. Každá z nich odkazuje na kapitolu spojenou s kapitolou z teoretické části. První z nich, tedy, čtvrtá z celkového pořadí, analyzuje a dokazuje na základě konkrétních příkladů, že *Deník Bridget Jonesové* spadá pod žánr chick-lit. Přestože se tato kniha považuje za jedno z prvních děl tohoto žánru, je nezbytné nahlédnout do minulosti, kdy ještě chick-lit nebyla definovaná jako samostatný žánr. Zjišťujeme, že se Helen Fielding částečně inspirovala knihou pojmenovanou *Pýcha a předsudek*, která byla napsána v 18. století Jane Austenovou. Další velká část této kapitoly se věnuje jazyku a zkoumá, zda se objevuje typický styl psaní pro chick-lit i v této knize. Výsledkem je potvrzení výskytu typického jazyka. Dalo by se tak shrnout, že v *Deníku Bridget Jonesové* byl použitý neformální jazyk plný metafor, přirovnání, slangových výrazů a humoru.

Druhá kapitola analytické části zkoumá, jak Helen Fielding reflektuje sociální změny a vývoj společnosti v 90. letech 20. století. *Deník Bridget Jonesové* se odehrává v kosmopolitním prostředí v Londýně, hlavním městě Anglie. Většinou všechny trendy přichází do velkých měst jako první a ani tato kniha není výjimkou. Protože se chick-lit řadí mezi knihy psané pro lidi ze všech sociálních vrstev, autorka zde nezahrnula politické změny. Pokud se jedná o sociální změny v životě postav, hrdinové této knihy se chovají stejně jako lidé žijící v reálném světě. Například Bridget, které je 32 let, se soustředí na svoji kariéru,

protože stále nemá děti. Navíc je svobodná, nezadaná a tráví čas s kamarády popíjením alkoholu na různých oslavách a v barech. Zkrátka užívá si volnost a svobodu. Statistiky, uvedené v teoretické části týkající se svateb, rozvodů, konzumerismu a také průměrné spotřeby alkoholu nebo vykouřených cigaret, se aplikují na jednotlivé postavy z knihy. Například Mark Darcy je rozvedený mladý muž, který pochází z bohaté vrstvy společnosti. Většina kamarádek od Bridget jsou sice zadané, ale nejsou vdané, protože v tom vidí až příliš velký závazek. Bridget nezobrazuje pouze moderní způsob žití žen, ale se svojí nadměrnou konzumací alkoholu a cigaret dokazuje, že přesahuje statistický průměr ve Velké Británii. Výsledkem této analýzy je potvrzení přítomnosti současných změn 90. let.

Poslední kapitola této práce se věnuje analýze knihy *Deník Bridget Jonesové*, v níž Bridget překonává různé problémy a potíže, které jí vstupují do života. Analýza Bridget a dalších postav je provedena na základě jejich zkušeností, vztahů a problémů, se kterými se postavy vypořádávají. Příběh postupně odhaluje, že problémy ve vztazích Bridget nepramení pouze ze špatného výběru partnera nebo chování samotné Bridget. Analýza této knihy odhaluje, že důvodem jsou předešlé události, které přispěly k nevyrovnanosti a nedůvěře vůči partnerům. Podle Eriksonovy teorie krize identity Bridget prochází pátou fází vývoje identity, která se týká Zmatení identity. Bridget nežije v permanentním vztahu, pouze se nezávazně schází se svým šéfem Danielem Cleaverem, se kterým se jí nepodaří vytvořit trvalý vztah. Zároveň tedy prochází i šestou krizí identity a trpí pocitem Izolace a osamění. Jedním z důvodů, v čem tkví tento problém, je neúspěšně dokončená první fáze krize identity. Protože matka Bridget stále rozhoduje a dělá některé věci místo Bridget, ani druhá fáze Autonomie nemohla být úspěšná. Matka Bridget také prochází jak pátou, tak i druhou krizí identity jako Bridget. Není spokojená se svým životem, který podle ní promarnila staráním se o děti, manžela a nestihla si vybudovat kariéru. Proto se rozhodne to změnit a „na stará kolena“ se začne scházet s Juliem a zároveň buduje kariéru. Toto chování vede ke krizi otce Bridget, který se začne cítit bezmocný a osamělý. Tudíž i on prochází šestou fází Izolace a osmou fází Integrity, kdy je se vším smířen na konci svého života. Kdykoliv se Bridget něco nepovede, nese vinu a je v depresi, tudíž prochází i třetí fází. Na rozdíl od předešlých fází, čtvrtou fází Bridget prošla úspěšně, tudíž nemá problém s pracovními povinnostmi. Kromě krize identity byly aplikované i identity třídy, teritoria a genderu. Bridget i další postavy patří do vyšší vrstvy společnosti, tudíž nevidíme veliké rozdíly mezi postavami. Rodina Darcyových dává nejvíce najevo, že jsou jedni ze zbohatlíků. Také teritoriální identita je aplikovaná, protože děj celé knihy se převážně odehrává v Londýně. Poslední identitou této kapitoly je genderová identita, která dokazuje, že postavy v této knize plní klasické genderové

role ve společnosti. Ženy mají tendenci se více starat o ostatní než muži, zatímco muži by měli být hlavou rodiny a mít vysoké postavení a dobře placenou práci. Co se týče práce Daniel Cleaver i Mark Darcy splňují genderové stereotypy.

Tato diplomová práce ukazuje, že i na tak podceňované knize jako je *Deník Bridget Jonesové* se dá aplikovat teorie identity od Erika H. Eriksona. I přesto, že má čtenář pouze možnost vidět hlavní postavy jen jako dospělé, v každé postavě je skrytý důvod určitého chování, který pramení z prožití předešlé části života. Pokud má čtenář znalosti teorie identity, je schopen pouze na základě vzorců chování postav rozluštit, zda byly jednotlivé fáze vývoje úspěšné či nikoli.

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# APPENDIX

Table 13.1 Selected items of consumer expenditure in the UK, 1935–1995 (at 1997 prices) (£billion)

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Household food</i> | <i>Alcohol</i> | <i>Tobacco</i> | <i>Housing</i> | <i>Fuel and light</i> | <i>Clothing</i> | <i>Travel and communications</i> | <i>Vehicle running costs</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| 1935        | 40.210                | 10.415         | 5.837          | 15.870         | 6.257                 | 14.802          | 7.058                            | 2.785                        | 150.120      |
| 1940        | 37.121                | 11.280         | 7.758          | 15.756         | 6.624                 | 14.950          | 5.491                            | 1.373                        | 143.202      |
| 1945        | 33.049                | 16.666         | 13.286         | 14.562         | 6.123                 | 12.647          | 7.636                            | 0.969                        | 151.083      |
| 1950        | 44.741                | 13.851         | 14.454         | 15.870         | 6.718                 | 20.059          | 7.982                            | 2.095                        | 178.529      |
| 1955        | 52.092                | 11.989         | 12.681         | 16.168         | 7.608                 | 18.690          | 7.911                            | 3.516                        | 188.915      |
| 1960        | 53.826                | 12.068         | 14.421         | 20.999         | 9.500                 | 20.835          | 8.994                            | 5.705                        | 214.924      |
| 1965        | 54.266                | 15.041         | 15.180         | 27.064         | 11.555                | 21.887          | 9.992                            | 9.865                        | 244.022      |
| 1970        | 54.137                | 19.550         | 14.620         | 34.408         | 12.708                | 23.401          | 11.416                           | 14.748                       | 272.969      |
| 1975        | 55.128                | 22.344         | 12.606         | 40.260         | 13.306                | 23.994          | 13.799                           | 18.819                       | 302.304      |
| 1980        | 55.731                | 23.454         | 11.358         | 44.599         | 14.972                | 23.261          | 17.310                           | 22.717                       | 326.457      |
| 1985        | 51.044                | 26.059         | 11.665         | 54.277         | 17.582                | 24.828          | 19.088                           | 27.709                       | 362.113      |
| 1990        | 52.229                | 26.677         | 10.803         | 60.345         | 15.300                | 26.074          | 22.568                           | 31.407                       | 434.061      |
| 1995        | 51.634                | 27.857         | 12.319         | 76.727         | 15.979                | 27.272          | 25.296                           | 34.930                       | 472.740      |

Source: A. H. Halsey and Josephine Webb, eds, *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 342–3.

Figure 1 Selected items of consumer expenditure in UK, 1935-1995