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THE PORTRAYAL OF SOCIAL AND INTERNAL CONFLICT IN
JANE AUSTEN'S *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*
BA thesis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the study of the social and internal conflicts of characters in Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility*. The aim of this thesis is to find out what kind of social and internal conflicts come up in the novel and what is the reason behind their existence. This analysis focuses on the two main characters of the story, sisters Elinor Dashwood and Marianne Dashwood. It is further extended by the study of side characters including John Willoughby, Colonel Brandon, Edward Ferrars, Mrs. Jennings, Lucy Steele as well as Mrs. Ferrars.

This thesis consists of four parts: the introduction, two chapters and the conclusion. The introduction tackles the importance and specificity of Jane Austen's work. The first chapter of the thesis is the theoretical part which consists of four subsections. The first subsection gives an overview of Jane Austen's work and her time. The second subsection gives an explanation of what the words 'sense' and 'sensitivity' meant during the 18th century and the third subsection brings out the use of irony as a narrative device in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. The last subsection of the first chapter consists of the discussion of social and internal conflict in literature. The second chapter is empirical with two subsections. The first subsection is the content introduction of *Sense and Sensibility*. The final subsection focuses on the analysis of social and internal conflict in *Sense and Sensibility* and exposes what kind of ironies arise during the novel. It is a study of the different personalities of the characters, their circumstances and behaviours which reveal the characters' social and internal conflicts. The thesis ends with a summarization of the main findings of the thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

Jane Austen's (1775-1817) works of romantic fiction were not very popular during the time they were first published. There were many authors more successful than her. Despite that, Austen has gained a very respectable position in the world of literature over the past two centuries (Mandal 2007: 3). Nowadays, Austen, whose stories are set among the landed gentry, is one of the most widely known and read authors in English literature. (General Press 2016: 11)

Jane Austen was more than just a 19th century British author. Her fiction explores complex relationships between humans. These relationships are as true and revealing nowadays as they were two hundred years ago. (Kirk 2016: 121) The larger questions, for example what values the novel supports and what kind of arguments about human interactions and society it blocks and which it furthers are provided with answers from the contents in her works. Her books showcase discussions about ethics and human behavior. (Davidson 2017: 12)

The author tries to combine comic actions with realistic characterization and serious moral concerns (Paris 2013: 14). Her works, including her novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), discuss different kinds of tensions between her heroines as well as societal problems of that time including the significance of social status and the position of women during the 18th and 19th centuries. These stories critique the novels of sensibility of the second half of the 18th century. They are also a part of the transition to the 19th century realism. In her fundamentally comic plots women, who depended on marriage to secure social standing and economic security, are the focal point. These women explore their journeys to self-discovery through love and marriage. (General Press 2016: 12)

Many obstacles, like the failures of education, distortions of social customs, traits of personality and judgment make the characters' daily lives difficult and reaching happiness is uncertain sensitive people. Due to the 18th century moral norms that exist in the society, no contentment is possible outside of its institutions. The characters' deviation from the institutional values turns out to ultimately be ill-fated. (Paris 2013: 14-15)

The first chapter of this thesis gives an overview of Jane Austen's work and her time and explains what the words 'sense' and 'sensitivity' meant during the 18th century. In addition, the use of irony as a narrative device in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* is brought out. The last section of the first chapter focuses on social and internal conflict in literature. The second chapter of the thesis concentrates on the analysis of the characters' social and internal conflicts in *Sense and Sensibility* including different ironies that emerge from these conflicts. The aim of this thesis is to find out what kind of social and internal conflicts the characters of Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* face, what is the reason behind them and what kind of instances of irony are shown throughout these conflicts.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Jane Austen and her time

Partikian (2003) writes that Austen lived in a very unstable England because there was a war with France and the individualistic philosophy of the revolutionary Jacobins ruled. There were many social and economic changes and the English society was starting to become more different than before. The lifestyles of the landed gentry were becoming less secure. By the first decades of the 19th century, a person's future social or economic status was no longer exclusively determined by birth into a certain class.

Concepts were starting to change. The 19th century romantic and sensitive ideas were slowly starting to become more popular than the 18th century sensible enlightenment ideas. (Partikian 2003) The "sentimental novel" was becoming more popular and it is believed that this was one of the reasons why Austen wrote *Sense and Sensibility*. These novels elevated feelings above reason. This meant that people were now being encouraged to show different emotions including unexpected passions and fainting which were considered improper to convey beforehand. (Mulcahy 2019)

Johnson (1990: 8) brings up the changing view of sentimentality at the end of the 18th century. Before, men were decidedly conservative types. There were country gentlemen who were against the change because they did not like the new social ideas. They demonstrated the gallant ways of "Old England". Sentimental men, however, believed in chivalry and deference to a lady. These men were often able to continue this way of thinking because they were usually the highest members of society.

In addition to the changing view of sentimentality, the beginning of fights for the equality of women was starting. Women did not have many rights and they had to depend

upon men for their welfare. A radical, Mary Wollstonecraft fought for egalitarianism and in her work she demanded for the equal education of women and disapproved of the necessity of women only becoming proper wives and mothers. (Partikian 2003)

According to Melz (2011: 17-18), many critics thought that Austen's works were too conservative when it came to addressing social changes and the difficult position of women. Austen was considered conservative in some ways because her works highlighted the propriety of the heroines. This was an aspect that was popular during her time period. Writer George Parsons Lathrop stated that women were going to become more independent. He also added that literature was beginning to reflect those changes, for example in the form of George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Austen supported sense over sensibility which meant that she disapproved of authors who favoured the Jacobin sentiment as well as feminist reformers like Mary Wollstonecraft. She disagreed with people who wanted change in the state affairs but she also acknowledged that the institutions had flaws. She was aware that there were different kinds of problems which included social and political issues. (Partikian 2003)

Austen and her contemporaries followed the polemical tradition but did not accept all of its terms. They developed different stylistic techniques. With these techniques they were able to use political material in an interrogative way instead of a prescriptive way. This meant that they did not get backlash like writers with prescribed works. (Johnson 1990: 22)

It is evident that Austen had discontentment with the society in which she lived. The Christian doctrine of modesty may have been a strategy to help her cope with the restrictive social system that many other writers shouted against. Instead of shouting and making her opinions clear and strong, Austen whispered by using subtle prose with ironic implications to express her opinions. (Partikian 2003)

A popular format during Austen's time was a didactic novel. Austen used didactic elements and these can be seen in her novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Two opposite viewpoints, the rational sense and romantic sensibility are set against each other. These points of views are represented by sisters Elinor Dashwood and Marianne Dashwood. Austen addresses the biggest political controversies of the ideologies of that time and the equality of women. (Partikian 2003)

Austen can be seen as being against the revolution. Her character Elinor Dashwood, who is the heroine of the novel, is unromantic, rational and socially proper. She hides her true feelings from everyone. Therefore, she directly contradicts the revolutionary ideas that were starting to become more popular in England during her time of writing. (Partikian 2003)

Partikian (2003) has said that the form of the didactic novel, however, was too limited for her because if she had, in fact, favoured it, it would have meant a different ending for her characters. For example, the death of Marianne by a fever like in the book *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, where Werther was overcome by sensibility just like Marianne. This would have been a very typical ending to a book during the Austen era where a character, who persisted with their romantic philosophy would either be unsuccessful or likely to die. However, Austen does not follow this didactic approach and makes her ending different. Marianne lives but must learn to change her strong beliefs. The less pleasant characters like Lucy Steele and John Willoughby have no serious damage done to them. In Austen's novels there are no clear winners or losers and no definite extremes of characters who are good or evil exist. They are not as clearly delineated than they are in the typical didactic novels of her time.

Melz (2011: 18-19) notes that Austen's characters frequently have to face problems with society's standards and their rules. Sometimes she satirizes the way propriety is dealt with, for example, when characters with a good status abuse their positions to get away with

breaking social norms. At other times Austen advocates using these rules in moderation, which can be done only when an individual attempts to achieve personal desires while at the same time being aware that these rules need to be followed due to practical reasons. Society did not seem to be changing in favour of women too quickly. Austen suggests a way a woman can be happy while navigating a world filled with social rules.

According to Paris (2013: 14-15), in the evolution of Western literature, there are a series of stages in the development of the sense of reality. Her novels consist of a series of variations upon the basic comic movement which start from threatening complications and end happily. The action of the comedy is formed from the difficulties and obstacles to the heroine's desire and the comic resolution is the overcoming of these obstacles.

The different kinds of blocking forces in Austen's characters' actions may be primarily internal, primarily external or some combination of both. The characters face external and internal threats. It is clear in her novels that the main barriers to their happiness, however, lie in themselves. They must remain true to themselves as well as undergo an internal change in order to achieve contentment and happiness in their lives. (Paris 2013: 14-15)

1.2 The meaning of 'sense' and 'sensibility' during the 18th century

According to Waldron (2001: 65), the terms 'sense' as well as 'sensibility' were both very slippery concepts throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. The term 'sense' was subjective. It ranged from humane intelligence and rationality to commercial cunningness, it depended on the speaker's preference. A man with sense meant someone an intelligent person could agree with. The term 'sensibility' meant a humane and compassionate attitude. However, the French provenance tended to give it a bad name. It was often associated with improper kinds of excess and affectation.

‘Sensibility’ was the rallying cry of reformists. Conservatives were against the idea of showing it from a positive light because they thought that it promoted dangerous things like moral relativism, unruly sexual energies and fostered radical individualism. The beliefs of reformists were the opposite of encouraging submission to social control which they strongly approved of. (Johnson 1990: 22)

In the works of enlightenment thinkers, the early 18th-century rationalism continued throughout the 18th century. It was the belief that the mind and rationality were humanity’s best asset. The world could be improved through it. People believed improving humankind meant suppressing things like lust. However, with shifts in political and also psychological models, the body started to gain more importance. John Locke, an English philosopher, stated that people can only know the world through their senses which meant that thinking rationally could only occur through experience that was gained through bodies. He said that without a body there could be no mental work nor morality. (Shaffer 1998)

Theories that had a gender-based effect were also forwarded. It was believed that the women’s nervous system was more delicate and that is why it was also thought that women were more responsive to feelings and had a more difficult time concealing them. By the end of the 18th century it was suggested that women could be easily led astray because of their emotional reactions. They were thought to be weak because of being emotionally driven. It was believed that women were especially prone to becoming disabled through sensibility because they were supposedly led by anything that affected the emotions. (Shaffer 1998)

Novels that played with emotions were considered to be dangerous because they could make people want something that they could not get, for example passion and worship from lovers. Emotional sensitivity which came through a nervous system and made a person more sensitive to emotional responses was called sensibility. People with sensibility were thought

to have less strength to survive in the structure of a post-industrial revolutionary Britain. (Shaffer 1998)

Being sensible during the 18th century meant controlling one's emotions rather than indulging them. It was considered important to allow rationality to rule over emotions. It was also seen as being responsible for civilizing manners and making even the lower classes more polite. Sensibility became more popular, but there were shortcomings. Sensibility was not good for survival and it could be faked. For example, people may have pretended to be sensitive but in actuality were only sensitive to themselves which resulted in insulting as well as hurting everyone around them. (Shaffer 1998)

Waldron (2001: 65) states that it was often difficult to know what kind of meaning was being used of its many meanings on any occasion. Austen uses the uncertainty of reference in *Sense and Sensibility*. Different kinds of sense and sensibility are juxtaposed and set against one another in complex relationships, motives and desires. Only the conceited seemed to triumph during difficult circumstances. Austen wanted to achieve a certain kind of moral uncertainty and therefore, she wrote against the grain of novels because she found them deficient. It was likely that Austen thought of writers Maria Edgeworth and Jane West when she decided to put her own version on the concept of sensibility. This meant that she knowingly detached the term from the political anxieties that it had recently been associated with and reverted it to its earlier identification with true civilised behaviour.

Waldron (2001: 65-66) added that Edgeworth and West hinted to the significance of sensibility being chaotic and destructive in the nature of things. West published *A Tale of the Times* (1799), which overtly politicises the lesson. The central male figure is a Jacobin who uses the doctrine of sensibility to deceive gullible women and to further his own desires and political aims. In Edgeworth's moral tale, *Belinda* (1801), the heroine is subjected to the various dangers of contemporary moral and social trends but emerges triumphant, not only

making for herself a marriage which is both rational and romantic, but causing many of those she has encountered on her way to abandon their erratic courses.

Sense and Sensibility has often been criticised for its ending. It fulfills a requirement of the time, the heroine of sensibility gets punished or reformed. Critics have come to the conclusion that Marianne has been reformed meaning that she was brought to her senses because of Willoughby's viciousness as well as because of the influence of her sister's sense. She is forced to marry a dull husband who will keep her on the narrow path. However, her endings always have double resonances. Similarly to many other 'sensible' novel-endings, it is deeply ironic. (Waldron 2001: 81-82)

1.3 The use of irony as a narrative device in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

Irony is one of the narrative devices of Jane Austen and it is used by her as a method to maintain the thematic balance in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Delicate irony is her strong weapon. She directs her irony at characters who deviate from sense. Her irony always includes some sort of moral. (Ishwarya & Rega 2019) According to Bryne (2014), *Sense and Sensibility* is a satire of sensibility, not an endorsement of it. Bryne added that Austen set out to deflate the conventions of the 18th century novel. She was parodying the excesses of the popular sentimental fiction of the day.

One of the ironies that can be seen is depicted with Marianne's case. She longs to be with Willoughby. It is ironical that the situation forces her to get married to Colonel Brandon and live her whole life with him. Marianne had repeatedly rejected Colonel Brandon before. She thought of him as an old man when he was paying loveless courtship to her. In the end Marianne is forced to accept the man whom she had rejected for a long time. (Austen 2018: 335)

Another example of irony occurs when Mrs. Jennings thinks that Colonel Brandon is proposing marriage to Elinor. In actuality he is telling Elinor that he has decided to offer the Delaford living to Edward Ferrars. Mrs. Jennings has overheard only a few words of the conversation but is already making her own conclusions. After Colonel Brandon has left, Mrs. Jennings congratulates Elinor on what Colonel Brandon had been saying to her. Elinor wrongly thinks that Mrs. Jennings has congratulated her on Colonel Brandon's offer of the Delaford living to Edward through her. Thus, there is a double misunderstanding. The irony here arises from the contrast between the reality as known to the reader and the wrong ideas of it which both Mrs. Jennings and Elinor have formed. (Austen 2018: 252-257)

There are many ironies in Austen's novels. She uses subtle irony to make her points clear. Some of the ironies are more visible but many of them might not be noticed at first because they are carefully hidden and can only be found by paying close attention to details. These ironies often arise in the novel *Sense and Sensibility* through the characters' conflicts.

1.4 Social and internal conflict in literature

In literature, conflict is a literary element which involves a struggle between two opposing forces, usually a protagonist and an antagonist. It is used to bring a story to life. There are two main types of conflict in literature: an internal conflict and a social conflict. A social conflict can also be called an external conflict. In an external conflict a character struggles with outside forces that intrude their progress. An internal conflict arises when a character experiences problems within themselves, for example two opposite emotions or desires. Usually it is virtue and vice or good and evil inside them. It causes the character to suffer mental agony. Both internal and external conflicts are essential elements of a storyline. It is essential for a writer to introduce and develop them, whether internal, external, or both,

in their storyline in order to achieve the story's goal. Resolution of the conflict entertains the readers. (Literary Devices 2020)

In a research done by Bronin (2015) she explains the character of Marianne and how in addition to sensibility, she has some sense as well. Through different instances of her sensibility, her conflicts are also brought out, for example how she is misunderstood by many other characters surrounding her and how her sensibility brings her trouble and agony.

Wardani (2018) analyses the characterization of main characters, the plot structure, the psychological conflicts of the novel *Sense and Sensibility* and its implication to character education at senior high school viewed from structuralism theory. As a result, it is found out that there are two psychological conflicts that occur through the main characters of the novel which are the conflict between Elinor and herself and the conflict between Marianne with herself.

A book by Paris (2013) concentrates on the different sources of tension in Austen's fiction. Formal, thematic and psychological analyses are offered for her four greatest novels. The freshness of different interpretations is evident. The study of tensions in Jane Austen's novels and of the conflicts in her personality challenges most of the existing criticism and helps to make sense of the disagreements within it. The book breaks new ground because it is an extended analysis of an authorial personality and a systematic exploration of tensions between the mythic and mimetic poles of literature. It is able to bring together literature as well as psychology.

To conclude, concepts during the 18th century and early 19th century were starting to change (Mulcahy 2019). The terms 'sense' and 'sensibility' were both slippery concepts throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries (Waldron 2001: 65). A didactic format was widely popular during Austen's time and her novel *Sense and Sensibility* contained didactic elements. In the novel there are two viewpoints, the rational sense and romantic sensibility.

In her novel, Austen addresses the biggest political controversies of the ideologies of that time and the equality of women. She gives a thorough insight into the 18th century social norms and problems that occur. (Partikian 2003) Due to the society's rules, her characters often encounter problems (Melz 2011: 18-19). The characters have to face external and also internal threats (Paris 2013: 14-15). Through these conflicts, several ironies come out. Irony is one of the narrative devices of Jane Austen and it involves some sort of moral. She directs her irony at characters who deviate from sense. (Ishwarya & Rega 2019)

CHAPTER 2

2.1 The content introduction of *Sense and Sensibility*

The aim of this chapter's first subsection is to give a short summary of the instances of conflict in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*. The second subsection focuses on the empirical analysis of the characters' conflicts and gives the reason behind these conflicts as well as brings out different kinds of ironic instances of the story.

Austen's works consist of a young woman's journey to self-discovery on the passage through love to marriage and focuses upon recognizable aspects of life. It is a concentration upon character and personality and upon the tensions between her heroines and their society. These topics, in a certain sense, relate her novels more closely to the modern world than to the traditions of the 18th century. Her concerns in the novel *Sense and Sensibility* can be seen in moralistic points and the novel depicts problems that take place between the characters' language and behaviour, feeling and action. (Southam 2019)

Mrs. Dashwood moves with her daughters Elinor, Marianne and Margaret to Barton Cottage in Devonshire, owned by Sir John Middleton. There they meet Mrs. Middleton's mother Mrs. Jennings and Colonel Brandon. Marianne and Elinor go for a walk. Marianne sprains her ankle and is rescued by John Willoughby. Marianne and Willoughby seem to both fall in love with each other. Brandon seems to have an interest in Marianne but he is degraded by Willoughby and Marianne. Brandon then receives a letter and he is suddenly called away. Willoughby also suddenly departs for London and leaves Marianne sorrowful and Elinor suspicious. (Mcgoodwin 1998)

Edward Ferrars shows up and is in low spirits. He is seen to have a ring with a lock of hair. Lucy and Anne Steele pay a visit. A conflict arises when Lucy confides to Elinor that she and Edward have been secretly engaged for four years and talks about the problems that

have resulted. Elinor is shocked but tries to conceal her emotions. Lucy tries to remove her rival Elinor from the picture. (Mcgoowin 1998)

Elinor and Marianne accept Mrs. Jennings's invitation to travel to London. Willoughby shuns Marianne at a party and another conflict comes to surface. He is seen with another woman. Later, Marianne receives a cold letter from him informing her that he is engaged to the wealthy Miss Sophia Grey and he returns her letters and the locket with Marianne's hair. Marianne is blindsided. (Mcgoodwin 1998)

The sisters visit at the John Dashwoods, where Marianne defends Elinor against the rude mother of Fanny and Edward, Mrs. Ferrars. Fanny invites the Miss Steeles for a visit. When Fanny and Mrs. Ferrars find out about Lucy's engagement to Edward, they explode in violent opposition. Mrs. Ferrars disinherits Edward. Brandon arranges a 200 pound a year living for Edward. Elinor conveys the offer to Edward. Robert Ferrars, Edward's brother, disapproves Edward's choice. (Mcgoodwin 1998)

Elinor and Marianne visit the Palmers at Cleveland, accompanied by Mrs. Jennings and Colonel Brandon. Marianne becomes ill and develops a putrid infection and nearly dies. Brandon is sent to fetch Mrs. Dashwood. Willoughby arrives to declare his love for Marianne to Elinor, his need to marry for money due to debts, his wife's insistence that he write the cruel letter, and other circumstances explaining his poor behaviour, seeking forgiveness. The mother and sisters return to Barton Cottage and Marianne reflects on her self-destructive behaviour. Elinor tells her of Willoughby's visit and his confession. It is a great relief to her. She then concludes that she could have never been happy with him. (Mcgoodwin 1998)

The servant says he has seen Lucy and that he is married to Edward. Edward soon arrives to inform them that it is in fact his brother Robert Ferrars who has married Lucy Steele. Edward explains that he stayed with the engagement to Lucy only out of a sense of duty and asks Elinor for her hand in marriage. Edward is reconciled with his mother and

receives some financial support. Elinor and Edward marry. Marianne marries Brandon. The sisters remain close. (Mcgoodwin 1998)

2.2 Characters' conflicts

In the novel *Sense and Sensibility* (hereinafter *SS*), social as well as internal conflicts exist. External conflicts exist between characters such as Elinor and Lucy (*SS* 116-117), Marianne and John Willoughby (*SS* 154-155). Internal conflicts, however can be seen clearly in Elinor when she struggles and wrestles with the divide between her head and her heart (*SS* 228).

Even though social conflict is the primary framework Austen used, it is only a front. Austen used the outlining of her own society as a literary tool to highlight the underlying conflict of her story. The fundamental conflict is between what is felt and what ought to be felt as determined by logic. All other conflicts start to emerge out of this primary conflict.

Elinor Dashwood and Lucy Steele

The relationship between Elinor Dashwood and Lucy Steele is complicated. There are several tensions that arise during the novel. These tensions can be considered as social conflicts between Elinor and Lucy. The reason for these conflicts is Edward Ferrars. Lucy has discovered that Edward and Elinor are attracted to each other. (*SS* 128) This puts her in a threatening situation. Her character, however, is clever, manipulative and selfish. These personality traits are useful to navigate relationships and achieve her desires. (*SS* 114) She takes the first opportunity to tell Elinor about her engagement with him (*SS* 116). This comes as a great shock to Elinor even though she feels unable to believe it at first (*SS* 117).

When she tells Elinor of her engagement, it serves as a dual purpose. The first reason is to warn Elinor that she, Lucy, has prior claim to a man they both want. She intends to remove her rival. The second is that by telling Elinor of the news, she is put in an unpleasant position of being her “friend”. This position decreases the possibility that she would continue her subtle flirtation with Edward and betray Lucy. She knows Elinor well enough to know that she will not act against a “friend”, however unwillingly she entered into that friendship.

Lucy sees the relationship between the two of them, and recognises the threat that it is. She knows that she is poor and without family connections to raise her social status. Elinor however, who may not have money, has status, which puts Lucy in a worse situation than Elinor. Lucy has a very good understanding of both human nature and honour. She knows she has trapped Edward into a marriage which he does not want to be in. She also knows that he cannot break the engagement. Honourable men did not offer to marry women and then retract the offer. It meant breaking a contract. It was one of the few protections that women had. He would offer her higher social status, money and respectability, therefore she is not willing to give him up.

Lucy uses all this knowledge to her own advantage. She keeps giving subtle warnings to Elinor to make sure that Elinor and Edward would not marry. She mentions how Edward’s love for herself has been put to the test by their very long absence from each other and it has stood the trial well. She also adds that he has never given her one moment’s alarm. (SS 129) She manipulates Elinor into believing that continuous flirtations between Elinor and Edward would be a betrayal of friendship, confidence, and trust. She does it knowing the damage it does to the both of them and even gets cruel pleasure from these manipulations.

Therefore, Lucy deliberately announces the news about her engagement to Edward and tries to make Elinor believe that it is real. She, however, is shocked but does not believe her at first (SS 116-117). Elinor, who seems to be the more sensible sister, always acting

rationally, thinking with her head, and disapproving of the strong sensibilities that her sister Marianne continues to show, ironically turns out to be just as blind as her younger sister who is living in illusions. The only difference being that Elinor does not show her desires and feelings, whereas Marianne prefers to display them because she values honesty above all else. Elinor herself sees through Willoughby's character and tells Marianne how Willoughby should not have been trusted but does not see that the news of the engagement between Lucy and Edward is true (SS 311-312).

Lucy explains further to Elinor how her acquaintance with him began through her uncle. She also adds how she was very unwilling to enter into the relationship due to not knowing his mother but loved him too greatly not to be with Edward. (SS 117) She uses clever tactics to attack her rival Elinor and remove her from the picture. She torments her further by adding that he is very charming and capable of making a woman attached to him knowing that Elinor herself is fond of Edward (SS 117).

To make matters worse for Elinor, she also informs her that Edward wears a ring with a lock of her hair in it as a constant reminder of their attachment. She asks Elinor not to tell anyone about their engagement because Edward's mother would never approve of it. Elinor, taken aback by the news and not happy about having to keep her secret, answers her disappointedly but politely that Lucy must have felt Elinor knowing the secret could not add to its safety. (SS 119)

After finding out about the engagement between Lucy and Edward, Elinor is almost overcome by emotions, she can hardly stand. Austen prevents Elinor and the readers from seeing the worthlessness of Edward's and Lucy's relationship. Lucy's dishonesty beneath her delightful personality must be interpreted. Elinor's suspicion of her is described: "that Lucy was disposed to be jealous of her, appeared very probable". Elinor, even though in pain, still remains well assured within herself of being beloved by Edward. (SS 124) Austen

(2018: 124-129) brings out how Elinor observes Lucy's behaviour and tries to figure out the truth about her engagement. It can be seen that through Elinor's judgment, the reader is directed to think of Lucy as someone egotistical and for whom intimacy is only valuable for greedy purposes.

The interaction through letters is for several characters very useful for self-profit. It is possible to carefully line up words in order to make people believe certain things. Lucy Steele writes for social and monetary gain. Willoughby is also able to make a situation easier for him through letters as he would not have to face consequences. It is shown how Elinor interprets the manipulative quality of Lucy's writing. (SS 244)

After Mrs. Ferrars finds out about the secret engagement of his son Edward and Lucy, Edward loses his inheritance. Lucy is desperate and sends a letter to Elinor to request her help as a result. She writes that their prospects are not very good and that if Elinor has the opportunity to recommend Edward to anybody who has a living to bestow, she would be very grateful. She adds that she is very sure Elinor would not forget them and that she also thinks Mrs. Jennings would say a good word for them to Sir John, Mr Palmer or any friend that may be able to assist them. (SS 243)

However, Lucy writes the opposite of what she actually means. Although she claims to Elinor that she is certain Elinor would not forget them, she, in fact, writes this in order to ask Elinor not to forget her and Edward's difficult situation, furthermore, to assist them in finding a benefactor. As soon as Elinor had finished the letter she intentionally gave it to Mrs. Jennings who was very gullible and who read it aloud with comments of praise (SS 244). These letters of manipulation are to achieve personal desires, and through them it is shown how easily other people are tricked into believing the words of clever writers. Mrs. Jennings is easily duped into believing in the authenticity of Lucy's sentiments. She says to Elinor, "How attentive she is, to think of every body!" (SS 244) Even though Lucy does

“think of everybody”, her thoughts are purely selfish. The fakeness of her sensibility is shown in the following statement: “your brother has gained my affections entirely, and as we could not live without one another, we are just returned from the altar...” (SS 323-324). After such a short time, Lucy has moved on from Edward and has her eye on the next prize. Both Edward and Elinor recognize the worthlessness of Lucy’s romantic way of speaking. Edward comments that this letter is “the only letter I ever received from her, of which the substance made me any amends for the defects of the style”. (SS 324)

Lucy is not shown in a very good light to the readers. However, she is the most rational person who does not let feelings disturb her, she has control over them. Her manipulations lead her to what she desires the most, a marriage to a son with a good inheritance. This can be seen as ironic because an unpleasant character ends up in the most pleasing position in the end. She reaches the position she always wished to be in.

Internal conflicts of Elinor Dashwood

After some time, Elinor is finally convinced that the engagement between Lucy and Edward is real and needs to accept that bitter fact. She also realizes that Lucy has no real attachment to Edward. She thinks that her own case is pitiable but Edward’s is hopeless. (SS 122) Here, the next ironic case can be seen. It is another example of Elinor’s blindness. She keeps pitying Edward who in reality is at fault himself and has not acted according to his status. He has promised himself to someone whom he does not love but is too cowardly to end it due to his “honour”. Elinor tries to comfort herself convincing her own mind that Edward’s engagement to Lucy is not an engagement of the heart (SS 122).

Elinor can see that Edward is hoping that family opposition will cause Lucy to release him. However, knowing Lucy’s strong motivation and intentions, she has very little hope of

that. She resolves to combat her own affection for Edward and to see him as little as possible (SS 125). Elinor decides that Lucy is completely insincere (SS 113, SS 124, SS 129, SS 133). Lucy's relations with her show that she is right. Elinor has constant inner conflicts, she keeps suppressing her feelings and does her best to convince Lucy that she feels nothing towards Edward, but in turn becomes her reliable friend who must suffer even more by listening to Lucy talk about the engagement every time they are in each other's company.

Many thoughts go through Elinor's head. "Much as she had suffered from her first conversation with Lucy on the subject, she soon felt an earnest wish of renewing it; and this for more reasons than one" (SS 124). She still remained well assured within herself, of being loved by Edward. She thinks that Lucy is jealous and she convinces Lucy that her heart is unwounded. (SS 125)

However, Elinor is heartbroken and suffers internally. She does not want anyone to know about her suffering (SS 228). She does not wish to cause further tension and act like Marianne because it is not proper even though she wishes she could express what she feels. She decides not to tell anyone about her feelings and thoughts about the situation which torments her greatly.

When the news of Edward's engagement to Lucy becomes public, Elinor shows the greatest strength over her emotions. She tells Marianne of knowing the secret and not sharing it. She says that she felt she was doing her duty but often wished to undeceive Marianne and her mother. She did not want them to suffer on her account. (SS 230) Elinor proves that she did indeed feel affection for Edward, but knew it would hurt her family to know this secret. Austen (2018: 230) illustrates Elinor's deep sensibility and her care for the feelings of others, while at the same time, she proves that she has enough sense to remain silent for the sake of others.

Despite the fact that Elinor looks like she is very sensible and rational, on the inside, she is just as full of emotions as Marianne. Elinor does not get dramatically carried away by infatuation the way her sister does, but she also falls in love. Her love for Edward Ferrars was hidden for a long time but it did not make it any less powerful.

It is clear, therefore, that in addition to social conflicts she also has several internal conflicts that she has to face. Elinor tries to approach problems the way she approaches household matters, efficiently and quietly, but it does not work. Her feelings sometimes get the better of her. Elinor's feelings are very deep and when she is hurt by the news of Lucy and Edward's engagement, she tries to conceal her feelings, which makes her sufferings even greater.

Elinor Dashwood and Mrs. Jennings

Mrs. Jennings is someone who loves to match-make and tease the young girls about their loves. Such comments, however, are often improper in polite society. She comes off as an unpleasant character. Marianne does not like Mrs. Jennings, Elinor tries to tolerate her. Even though she can often make hurtful and comments about Willoughby or Edward and create confusion with her misunderstanding, Marianne and Elinor come to appreciate her as caring, loyal, and more honest than other people they know. She acts as a surrogate mother while they are in London, because Mrs. Jennings has Elinor and Marianne stay with her in London (SS 139). By the end of their stay and when Marianne is very sick at Cleveland, her good character shines through all of her teasing and vulgar remarks.

Another irony created by Austen can be seen. Elinor tolerates unpleasant people. She has good relationships with them. Elinor's strong sense forces her to have good relationships with different people. Unpleasant people, ironically, are the most helpful in different difficult

situations like in the case of Mrs. Jennings who lets the sisters stay with her in London and even comforts them in difficult times. It can be emphasized that there is a very delicate line between hypocrisy and courtesy.

Mrs. Ferrars and Edward Ferrars

Mrs. Ferrars is someone for whom an economic status is the most important. She is only interested in her sons having an economically good match (*SS 19*). She wants Edward to marry an heiress — Miss Morton (*SS 197*). There was a danger that if Edward displeased her in any way then she would disinherit him (*SS 233-234*). This is a very clear indication of a social conflict between Mrs. Ferrars and Edward Ferrars.

According to Knowles (2018), within each of the romances was a complex picture of Georgian life. Marriages could not be made without a reference to fortune. A gentleman was expected to marry to improve his position, to secure his fortune and to further his political ambitions as well as increase his influence. A lady was supposed to make a good match that would enable her to keep or improve upon her position in society and make her mistress over her own household. The desire for financial security was a commonplace.

Mrs. Ferrars meets Lucy and she thinks that she is charming. She favours her because she wants to discriminate against Elinor (*SS 208-212*). Everyone in the family knows that Edward is attached to her. When Mrs Ferrars finds out that Lucy is poor her thoughts about her change (*SS 226-228*). The engagement of Edward and Lucy causes Mrs. Ferrars to see Elinor in a new light. Mrs. Ferrars disinherits Edward and gives the fortune to her second son, Robert Ferrars (*SS 235*).

Ironically, when their mother, as a result of Edward's disobedience, gives what was intended to be Edward's portion to Robert, then Robert ends up marrying the girl that he,

Edward had pledged himself to. This is the same act of rebelliousness that caused his mother to disinherit Edward. When she finds out, that her son Robert does not care about his mother's wishes, Mrs. Ferrars is forced to accept her eldest son Edward as the equal of her daughter Fanny at least (*SS 324, SS 331*). Therefore, the living of Delaford becomes adequate for a respectable marriage (*SS 332*).

Edward and Elinor are very grateful. However, neither of them really want to mend the relationship with Mrs. Ferrars. Their relations with her will be stately, but not loving in the only sense in which Mrs. Ferrars can understand the word. It is Lucy who will appear to her to be loving only due to Lucy marrying Robert who now has a very good economic status.

Internal conflicts of Edward Ferrars

Edward Ferrars has secretly been engaged to Lucy for four years. After a short time of being engaged to Lucy he realizes that Lucy is far from what he desired. Even though she is intelligent, she is also deficient both in education and in cultural interests. (*SS 123*) Edward regrets his engagement. Lucy has also known how he really feels for a considerable amount of time. However, Edward thought that it would be dishonourable to ask her to release him. In addition, she had said that she still loves him and he believes her. Edward suffers from internal conflicts. He has constant inner turmoil, he wants to do the right thing, but doing the right thing causes him to be unhappy because he loves another. This conflict within himself makes him depressed. (*SS 82, SS 88, SS 91-92, SS 122*)

Edward Ferrars was never in control of his life. He was dominated since childhood by his bullying sister, Fanny, and their mother. He is a man without a mission of any kind or even a day to day profession because his mother had decided that it was better to be a

wealthy man of leisure rather than to have a career. Edward is not a slouch by choice, but rather, by command. Many other men might envy his free time and inherited income, but he himself is thoroughly disgruntled by it (SS 80-81).

Edward disobeyed his mother once and is now living to regret it. He got engaged to Lucy Steele secretly at a young age, and now, years later, he is stuck with another controlling and manipulative woman like his mother. He meets the Dashwoods, and he is immediately seduced by their kindness and gentle natures. He falls in love with Elinor, who is the opposite of Lucy.

Edward is spineless but there is something about him that makes Elinor fall for him. Even though he is not good-looking or talented, he is still likable. It is clear, that Edward is intellectually unequal to Elinor but it may have been that this is exactly what Elinor misses because, as previously mentioned, the well-being of others is very important to Elinor. Therefore, she has a strong caretaker instinct. Edward's life was controlled by someone else than himself and it was something that he was used to. An irony is, that Elinor being his caretaker may result in him continuing with a similar, comfortable life that he used to have beforehand.

Marianne Dashwood and John Willoughby

Marianne thinks Willoughby to be the perfect gentleman when she first encounters him. It seems like Willoughby himself is interested in her as well. They start seeing each other and everything seems to be perfect at first. Willoughby convinces Marianne of the certainty of their relationship. However, his final letter to Marianne reveals him to be a very deceitful person because the letter holds no substance beneath its form.

Willoughby has played with Marianne's feelings. He makes her believe that he was not in love with her. He forgets all about Marianne and meets Miss Grey, a wealthy girl. Another social conflict arises. In London, Marianne wishes to meet with Willoughby. She sends letters to him but there is no response. She meets him at a party, but his behaviour seems different to Marianne. He addresses himself to Elinor rather than Marianne. It seems like he is trying to avoid her. He inquires in a hurried manner after Mrs. Dashwood and asks how long they have been in town. (SS 154) Willoughby avoids Marianne because he does not want to confront the issue and reveal to Marianne or to anyone, in fact, what kind of a man he really is.

Marianne is surprised and confused, she asks Willoughby whether he had received his letters and if he would not shake hands with her. He cannot then avoid it, but her touch seems painful to him and he holds her hand only for a moment. During all this time he is evidently struggling for composure. (SS 154) Marianne and Willoughby have to face a social conflict.

He makes no reply and all his embarrassment returned. Then he answers quickly and turns away with a slight bow and joins his friend. (SS 155) Willoughby tries to avoid the situation and chooses to leave. This kind of behaviour shocks and also confuses Marianne because she knows something is wrong but she did not understand what it is as Willoughby does not say anything.

Throughout their courtship, Willoughby uses sentimental substance in order to win over Marianne's affection. In doing so, Willoughby calls into question both the authenticity of Marianne's sensibility as well as the virtue of the sentimental expression. In Marianne's and Willoughby's different discussions of music, dance and literature, it can be seen that their tastes appear to be the same because Willoughby "acquiesced in all her decisions". (SS

42) Marianne believes that their intimacy is authentic because of their similarities. However, Willoughby is only copying her sentiments in order to fit the role of a man she would love.

Willoughby later admits to Elinor that he “endeavored, by every means of my power, to make myself pleasing to her” (SS 282-283). Rather than being similar because of their sentiments, they are brought together because Willoughby does not seem to possess a mind of his own. Willoughby tells Elinor about his uncertainty regarding his feelings for Marianne: “Had I really loved, could I have sacrificed my feelings to vanity, to avarice?” (SS 283)

In the relationship of Marianne and Willoughby, Austen demonstrates the suspicious nature of claims to authentic intimacy in a world in which people do not possess or know their own mind, and are then compelled to imitate the sentiments of others. Marianne is vulnerable to Willoughby’s selfish schemes because she believes in the power of the letter to create authentic intimacy between individuals, but she eventually learns that her beliefs have been wrong when Willoughby’s sentiments are exposed to be an empty façade masking vanity and ambition.

Onlookers assume that Marianne and Willoughby are engaged because of Marianne’s letters. Colonel Brandon says to Elinor “Your sister’s engagement to Mr. Willoughby is very generally known”, their marriage is universally talked of. (SS 151) Even Marianne herself is tricked into believing in the power of sentimental expression. When Elinor asks her sister if she was ever sure of Willoughby’s real love for her, Marianne replies, “It was every day implied, but never professedly declared”. (SS 163)

Willoughby benefits from the private nature of the epistolary form because he is freed from the responsibility of social ethics. He is never forced to publicly commit to Marianne. Marianne thinks that Willoughby’s encouragement of privacy in their relationship indicates

a sentimental desire for intimacy, but actually, Willoughby only hopes to escape the ethical codes of conduct enforced by public judgment.

Even when Marianne experiences Willoughby's cruelty face-to-face, she refuses to change her opinion of his character unless she receives evidence in the written form. Upon arriving in London, Marianne immediately writes to Willoughby and anticipates his arrival. He neither responds nor visits her. Marianne still refuses to question his love for her because she does not receive a letter telling her that. She needs to see written proof. When she finally sees Willoughby, he treats her with the indifference of a stranger, Marianne writes to him the following morning asking Willoughby if he had deceived her. (*SS 157*)

Marianne's vulnerability as heroine is the result of her refusal to acknowledge the value of public structures and social forms as protection against arrogant people. In their final letters, Marianne's sentiments are set against Willoughby's selfishness. Marianne pours her heart out on a page, but Willoughby allows his wife to dictate his response. In Marianne's final letter, her unrestrained crying, expressing the emotions on her face that she articulates in her words, leave smudges on the paper. Her flowing tears, described as "frequent bursts of grief", compromise the formal quality of the paper. (*SS 157*)

Willoughby's reply produces only the formal aspects of the letter. His wife dictating the content makes his role as an author limited to the form of handwriting. He later confesses to Elinor, "I had only the credit of servilely copying such sentences as I was ashamed to put my name to". (*SS 290*) His vanity prevents him from internalizing any of the sentiments he claims to feel (*SS 72-73, SS 153, SS 159-160*). Willoughby, who initially appears virtuous, turns out to be a person whom words bear no more value than their efficacy as tools of manipulation and expressions of vanity.

Internal conflicts of Marianne Dashwood

After her meeting with Willoughby, Marianne's health is down, she never thought Willoughby would act like that. She keeps thinking about Willoughby because she still loves him. Elinor tries to comfort her and bring some sense into her. She makes her think about the effect it would have on their mother. Marianne, however, is not able to hear her, she wants to be alone. She does not care about anything in her deep sorrow. She says that Elinor cannot have an idea of what she suffers. (SS 161-162) Her internal conflicts are clear.

She is not able to think rationally, only through her feelings. Elinor tried to make her realize that Willoughby is not a good person and that it is for the best that things have turned out the way they have. Marianne, however, cannot not listen to her and tried even defend Willoughby after what he has done to her. Marianne is in conflict, she still tries to see some good in Willoughby but at the same time she is very hurt. (SS 165)

Slowly Marianne starts to realize that Willoughby has betrayed her. The more she thinks about the recent events and what she felt, the more sorrow she feels for herself and she strains her body with her emotional turmoil. In London, when she no longer sees Willoughby, her life collapses. She goes out every day but it is a matter of indifference to her whether she does or not. (SS 219) Her world around her starts to crumble and she does not wish to do anything anymore. Her suffering has become very severe. Elinor is convinced that he never was attached to her. He has been very deceitful. (SS 174-175)

Marianne is depressed knowing that there is to be no future with Willoughby because he would marry a wealthy Miss Grey. Marianne's sensibility has turned into insensibility and she is emotionally broken. She has grown so used to thinking and feeling about Willoughby that when he is gone, she begins recycling her empty, grief-filled emotions, thus affecting her physical and mental well-being. Her emotions are so deep that once she no

longer has control of her perspective of the rational, she becomes violently ill. It takes this physical sickness for her to realize the depth of her insensibility and the damage it has done to herself physically and emotionally. When she regains her ability to live in the reality of her now single life, she understands how her insensibility has shaken her. She was not able to overcome her problem as well as a sensible person would be able to.

In an earlier scene Elinor berates her sister for speaking openly with Willoughby. She predicts that the couple's acquaintance will be short-lived due to their "extraordinary despatch of every subject for discourse". (SS 42) According to Bonin (2015: 37), Marianne's sincerity sometimes reveals itself in sarcasm. Sarcasm often conveys harsh irony. The irony of Marianne's sarcasm, however, is that it connotes a sincerity of sentiment that her words do not live up to. Marianne's response exemplifies sarcasm in its most sincerely caustic use. She says that she understands that she had been too much at ease and too frank, she adds that she had erred against every common-place notion of decorum and been too open and sincere when she ought to have been reserved and dull. Had she talked only once in ten minutes, this reproach would have been spared. (SS 42)

Instead of understanding Elinor's point of view she makes her frustration evident. Though she claims to know what Elinor means, she does not actually believe that she was in the wrong for being too much at ease, happy, and frank. She was in denial. Marianne's sarcasm indicates the sincerity of her expression. She is not afraid of offending Elinor. It is important for her to be honest. Marianne's intentional commitment to sincerity exemplifies her natural capacity for reason, or sense, in simultaneity with her sensibility. Bronin (2015: 41, 45-46) states that Marianne's judgments are based on the pleasantness of her emotions and the analytical problem of Marianne's character is that her sensibility causes her language and intentions to not always align. Her language is often perceived as offensive, selfish, imaginative, but her expressions are undoubtedly sincere and her intentions are altruistic.

In the end, another irony can be brought out. Marianne does not end up ruined by her excess of emotion, but she is forced to settle down and marry a man she is not attracted to. Marianne needs to give up her feelings to marry Colonel Brandon. This can be seen in the following statement: "...and to see Marianne settled at the mansion-house was equally the wish of Edward and Elinor. They each felt his sorrows, and their own obligations, and Marianne, by general consent, was to be the reward of all". (SS 335) Marianne, for whom love was always the most important, chooses wealth in the end.

Marianne and her family

Marianne is impulsive and leads with her emotions. Due to these factors, she can be thoughtless and often fails to consider the effect her actions have on others and even unintentionally making situations worse. She is whimsical and lets herself be carried away by current passions and reigning beliefs. She imposes her black-and-white views of the world on others and is usually disappointed by others' inability to live up to her standards.

She causes great worry for the rest of her family. When Willoughby leaves without sufficient explanation she goes into an emotional fit, which her mother and sisters also must suffer with her. She is awake the whole night and weeps which gives pain to her mother and sisters as well. (SS 74) Because Marianne is so open about her feelings, her family feels compelled to be saddened too.

Marianne's behaviour can in part be attributed to her mother and her youngest sister. They are both very emotional, first when the father dies and then in their estimation of Willoughby. Mrs. Dashwood is as thoughtless as her middle child as she lets Willoughby charm her. She does not see what is actually before her eyes but sees what she wishes. She

hopes for an engagement between Marianne and Willoughby. (SS 43) Had her mother been more sensible and seen through Willoughby, the situation with him could have been avoided.

John Willoughby and Colonel Brandon

The relationship between Willoughby and Brandon is complicated. It is an affair of honour and a social conflict between the two of them. The hatred provokes a duel over Willoughby's seduction of Brandon's ward, Eliza, and the duel exists for the reader only because they engage in a secondary duel in the sight of Elinor Dashwood.

According to Brewton (2001: 79), the silent critique of the duel is analogous to the equally unspoken critique of Marianne's dangerously excessive sensibility. The duel is alluded to only once in the moment between Elinor and Colonel Brandon in which Willoughby's character is blackened by Brandon as "expensive, dissipated, and worse than both" (SS 183). Through Elinor's conversation with Brandon, it can be seen that he does not like him. He says that Eliza had confessed to him the name of her lover and when he returned to town, they met by appointment, Willoughby to defend and Brandon to punish his conduct (SS 184).

Willoughby counters with a reply to Brandon's version. He asks to remember from whom she received the account and if it could be an impartial one. He says he did not mean to justify himself, but at the same time cannot leave her to suppose that he has nothing to urge. That because Eliza was injured, she was irreproachable, and because he was a libertine, she must be a saint. (SS 284) Willoughby has every intention of justifying himself to the degree necessary for his vanity (Brewton 2001: 80).

Brewton (2001: 84) adds that the duel sheds considerable light on the action of the whole by revealing a depth of masculine rivalry over the possession of women. Austen goes

to great lengths to capture Willoughby's pleasant character, while Colonel Brandon comes off repeatedly as dull and cautious (SS 44-45). The story of the two Elizas provides insight into Colonel Brandon's character. The original Eliza, a cousin of Colonel Brandon's to whom he had been deeply attached since childhood, was the ward of his father. Brandon and his brother had been raised as siblings to Eliza, and Colonel's frustration occurs when his brother steps into his place and marries Eliza.

Colonel Brandon compares Marianne to the first Eliza with Elinor: "I once knew a lady who in temper and mind greatly resembled your sister, who thought and judged like her, but who from an enforced change—from a series of unfortunate circumstances..." Here he stopped suddenly (SS 50). Colonel Brandon pauses, not overcome by emotion as he is in other places, but as if in fear he had said too much (SS 50).

According to Brewton (2001: 85), Brandon is confused because of the similarities between Marianne and the two Elizas. Brandon discovers the younger Eliza's indiscretions, transgressions that strike as more evocative of Marianne. The younger Eliza's fall and her elopement without marriage to Willoughby, is the moral danger threatening Marianne.

Prior to the duel, Colonel Brandon had been observing for some time Willoughby's greater romantic success with Marianne. For Colonel Brandon to discover that the seducer of his ward and niece is the same man who is also presently besting him in the struggle for Marianne's affections constitutes a state of affairs too excruciating for the Colonel to endure (Brewton 2001: 86).

Colonel Brandon's motives are also simultaneously personal. The inarticulate and violent expression of his desire and also selfless, lacking in any regard for public opinion or appearances. Colonel Brandon and Willoughby both keep their silence until their conflict over Marianne renews the violence of their rivalry (Brewton 2001: 87).

Brewton (2001: 87-88) states that in Austen's fiction, the competition for marriageable men by women always occupies the foreground of the narrative, while the competition between men for women is in a realm of secondary social intensity. The duel acknowledges both the reality of masculine competition as well as violence and it is a narrative event that signifies as a site of multiple conflicts.

The violence marks the risks inherent in a social organization that harbors a body of idle gentry who act as predatory males on unprotected females. Austen makes clear that such violence is anything but frivolous. The class system has nurtured gentlemen, they have nothing more to do than to seduce and fight (Brewton 2001: 88).

CONCLUSION

The English society during the Austen era was in a transition due to different social and economic changes. The terms 'sense' and 'sensitivity' were both complicated concepts throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. It is clear that Austen was disgruntled with her society but instead of shouting and making her opinions strong, she decided to whisper by using subtle prose with ironic implications to express her opinions. One of the strongest weapons of Austen was the use of delicate irony in her works. She intentionally directs her irony at characters who deviate from sense.

There are many conflicts, external as well as internal that come to the surface during the novel. The main conflicts revolve around Elinor Dashwood, Marianne Dashwood, Lucy Steele, Edward Ferrars, Mrs. Ferrars, John Willoughby and Colonel Brandon. In the case of Elinor Dashwood, her most evident social conflict can be seen with Lucy Steele. The reason for this conflict is Edward Ferrars. Lucy Steele and Edward Ferrars are engaged which brings up complications because Edward is in love with Elinor. He is an honourable man and is not able to break his engagement to Lucy. Thus, he is stuck with Lucy which causes unhappiness for Elinor as well as himself. Lucy is aware of it and makes it known to Elinor that they are engaged. She tries to remove any hope that Elinor still has left with Edward. An internal conflict arises within Elinor due to the news of Lucy's and Edward's engagement. She tries to make sense of the situation but her feelings interfere. She hides her feelings which makes her suffering even greater.

Another social conflict can be seen between Marianne and Willoughby. Marianne and Willoughby start seeing each other. Suddenly Willoughby becomes cold towards Marianne. He neglects her due to finding a better economical match for himself. Marianne is blinded and confused. A conflict within herself arises. She does not want to believe that she has been

betrayed by Willoughby and at first she even tries to defend his actions. The deceitful nature of Willoughby causes Marianne to collapse. Her deep sorrow takes a toll on her body and she becomes very ill. She is taken over by her sensibility. This also affects her family greatly.

A conflict between Edward Ferrars and her mother Mrs. Ferrars arises. For Mrs. Ferrars, a good economical status is very important. She wants her sons to marry well. After finding out that Edward is engaged to Lucy, who is poor, Mrs. Ferrars is outraged and disinherits Edward which puts him in a difficult situation. The relationship between them remains cold even after the conflict.

The relationship between Willoughby and Colonel Brandon consists of a silent duel. Colonel Brandon is in love with Marianne but has to accept being on the sidelines because Marianne only has eyes for Willoughby. Colonel Brandon knows that Willoughby is not a good character. The account of the duel serves as a buried representation of a narrative event, which signifies as a site of several conflicts.

Through these characters' conflicts, several ironies come to surface. Marianne did not believe that Edward was engaged to Lucy at first. Elinor, who seemed to be the more sensible sister, ironically turns out to be just as blind as her younger sister Marianne who is living in illusions. The only difference being that Elinor does not show her feelings whereas Marianne prefers to display them because she values honesty above all else.

Robert, Edward's younger brother, gets the inheritance that was intended for Edward due to Edward defying his mother's wishes. Irony arises when their mother gives what was intended to be Edward's portion to Robert, Robert ends up marrying the girl Edward had pledged himself to, the very act that caused his mother to disinherit Edward.

Irony is also seen when Marianne does not end up ruined by her excess of emotion, but she is forced to settle down and marry a man she is not attracted to. Marianne, for whom true love was always the most important, chooses wealth instead. Mrs. Jennings often makes

hurtful comments but comforts Marianne during difficult times. Thus, several unpleasant characters turn out to be the most helpful.

In conclusion, the main obstacles of the characters are their inner conflicts. The lack of sense puts them in difficult situations. Austen recasts all knowledge in this world of social forms as uncertain. She teaches that people's conduct is a much more valuable tool for understanding their character than the alleged authenticity of written sentimental expression. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the virtue of consistent moral conduct prevails over sensibility. Austen's sentences, which are usually direct, contain within them contradictions which reveal insights into character and theme. Austen uses ludicrous characters to create hilarity. Irony is used as a means of moral and social satire. Her subtle purpose in the novel *Sense and Sensibility* is to represent the social reality in a satirical way. The whole story presents psychological suffering resulting from the accident of being in love and it is the primary intention of the novelist.

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RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

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**The Portrayal of Social and Internal Conflict in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*
(Sotsiaalse ja sisemise konflikti kujutamine Jane Austeni romaanis "Mõistus ja Tunded")**

Bakalaureusetöö

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Käesolev bakalaureusetöö analüüsib sotsiaalseid ja sisemisi konflikte Jane Austeni teoses „Mõistus ja Tunded”. Antud töö peamine eesmärk on välja selgitada millised konfliktid esinevad Jane Austeni romaanis, mis on nende tekkimise põhjusteks ning kuidas esineb iroonia nende konfliktide näitel. Neid aspekte analüüsitakse peategelaste Elinor Dashwoodi ja Marianne Dashwoodi ning kõrvaltegelaste näitel.

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö koosneb neljast osast: sissejuhatusest, kahest peatükist ja lõppsõnast. Sissejuhatuses on esindatud töö taust ja Jane Austeni olulisus uurimuses. Bakalaureusetöö esimene peatükk on töö teoreetiline osa, keskendudes Jane Austeni ajale ning tema teoste ülevaatele. Lisaks on lahti seletatud mõistete “mõistlikkus” ja “tundlikkus” tähendused 18. sajandil ning välja on toodud iroonia narratiiv käsitletavas teoses. Esimese peatüki viimane osa on ülevaade sotsiaalse ja sisemise konflikti käsitlemisest kirjanduses. Teine peatükk on pühendatud teoses “Mõistus ja Tunded” esindatud karakterite analüüsile. Selles osas tuuakse välja peategelaste ja kõrvaltegelaste sotsiaalsed ning sisemised konfliktid kirjeldades nende iseloomujooni ja käitumist. Lisaks on teose põhjal käsitletud Austeni kasutatud irooniat.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et romaanis esinevad nii sotsiaalsed kui ka sisemised konfliktid. Kõige suuremaks takistuseks tegelaste õnneni jõudmisel, on nende sisemised konfliktid. Elinor Dashwood kannatas, sest hoidis oma tunded enda sees, Marianne Dashwoodi üle võttis võimust tundlikkus, mille tõttu ta ka haigeks jäi. Läbi konfliktide ilmuvad välja irooniad, sealhulgas Elinori illusioonid elamine ning Marianne abiellumine Brandoniga. Järjekindla moraalse käitumise voo domineerib tunnete üle. Austen kasutab irooniat moraalse ja sotsiaalse satiiri vahendina. Iroonia esindab armusuhetest tingitud psühholoogilisi kannatusi ning see on romaanikirjutaja peamine eesmärk.

Märksõnad: Jane Austen, 18. ja 19. sajandi inglise kirjandus, sotsiaalne ja sisemine konflikt

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