

Trabajo Fin de Grado

An Overview on Jane Austen's Depiction of Marriage

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1. INTRODUCTION

The nineteenth century was the reign of Queen Victoria, who came to the throne in 1837 after the death of her uncle, William IV. Among other things, she introduced family values, such as women's roles in domesticity as wives and mothers. This century was marked by great events that had an essential impact on literature as they changed the society of the time. It was, on the whole, a culture of individualism and capitalism. This new balance gave way to class tensions, as the old aristocracy was concerned with the emerging bourgeois class coming into power. It was a period of transition, where the aforementioned middle class began to gain rights. For instance, the First Reform Bill took place in 1832, which meant that the upper-middle classes could vote. A year later, slavery was abolished, an important event for Romantic and Victorian poets. Moreover, the passing of the "New Poor Law" in 1834 ensured that poor people were allowed to live in workhouses to escape from poverty. It was an essential century for women also. After the Third Reform Bill (1885) that allowed everyone but women to vote, the question of women's rights started to gather strength. This meant the start of an organized women's suffragette movement, as in 1886 Emily Davies presented a petition to parliament known as the 'Ladies' Petition.

This essay aims to discuss the role of marriage in Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility*, in which the author focuses on the lives of two sisters and their troubles in the nineteenth century, which so strongly encouraged women to marry for economic reasons. Elinor, the elder sister, cannot help but feel disappointed after discovering Edward's marriage to another woman, Lucy Steele. On the other hand, Marianne falls in love with John Willoughby, whom she regards as the perfect man for her, since they share a wide variety of interests. On account of their love problems, both sisters go through a process of maturation that will allow them to marry the man they want, at least in the case of Elinor. In order to carry out this analysis, firstly, some theoretical framework will be provided by discussing Mary Wollstonecraft's

claim that women should be allowed to marry out of respect and love in order to be equal to men. She further discussed that women must be allowed to have the same education as men. She defended women's independence from the institution of marriage. Then, Austen's depiction of a successful marriage, as influenced by Wollstonecraft's feminist stance, will be discussed. Austen advocates a kind of marriage based on friendship and compatibility, something that she clearly encapsulates in her two main heroines from her novel *Sense and Sensibility*. After this theoretical framework, the analysis of her novel will be carried out, mainly by explaining how different characters, such as John Dashwood, Lucy Steele or John Willoughby, are conditioned by the economic gain that could be obtained as a result of an engagement. Next, it will be analysed how, through the evolution of Elinor and Marianne, Austen reserves the best types of marriage for her heroines.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

2.2. MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT: MARRIAGE AND COMPANIONSHIP

Austen was influenced by Burlesque Sentimental comedies and the Egalitarian Doctrines of the French Revolution, but she was especially influenced by Mary Wollstonecraft's masterwork *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), a defence of the rights of women to be educated just like men. It should also be noted that finding a second love or attachment is a key concept in *Sense and Sensibility*, as is shown in Marianne's evolution and final decision. The marriage institution in the nineteenth century maintained women's subordination to men, since they depended on a good marriage to provide them with money and property. Women had to stick to this institution if they wanted to survive in society and integrate into it. Indirectly, women became accomplices by selling themselves and choosing to behave according to the patriarchal standards that made them desirable to be bought and sold on the marriage market (Evans 20).

The topic of marriage has been extensively discussed by many writers, and its analysis of the impact on women's lives was one of the main concerns for the English writer, philosopher, and advocate of women's rights, Mary Wollstonecraft. She discussed her interpretation of marriage in one of her most famous works, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), where she defended her view that marriage should be based on mutual respect, love, and shared interest, in other words, it should be considered as friendship. As discussed by Hartman (2019) in his essay "An Aristotelian Paradox: Wollstonecraft and the Implications of Marriage as Friendship", "Wollstonecraft's interpretation of marriage serves as an attempt to create a space for women to develop the agency and education required to function as the equals of men" (831). Women should have the right to choose their partner and control their lives as men did, rather than being interested in financial gain or social status.

Wollstonecraft defended the right of women to be educated as men in order for them to pursue education, careers, and personal fulfilment: “the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practicing various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband” (*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* 55). Wollstonecraft’s definition of marriage defended women’s independence, equality, and respect from this institution. Most feminist theorists and thinkers have been influenced by her ideals, such as the famous British writer Jane Austen.

2.3. AUSTEN’S DEPICTION OF A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

Jane Austen is considered to be one of the few female canonical novelists of the transitional period from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. She was born into a rural professional gentry family, and lived in the countryside. She was an educated woman, as well as her siblings, which was not common for women in her era. Austen is regarded both as a forerunner of the Romantic period and an inheritor of the main Neoclassical tenets. Women’s writings offered a social critique of the nineteenth century, rather than a woman’s view of life. The questioning of patriarchal structures was a key ingredient in Austen’s *oeuvre*. On the whole, women writers like her disguised their political intent through fiction. Women wrote about their desire to become emancipated from the constructions of what it meant to be feminine, and position themselves as rational thinking beings (Evans 117).

Austen is mainly concerned with the condition of women who have lost their homes and live in ‘orthodox’ families, whose life depended on their father’s life. This dependence was due to women’s financial insecurity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which forced them to rely on men to survive and find protection. Therefore, she is interested in the business of making matches for her heroines. As a result, the principal theme of her novels is matrimony. (Sundari 107). However, she defends a type of love and marriage based neither on passion

nor material gain, but rather on friendship and compatibility. On this aspect, Cardell argues that:

Austen promotes a certain type of romantic relationship: a ‘duller’ long-lasting relationship – which may be equally as happy during a longer period of time – before passionate love-affairs, and I believe that Austen meant that it is more important for a couple to get to know one another before starting a relationship or getting married, than to fall madly in love at first sight. (5-6)

Nevertheless, despite Austen’s defence of a marriage based on friendship and compatibility, it should not be forgotten that most of the characters pursuing marriage did it for financial support and as their only way to be integrated in society. Thus, through her fiction, Austen criticized marriage institutions as something that ruled women’s life. Nall states that “marriage was the only way for a woman to complete the main goal given to her, which was to produce children” (3). As a consequence, education was an important aspect for women in the marriage market. Educated women were taught different skills to make them desirable for men: “women’s education was [...] dependent on class, and even for women in the middle and upper classes was extremely limited. Its sole concern was to make women marriageable, so it focused on ‘accomplishments’” (Walton 1).

3. MARRIAGE ANALYSIS IN *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*

Jane Austen published in 1811 her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, which depicts the challenges that two sisters have to face as regards the marriage institution in the nineteenth century. The novel was published anonymously, as women were not expected to pursue a profession at that time.

From the first chapter, the vulnerability of unmarried and widowed women is clearly seen, mainly as a result of Mr. Dashwood's death. Austen focuses on the economic aspect of marriage by launching a critique against women's dependency on it. Elinor and Marianne have to move from their home in Norland Park with their mother, and are forced to exile involuntarily to Barton Cottage after their father's death. The house in which they lived was no longer theirs, therefore when John Dashwood's wife arrives at Norland Park, the narrator explains that "no one could dispute her right to come; the house was her husband's from the moment of his father's decease." (Austen 5). Mrs. Dashwood sees herself living in an unpleasant environment, where she does not feel welcomed despite having lived there all her life; she is no longer the woman of the house. Mrs. John Dashwood's behaviour towards her mother and sisters-in-law does not help to improve the situation. As Mrs. Dashwood receives a letter inviting her and her daughters to go to Barton Cottage, she does not hesitate to abandon her home, as "to remove for ever from that beloved place would be less painful than to inhabit or visit it while such a woman was its mistress" (Austen 18). Austen criticizes how widowed and unmarried women were dispossessed of their homes, as the property was inherited by the family's first son, thus leaving women without any possessions. Therefore, as Sundari suggests, women were dependent on the social and economic security that marriage could provide them with (102).

However, Mrs. Dashwood is not the only character interested in the monetary gain that could be obtained with marriage. Many female characters are mainly concerned with marriage's

financial aspect rather than falling in love (Nall 2). After finding out the great fortune that Colonel Brandon possesses, John Dashwood develops a great interest in trying to bring their families together. For him, family ties are the best way to increase wealth and foster investments. Accordingly, he tries to convince Elinor that Colonel Brandon should be a suitable husband for her. He is confident that she will not object to this marriage as it is beneficial to “all parties”:

‘Colonel Brandon must be the man; and no civility shall be wanting on my part to make him pleased with you and your family. It is a match that must give universal satisfaction. In short, it is a kind of thing that—lowering his voice to an important whisper—will be exceedingly welcome to *all parties*’. (Austen 164)

Throughout the novel, Austen reflects on her characters’ monetary worries, and on how to generate profit from marriage seems to be their main concern. This is not strange, taking into consideration that the central purpose of marriage was to provide people, and especially, women, with economic stability. Even both heroines, Elinor and Marianne, are interested in it. At one point in the novel, they discuss what they expect to earn:

‘Come, what is your competence?’ ‘About eighteen hundred or two hundred a year; not more than that!’ Elinor laughed. ‘*Two* thousand a year! *One* is my wealth! I guess how it would end’. ‘And yet two thousand a year is a very moderate income’, said Marianne. ‘A family cannot well be maintained on a smaller one. I am sure I am not extravagant in my demands. A proper establishment of servants, a carriage, perhaps two, and hunters, cannot be supported on less’. (Austen 67)

It seems ironic that, in the end, it is Elinor who makes the most romantic union, as she marries Edward without expecting more than one hundred a year.

Women were the most vulnerable members of English society in the 18th and 19th centuries, since they lacked the “ability to have independent financial security” (Nall 78). Due to this,

they had to depend on men, which encouraged patriarchal assumptions. In opposition to this, Austen makes it clear that marriages that turned on financial interest often resulted in unhappy relationships, as they were not at all concerned with love. An example of this is the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Palmer, which lacks mutual affection. Theirs is based on external factors, such as physical appearance and financial support rather than shared interests. Throughout the novel, there are instances where Mr. Palmer shows no concern about others, especially her wife: “Mr. Palmer made her no answer, and did not raise his eyes from the newspaper” (Austen 79). As Nall argues: “neither of them display feelings of love and admiration towards the other, but instead it is more of a forced relationship” (46). Mr Palmer realizes that he is the husband of a “silly woman” (Austen 83), and that he was blinded to marry her on account of her apparent beauty. The couple does not communicate much, but for Mrs Palmer this is not something to worry about. The financial security that their marriage has provided her with is more than enough, since it allows her to live freely, gossip and go shopping when she wants to: “After an hour or two spent in what her mother called comfortable chat, [...], it was proposed by the latter that they should all accompany her to some shops where she had business that morning [...].” (Austen 121).

Another essential figure regarding Austen’s critique of a marriage based on financial interest can be found in John Willoughby’s character. His initial interest in Marianne is frustrated when he decides to marry another woman on account of her economic income. In his visit to get to know Marianne’s state, he confesses to Elinor that her marriage to Miss Grey was necessary in order for him not to lose the favour of Mrs Smith. His love for Marianne was not enough “to outweigh that dread of poverty, or get the better of those false ideas of the necessity of riches [...].” (Austen 237). His monetary interest was therefore stronger than his desire to be happy with a woman with whom, as the author seemed to suggest, he shared interests. He tries to justify himself by saying that he “was forced to play the happy lover to

another woman” (Austen 241). However, this apparent unhappiness does not mean that he would have been happier marrying Marianne, as Elinor suggests:

It has not made him happy. [...]; and he thinks only that he has married a woman of a less amiable temper than yourself. But does it follow that had he married you, he would have been happy?—The inconveniences would have been different. [...]. He would have had a wife of whose temper he could make no complaint, but he would have been always necessitous—always poor [...]. (Austen 259)

In the end, Willoughby leaves Marianne after finding someone more suitable for him who might cover all his necessities.

As has been discussed throughout this dissertation, economic stability drove women to “fight for the most successful male, instead of creating honest relationships” (Nall 49). Another example of this is the character of Lucy Steele. The narrator presents a character who apparently fell in love with Edward Ferrars at the very moment they met when they were younger. For Elinor, her presence implies great pain and suffering, but also a change in attitude, namely, the embodiment of Austen’s depiction of ‘sense’. Despite having tried to avoid the company of Lucy, Elinor cannot help but be the one who listens to her confession and conceals it in silence. Lucy is described by the narrator, mainly through Elinor’s thoughts, as someone “illiterate, artful and selfish” (Austen 102). Her actions make this only too clear. Knowing how much her confession might affect Elinor, Lucy does this on purpose, as she is aware of her connection with Edward: “she knowingly deceived others by acting a certain way, while girls who had received education participated in a structural form of deceit” (Nall 57). Her reason to behave in this way was to ensure for herself economic stability; she did not come from a wealthy family that could provide her with good education, in comparison with Elinor or Marianne. By marrying Edward, she could acquire a good position. This was her main concern, without thinking of the consequences.

Furthermore, she eventually changes her 'love' interest by marrying instead Robert, Edward's brother. What may have caused this change is unknown to many of the characters but, taking into account her usual deceitful actions, it comes as no surprise. Elinor wonders how they "could be thrown together" (Austen 267). When she asks her if she knew Robert Ferrars, Lucy confesses: "I fancy he is very unlike his brother—silly and a great coxcomb" (Austen 108). On the other hand, Robert considers Lucy to be "the merest awkward country girl, without style, or elegance, and almost without beauty" (Austen 219). The question lies in what connection might be between them, but their behaviour speaks for itself. While Lucy is only interested in getting the best connection, Robert is no more sensible. Robert pities Edward for having lost the favour of their mother, repeatedly saying "poor Edward" and "poor fellow" (Austen 2019), but not feeling sorry at all. The one that benefits most from Edward's marriage in economic terms is Robert, since their mother decides to give him all her properties after being disappointed in her son Edward. Therefore, Lucy's and Robert's behaviour is almost the same, as Nall argues that "they were both behaving despicably, so it is no surprise that Austen put these two together" (54). Nevertheless, despite achieving her main goal, Austen does not give her, nor Robert, a happy ending, as there were "frequent domestic disagreements between Robert and Lucy themselves" (Austen 278).

As can be seen, all characters are concerned with the matter of marriage, especially if it involves some financial interest. For instance, when Marianne gets unwell after Willoughby's deception, John Dashwood cannot help but comment on her appearance to Elinor and "question whether Marianne now, will marry a man worth more than five or six hundred a-year, at the utmost, and I am very much deceived if you do not do better" (Austen 121). Austen also examines how, by being exclusively concerned with marriage, a mother can neglect their daughters' well-being. For instance, after Mrs. Dashwood discovered that

Elinor's and Marianne's engagements were not going the right way, the narrator comments with a satiric tone:

She feared that under this persuasion she had been unjust, inattentive, nay, almost unkind, to her Elinor;—that Marianne's affliction, because more acknowledged, more immediately before her, had too much engrossed her tenderness, and led her away to forget that in Elinor she might have a daughter suffering almost as much, certainly with less self-provocation, and greater fortitude. (Austen 270)

Marriage in Austen novels is based on money and social position, however, she leaves a place for love, especially as regards her heroines. Austen reserves for them, especially the ones that survive their struggles, the most adequate match. Mosher-Knoshaug argues that Austen mainly exposes the sentimental novel's negative aspects and her heroines' sensibility (25). The case of Marianne Dashwood is the perfect example of this, since Austen provides this character with an imprudent nature. She is described in the book as “sensible and clever; but eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, interesting: she was everything but prudent” (Austen 6). Being such a sensitive character, she suffers a lot. Marianne falls in love with John Willoughby, whom she considers to be the best match for her. This choice is influenced by her own emotions rather than common sense. She declares to her mother: “I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own. He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both” (Austen 13-14). Indeed, John Willoughby seems to match all her demands. Despite having been acquainted with him for such a short time, Marianne is confident that she knows Willoughby well enough. Neither her mother nor her elder sister can do anything about it.

Marianne is aware of her financial necessities, as has been discussed before. However, due to her young age, she is not completely aware of their economic situation. She is delighted to

receive a horse as a gift from Willoughby, without taking into account all the costs that it implies if they decide to keep it: “Without considering that it was not in her mother’s plan to keep any horse, that if she were to alter her resolution in favour of this gift, she must buy another for the servant, and keep a servant to ride it, and after all, build a stable to receive them [...]” (Austen 43)

Elinor declines the offer for the benefit of her mother. Nevertheless, it is significant to consider how, by letting herself be driven by her emotions, Marianne cannot think of any others but herself. Marianne’s sensitivity leads her to be irrational, which results in her eventual mental and physical self-destruction (Mosher-Knoshaug 30). When she finds Willoughby at the ball, Elinor asks her to be “composed” (Austen 128), and not let herself be influenced by her emotions in front of everyone. But she fails to achieve this. Marianne lets her sensibility take control over her body. From this moment on, she will cry at anything that reminds her of Willoughby. She even shouts at her sister and says: “How easy for those who have no sorrow of their own to talk of exertion! Happy, happy Elinor, *you* cannot have an idea of what I suffer” (Austen 135). Marianne does not know anything about the suffering of her sister, but is convinced that everyone is happy except her, because Willoughby has fallen out of love with her. Wells affirms that “Marianne’s delicate mind and passionate heart make her a self-indulgent and careless person” (31-32).

In the end, Marianne is forced to come to her senses and abandon all her beliefs. As a consequence of her process of maturation, Austen provides her with what can be the best match for her, Colonel Brandon. Mosher-Knoshaug (5) argues that their relationship is a healthy one, as it gives an impression of real and sensible. However, this fails to consider his initial attraction on account of her resemblance to Eliza Williams. Eliza’s daughter becomes a victim of Willoughby’s charm, just like Marianne. Unfortunately, the one that suffers the consequences is “little Eliza” (Austen 152), as Colonel Brandon names her. His confession

about Willoughby's behaviour to her provides new insights into his conduct: "He had left the girl whose youth and innocence he had seduced, in a situation of the utmost distress, with no creditable home, no help, no friends, ignorant of his address! He had left her promising to return; he neither returned, nor wrote, nor relieved her" (Austen 153). From that moment on, Brandon becomes a great support to Elinor, which influences his future relationship with Marianne. Nevertheless, Marianne never contemplated Brandon as a match for her. She considered him to be an "absolute old bachelor" (26), unfit to marry her because of his age. She is also influenced by Willoughby's opinion of him. For the former, Brandon is someone everybody "speaks well of, and nobody cares about; whom all are delighted to see, and nobody remembers to talk to" (Austen 38). Interestingly enough, he also points to a financial aspect for his dislike: "who has more money than he can spend, more time than he knows how to employ, and two new coats every year" (Austen 39). This brings to the fore his inferiority complex since he does not have great possessions and has to satisfy his aunt's demands. In the end, Marianne's disappointment leads her to fall extremely ill, which influences her subsequent evolution, as she is driven to marry Colonel Brandon to comply with societal expectations. Marianne's foolish heart is thus restrained by Brandon's reason (Mosher-Knoshaug 33). The narrator indicates that Marianne has been born to an "extraordinary fate" (Austen 279), that is, to come to her senses, learn from her errors, overcome her sorrows and finally become a woman not driven by her sensibility any more. Austen tries to persuade her female readers to educate their minds so that they may be able to tell fiction from reality and thus become positive figures. Therefore, by teaching her heroines, Austen does not punish them but rather provides them with the best of marriages. After overcoming her struggles, Marianne marries Brandon, who provides her with a new home, not far from her sister's property, which allowed them to live in harmony. Marianne becomes "the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village" (Austen 279) at a young age,

nineteen. Marianne has learned from her previous mistakes and has been able to heal her heart from Willoughby's deception. Although she mainly married in order to fulfil the duties imposed on her by society, the narrator implies that, in the end, she has fallen in love with Brandon, which turns the ending into a rather more hopeful one for Marianne: "Marianne could never love by halves; and her whole heart became, in time, as much devoted to her husband, as it had once been to Willoughby" (Austen 279).

Marianne is not the only heroine in Austen's novel that suffers and evolves into a different woman. Elinor also goes through a series of unfortunate events that make her go through a process of maturation. In opposition to her sister, Elinor is defined as having an "excellent heart;—her disposition was affectionate and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them [...]" (Austen 5-6). The control of her feelings and her senses turns her into the "counsellor of her mother" (Austen 5), a great responsibility for a girl of nineteen. But as her mother's personality resembled that of her middle sister, she had to stay composed. As is mentioned in the novel, Elinor, although affected by her father's death, had to remain calm and show that she was in control. She had to "strive to rouse her mother to similar exertion, and encourage her to similar forbearance" (Austen 6). Elinor remains like this throughout the whole novel, which allows her to take care of her sister in spite of suffering from her own problems, and to restrain her feelings against Lucy Steele's provocations. Nevertheless, the novel makes no secret of the fact that she suffers enormously when she is informed of Edward's engagement. Therefore, as discussed by Sundari, Elinor's nature includes a certain amount of sensibility (110). For instance, when Lucy confesses to her being engaged with Edward, she is "mortified, shocked, confounded" (Austen 99) by the news. Although overwhelmed by such emotions, she tries to remain calm, for the sake of her mother and Marianne's. She even feels more sorry for Edward than herself, as he has to marry such a

selfish woman as Lucy. She cannot help but mourn “in secret over obstacles which must divide her for ever from the object of her love” (Austen 102).

In contrast to her sister, Elinor has a more practical view of life. Her use of language is more balanced than Marianne’s, which exemplifies Elinor’s judgement. Marianne’s romantic tone when talking about Norland’s scenery is contrasted with Elinor’s: “It is not every one,” said Elinor, “who has your passion for dead leaves” (Austen 65). “Dead leaves” is a metaphor for dead nature, which functions as an ironic instance, as she does not share her sister’s feelings towards viewing the leaves falling in the change of seasons. The one who seems to share these ‘romantic’ feelings is Edward Ferrars who, in the same passage, when asked about Barton Valley, cannot help but point out how dirty it must be in winter. Marianne does not seem to like Edward’s behaviour, she finds he has “no real taste” (Austen 13) as he shows little interest in art. But, for Elinor, there is no doubt that he has both taste and knowledge:

I have seen a great deal of him, have studied his sentiments and heard his opinion on subjects of literature and taste; and, upon the whole, I venture to pronounce that his mind is well-informed, enjoyment of books exceedingly great, his imagination lively, his observation just and correct, and his taste delicate and pure. (Austen 15)

It can be supposed that, since they share the same interests, they are a perfect match for each other. They have many things in common. But, as has been shown in the character of Marianne, Austen will not let her heroines achieve their happiness without previously going through a series of challenges. For her, it was crucial to find the best match for her heroines, and to do so she took a practical view of love and marriage (Sundari 114).

Edward is the perfect match for Elinor. Nevertheless, his engagement with Lucy Steele is an obstacle for their potential happiness together. For Edward, Elinor could only feel sorry and compassion after knowing that Edward’s family was not pleased with his marriage. Mrs. Ferrars decided that “she would never see him again; and so far would she be from affording

him the smallest assistance, that if he were to enter into any profession with a view of better support, she would do all in her power to prevent him advancing in it” (Austen 194). Elinor wants to make sure that Edward can have a place to live in, even if he marries somebody else. She talks with Colonel Brandon, whom she appreciates and considers a friend, to ask him to give Edward his parsonage in Delaford.

But it is no doubt that Edward has feelings for Elinor, since when he knows about her achievement in getting him a house he gave her “a look so serious, so earnest, so uncheerful, [...] he might hereafter wish the distance between the parsonage and the mansion-house much greater” (Austen 212). As Edward had previously confessed, he only kept his engagement with Lucy because he felt obliged to do so. He found in Lucy an adequate companion, as he did not know much about other women when he first met her. Nevertheless, when Lucy abandons him to marry Robert, he feels free and happy: “He was released without any reproach to himself from an entanglement which had long formed his misery, from a woman he had ceased to love” (Austen 265-266). From the moment he knew he was free, he decided to look for Elinor and ask her to marry him. Elinor’s repression of her feelings and concealment of the truth makes her burst into tears of joy when knowing about Edward’s broken engagement. Yet, despite knowing that they could marry, they knew that their financial income was not enough to have an adequate living: “they were neither of them quite enough in love to think that three hundred and fifty pounds a-year would supply them with the comforts of life” (Austen 271). This reinforces the idea that Austen is aware of the importance of economic interest, however, she does not advocate marriages of convenience; mutual interest and respect should always be required as well (Cardell 6). The relationship between Elinor and Edward is, no doubt, the perfect one. They are aware of their flaws and strengths, and work together to construct a perfect relationship that could last much longer.

4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this essay has elaborated on how Austen promotes a specific type of marriage, based on companionship in contrast with the traditional values of marriage exclusively based on economic interest. In *Sense and Sensibility*, her first novel, the author depicts the life of two sisters who have to go through a series of obstacles in order to marry the ones that are supposed to be their right matches.

Austen emphasises the economic side of marriage by criticising women's reliance on it. Mrs. Dashwood sees herself in an unhappy situation in which she is no longer the woman of the house. Austen criticises the forced removal of widowed and unmarried women from their houses because the land was inherited by the family's eldest son, thus leaving women with nothing. Rather than falling in love, many of the characters are preoccupied with the financial aspects of marriage. After learning about Colonel Brandon's immense fortune, John Dashwood becomes very interested in attempting to bring the two families together. Family ties, in his opinion, are the best way to prompt wealth. In order to accomplish this, he attempts to persuade Elinor that Colonel Brandon is a suitable husband for her. This is hardly surprising, given that the primary function of marriage was to offer economic stability.

Contrary to this Elinor, in the end, is the one who makes the most romantic marriage, as she marries Edward without expecting more than one hundred a year. On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer's relationship lacks reciprocal affection. Theirs is dependent on external variables like beauty and financial backing, rather than mutual interest. Mrs Palmer is unconcerned about their lack of communication. Similarly, John Willoughby's initial love for Marianne 'vanishes' when he is forced to marry another lady so as to keep Mrs Smith's favour. His monetary motivation outweighed his desire to be happy with a lady with whom, as the author implied, he shared interests. The author also introduces Lucy Steele, who appears to be in love with Edward Ferrars. The narrator describes Lucy as illiterate, 'artistic',

and self-centred. Her motivation for acting in this manner was to maintain economic stability because, unlike Elinor or Marianne, she did not come from a wealthy family that could give her a good education. By marrying Edward, she could acquire a good position, which was her primary priority, no matter the consequences. In the end, she alters her primary goal by marrying Robert, Edward's brother. Nonetheless, and despite attaining her major desire she, just like Robert, does not enjoy a happy ending, as both of them end up having numerous domestic problems. All of the characters are anxious about marriage, especially if it entails some kind of financial stake. For example, when Marianne becomes ill as a result of Willoughby's deception, John Dashwood cannot help but comment on her appearance to Elinor and wonder if Marianne would now be able to marry a man rich enough. Austen also examines how, by being merely worried about marriage, a mother can neglect their daughters' well-being.

Marriage in Austen's books is centred on money and social standing, but she leaves room for love, particularly as regards her heroines. Marianne Dashwood falls for John Willoughby, whom she believes is the ideal match for her. Indeed, John Willoughby appears to meet all of her requirements. Marianne is confident in her knowledge of Willoughby despite having known him for a short while. Her mother and older sister are unable to intervene. Marianne's sensitivity causes her to be unreasonable, which leads her to depression. Marianne is eventually compelled to come to her senses and reject all of her convictions. Austen introduces her to Colonel Brandon, who may be the ideal fit for her, now that she has finally matured. She must come to her senses and turn into a sensible woman. Marianne has learned from her past mistakes and is able to recover from Willoughby's deceit.

Elinor must remain cool and assert her authority, but this does not mean that she is deprived of sensibility, as her suffering is often demonstrated in the novel. Elinor always does her best to stay calm for the sake of those around her. She has a more realistic perspective on life.

Her choice of words is more balanced than Marianne's, which proves her wisdom. She is such a patient and honest character that Austen finally rewards her with the man she is in love with, who also happens to be the perfect partner for her. Theirs is, no doubt, the right kind of marriage for Jane Austen.

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