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Jane Austen's romances: an analysis of romantic relationships in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*

Autora

Elena Fuertes Martínez

Directora

Isabel Fraile Murlanch

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

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Introduction

A certainty in Jane Austen's novels is the romantic "happy ending" in which the story's main lovers eventually marry. The aim of this essay is to analyse the depictions of romance and marriage in two of her most famous works −*Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*– and to attempt to determine whether the romantic resolutions are actually sincere or ironic, and thus if the endings are truly happy or not.

A comparative analysis will be carried out of the portrayals of the two novels' main romantic couples –that is, those between Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars, and Marianne Dashwood and Colonel Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility*; Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, and Jane Bennet and Charles Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*− that come together at the end of each story, taking into account the history and characteristics of the relationships and whether they are presented in a positive or negative light. In order to determine if the couples getting together can truly constitute a happy ending, the whole extension of the characters' individual development and interaction throughout the novels must be analysed, as well as the reality of women and marriage during the time period in which Austen lived and set the stories. Specifically, the aspects to be analysed about the relationships will be the lovers' first meetings, the family pressure for or against the union, the lovers' similarity or disparity in tempers, their individual character development, the process of the lovers getting to know each other, and marriage as reflected by Austen's views and experience and by these characters.

Portrayal of the relationships

First meetings

Regarding the first meetings between the lovers, the concrete questions to analyse are whether the lovers' very first meeting is explicitly shown, and since first impressions in Austen often change in the later process of maturing, whether this shift in views occurs with every couple.

Although Elinor and Edward are one of the main couples of the novel, *Sense and Sensibility* does not show their first meeting, but instead jumps ahead to a time when the Dashwoods have already known him for some time and Elinor has already developed feelings for him. This is only the first of the ellipses that mark the pairing, as most of their relationship is skipped over. The writer's way of keeping their romance mostly outside the narrative is very intentional according to Deborah Kaplan, who argues so in order to explain the gaps of this relationship:

> Austen's narrator refers to but does not dramatize their "growing attachment" (*Sense*, 15). The novelist did not indulge in depictions of hero and heroine falling in love for crucial reasons. First, Austen presents the relationship of Elinor and Edward as one which, however strong their feelings, is conducted with a quiet decorum [...] Second, as Edward is already engaged, his affection for Elinor is tinged with guilt and the knowledge that his feelings are hopeless (182).

In contrast, Marianne's meeting with her two suitors is explicitly shown. Willoughby is first introduced as a dashing and heroic figure, rescuing Marianne in a very Victorian-like romantic scene, while the meeting with Brandon takes place in a regular social gathering and he gives her the impression of being a boring, elderly man. These first impressions are eventually either proven absolutely wrong −in Willoughby's case, as he turns out to be anything but heroic− or not so unforgivable as they seemed to be −as in Brandon's case, since it is stated that Marianne found those flaws not to be so important after marrying him.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, all the members of the two main pairings meet each other at the same time, during a ball. Jane and Bingley are instantly drawn to each other, due to their being very similar in personality and to the fact that their good-natured temper is uncomplicated and unhidden. However, Lizzy and Darcy's first meeting goes badly, but as their storylines involve having their original views about others subverted and their own prejudices overcome, this first impression has changed by the end of the novel. This theme is particularly relevant to the plot of the novel, to the point that the original title intended for the novel was, tellingly, *First Impressions*. The main characters in the novel must have their first impressions of others either proven wrong −such as Lizzy and Darcy's initial views on each other− or unimportant −such as Darcy's assessment of the Bennets' lack of refinement− in order to achieve happiness (Abbot 31).

Family pressure

The issues that I chose to examine concerning the characters' families' pressure for or against their unions were whether the characters' relatives mean to push the couples together or apart, and in what ways this affects the relationship taking place or being delayed.

Family pressure in *Sense and Sensibility* is extremely problematic, although it is only Marianne and not Elinor who suffers greatly from it, as Edward chooses to marry the latter in spite of his mother's opposition, but this does not affect their relationship. However, by the end of the novel, it is stated that Marianne's whole family wants to see her married to Colonel Brandon. This wish comes from their belief that he deserves to get her for being a good man, not only considering Marianne as a prize that should be given to the worthy suitor but also entirely forgetting to take into account her feelings on the matter, as nobody consults Marianne on the matter and she is completely

unaware of the situation. Furthermore, the language used by the narrator contains some implications of coercion on the family's part:

> They each felt his sorrows and their own obligations, and Marianne, by general consent, was to be the reward of all. With such a confederacy against her [...] what could she do? [...] that Marianne found her own happiness in forming his, was equally the persuasion and delight of each observing friend (372-373).

Directly referring to this quote in her article "Jane Austen, the Second Anglo-Mysore War, and Colonel Brandon's Forcible Circumcision: A Rereading of Sense and Sensibility", Linda Walker expresses her strong impression that Marianne consented under duress to her marriage, which is what I believe that even casual readers may gather as well:

> Elinor is a handmaiden to Brandon's pursuit of Marianne, despite being aware, "on an impartial consideration of their age, characters, or feelings" (336), that they do not suit. She welcomes him to Mrs. Jennings's house over and over again −eight or nine times− (161, 168, 172) despite Marianne's repugnance.

She later highlights, in the first place, the use of the word "reward" to refer to Marianne and how it takes away her autonomy and agency, and in the second place, how the narration all but states that she was pressured into marriage by her family.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (5). The very first line of *Pride and Prejudice* clearly indicates that the social pressure to marry is a constant in the novel. Most of it comes from the characters' families, most notably Mrs Bennet, and it is most pointedly directed towards the female characters, especially the five Bennet sisters, although as the quotation above shows, men are socially expected to marry as well. Mrs Bennet's obsession with having her daughters married off is not without reason, since as it is frequently mentioned, the women of the family will lose their house upon the patriarch's death due to the lack of a male Bennet heir. To a lesser degree, Lady

Catherine tries to exert pressure as well in order to ensure a marriage between her daughter Anne and her nephew Darcy; and to avoid one between Lizzy −whom she considers inferior because of her social class− and Darcy; and the Bingley sisters attempt to prevent their brother from marrying Jane −as does Darcy− and push him towards Georgiana Darcy, who is of higher status and possesses considerable wealth. It must be noted that the main reason behind the families' pressure for their younger generation to conform to the social convention of marriage is keeping or improving one's social and financial status and the family's −including social prestige and economic situation. However, all the aforementioned pressure tends to cause the completely opposite results to those originally intended. Mrs Bennet's indiscreet and overly committed matchmaking is taken for gold digging and indirectly causes Jane and Bingley's temporary separation, and while the efforts of the latter's sisters to keep them apart are successful for some time, they are ultimately frustrated. The biggest example of this family pressure backfiring is Lady Catherine, whose meddlesome visit to Lizzy in order to ensure the impossibility of her having entered an engagement to Darcy is precisely what brings them together.

Similarity or disparity

Judging by her depiction of romances in many of her works, Austen seemed to be of the opinion that like-mindedness was a necessary foundation for a successful relationship; therefore, analysing the characters' similarity or disparity in tempers is relevant. Most of the relationships in which the characters are similar appear to be happier than those composed by people of vastly different personalities, but the extent to which similarity is important must be studied, as well as whether the characters are aware of this and share Austen's view.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, the dynamics of partners with similar personalities is a central element and, as such, is explored and extensively discussed by the characters. Elinor's love interest, Edward, is remarkably similar to her: both are shy, thoughtful and quiet; and Marianne is specially determined to find someone like herself, who shares her passion and taste, as she strongly believes that a similar disposition is a partner's fundamental trait −hence she is supportive of her sister and Edward's relationship as well. Marianne's two romantic experiences are more difficult to fit into her wish for like-mindedness. First, she meets Willoughby, who is as passionate and −she thinks– straightforward, open and honest about his feelings as she is, but it ends badly for Marianne. Later, once she has left behind her exuberant personality and been "tamed", she marries the much older, calmer, more serious and reserved Brandon. Although it is suggested early in the novel that they are not as different as they seem −namely through one comment that they share a musical taste to an extent− this one similarity seems rather feeble in contrast to their differences in age, life experiences and personality.

Pride and Prejudice is clearer in its portrayal of like-minded individuals gravitating towards each other, something that happens often in the novel, as the two main relationships belong to this type of bond. Jane and Bingley are the most straightforward example, as both are easy-going, sweet, patient, naïve, and too good-natured for their own good, and it is often remarked that this deep similarity makes them right for each other. They are indeed happy together, but the novel also shows that being so alike entails, along with having the same strengths, sharing the same weak points, which causes them to have some deficiencies as a couple and future heads of a household. For instance, their shyness and modesty prevent Jane from being open and Bingley from being certain about their feelings initially; or, as Mr Bennet once puts it, "you are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that

every servant will cheat you, and so generous, that you will always exceed your income" (268). Lizzy and Darcy's case is more complex. They seem quite different for most of the novel −and in fact, Lizzy mocks the idea that their tempers could be similar at one point (74)− but as the story progresses, they are found to be cynical, very protective and caring of their few but precious loved ones, and in possession of a very harmful flaw that drives them, respectively, to treat others unjustly –in Darcy's case, due to his pride− and to judge others incorrectly −in Lizzy's, due to her prejudice− and which they must overcome in order to grow as human beings. This does not imply that they become suddenly alike in every respect, but that their true and evolved temper is finally clear to the other. They admit there are some differences between them, but that those will contribute to their mutual improvement, with one's strengths making up for the other's weaknesses, a kind of reciprocally beneficial relationship that Austen referred to as a 'compact of convenience' (Shields 99). Therefore, they are a more realistic example of this type of relationship, as their partnership is based on their being complementary and compatible rather than on being identical. In *Jane Austen and the State*, Mary Evans argues that there is definitely a component of mutual benefit in some of Austen's couples, such as Lizzy and Darcy, which I believe could be the idea behind pairing up Marianne and Brandon as well: "On an interpersonal level, the [marriage] of [...] Elizabeth and Mr Darcy [seems] to be entirely appropriate: the women are, in a sense, tamed by the better judgement and the wider experience of the world of their husbands, whilst the men are given more levity by interaction with their lively wives" (23).

Character development

Most of the characters must evolve in some way, but it should be discerned if this character development is undergone so that they can become better for the sake of improving as human beings, and maybe later allow for a relationship, or exclusively in order to shape them into being adequate for a relationship. It must be noted as well whether the characters merely overcome their worst traits or if they suffer a complete change of personality.

Oddly for an Austen heroine, Elinor remains a mostly static character throughout *Sense and Sensibility*. She begins and ends the story as a calm, reserved young woman and the only noticeable change is that by the ending of the novel she is willing to disregard money as a marriage requirement as long as she can have love. Marianne's change, in contrast, is a rather extreme case of character development. The ending of Marianne's relationship with Willoughby is very traumatic and this, coupled with a nearly lethal illness, changes her drastically, in the sense that she suffers a complete shift in personality, from a passionate and lively girl to a broken and chastised woman. As for the male counterparts of the quartet, it seems as if they do not evolve at all, although this may be due to the little time the novel devotes to them. Edward's lack of character development can be succinctly summed up by the following quotation:

> It was certain that Edward was free; and to what purpose that freedom would be employed was easily pre-determined by all; −for after experiencing the blessings of one imprudent engagement, contracted without his mother's consent, as he had already done for more than four years, nothing less could be expected of him in the failure of that, than the immediate contraction of another (353-354).

The acid irony of the passage is probably the closest that the narration gets to overt criticism of Elinor and Edward's marriage. It highlights the main two things the reader gets to learn about Edward with certainty: the first, that he was once secretly engaged; and the second, that after managing to break off that commitment, he almost

immediately entered another one with Elinor. Years have passed between the first engagement −which took place when he was much younger− and the second, yet the quote implies he has not matured or learned anything at all in his approach to romantic relationships. As for Brandon, the reader knows so little about him that any possible changes in his characterization seem imperceptible.

Pride and Prejudice takes a very different route to character development. It is very important for the plot that the novel's main characters have an important flaw but are good at heart, and therefore they have to overcome that flaw but not change their whole personality. Jane, who always thinks the best of everyone, must learn that some people are genuinely toxic or out to hurt others. Lizzy has to realize that her judgement is not infallible and thus she cannot really tell what someone is like until she truly gets to know them. Darcy must overcome his classism and excessive pride and start to show respect not only to the people who depend on him. An exception to this is Bingley, as he begins and ends the story as a good-natured but very easily influenced person who is usually led by others: even at the end of the novel, he finds the confidence to propose to his beloved Jane only after Darcy has assured him of his support. Nevertheless, the novel makes it clear that in general, the characters need to develop some traits and get rid of others, while remaining the same people, if improved, at their core.

Interaction

The portrayal of the couples' interaction, that is, of the actual time the lovers spend together, getting to know each other and having the chance to develop feelings for each other, is another issue to be examined. In particular, I will be paying attention to whether getting to know each other is considered necessary by the characters involved

in the relationships and by others, and to whether the couples' falling, being in love and confessing their feelings is shown or told.

Sense and Sensibility is rather peculiar in its portrayal of courtships. Oddly, the novel devotes more time to the platonic relationships and the romances that end in disappointment −that is, the one between Marianne and Willoughby− than it does its main endgame romances. Elinor and Edward's relationship, as has been mentioned before, is almost completely skipped over, so they are not shown getting to know each other, but Marianne and Brandon are even worse offenders against generic conventions than they are. Walker directly addresses this practically invisible relationship as caused by the story's small focus on Brandon and the even smaller focus on his relationship with Marianne:

> We see him little and hear him less. He wins the heroine in the end it seems by simply being there, endlessly being there. […] He and Marianne Dashwood have no conversation, no polite social intercourse. It's an amazing omission and one turns the pages in disbelief, hunting for what must have been missed. What other novel exists where a couple meets, courts, and marries throughout the span of 380 pages, without speaking to each other?

The romantic resolutions of the Dashwood sisters are as perplexing as their courtships. They are narrated through dialogue-less passages: the narration tells of Edward's proposal and his wedding to Elinor, and of Marianne's engagement and marriage to Brandon (Abbott 36). None of the details or exact words of the characters of these events are explicitly shown −although the latter could be explained by virtue of Elinor being the focaliser of the novel−, which seems very peculiar considering they are supposed to be the romantic climaxes that the novel has been leading readers to. Edward's decision to propose to Elinor, the actual event and her reaction are comprised into one neat paragraph, which is narrated in such a non-romantic, impersonal style that it does not seem to fit with the engagement of two people who are passionately in love

and can finally be together after a series of obstacles: "How soon he had walked himself into the proper resolution, however, how soon an opportunity of exercising it occurred, in what manner he expressed himself, and how he was received, need not be particularly told. This only need be said; −that […] he had secured his lady" (354).

Pride and Prejudice is rather more explicit in having the couples actually interact inside the narration. Jane and Bingley spend most of the two balls that take place in the story together, and they also interact during social visits, although it is unclear if they talk to each other at all at the time of Jane's stay at his house during her illness. It seems like they are instantly drawn to each other. For their part, Lizzy and Darcy interact a fair amount: they speak during social visits as well, at the Netherfield ball, and during Lizzy's visit to Pemberley, but it is strange that the narration reveals that Darcy's feelings for Lizzy began very early on, when they had not even spoken and had not caused each other an agreeable impression. As for the romantic resolutions, the novel takes a different approach in each. Bingley's proposal to Jane is not shown at all – which, as with the above case, can be explained given that most of the novel mostly follows Lizzy's story, and she is not present during that particular event− but the joyful mood of both after it is, as well as the rest of the Bennets'. In contrast, Darcy's two proposals to Lizzy appear as dialogue, but only a few sentences, while Lizzy's immediate reaction to the second one is only narrated, but the language used fits the romantic ambiance of the scene, and their conversations afterwards are detailed.

Marriages

Marriage as it appears in the novels cannot be analysed in itself, without taking into account its historical context and Austen's own experiences and opinions on it. It must

be discerned whether the characters' unions are somehow forced −due to social norms, pressure, genre expectations, etcetera− or freely chosen.

Having the main couples get married is practically law in Austen's novels, but the issue of whether she meant the novels' romantic resolutions sincerely or ironically is not so easily discerned and has been the subject of much debate in literary criticism. It seems that Austen personally disagreed with the idea that women simply had to be married off, sometimes without emotional attachment, in order to gain the closest thing to financial independence that they could aspire to achieve, as they would stop being a burden for their families. Austen herself once faced the decision of marrying –by accepting the proposal of Harris Bigg-Wither, a man whom she did not love but who could provide financial stability for her− or remaining single –in spite of the fact that she knew this would mean continuing to depend financially on her parents, something she was growing weary of (Shields 98-99)− and chose the latter. This decision was not easily made, however, and it was influenced by Austen's personal feelings rather than by any kind of anti-marriage stance, as it is explored by Carol Shields:

> She did, to be sure, long to marry. She was just days away from her twenty-seventh birthday and facing the reality of what that might mean. [...] The marriage would bind the two families even closer together and would give Jane a home of her own, but nothing could alter the person of Harris Bigg-Wither and the very probable revulsion she felt for him (98-99).

Judging by this account of the event, it would seem that Austen's views on marriage did not consist of being inherently against it, but rather on being very aware that it was unfair for women to be forced to choose between loveless unions or spinsterhood. This was a dichotomy that she experienced personally and painfully after the aforementioned proposal, since, as mentioned above, she knew she would likely never receive another (Shields 101), and although the prospect of never getting married did not seem agreeable to her, her opinions on marrying without love remained unchanged, as can be

clearly seen in one of her letters advising her niece years later that "anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection" (*The Letters of Jane Austen,* 279).

Austen's writings are easily a way for her to show her views on the woman question: "As readers, we see that woman's role, her "place," is a central subject in the Austen novels; as David Spring asserts, "Jane Austen's major preoccupation was the fate of women in the society of her time" (Swords).

Nevertheless, the reality of the Regency Era was that the only options available for the future of a young woman belonging to the landed gentry −such as Austen herself, and her heroines– were often marriage, dispossession or becoming a burden for her family. Even though Austen was an example that there were ways out of this oppressive situation, since she never married and went on to enjoy a successful career as a writer (Shields 153) –a job which, in spite of the professional limitations put on women at the time, she could have and earn money from, while still maintaining her respectability, due to her social status (Swords)− this was not the norm at the time. Still, however Austen felt about women's position with regard to marriage, the genre in which she wrote was expected to have its stories end with the happy marriage of the protagonists. The fact that Austen opposed the imposed requirement of marriage expected of "proper" women is key to understand her decision to criticise it in her works, whether it was done subtly through hints and irony –as I believe is the case with the ending of *Sense and Sensibility*– or, more openly, by showing her heroines' usual practical sense on the matter of matrimony. Her own ideas about love and success in marriage must not be disregarded either, and are present in the romanticism that manages to sneak into her heroines' love stories. Austen was by no means a revolutionary, but she was not happy with the robbery of women's rights in her time,

which included being unable to make their own fortune, losing their legitimate fortune to a male relative, or being financially dependent on their husband after marrying. This is the reason why both practicality and romanticism are relevant in Austen's novels: the four heroines of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* are under threat of being destitute unless they marry, but their attitudes to this established norm of marriage are different. They go from the extremely practical −like Elinor, who advocates for economically advantageous marriages– to the extremely romantic –such as Marianne, who believes a union without feeling is worthless−, going through the opinions in-between −that of Lizzy and Jane, who are reminded by their mother that matrimony is the only possible step for them if they want to survive (Abbott 19) and are aware of the advantages of a well-off marriage, but at the same time do not wish to take a husband they do not feel any attachment to. Whether these particular attitudes are changed or not during the course of the story is eventually irrelevant: for most of the heroines, in the end, the act of getting married may ultimately follow social conventions, but it is a personal choice made in order to try and achieve happiness. Austen also emphasises that marriage is not inherently the happiest alternative for everyone by showing, as Karen Newman expresses in an article titled "Can This Marriage Be Saved: Jane Austen Makes Sense of an Ending", several minor characters' unsuccessful marriages that "prevent us from dismissing her novels as romantic love stories in which Austen succumbs uncritically to the "rewards" her culture allotted women" (695).

Elinor and Marianne's marriages in *Sense and Sensibility* appear to be a good example of Austen's love for irony. Elinor, who had always been an advocate for practicality and realistically saw the advantages of a well-off marriage, ends up marrying an impoverished Edward out of love; while Marianne, who has the opposite view of what a suitable marriage would be in that she preferred passion over money,

eventually marries a wealthy man whom she does not love. The reading of Elinor's marriage to Edward as happy heavily depends on believing that she is right in forgiving him for concealing his engagement to another woman and thus being dishonest with her for most of the novel, not just by neglecting to mention it, but also by outright lying at one point in order to keep it a secret from Elinor (95). This brings about an inevitable interpretation of Edward as a deceptive love interest (Ray), the figure of the "wrong suitor". This is a very common character in Austen's novels, who is seen as a possible candidate for the heroine's love until his true, unworthy self is discovered. The difference in this case is that in spite of this, he is the one Elinor ends up with. For her part, the ending of Marianne's story is especially curious in that, as T. Vasudeva Reddy mentions, "in Jane Austen's view marriage may not be the only solution to the women's problem [...] In her view it is better to remain unmarried than marry a man whom one cannot love" (162), and Marianne does not reciprocate Brandon's feelings at the time of their marriage (although it is mentioned that she eventually came to love him). The actual quotation from Austen's letters which he is referring to is that "nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without love, −bound to one, and preferring another; that is a punishment which you do not deserve" (*The Letters of Jane Austen* 287). Although Marianne has no love left for Willoughby by the time she marries Brandon, it is difficult to see how Marianne has been so traumatized by her tragic passionate romance that she would prefer to enter an engagement with no feeling at all. Furthermore, it is also unnerving that their relationship has some uncomfortable implications, not only due to the age difference, since Brandon is old enough to be Marianne's father, as she herself remarks at one point, but especially in that Marianne caught his attention for being very similar to his past love, and so it is uncomfortably easy for the reader to see her as a replacement, which in turn also begs the question of

how much he really knows and values Marianne for herself. Given the treatment of both sisters' endgame relationships throughout the novel, it is difficult to consider their marriages as happy endings. As Claudia Johnson puts it, "it is only by recourse to outrageous acts of chance that Austen marries her heroines off with some measure of muted felicity" (72).

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane and Bingley's marriage is expected by most of the characters for a large part of the novel, and it finally taking place is a joyous occasion. Nevertheless, although it is clear that it is what both characters clearly wanted, Bingley's main flaw, his high suggestibility, has posed problems to their relationship, and it seems that he has not overcome it, as mentioned by the narration near the end of the novel when Lizzy reflects on how easily he is guided by Darcy (286). This casts serious doubt on whether Bingley, however in love with Jane he may be, would still have gotten married to her without Darcy's "permission", as Lizzy puts it. It also makes their love story less satisfactory, as they are brought together more by the actions and inactions of others than of themselves. Lizzy and Darcy's marriage, however, defies the expectations of most characters –with the exception of those who gave credit to the then false rumours regarding their engagement. Due to Lizzy's vocal dislike of him and Darcy's palpable disdain for almost everyone for a good part of the novel, by the end nobody expects them to begin a relationship, and the fact that they do contradicts all kind of other characters' expectations and even their own, as each was convinced until almost the very end that their love was unrequited. It is a union that is freely chosen, that takes only the feelings of both characters into account and therefore shows that marrying is their true desire.

Conclusions

Despite the fact that both stories end in marriage, as seems to be the norm in Jane Austen's novels, the endings of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, while perhaps very similar at first glance, are not as alike as they may initially appear. They could be considered as a good fit to the romantic genre, as long as the reader disregards Austen's use of irony and takes the endings at face value. After all, the author was obviously aware of the genre's conventions, and provided her readership with endings that fit in it, namely those in which everyone gets married.

However, after carrying out a detailed analysis, I have observed that the appropriateness of the novels' resolutions differs in terms of characterization. Elinor's romantic ending suffers mostly from the many ellipses that plague her relationship with Edward, who is, like Brandon, lacking in depth. The narrative builds Marianne up as a well-defined, engaging main character throughout the whole story, only to dismiss her at the last possible second as a secondary character's love interest −even though she is one of the two protagonists− with whom she has little or no romantic development, and in addition, it is implied that their relationship is at best problematic in many aspects. My close examination of the novel has made me reach the conclusion that the resolution of *Sense and Sensibility* forces a romantic closure that is out of place character-wise, and therefore it can be understood as ironic.

In contrast, *Pride and Prejudice* devotes more time to the individual motivations of its characters and to the justifications behind their romantic attachments. Jane and Bingley are given less attention by the narrative and due to this they might seem like less developed characters −when in truth they are merely less complicated characters in comparison to the novel's other main couple− and their romantic closure is correctly set-up and can be said to make sense. Lizzy and Darcy are complex characters who

undergo a process of individual development that eventually enables them to convincingly come together as a couple. After analysing the novel in-depth, it can be concluded that *Pride and Prejudice* provides a much more satisfying happy ending that leads its characters to a coherent closure, and thus it can be understood as sincere, raher than ironic.

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