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## **The Miseducation Of Marianne Dashwood: Jane Austen's Politicization of Sentimental Discourse**

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The Miseducation Of Marianne Dashwood:  
Jane Austen's Politicization of Sentimental Discourse

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It is often said about Jane Austen's prolific literary career that *Sense and Sensibility* is the most unmistakably didactic and one of her more unpopular novels from her collection of works.<sup>1</sup> Since liberals, moderates, and conservatives perceived the novel as an influential medium, Austen, along with numerous authors, began to use the novel to politicize the existing sentimental discourse to express their beliefs because sentimental novels had a powerful impact in their society. In *Revolution and the form of the English novel 1790-1825*, Nicola J. Watson asserts that “in a country where morals are on the decline, sentimental novels always become dissolute,” supporting the idea that romantic novels were a reliable indicator of a country's temperament, which became a significant reason for the oppositional literary reaction towards sentimental ideology.<sup>2</sup> As resentment began to develop because sentimentalist writing and philosophy nurtured emotional excess by suggesting that individuals should distance themselves from the ideas of sense and reason and more so towards emotion and feeling. Austen and her contemporaries disliked the sudden embrace of sentimental values. Hence, she, along with her peers, decided to counteract this newly formed movement that, from their perspective, encouraged a certain level of departure from moderate values.

According to Marilyn Butler, in the novel *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, initially, *Sense and Sensibility* was a collection of letters titled *Elinor and Marianne*.<sup>3</sup> It may have been

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1. Marilyn Butler, “Sense and Sensibility,” in *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2001), 194.

2. Nicola J. Watson, “Introduction: Revolutionary Letters,” in *Revolution and the form of the English novel 1790-1825* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994):1.

3. Butler, “Sense and Sensibility,” 182.

written in 1795 at the same time, where writing didactic novels that juxtaposed the beliefs and conduct of two characters was quite popular, which also allowed writers to highlight particular qualities while censuring the contrary to their audiences. Butler asserts *Sense and Sensibility* was not only didactic but suggests that Austen's choice of focusing upon the dissimilarities of her two heroines demonstrates that she was purposefully trying to make an ideological point that breaking with societal conventions would pose dangerous risks for women who are both emotional and easily influenced.<sup>4</sup> Susan Morgan has argued that the contrast between Marianne Dashwood's hyper-emotional disposition and Elinor Dashwood's more reserved temperament is proof that Austen was attempting to advance the notion that one set of values is inherently better than another, specifically, sentimental values, in comparison to non-sentimental values.<sup>5</sup> In this essay, I will argue that *Sense and Sensibility* disclose Austen's anxieties regarding sentimentalism because, from this perspective, Marianne Dashwood's character arc illustrates the author's unhappiness with the growing sway of sentimental beliefs on impressionable young women.

The most straightforward way to begin is to declare that *Sense and Sensibility* is a story where Austen utilizes Marianne Dashwood, along with many other naive women, to illustrate the dangers posed by excessive sensibilities, hyper-emotional behavior, unstable male conduct. It is the author's most didactic novel. A book that contrasts unrestrained passions and conservative practices through the actions of sensitive men. This novel allows Marianne to succumb to the dangers of being overly sensitive to make a calculated societal point about the hazard of

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4. Butler, "Sense and Sensibility," 182.

5. Tasha Ghoshal Wallace, "Sense and Sensibility and the Problem of Feminine Authority," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 4, no. 2 (January 1992):150.

expressing and prioritizing sensibilities instead of traditional values that leaves women in vulnerable circumstances against the opposite sex. This message was communicated in the description of Marianne after her marriage to Colonel Brandon, “Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions” (268). Critics, such as Tasha Ghoshal Wallace and Shawn Lisa Maurer, have shown that *Sense and Sensibility* emphasize the social, emotional development of Marianne Dashwood into a mature woman that renounces her sensible manner for a more modest demeanor exemplified by her choice in Colonel Brandon as a partner.<sup>6</sup>

I agree that *Sense and Sensibility* reveals Austen's concerns regarding sentimentalism, so she uses Marianne Dashwood's character arc to illustrate her anxieties regarding the revolutionary shift in England's political climate. The point of this essay is to build upon this understanding of Marianne's maturation process, and then explore how Austen utilizes the diverse masculinities of Marianne's love interests to assert the notion that sentimentalism is a threat to civility, specifically to womanhood because it espouses values that women cannot fully live by in a patriarchal society. Austen does not seek to confront patriarchy but is aware that it places constraints that women must adhere to in a civilized society. Otherwise, they will suffer from challenging an unforgiving system, as evidenced by her depiction of the tragic lives of the Elizas. As romantic novels became prevalent, the genre started to provide a space for passionate women to revel in imaginative fantasies with newly domesticated rakish men, which encouraged a dangerous idea that women were on a similar footing with men, and did not have more to lose in society, in terms of status. Through the themes interpolated in her writing, it is clear that

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6. Shawn Lisa Maurer, “At Seventeen: Adolescence in *Sense and Sensibility*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 25, no. 4 (Summer 2013): 726.

Austen understands the potential reasons for seductive novels to influence female readers, and attempts to combat this by using Marianne as an exemplar for the intended audience. At the beginning of the novel, Marianne excessively feels every emotion with such intense passion, which causes her to pine for a storybook love. Eventually, Austen forces Marianne, the sensitive heroine, to undergo a harrowing transformation starting with her doomed relationship with John Willoughby to a future engagement to Colonel Brandon to become a more disciplined woman. Furthering, my assertion that Austen uses these different representations of masculinity to display the dangers that exist for women that embrace excessive sensibilities because they suffer more under the male patriarchy.

Sentimentalism was a lightning rod for controversy during the eighteenth century because of the divisiveness that developed amongst the traditional culture of the period. This particular genre reinforced unpopular morals and beliefs, so it is not surprising that romantic stories caused discord because of its growing influence on society, especially women, which was a significant cause for concern. Considering the overwhelming popularity of sentimental authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, experts speculated that women were more inclined to be naive, thereby making them partial to the messaging in sentimental novels. Claire Grogan notes that Anna Laetitia Barbauld wrote explicitly of the powerful influence of Rousseau in *The British Novelist* "the passionate, the eloquent, the seductive Rousseau . . . whose thoughts . . . breathe and words . . . burn." Barbauld uses language such as "breathe" and "burn," to paint the picture that Rousseau's thoughts exuded erotic and sentimental connotations, assumably, because his statements inspired ideas that proposed passion and deep emotion that resonated with female

readers.<sup>7</sup> She also outlines the different dangers for young women because first, “the danger novels posed for the female reader, and second, the specific dangers of Rousseau because of the limited reading capabilities of women.”<sup>8</sup> This thought becomes predominant and pervasive through some social circles that women readers were undoubtedly easily influenced, and liable to be seduced by the radical ideologies espoused from a controversial choice of novels because of their assumed lack of intelligence. Austen likely recognized that sentimental ideology would yield terrible results for women because romantic novels tended to portray men as one-dimensional figures, ignoring the multi-layers they held that could range from polite to wicked. Subsequently, this led to numerous attempts by Jane Austen, along with many authors, to satirize the sentimental novel to compare and contrast moral values to examine the problematic truths that women experience concerning matrimony, in the hopes of coaxing the female audience towards the conservative point of view.

As sentimental novels attempted to decenter the domestic sphere as an influence over the lives of the heroine, conservatives, similar to Jane West, Mary Hays, and Jane Austen, decided to react to the social phenomenon surrounding *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and many of the other sentimental novels.<sup>9</sup> These authors moved towards weaponizing the novel to disseminate their own ideals to hinder progressives in the eyes of the public, specifically, the female reader. They composed texts such as *Gossip Story*, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, and *Sense and Sensibility*,

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7. Claire Grogan, “The Politics of Seduction in British Fiction of the 1790s: The Female Reader and *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 11, no. 4 (July 1999): 459.

8. Grogan, “The Politics of Seduction in British Fiction of the 1790s,” 459-460

9. Gary Kelly, “Women Novelists and the French Revolution Debate: Novelizing the Revolution/Revolutionizing the Novel,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 6, no. 4 (July 1994): 380.

and these authors adopted the novel to distort the overall sentimental message to explain the possible downfall of someone who entirely abandoned their pension for self-control.

*In Revolution and the form of the English novel 1790-1825*, Nicola J. Watson continues this assertion, “This politicization of sentimental discourse, on the part of radicals, liberals, and conservatives alike generated a range of new narratives models in response.”<sup>10</sup> Watson suggests that most of the authors on both sides of the ideological argument surrounding sentimental discourse manipulated the novel to propagate a didactic and conventional narrative in their novels. The novel *Sense and Sensibility* is quite transparent in demonstrating a conservative message throughout the story; and, it is significant to note that critics suggest the main reason for this stands as a warning for young women contemplating with conforming to a philosophy that will punish them for rebelling against a patriarchal culture that will penalize them for following their unrepressed feelings.

Often many scholars have found the ending to Marianne's plot and the love triangle between herself, John Willoughby, and Colonel Brandon to present an exceptionally flat finish for the impulsive heroine.<sup>11</sup> Therefore it is possible to contend that Austen does not place Marianne Dashwood between two male suitors in Colonel Brandon and John Willoughby to inspire a love story. Instead, it is to differentiate the masculinities that women will encounter throughout the courtship phase and emphasize the contrasting dangers that men will pose for them. John Willoughby exemplifies the exact man that Marianne has had her heart set on from the beginning of the story. He possesses the charming characteristics exemplified from the imaginary leading males she encounters in the popular novels of the period because of his charm,

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10. Watson, “Introduction: Revolutionary Letters,” 2.

11. Maurer, “At Seventeen: Adolescence in *Sense and Sensibility*,” 723.



nonchalant, including his debonair personality. Unfortunately, Willoughby's actions echo the eroding values of the period by his rakish behavior that begins to corrupt Marianne entirely, ranging from her person to her emotional health. On the other side, Colonel Brandon presents rigidly and lacks a particular outwards passion that Marianne, a female reader of the time, would hardly be in favor of him. Yet, Brandon represents the expected male standard of the time because he models maleness that is sophisticated as well as conforms to the expected standard of the period. Since he fits into the norm, it also positions him into the role of representing the patriarchy. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks defines, "patriarchy," as a system of society or government in which men hold power and women are largely excluded from it.<sup>12</sup> Colonel Brandon maintains military standing, land ownership, and polished demeanor, it is possible to connect him to the patriarchy, along with the conservative class. However, it is challenging to place both of these in any one category of male masculinity, according to eighteenth-century standards because these particular men oscillate between the various paradigms of male masculinity. Critics believe a significant reason for Austen shaping her leading males to display true-to-life illustrations of male behavior was to counteract the artificial versions that appeared in the romantical stories, which led to her depicting honest pictures of courtship.

As stated earlier, there were a variety of masculine categories during the late eighteenth century. Sentimental novels typically posited their leading men as dashing, carefree, and excessive passionate, mostly, a man of feeling. Based on her collection of works, namely *Sense and Sensibility*, it suggests that Austen disagreed with the shallow depictions of males in sentimental texts because they misled the female readership in making a well-reasoned decision

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12. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, "World History and the History of Women, Gender, and Sexuality," *Journal of World History* 8, No. 1 (Mar 2007): 53.

amid courtship. In this novel, Austen routinely distorts the presumed perceptions of male masculine behaviors as the novel chronicles the shifts in each of Marianne Dashwood's suitors. When the novel introduces Colonel Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility*, he immediately is oriented to the reader as a polite gentleman. Phillip Carter states that the polite gentleman was a popular example of maleness, “politeness was a form of social refinement that linked virtue with civility, thus producing a new concept of social interaction at the turn of the eighteenth century.”<sup>13</sup> This specific class of males demonstrated their masculinity through sociability and self-regulation and refused to break convention and upset the public expectation for their behavior. The narrator observes these qualities in the description of the Colonel. “He was silent and grave. His appearance, however, was not displeasing, despite his being in the opinion of Marianne and Margaret an absolute old bachelor, for he was on the wrong side of five and thirty; but though his face was not handsome, his countenance was sensible, and his address was particularly gentlemanlike”(27). At the outset, the novel infers that Brandon's appearance is visually disappointing by describing using specific words choice like “silent” and “grave,” thereby conditioning the readership to find him wholly unattractive and not suitable as a leading man because of his lack of passion. When the narrator continues to paint of picture of Brandon to the reader, the text also states that Brandon's appearance was equally “sensible” and “gentlemanlike,” which in connection to the earlier descriptors of Brandon wholly diminishes his overall appeal because of his perceived inflexible male attitude. Austen positions Colonel Brandon as inferior, compared the idea of a passionate lover. Further, this representation is accentuated from the viewpoint of the adolescent Dashwood sisters, who find Brandon dull and

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13. Karen Harvey, “The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800,” *Journal of British Studies*, 44, No.2 (April 2005):301.

unappealing. Since Marianne and Margaret are closer in age with the female readership, that would be more akin to being more likely interested in sentimental novels and lean more towards a more liberal man and are less likely to find Brandon or manliness that he represents attractive. Although Austen incorporates the opinions of the younger women, she also indirectly satirizes them for the same opinions. When Elinor and Marianne debate the merits of the older bachelor, Marianne comes across as vapid, “It would be impossible, I know,” replied Elinor, “to convince you that a woman of seven and twenty could feel for a man of thirty-five anything near enough to love, to make him a desirable companion to her. . . but he talked of flannel waistcoats,” said Marianne, “and with me, a flannel waistcoat is invariably connected with aches, cramps, rheumatisms, and every species of ailment that can afflict the old and the feeble”(30). Although Austen acknowledges the criticisms Colonel Brandon faces and posits him as a timid bore, she does not fully allow him to be ridiculed without response. Elinor talks down to Marianne on the basis that she is too immature to appreciate someone like Colonel Brandon, and Marianne does reinforce this accusation she continues to prattle on about flannel waistcoats, which illustrates the frivolous feelings that overly sentimental women maintain. Austen mocks emotional women through Elinor's disparaging comments to make a distinction between how these two different women see the same man, Elinor, the responsible figure, recognizes that there is more to the man than his appearance or lack of emotion. Unfortunately, Marianne, similar to the heroines in sentimental novels, finds herself more drawn to the pursuit of desire and spontaneous affection.

### *Austen and Sentimental Literature*

When Austen begins the courtship plot of Marianne Dashwood and John Willoughby, she permits the reader to experience a quintessential sentimental romance along with Marianne. The novel allows this to occur to demonstrate the faults in sentimental courtship plots. As Claire

Grogan has observed in the literary works of Jane Austen and her contemporaries, the sentimental genre possesses certain inherent tropes.<sup>14</sup> “For instance, they made political comments about the female reader, her critical abilities, her choice of reading material, and her sexuality when discussing, in their fiction, the novel's reputation for seduction.” Whenever Austen alternates between the narrator and Elinor to criticize Marianne, she censures Marianne Dashwood's obsession with Willoughby because of these traits. Austen sharply critiques the development of the initial meeting between our impulsive heroine and John Willoughby. “His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favorite story, and in his carrying her into the house with so little previous formality, there was a rapidity of thought which particularly recommended the action to her. . . .” “Her imagination was busy, her reflections were pleasant, and the pain of a sprained ankle was disregarded”(33-34). In this passage, Austen, through the gaze of the narrator, derides this storybook meeting between the two characters because the description of the entire ordeal is laughable. When the narrator decides to liken John Willoughby, the mysterious stranger, to a hero from her favorite story, this reads as an indirect criticism of sentimental clichés because of the emphasis placed on comparing this interaction to “her favorite story.” After referring to Marianne's experience as merely a story, the critique renders her childlike and supports Claire Grogan's earlier point since this also diminishes her intelligence, her preferences in literature, and her ability to be easily seduced by a newcomer. Further, this scene entirely captures the high level of excess that Austen found to be undesirable and, demonstrates Marianne's unhealthy behavior. Marianne's continued fixation of this stranger is unreal, and this is apparent in the narrator's cynicism about this scene. The emphasis placed on the narrator's mixture of ridicule and doubt at this encounter allows the

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14. Grogan, “The Politics of Seduction in British Fiction of the 1790s,” 464.

reader themselves to ponder over the scene and gradually find fault in the banality of sentimental romance because it is unmistakably rooted in a superficial infatuation on beauty. Marilyn Butler reads this moment in *Sense and Sensibility* similarly, “His beauty encourages an intuitive response from Marianne, and receives it.”<sup>15</sup> This specific scene is reminiscent of Austen's assessment of the dangers stemming from the sentimental genre because Marianne does not scrutinize the situation and cedes control and embraces her passions for a handsome stranger. Furthermore, this is after; she quickly declined the advances of Brandon based on his lack of passion, there showing her desire sentimentality as sign of shallowness in her because his physical prowess easily sways her, which causes her to mistake his personality.

Michael Kramp writes in his novel *Disciplining Love*, in the woods, “Willoughby displays a rugged sense of toughness through his ability to help and save her from fall in the woods.”<sup>16</sup> Willoughby is presented overwhelmingly at the height of manhood, which further authorizes the reader to understand the reason why Marianne would be attracted to this seemingly refined man. He is attentive to Marianne at her time of need, “he offered his services, and perceiving that her modesty declined what her situation rendered necessary, took her up in his arms without farther delay, and carried her down the hill”(33). Overall, on the surface, John Willoughby seems to inhabit the masculine space of the polite gentleman. Karen Harvey claims, the men that practiced polite masculinity were courteous towards their fellow peers and especially ingratiated themselves towards the fairer sex.”<sup>17</sup> Considering that Austen has

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15. Butler, “Sense and Sensibility,”186.

16. Michael Kramp, “Austen’s Sensitive Men,” in *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007): 58.

17. Harvey, “The History of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800,” 301

presented John Willoughby as this figure, by emphasizing his beauty, power, and heroic qualities, it is possible to assert that Austen structures Willoughby, almost as a decoy figure to the reader. He is undeniably charming in every possible facet but eventually develops into a monster. Since he eventually changes for the worse, he displays to the reader the impracticality of ceding control in hopes for sentimental romance. Austen against presuming men's behaviors based on superficial reasoning, and she continues this idea through Elinor's critical view of the relationship.

Throughout the novel, Austen permits the Willoughby character to expose his sensibilities without fully exaggerating his rakish manner to conceal his corrupt behavior. Meanwhile, the author continues to shift between different character perspectives to criticize his relationship with Marianne, indirectly censuring his masculine conduct as well. Since it was quite popular in conduct genre to contrast the views of two different characters, it is not surprising that Austen uses Elinor's perspective to assess her sister's new beau as suspicious. According to Karen Stohr, Elinor's discernment is not surprising since, "throughout the novel, Elinor is the exemplar of moderation, propriety, and moral rectitude." "She fulfills every major social duty without ever being obsequious or false." "Always conscious of the demands of gratitude and family relationships," thereby making Elinor a representation of Austen's conventional beliefs.<sup>18</sup> Elinor functions as a stand-in for Austen while she criticizes Marianne for her complete lack of reserve with Willoughby. "Well, Marianne," said Elinor, as soon as he had left them, "for ONE morning, I think you have done pretty well. You have already ascertained Mr. Willoughby's opinion in almost every matter of importance. You know what he thinks of

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18. Karen Stohr, "Practical Wisdom and Moral Imagination in Sense and Sensibility," *Philosophy and Literature*, 30, No.2 (October 2006), 382

Cowper and Scott; you are certain of his estimating their beauties as he ought, and you have received every assurance of his admiring Pope no more than is proper” (37). Austen expresses disdain for self-indulgence and the unhealthy consumption of sentimental literature through Elinor's criticism of her sister and her prospective beau. Marilyn Butler reads this passage similarly, “But she does mean to criticize, through Elinor, the way Willoughby and Marianne read, and show that when they abandon themselves to their reading together, the result is grossly self-indulgent.” “Everything they do follows the same shared selfishness.”<sup>19</sup> Though Willoughby and Marianne demonstrate a shared sense of selfishness and disappoints Elinor, it is a softened idea of the dangers of sensibility it is a far cry from the unsavory character that Willoughby will eventually become by the conclusion of the novel. While Austen seems committed to easing both this couple towards the punishment for their actions, this tact illuminates to the reader that it is not one swift action that demonstrates a bad behavior. Instead, the novel suggests it is tiny examples of taboo practice that slowly reveal the hidden character of an individual, while simultaneously showing those same small examples that corrupt both involved.

This development demonstrates that the initial presentation of John Willoughby may have been misleading, which, according to Charles H. Hinnant, is a reoccurring example that appears in Austen's novel as a critique of the courtship process. “Austen's novels assume from the outset that the courtship relation is spurious and misleading, distorting genuine human feelings and concealing important character traits.” The passions generated by amatory gallantry are likely to be either transient and blind or, even worse, merely simulated.”<sup>20</sup> This analysis on

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19. Butler, “Sense and Sensibility,”187.

20. Charles H. Hinnant, “Jane Austen’s “Wild Imagination”: Romance and the Courtship Plot in the Six Canonical Novels,” *The Ohio State University Press*, 14, No. 3 (October 2006):306.

the part of Hinnant supports the idea that through Elinor's perspective, Austen is alleging that John Willoughby, the momentary hero, should not be trusted based on his first impression. Additionally, the analysis supports the idea that the author allows Willoughby to disrupt the masculine norm to demonstrate the point that assumptions can prove false, and even men who present themselves as heroes towards women can indirectly harm them as well because of the ever-changing character of men.

Michael Roper and Josh Tosh claims that “Masculinity is never fully possessed but must be perpetually achieved, asserted, and renegotiated,” and this is evident as Willoughby continuously shifts between modes of politeness and rakish behavior.<sup>21</sup> Since this behavior can pose a threat to women, they should continuously monitor their whims and maintain a level of awareness instead of practicing self-indulgent behavior. Elinor's rebuke of Marianne, her younger sister, behavior and openly chastising Willoughby aids the idea that their behavior is the antithesis of ethical conduct, thereby making it shameful, and reinforces to the audience that this is the opposite of desired behavior.

Austen utilizes Marianne's transgressions against conventional society to alienate Willoughby in the eyes of the readership to Willoughby. Marianne begins to ignore warning signs signaling the eventual corrosion to her person, indirectly communicating the perceived ills of sentimental literature. Now that Willoughby begins to allow his disguise to slip, he begins to uncharacteristically rash. Even though Marianne is not attracted to Colonel Brandon for the reasons mentioned before, still, her disruptive male suitor attacks his credibility for the point of engaging her in similar destructive behavior. He implores her to criticize Colonel Brandon, “Is

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21. Megan A. Woodworth, “I Could Meet Him No Other Way,” in *Jane Austen and Masculinity*, ed. Michael Kramp (Maryland: Bucknell University Press, 2018), 84



just the kind of man,” “whom everybody speaks well of, and nobody cares about; whom all are delighted to see, and nobody remembers to talk to” (39). After this comment disparaging Brandon, Elinor's reaction to this comment about Brandon accentuates the controversiality of Willoughby. “Do not boast of it, however,” said Elinor, “for it is injustice in both of you” (39). This scene continues to stress the didactic message because when Austen structures an instance of Marianne or Willoughby exhibiting poor manners openly, Elinor, the model of integrity, functions as Austen's proxy and an agent of restraint as she chastises these indiscretions. Tasha Ghoshal Wallace also posits that Elinor's severe critiques are a representation of Austen's views, “In Elinor's swift critical responses, we see a version of the hasty, unvarnished irritation of large fat sighings. The novelist's own impatience with unseemly displays of sentimentality,” Elinor, who unquestionably demonstrates an apparent inclination to conservative mindset serves as a reminder to the female reader that the behavior of the two people near her is improper, and a sign of radical habits that she as an upstanding person does not dare condone.<sup>22</sup> This is especially important because of her continual defense and endorsing of Brandon's more rigid, controlled male behavior attempts to legitimize Brandon to the reader, as he is routinely facing attacks by the nonconservative opposition pairing of Marianne and John Willoughby. Equally important, Elinor continues to chastise Willoughby and Marianne for teasing Colonel Brandon, “I can only pronounce him to be a sensible man, well-bred, well-informed, of gentle address, and, I believe, possessing an amiable heart” (40). Elinor previously supports Colonel Brandon's opportunity with Marianne. She refuses to hear his name disparaged for demonstrating those traits, as mentioned earlier since his behavior has been nothing less than socially acceptable and adhering to the polite gentleman's sensibilities.

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22. Wallace, “Sense and Sensibility and the Problem of Feminine Authority,” 159.

Comparatively to John Willoughby, Colonel Brandon's presentation is mixed because of the contrasting opinions of the Dashwood sisters. Earlier, Marianne recoils at the idea of his possible interest in courtship, while Elinor believes the older gentleman deserves more consideration than a shallow appraisal by her inconsiderate sister. Marianne and Willoughby have rendered him meek, inoffensive, and unattractive, completely stripping of him of character to reduce his ability to stand out as a true lover. However, Austen once again alters the understanding of Brandon by adding mystery and doubt in his personality by hinting that even someone as dull as Colonel Brandon has a sordid past, "She is a relation of the Colonel's, my dear; a very near relation." "We will not say how near, for fear of shocking the young ladies." "Then, lowering her voice a little, she said to Elinor, She is his natural daughter"(51). This quick revelation performs multiple functions at this juncture, Austen subtly shifts the perception of Colonel Brandon from a timid bore to someone of interest. Austen's use of mystery obscures his masculine identity since he departs Barton Park on a horse, which is reminiscent of the idealized storybook hero that permeated Marianne's imagination at the first meeting with Willoughby; therefore Brandon is no longer static. Now that Mrs. Jennings decides to expose the notion of Brandon's "natural daughter," which now gives Brandon a rakish quality, he is even more challenging to pin down in terms of masculinity because of possible sordid past.

### *Marianne's Substitutions*

One of the central messages that *Sense and Sensibility* tries to espouse is that most of the men in society are not entirely dissimilar from each other. Austen uses Marianne Dashwood's experiences with excessive sadness to demonstrate her underlying point that sentimental novels do not accurately portray men, but instead deliver stereotypical versions. Austen uses her troubled heroine's longing for her missing beau and teases the idea of his arrival in a comedy of

imitations to illustrate unoriginal men. Marianne's potential suitor has proclaimed gentlemanly behavior only to reveal insidious past of corruption, selfishness, and other terrible behaviors the reader could not suspect at first glance. On the other side, this behavior is juxtaposed by a seemingly timid man hiding feats of bravery, but, unfortunately, all of these men are tied in their ignorance of the plights of women. Marianne is distraught and obscures and blurs the lines of the different versions of maleness, especially, when Marianne Dashwood begins to start mistaking the other males in the text for her beloved Willoughby. While she is initially reeling from the sudden departure from Willoughby, she confuses Edward Ferrars for him, "Amongst the objects in the scene, they soon discovered an animated one; it was a man on horseback riding towards them. In a few minutes, they could distinguish him to be a gentleman; and in a moment afterward, Marianne rapturously exclaimed, "It is he; it is indeed;—I know it is!" (68) It is not surprising that Marianne, in the throes of her passion and sadness for her departed lover, would mistake someone else for him, however, it is critical how Austen deploys Edward's entrance to this scene and note that his entry is eerily similar to the inaugural introduction of Willoughby. The core ideas repeat at this moment, Marianne is casually walking with her family, and a mysterious stranger appears on horseback, much like Willoughby; however, Marianne is incorrect in her assumption. I assert that the reason Austen recreates this scene to criticize Marianne's perception of men indirectly, by illustrating that the inherent charms that she affixed to Willoughby because he reminded her of a storybook hero were not at all distinctive traits that only he possessed but that all men can possess if they choose. "Marianne looked again; her heart sunk within her; and abruptly turning round, she was hurrying back, when the voices of both her sisters were raised to detain her; a third, almost as well-known as Willoughby's, joined them in begging her to stop, and she turned round with surprise to see and welcome Edward Ferrars."

Marianne is desperate for Willoughby, but this begs the question of why Austen decides to substitute Edward for Willoughby? One particular reason is to demonstrate Marianne's feeling of frenzy at this moment. Although, in a more profound sense, this can be interpreted as Austen is displaying that sentimental texts have miseducated Marianne, her perceptions of the trappings of masculinity are limited. She cannot see that masculinity is interchangeable between the different examples of maleness that we encounter in the text, and this situation replays itself with Colonel Brandon in the future. "In the ecstasy of her feelings at that instant she could not help exclaiming, "Oh, Elinor, it is Willoughby, indeed it is!" and seemed almost ready to throw herself into his arms, when Colonel Brandon appeared" (144). Since she was overwrought with sentiment for her former love, she is physically sick to this idea. As Celia A. Easton notes, "Without waiting for physical evidence, Marianne extends her initial misinterpretation into a sexual gesture, then is repulsed to the point of physical distress when she discovers that she has almost thrown herself upon a substitute for the object of her desires."<sup>23</sup> Due to her immaturity, Marianne refuses to accept another instead of Willoughby. "She instantly saw that it was not unnoticed by him, that he even observed Marianne as she quitted the room, with such astonishment and concern, as hardly left him the recollection of what civility demanded towards herself." If we are reading this through a didactic lens, it is possible to interpret that Austen is demonstrating that Marianne's refusal to change her understanding of how masculinity works tied to tender-hearted disposition. She is not able to understand that her former lover has left her behind has completely misled her.

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23. Celia A. Easton, "Sense and Sensibility and the Joke of Substitution," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 23, no.2 (Spring 1993):117

*The Two Elizas*

The transformation Willoughby undergoes from a passionate beau to selfish heartbreaker communicates that masculinity is volatile. John Willoughby is the lothario that values his desires and ambitions above all else, and this former beau demonstrates this in his sudden departure, marriage, and complete ignorance of Marianne. The novel no longer attempts to hide the viciousness of Willoughby's character and illustrates his ability to exploit all different members of the female sex for his gain ranging from used lovers to his kin. He is vile, uncontrollable, and egotistical the opposite of Colonel Brandon during his last sighting. The novel has reached a momentary fork in the road because of this opening to ascend Colonel Brandon to the role of the leading man of Sense and Sensibility; however, Austen does no such thing, she begins to cloud Brandon's true self more than ever with his reveal of the "*Two Elizas*."

Ironically, Michael Kramp posits that Colonel Brandon is similar to John Willoughby, albeit at different places in their lives. "Brandon has simply already learned what Willoughby learns by the end of the novel: that to become a trusted and responsible figure in the modern national community, men of sensation must discipline their sensitivity."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, it is crucial to investigate whether Brandon's capacity to execute his function in society does not indirectly harm the women he encounters. Colonel Brandon's recollection of the "*Two Elizas*," is a story of heartbreak and lost love is an example of domestic fiction because it demonstrates several themes from the romantic genre. According to Donna Campbell, sentimental novels expected that the young heroine must undergo a series of emotional challenges varying from temptations and emotional abuse to achieve moral understanding. "She suffers at the hands of

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24. Kramp, "Austen's Sensitive Men," 58.

abusers of power before establishing a network of surrogate kin. . . the plots” repeatedly identify immersion in feeling like one of the great temptations and dangers for a developing woman.”<sup>25</sup> This tragic story of both Elizas exemplifies all of these features, precisely the notion that heroines endure from the hands of multiple abusers. Colonel Brandon alleges Eliza experienced harshness from the hands of his brother; however, his inaction and eventual disappearance likely contributed to her pain. By subjecting Eliza to a terrible union with Colonel Brandon's brother, Austen uses this component of the sentimental novel to demonstrate the role that males put women through, as a result of their selfish actions or Brandon's case inaction.

Brandon openly regrets his lack of involvement in her life, and slightly holds himself responsible for her downfall.” but can we wonder that, with such a husband to provoke inconstancy, and without a friend to advise or restrain her (for my father lived only a few months after their marriage, and I was with my regiment in the East Indies) she should fall? Had I remained in England, perhaps—but I meant to promote the happiness of both by removing from her for years, and for that purpose had procured my exchange” (146). Austen's decision to allow Brandon to question himself about his possible actions or better yet inaction seems to be a calculated choice by the author to demonstrate the hypocritical nature of the men and takes swipes at the Colonel's image. Consequently, he admits that he attempted to elope with Eliza, but as that plan falls through and she is married, forced to comply with the patriarchal dominance in her life. Even though his beloved is suffering, himself probably heartbroken, Brandon still has the opportunity to continue with his role in the patriarchal system, as evidenced by his current estate, titles, and other assemblances of success, and this something that Eliza does not have the

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25. “Domestic or Sentimental Fiction, 1820-1865,” *Literary Movements*, accessed April 29, 2020, <https://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/domestic.htm>

option to engage within because of the limitations of her sex. He loved her, but relatively suffered none of the consequences, and this is similar to Willoughby's departure from Marianne. Austen recognizes that women in this current construction of gendered power sacrifice more when they choose to cede to their desires and tender hearts, all the while society creates an opening for men to redeem themselves. Austen shrewdly interpolates this tragic story of Eliza to use an example of a romantic trope to display the harsh realities that exist for women who seek to challenge the patriarchy eventually punished because too many actors gain from the system as a whole. Her future husband is allowed to participate in the matrimony regardless of his flaws, and Brandon engages in a redemption, ultimately denied to her.

As Brandon recants this story, the novel suggests that Brandon is aware of this hypocrisy subconsciously since he is visibly guilt-ridden. He starts to decry his brother, his morals, and his code of masculinity "My brother had no regard for her; his pleasures were not what they ought to have been, and from the first, he treated her unkindly." (146) When Brandon criticizes his brother, "his pleasures were not what they ought to have been," he indicates that his elder brother masculine sensibilities leaned more towards a more lewd, lascivious disposition. Unlike his brother, Brandon demonstrates a genuine sadness for Eliza, and her trials and tribulations suffered at the hands of his family. Rebecca Richardson suggests, "By having the Colonel present his tale in person and indirect speech, Austen clearly shows his troubled conscience."<sup>26</sup> Colonel Brandon struggles to forgive himself because of Eliza's miserable existence. However, Brandon's struggles to forgive himself underpin the assertion that his passivity contributed to Eliza's tragic fate. Eliza's suffering invokes thoughts of Marianne reminding him of another

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26. Rebecca Richardson, "Dramatizing Intimacy: Confessions and Free Indirect Discourse in *Sense and Sensibility*," *ELH* 81, no.1 (Spring 2014): 232.

woman he could not save from the harmful desire of a disastrous male figure thereby, communicating one of Austen's underlying messages about the terrible tragedies that women experience from the effects of rampant patriarchy.

Brandon's former sweet, Eliza, is undoubtedly a minor character in *Sense and Sensibility*, but Austen maximizes her overall impact by using her as an example of the pitfalls and tragedies that could befall Marianne if she succumbs to her sensibilities. Shawn Lisa Maurer's observes, "Marianne possesses sexual appetite and sensitivity, and she chooses the man she could prefer, blind to the social likelihood that a man in Willoughby's position might truly wish her for a sexual partner for a time, without wishing to marry her. Marianne is spared the trials of the seduced woman—Eliza's stand-in for her, in undergoing those traumas."<sup>27</sup> Keeping with the idea that a hallmark of sentimental novels is to rehabilitate its heroine to ensure she receives the proper wisdom to acclimate into polite society, using a stand-in for Marianne allows Austen to offer Eliza as a sacrificial lamb towards her intended audience.

After returning from his absence, Colonel Brandon makes this point because he describes the tragedy that Eliza succumbs too during his time away "It was nearly three years after this unhappy period before I returned to England. . . ." "I could not trace her beyond her first seducer, and there was every reason to fear that she had removed from him only to sink deeper into a life of sin"(146) Brandon details his absence in the elder Eliza's life, and upon his return, she is missing and fallen into disarray, without having confirmed this reality Brandon is sure of this possibility because of this didactic undercurrent in the novel. Eliza's meaningful, but her brief character arc paints a startling picture of the struggles that correspond with practicing life with

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27. Maurer, "At Seventeen: Adolescence in *Sense and Sensibility*," 741.



sensible morals. Brandon eventually realizes his worst fears, as he finds his lapsed crush withered by her marriage and the effects of consumption, as a result of the brutality her life.

As Colonel Brandon continues to confess to Elinor about his failures in protecting Eliza, his former flame, he reveals a similar situation with his ward, Eliza Williams, the daughter of the original Eliza, from his past. The Colonel explains after the death of his former sister-in-law, he assumed guardianship of her daughter and provided for her through his estate, and believed she was in good spirits. Unfortunately, he informs her that a rude awakening found him when he tells her John Willoughby had seduced and ran away with his charge only to abandon her. Good heavens!" cried Elinor, "could it be—could Willoughby!"—"The first news that reached me of her," he continued, "came in a letter from herself, last October" (148). The salacious tryst between John Willoughby and Eliza Williams embodies more features of the romantic genre because of Eliza, a young woman, diverges from Colonel Brandon's wishes and yields to her emotions and engages dissolute behavior. The younger Eliza also represents the model sentimental heroine as she gives way to her passions, which involves her straying away from her paternal guidance and towards the arms of her natural lover, leading her to sin. Eliza bears the brunt of her rendezvous with John Willoughby since he quickly flees, and she becomes pregnant. "No, he had already done that, which no man who CAN feel for another would do. 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" (149). Colonel Brandon becomes wholly incensed that Eliza Williams, under his care, will become an unwed single mother because of the inappropriate and callous behavior of John Willoughby, thereby confirming John Willoughby's transformation because he manipulates Eliza.

Despite the performative outrage that Colonel Brandon continues to display over the sully of his ward, Eliza Williams, he is assuredly more worried about protecting his reputation, evidenced by his desire to challenge his adversary to a duel. “I could meet him no other way. Eliza had confessed to me, though most reluctantly, the name of her lover, and when he returned to town, which was within a fortnight after myself, we met by appointment, he to defend, I to punish his conduct. We returned unwounded, and the meeting, therefore, never got abroad” (150). A pivotal scene, given Brandon supposedly under the guise of defending her honor, however, this is not the case. Both of these men confront each other, but the reason for this because of their male egos and reputation. As Tasha Ghoshal Wallace notes, “Even Colonel Brandon, who fights a duel with Willoughby, does not suggest that Willoughby make reparation by marrying Eliza. Eliza's sin excludes her from society forever, and Austen's silence about her fate assumes that her expulsion is necessary and appropriate.”<sup>28</sup> Eliza is nothing more than an excuse for these men to justify their actions against each other. Austen formulates this exchange between these contrasting views of masculinity to illustrate that neither constructs have the best interests of women at their core. Unfortunately, women like the former Eliza, Eliza Williams, and Marianne will only suffer if they deviate from the expectations of women at this time. According to Megan A. Woodworth, “despite the impression given by novels, few duels were related to defending a woman's honor. . . . Women provide another way for men to claim and contest honor.”<sup>29</sup> This a vital reason that Austen believes women cannot behave emotionally because of either side's willingness to liberate socially disgraced women from their shame. Colonel Brandon never declares for John Willoughby to apologize for his depraved behavior

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28. Wallace, “Sense and Sensibility and the Problem of Feminine Authority,” 155.

29. Megan A. Woodworth, “I Could Meet Him No Other Way,” 84

with his ward, nor does Willoughby extend one towards the gentleman at all because Eliza, a woman, is a minor player in the feud. The novel suggests that Brandon does differ from Willoughby in this instance since he exhibits some level of care about the wellbeing of women, at least, more than Willoughby in these instances. Unfortunately, for Colonel Brandon, that is not a high standard to eclipse, so he is only narrowly better than his counterpart.

### *Elinor's Forgiveness*

At this juncture in the novel, Austen has used several sensitive female characters to illustrate the impracticability of sensible behavior, while primarily positioning Elinor as the model and arbiter of moral restraint. Until she directly interacts with crestfallen John Willoughby, who is shaken by Marianne's turn for the worse. Willoughby projects genuine interest in Marianne's condition, so he seems regretful for his past actions. Nevertheless, Elinor, who has always doubted his character and seen Willoughby for his true self, she unwittingly falls victim to disingenuous actions. Since Elinor is our sanctimonious example, her brief extension of mercy reinforces the danger that all personalities are under the threat of excessive behavior. Whereas Marianne's flaw was that she was too sensitive, Elinor's kindness is her brief lapse in judgment, and Austen plays on this flaw by deciding not to present Willoughby at his best, but his absolute worst to incur pity, "I acknowledge that her situation and her character ought to have been respected by me. I do not mean to justify myself, but at the same time cannot leave you to suppose that I have nothing to urge—that because she was injured, she was irreproachable, and because I was a libertine, SHE must be a saint." (224). This is a seminal moment in the text since this is a rare instance of Willoughby since he finally accurately defines his corrupt behavior; also it is important to denote that the novel until this moment does not use the actual phrase "libertine" till this moment, which brings an immense significance to this revelation.

Tasha Ghoshal Wallace posits that Willoughby is trying to shirk his responsibilities and his faults, “He urges Elinor to remember that Eliza is not without guilt, that he is in part victimized by the violence of her passions.”<sup>30</sup> Even though Willoughby confesses his wrongs, Wallace is correct as he stops short of fully implicating himself responsible for the painful shunning that Eliza has endures because of his actions, thereby discrediting his apology. He switches through different mixed feelings through this confession scene because of the defense of his character, and then he fluctuates between pitiful and regretful. At first, Elinor is surprised at his arrival, and his outward drunkenness “Elinor looked at him with greater astonishment than ever. She began to think that he must be in liquor.” When he notices Elinor's reaction, he immediately responds, “yes, I am very drunk. — A pint of porter with my cold beef at Marlborough was enough to over-set me” (225). This version of Willoughby is a departure from the slightly courteous gentleman she met at Barton; his intrusion signals a lack of social graces and polite behavior. Similarly, his struggles with alcohol display problems with excess and continues to contest his prior gentlemanly standing.

As mentioned earlier, Elinor possesses the moral high ground in many interactions because she is a representative of Austen. Nevertheless, Austen chooses to have Elinor sympathize with Willoughby to demonstrate that anyone can fall victim to the allure of the libertine. The novel has repeatedly intimated that selfishness comes in different shapes and sizes and is detriment towards anyone in the vicinity of said emotion, and in this exchanged based on Elinor's response, “He stopped. “Well, sir,” said Elinor, who, though pitying him, grew impatient for his departure, “and this is all?” (233) While Elinor feels sorry for his distress, simultaneously, she is overwhelmed by the pressure to be a participant in his self-absorption to be polite. She is

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30. Wallace, “Sense and Sensibility and the Problem of Feminine Authority,” 156.

figuratively held against her will by her manners, coupled with Willoughby's manipulation, "If you CAN pity me, Miss Dashwood, pity my situation as it was THEN. With my head and heart full of your sister, I was forced to play the happy lover to another woman!—" (234)

Willoughby's pleading for Elinor to heed his request for compassion for his mistakes and his broken heart is reminiscent of his influence on Marianne with a small change, given that he is no longer exuding the confidence and poise that he once possessed, however, he is still emotionally overwhelming the woman opposite him again. He raises his voice, as evidenced by the capitalization of "CAN" and "THEN" to force Elinor to feel for his pain and his "suffering" amid his unraveling, directly dictating and shaping the kind of emotion should demonstrate for him. He continues to handle Elinor by extolling praises upon Marianne to weaken Elinor's resolve. Austen continues to contrast the self-pitying and the self-indulgence to ensure that the audience understands he is a manipulator to the core.

He continues to tell Elinor that Mrs. Smith was aware of Eliza, the child, and eventually admits that she could find forgiveness, and pardon his lack of moral behavior if he agrees to wed the young woman, "In the height of her morality, good woman! she offered to forgive the past if I would marry Eliza," however, he refuses this proposal "That could not be—and I was formally dismissed from her favour and her house" (226). Although the honorable action to Eliza and alleviate the ills of the situation, thereby rehabilitating his character, he chooses not to follow that path, even after benefits are attached. Willoughby shirks his parental duties towards Eliza, and the infant, his familial obligations, and his promises to Marianne powerfully signaling of his self-obsessed, unpolite, and libertine behavior that is solely concerned with his interests while leaving many women distraught in his wake. He explicitly discloses that his marriage is a fraud, "Do not talk to me of my wife," said he with a heavy sigh.— "She does not deserve your

compassion.—She knew I had no regard for her when we married”(233). Ultimately, revealing that in the middle of this apology, he has not changed, but Austen leaves enough space in this instance to allow some for the amount of compassion for him because of this uncomfortable truth feels like a punishment. As John Willoughby decides he can no longer stand to be in Elinor's presence, he begins to leave, but not before evaluating Elinor's ability to forgive him for his transgression and immoral behavior. “And you DO think something better of me than you did?”—said he, letting it fall, and leaning against the mantelpiece as if forgetting he was to go. Elinor assured him that she did;—that she forgave, pitied, wished him well—was even interested in his happiness—and added some gentle counsel as to the behaviour most likely to promote it. His answer was not very encouraging” (225). The narrator observes Willoughby's hesitancy before leaving, stressing the idea that he wants to confirm that he has received the genuine forgiveness from Elinor that he has been trying to gain from her for all of this time. Surprisingly, Elinor gives him that forgiveness and even more advice to assist because of the kindness within her that Willoughby has continued to manipulate throughout the entire conversation. The narrator's comment, “His answer was not very encouraging” (235), highly suggests that this advice was for naught, which should be not unexpected given his contradictory apology. Elinor's forgiveness is interesting, mainly because of her past criticism of Willoughby, which makes her act of forgiveness even more disconcerting for the reader. Since Elinor is a reasonable, innocent, and chaste character in the novel, the idea that she would develop this lapse in judgment regarding Willoughby illustrates the notion that a rakish character can seduce any woman, regardless of virtue. As Valerie Wainwright suggests, in her analysis of this scene, “Strikingly, Elinor's ‘interest’ in Willoughby's welfare, her emotional engagement in his suffering, is now experienced as a form of subjection from which she must free herself. His ‘influence over her

mind' is, she decides, due to factors that 'ought not in reason to have weight,' and especially that "open, affectionate, and lively manner which it was no merit to possess," this point is assisted by Willoughby's flawed justification for his earlier actions.<sup>31</sup> He makes no effort to resolve any of his outstanding issues with his prior relationships. Therefore, Elinor contemplating forgiving his actions supports the idea that anyone, particularly any woman, is susceptible to involuntary emotional responses. As Wainwright states, "Elinor is also concerned to point out the potentially infectious nature of 'tenderness,' which can 'lead the fancy astray.'" Later, in relating Willoughby's narrative to her sister, she has no desire to 'arouse such [compassionate] feelings in another."<sup>32</sup> Austen "contaminates" Elinor to prove that it is possible to elude the influence of radical libertine, and dually assist Marianne in making the same transition from overly sentimental towards the rational disposition that Elinor always has possessed. However, in delivering this message, it is possible to assert that Elinor's decision to help Marianne move past Willoughby leads to her submitting to the patriarchy.

### *Transformation to Adulthood*

According to Marilyn Butler, "Jane Austen has no more than a qualified belief in the evils of sensibility. She spares Marianne, the individual, to have her recant from sensibility, the system."<sup>33</sup> Austen has taken Marianne or any young, sensible woman, on a journey to demonstrate the ills that exist for women that embrace excessive sensibilities. Marianne has to fully transform by ceding her sensibilities and bind herself to Brandon to cross the threshold into

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31. Valerie Wainwright, "On Being Tough-Minded: Sense and Sensibility and the Moral Psychology of "Helping," *Philosophy and Literature* 39, no.1A (September 2016): A202

32. Wainwright, "On Being Tough-Minded: Sense and Sensibility and the Moral Psychology of "Helping," A202

33. Butler, "Sense and Sensibility,"192.

civil society, however, by uniting herself to Brandon, she is thereby submitting to the patriarchal influence she was unknowingly flouting with her obsession and sentiment-based fantasies. This analysis coincides with the earlier point that Austen is not oppositional to the patriarchal system, but understand the reality that women must face or else be drastically exploited by, evident in two Eliza subplot.

The novel suggests in the morals and education it continuously tries to espouse that masculinity is fragile and continually shifts; as a result, sentimental stories that represent men otherwise and teach women to challenge their place in this structure dooms them. Readers and critics have frowned upon the end of *Sense and Sensibility* because of this depressing ending. However, Austen did not share this perspective, so the narrator's tone is positive and celebrates Marianne's rebirth and understanding of place in society. “Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favourite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another!—and that other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married,—and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat!” (268) Marianne's eventual acceptance of Colonel Brandon, specifically appreciating his friendship and loyalty, as opposed to the looks and charm of Willoughby, displays her complete transformation. Marianne becomes the ripe age of nineteen, which is Elinor's age at the beginning of the novel to support further the notion that Marianne has reached adulthood. As the story ends, “she found herself at nineteen, submitting to new attachments, entering on new duties, placed in a new home, a wife, the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village!”



(268) Now that Marianne has aged into maturity, she has left behind foolish and idolatry behavior for domestic life and can now achieve a level of happiness uncompromised by irrational behavior. I conclude that Austen's portrayal of Marianne of a journey from an irrational young woman to a now calm, reserved woman demonstrate the ill effects of sensibility and sentimental novels on women through the novel uses conflicting versions of masculinities to show the negative impact that men have on women with very little remorse. Furthermore, we see the men that feign to save their honor, the cases in which men refused to forsake their pride, and their name for the women they claim to love. According to Austen and *Sense and Sensibility*, women are overwrought with emotion will not do well to survive patriarchal society.

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