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FROM NOVEL TO FILM: THE TRANSPOSITION OF SOME CHARACTER ROLES IN EMMA THOMPSON'S SCREENPLAY OF *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*

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1 Razão e Sentimento; 2 Jane Austen; 3 Emma Thompson; 4 Adaptação;
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RESUMO

Sense and Sensibility (1811), o primeiro romance publicado de Jane Austen, foi transposto para o cinema em 1995, conferindo seis prêmios de melhor diretor a Ang Lee e dezenove a Emma Thompson, oito como melhor atriz e onze pelo melhor roteiro adaptado. Nesta dissertação eu apresento minha leitura da transposição feita por Emma Thompson do romance de Jane Austen, focando especialmente na maneira em que os personagens principais são transpostos para a tela. Para isso, utilizo três apoios, o texto do roteiro, os diários de Thompson e as performances dos atores. Em cada um desses eixos foram feitas escolhas que merecem ser investigadas, revelando o processo pelo qual o trabalho original se molda às regras da nova mídia e ao público pretendido. Atenção especial é dada aos recursos usados na transposição dos personagens do romance para o filme. O lastro teórico-crítico da pesquisa se apoia nos estudos de Linda Hutcheon sobre adaptação e nos textos de Gerald Mast e Christian Metz sobre a linguagem cinematográfica. A dissertação vem estruturada em duas partes. A primeira, dividida em três seções, apresenta os elementos de contextualização necessários para a discussão empreendida no trabalho. A primeira seção trata sobre o filme produzido em 1995 e sobre Ang Lee, responsável pela direção do mesmo. A segunda seção retraça alguns referentes do romance *Sense and Sensibility* e sua autora, Jane Austen. A terceira seção considera o processo de criação e adaptação do roteiro de Emma Thompson. A segunda parte do trabalho enfoca as escolhas de transposição, em especial no que diz respeito ao tratamento dos personagens. Ao término da pesquisa, espero identificar os traços que caracterizam Thompson como leitora diferenciada de Austen, e explicitar fatores que motivam as escolhas favorecidas no processo de transposição analisado.

Palavras chaves: 1 *Razão e Sentimento*; 2 Jane Austen; 3 Emma Thompson; 4 Adaptação; 5 Personagens; 6 Cinema.

ABSTRACT

Sense and Sensibility (1811), the first novel published by Jane Austen, was transposed to the movies in 1995, granting six awards to Ang Lee as best director and nineteen to Emma Thompson, eight as best actress and eleven for best adapted screenplay. In this thesis, I present my reading of Emma Thompson´s reading of Jane Austen´s novel, focusing mainly on the way the major characters are transposed into the screen. In order to do that, I direct the analysis from three cornerstones, the text of the screenplay, Thompson's diaries, and the actors' performances. In each of these instances choices that deserve to be investigated have been made, which reveal the process through which the original work molds itself to the rules of the new media and to the audience it is intended. Special attention is given to the resources used in the transposition of the characters from the novel into the film. The theoretical support of the research is based on Linda Hutcheon's studies on adaptation, and on Gerald Mast's and Christian Metz's texts about filmic language. This thesis is composed in two parts. Part one comes divided into three sections, and presents the contextualization necessary for the discussion held in the work. The first section introduces the film produced in 1995, and Ang Lee, responsible for its direction. The second retraces some referents from the novel *Sense and Sensibility* and its author, Jane Austen. The third considers Emma Thompson´s process of creation and adaptation of the screenplay. Part two focuses on the choices made in the transposition, especially the ones regarding the treatment of the characters. At the end of this research, I hope to identify the traces that characterize Thompson as a differentiated reader of Austen, and show the factors that motivate the favored choices in the analyzed transposition process.

Keywords: 1 *Sense and Sensibility*; 2 Jane Austen; 3 Emma Thompson; 4 Adaptation; 5 Characters; 6 Film.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Nineteen ninety-five was the year I discovered Jane Austen. Not that I had not heard about her before, but for some reason I had never had the opportunity of getting better acquainted with her work. And when that acquaintance came – as happened with many people from my generation and the ones that came after mine – it came in the form of two movies. Yes, I start by confessing that my first contact with Jane Austen was through the adaptations of two of her novels: *Emma* (in the modernized version *Clueless*) and *Sense and Sensibility*. *Clueless,* the first I saw, brought my attention to Jane Austen and made me wish to read her books. But it was *Sense and Sensibility* that opened my eyes to the fascinating possibilities in Austen's fiction, and made me go after every single thing she had written. The plot was well wrought, the story romantic without excess, the characters endearing. I became a reader and, through these subsequent 17 years, Jane Austen became my favorite author. In 1995 I was a Communications student, so Austen was first a pastime to me. Only later, when I started studying Languages at the University, did Jane Austen become, also, my object of study.

Perhaps because my first contact with Austen took place through films, I also developed an interest in the field of adaptation studies. I read about movie theories, and came to the conclusion that each film offers its own fictional world. Even when the story borrows from one original literary source, the film does not necessarily have to keep "faithful" to the original literary project. So, differently from many people who never studied about adaptations, I never judge a film by its faithfulness to the original source. A film, for me, either stands on its own merits – or it does not stand at all. I came to the belief that "faithfulness" is an ideal impossible to be reached, because we are dealing with two media that are completely different in their resources. What makes a good adaptation, then? How is it that some adaptations of novels are so satisfying to the reader of the original work, and others are not? To what extent does the answer lie in

the quality of the choices made by the adapter, and director; or is it that some stories are more appropriate for transposition to the screen than others? These are some of the questions that I pursue in this thesis.

Maybe because of her limited number of novels, only six, Jane Austen had each of them transmuted to the screen (movies and TV), not one, but many times. The combination of irony, compelling characters, funny quotes and romance turns them into successful productions, especially among the female public. According to the website janeausten.org there are altogether 61 films, documentaries or TV series, either adapted or based on her novels (comprising also productions that deal with Jane Austen herself as a character, such as *Miss Austen Regrets* and *Becoming Jane;* as well as modern adaptations of her works as *From Prada to Nada* and *Bride and Prejudice*)[1]. The oldest film adaptation is MGM's 1940 *Pride and Prejudice* adapted by Aldous Huxley and Jane Murfin and directed by Robert Z. Leonard (starring Laurence Olivier and Greer Garson). To date, *Sense and Sensibility* has been adapted seven times, and the version adapted by Emma Thompson is the one I choose as the corpus for the research carried out in this thesis.

A word about Emma Thompson, now: I grew even fonder of the movie when I learned that Emma Thompson, the actress who plays the role of Elinor, the protagonist in the story, undertook the task of adapting the novel to the screen. I became curious about Thompson's other intellectual abilities. I found out that she has a degree in English Literature from Cambridge University, where she joined a theatrical club along with several other colleagues, John Cleese, Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie among them. Emma Thompson has a profound knowledge of Austen's world, and she is the kind of person who would not plunge into any project without being persuaded that she could do it. Although she had never attempted to adapt anything before, she took the work gladly into her hands. It took her five years to have the script ready, approved and ready to go to the screen.

[1] For a complete list of Austen's adaptations to the screen go to Annex 7.

Emma Thompson's screenplay for *Sense and Sensibility* won eleven awards for Best Adaptation, including the Oscar and the Golden Globe. Her famous Golden Globe's acceptance speech[2], filled with Austean wit, demonstrates how much knowledge and understanding she has about the author and her work. Emma Thompson's prized screenplay results from the combination of her own voice with Austen's voice, a voice that most likely influenced Thompson's style and view of the world. In Lindsay Doran's (the producer of the film) words, Thompson understood that Jane Austen is "wickedly funny" (THOMPSON, 1995, p.9) and made sure that her adaptation would keep to that line. It was essential that the film would reproduce not only the drama, but also the comic aspects we find in Jane Austen. In my opinion, the movie owes much to the combination of Thompson's, Doran's and Austen's voices. The three of them seem to be masters of wit: mastery in subtlety and wit is essential in a Jane Austen project. This can be either considered a happy coincidence, or the product of a careful search for the right professionals. In this case, I would rather think it is the result of affiliation and mutual recognition, because much of their humor was probably inherited from their early readings of Austen's works. Lindsay Doran decided to invite Emma Thompson to the task because of the satire she found in *Thompson*, a TV series written by Emma that showed how clever and humorous she could be.

The invitation for Emma Thompson to play the leading role in the film came only after Ang Lee took over as the film director. At the time, in spite of being known for acclaimed works *The Wedding Banquet* and *Eat Drink Man Woman*, the Taiwanese director did not have much experience working in the West. Geoff Stier, from Mirage Productions, was the one to suggest his name, but even though Ang Lee had good reputation, and experience, it was a risk to put such a British classic in the hands of an Easterner who had never even read Austen. Fortunately, Stier's intuition proved correct. Lee's Asian outlook on life and his style of making films matched the production very smoothly. How is it that an Asian foreigner could be so tuned with and have such a grasp of Jane Austen's genteel rural Regency world? How could the viewpoint of someone from such a distant culture contribute so much to the overall result of the film? To what extent did Lee's perception influence the way Emma Thompson wrote her script, or the

[2]Available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Pun3jaMVJk

way she played the role of Elinor? And how much can be counted the other way round: what has Thompson's experience as an actress added to her work as a screenwriter? What of her experience as a Literature professional and as a reader of *Sense and Sensibility* was an influence in her role as the translator of the work from novel to screen?

From such questions rises the objective of my thesis, which consists of an investigation of the process through which Emma Thompson adapts Jane Austen's novel into Lindsay Doran/Ang Lee's film. I like to call this enterprise "my reading of Thompson's reading of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*". In order to do this, I make use of two primary sources, Austen's novel and Thompson's screenplay. I also rely heavily on the information extracted from Emma Thompson's filming diaries. Special attention is paid to the construction of the five main characters in the movie. I am interested in examining how Emma Thompson's background as an actress might have influenced her reading of *Sense and Sensibility* and her subsequent translation of the novel to the screen. To what extent has the fact that she is an actress worked to her advantage when depicting the characters? Has the fact that she is also the protagonist in the film had any consequence to the portrayal of Elinor? What devices has Thompson used to delineate the characters and better explain them to the audience in this other media? What resources does she use to help the audience adapt to the adaptation? In this case, we never know where the movement of the wheel starts: does the fact that she is an actress help her become a better writer; or does the fact that she is a graduate in Literature help her become a better actress?

Emma Thompson is obviously well acquainted with the works of Jane Austen, having been reading them since she was a child. That fact, despite the several obvious advantages (she knew what she was dealing with) may also have posed some challenges. The more you are a fan to an author, the harder it is to dare meddling with their work. If you like something very much the way it is, you want to keep it untouched, unspoiled, and that is something absolutely impossible to be achieved in an adaptation.

I use the word adaptation to refer to what Emma Thompson does as she writes her screenplay. The word is used in the sense proposed by Canadian theorist Linda

Hutcheon in the book *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006). The most important feature in an adaptation is the fact that it deals with transformation, not only from one media to the other, but mainly from one text to another. An adapter aims at retaining the author's voice while, at the same time, imprinting his own. It is this amalgamation of two voices and one reading (the adapter's) that makes the adaptation possible. Hutcheon says that "Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication." (HUTCHEON, 2006, p.7), which means that "the form changes with adaptation (…); the content persists." (Idem, p.10).

As we can see, the idea of fidelity to the original in an adaptation to a different media is unfeasible. But then, why are adaptations so profuse today? For one thing, because we live in a time in which the relations involving the world of art and the economic market are neither as shunned nor as hidden as they once were. Late Capitalism unveiled unspeakable things concerning art as shocking as the things Jane Austen revealed about the backgrounds of genteel courtship. The movie industry has always been more candid about these issues than the literary editorial world. Movie adaptations of literary works are usually considered successful when they are successful at the box office, regardless of their ranking in the literary canon or of the opinion critics may have about them. This can be seen in the film adaptations of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, for instance. Capitalizing on a success is part of the economic business. If something is lucrative in a certain medium, it will quickly be transmuted to as many others as possible in order to make it even more profitable. Books become movies, movies become video games, toys, internet platforms, and theme parks. Publishing companies use images of the adapted film on the cover of their new editions of the novels that triggered the films, and many other endless strategies are tried. The movie industry generates a lot of money and it is obvious that every decision must be based not only on quality but also on profit. All that must be taken into consideration by every member of a movie crew, including the adapter, the screenplay writer, who seems to amalgamate the tasks of a reader, a translator, a mediator and a diplomat. Just like any other translation from one language to another, there will always be a moment of interpretation and choice. Why use one word instead of its synonym? Why focus on one

aspect of the story instead of another? Changes and choices have to be made, and they are.

Considering the transit involving pictures and novels, Levinson (1986) comments that film has a similar, but reverse, mode of apprehension to literature: “In the cinema, one extracts the thought from the image; in literature, the image from the thought.” (LEVINSON, 1986, p.28). There is so much involved in the adaptation of a novel to the screen: making the story fit into a two-hour time slot, casting the actors, dealing with budgetary constraints, having to think of how the audience will embrace the changes necessary due to the aforementioned aspects. Each of these challenges would be quite difficult to be accomplished, let alone the fact that you also have to incorporate one of the characters to perform, which is what happened in the case of Emma Thompson, who was also the protagonist in her own film adaptation. When working the part of the research that is directly concerned with Cinema theory, I rely predominantly on the views stated by cinema historian Prof. Gerald Mast and by French film theorist Christian Metz.

Mast (1982) points out the fact that, no matter how the transposition of a novel to the screen is called the “terms imply (indeed demand) a respect for the original text as the fixed foot of a compass around which the film version must revolve.” (MAST, 1982, p.280). One has to have it very present that this new work has a source in something that was produced before. And this is perhaps one of the reasons why adaptations have so many fans; as Linda Hutcheon suggests, it is the possibility of seeing something one already knows in a different package: Boyum agrees with this idea: “Besides, there’s a natural impulse to want to vivify a work of literature that has moved us and mattered to us.” (BOYUM, 1985, p.20). We contrast our reading and the reading presented in the new construct. Jane Austen nowadays stands as a symbol to that, but it was not so in 1995. Several adaptations of her work had already been made – mostly for TV – but none was received with much alacrity. It is only in 1995 that her works recommenced to be adapted with good quality and Jane Austen transformed from something from the past to the author of the moment. Nowadays adapting Jane Austen to the screen may be seen as a safe bet, but in 1995 it could be risky, because her novels were not that well-known outside the United Kingdom. Bringing two people that – each in their own way – had no

experience in the field (Thompson, who had never worked as an adapter, and Ang Lee, a foreigner with no previous knowledge of Austen's work, and with little experience with the dos and don'ts of directing in the West) was a great leap of faith from the producer Lindsay Doran. Her passion for the project was certainly one of the reasons for its success.

All this being said, I here present my pledge in this thesis: with the help of Linda Hutcheon's theory on Adaptation, and using the cinema terminology as I take it from Mast and Metz, I propose to investigate the movements of Emma Thompson as an adapter of *Jane Austen's* novel *Sense and Sensibility* into the homonymous film produced by Lindsay Doran and directed by Ang Lee. The thesis is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is subdivided into three sections; the first talking about the film itself and its director, Ang Lee; the second centering in Jane Austen and *Sense and Sensibility* the novel; and the third focusing on Emma Thompson's role as the adapter of the novel to be transposed to the screen. The second chapter will center its attention on the effects of the transposition of the novel to film analyzing how the characters were transformed in order to fit the new format.

1 CONTEXTUALIZING POLES

1.1 THE FINAL PRODUCT

1.1.1 The Film: *Sense and Sensibility*, by Ang Lee

The project for the 1995 Hollywood rendering of *Sense and Sensibility* into film starts with producer Lindsay Doran[3], a professional who likes to produce what she calls "feel-good movies"; the ones that leave the audience feeling happier than when they entered the movie theatre. That does not mean necessarily a happy ending, but indicates the reverse of the ideas that a film can only be considered really good if it has a tragic ending, and that Oscars are only granted to professionals who work in these kinds of films (RICKEY, 2010).

In a recent presentation to filmmakers, Doran pointed out her belief that what the audience wants is to see the interaction between people, and the ways in which they solve their differences in an optimistic way (DORAN, 2012). Also, in an interview for the New York Times published on January 13, 2012 she advocates for the making of films that produce positive emotions in the audience. This is the mood that underlies her production of *Sense and Sensibility*. In her introduction to Emma Thompson's *Diaries* (1995), Doran reveals that she did not like Jane Austen at first. It was only when she attended some classes in college that she changed her views. The professor was so fond of Austen, and one of her classmates made such a praised presentation about the author that Doran had no chance but capitulate. So, she proceeded to read all the novels and,

[3] For a complete list of all the films produced by Lindsay Doran refer to Annex 4.

like many of us, became an enthusiast of Jane Austen. As she decided to read the books chronologically, *Sense and Sensibility* was the first, and the one that became her favorite. Being the daughter of a Hollywood studio executive, Doran grew up listening to what makes a great film, and therefore imagined that *Sense and Sensibility* had all the elements necessary for a successful movie: "wonderful characters, a strong love story (actually, three strong love stories), surprising plot twists, good jokes, relevant themes, and a heart stopping ending." (DORAN, 1996, p.11). When she realizes that, she decides she will make a movie out of it.

The first step was to look for a screenwriter. Having always been drawn to stories that were not just one thing but a combination of many, such as dramas with a hint of comedy, or comedies that could make you cry, Doran searched for a screenwriter capable of working through these characteristics (which applies so well to Jane Austen's novels). Doran wanted her film to portray the perfect balance of satire and romance she felt in Austen. For that to happen, she needed a screenwriter capable of navigating well in these two worlds. That proved to be easier in theory than in practice. It took Doran ten years - from her start, working for Sydney Pollack's production company *Mirage* - to find her perfect match. She either received scripts which were strong on the satire and weak on the romantic side, or vice versa. Doran started to feel discouraged, fearing that maybe the person she was looking for did not exist. Suddenly, such screenwriter came into existence in the person of Emma Thompson, the actress who had never adapted anything in her life.

Thompson, with her English Literature degree from Cambridge University, had already written some pieces for television, but had no experience with adaptations. Lindsay Doran met Emma Thompson when she produced one of the actress's films, *Dead Again*, and had the feeling that she had finally found the person she was looking for. Thompson was able to combine satire and romance in an effortless manner, besides having a deep knowledge of Jane Austen. Another important aspect to be taken into consideration in Doran's choice of a screenwriter was the use of language. As in all adaptations, scenes had to be changed and lines had to be added; she needed an adapter who was able to mold his or her voice into Austen's. The result of the new added lines had to be convincing to the most demanding Austen admirer; the adapter, therefore, had

to “speak” the language of Jane Austen, and Emma Thompson was able to accomplish that.

When faced with the invitation to write the screenplay of *Sense and Sensibility*, Thompson was surprised, not only with the fact that the invitation was made to herself but also with the choice of the novel. She at first thought that it would make more sense to adapt something else by Jane Austen, but she agreed that *Sense and Sensibility* had the advantage of having two female protagonists, which would certainly bring more interest and possibilities to the story. After rereading the novel she also realized that no other novel by the author had as much action as this one (e.g. a pregnancy out of wedlock and a duel). Thompson stresses the importance of the play of satire and irony, and observes that people in Austen’s novels seem so authentic because they are shaped on the kind of people the author met in her own life. (THOMPSON, 1995). And she continues by commenting that the plot of *Sense and Sensibility* is in episodes that might have happened to many people living within that social context. More than that, human beings are still the same (in the sense they are still concerned about money and relationships), and will identify with the novel, no matter how long ago it has been written. For Thompson, the key to *Sense and Sensibility’s* success and interest still today lies in the fact that it is a very current story, with a plot and characters that are very understandable to the modern audiences. (Idem, 1996)

Adapting *Sense and Sensibility* was neither an easy nor a quick task. The screenplay started being written at the moment Emma Thompson was getting well known internationally, being acclaimed for her performances in *Howard’s End* (for which she received her first Academy Award), *The Remains of the Day,* and *Carrington.* As she could not afford much time to dedicate to the screenplay, she would write the draft when she was between movies. It was only five years - and many drafts - later that she concluded she had something worth working with.

The fact that Doran was working with Sydney Pollack granted his support for the project. Even so, it was difficult to find a studio willing to produce a film by an English author, adapted by an actress that was just beginning to become famous. Eventually, Columbia Pictures finally saw value in the script and accepted the challenge. The film

was meant to be released internationally, which implies that it should have not only the Jane Austen Doran wanted, but that it had to be done in a way that made it understandable to the international Hollywood public from the 1990's. Some aspects of the story that would be easily understood by the British needed some sort of abridging to the millions of spectators from other countries and cultures. Many points in the story needed to be changed, or clarified. That was one of Pollack's biggest concerns, who ended up as executive producer in the enterprise. He was the first to point out, for instance, that apart from the British, not many people in the world would know that Norland Park or Barton Park were names of houses. This outside perspective helped them adequate the script to foreign viewers.

At the time, Jane Austen is not "trendy", and Emma Thompson is not yet recognized as the accomplished actress she is today. And there is still the challenge of choosing a director. Geoff Stier, a colleague from Mirage, suggests the Taiwanese director Ang Lee. The idea seems very odd at first since they were considering a British female director. Nevertheless, the more they consider the idea, the more it seems right. Having found the combination of satire and romance in Emma Thompson, they now need a director who shares the same characteristics, so that he could appropriately translate Thompson's screenplay into visual language. Although he is Asian, admittedly unfamiliar with Austen's novels, and virtually unknown by Western producers, Lee possesses the qualities necessary to bring Thompson's adaptation successfully to the screen. "The idea of a foreign director was intellectually appealing even though it was very scary to have someone who didn't have English as his first language", says Doran in an interview for the Newsweek Magazine (DORAN, 1995, p.2). Ang Lee had directed three films, *Pushing Hands* (1992), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman(*1994), stories that combine modernity and tradition, family relationships and the so much sought after mixture of humor and romance. *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman* especially has many points of contact with *Sense and Sensibility,* since it also deals with the relationship between sisters struggling to find love and find themselves. Interestingly enough, both films share the same line, "What do you know of my heart?" spoken from one sister to another. Although Lee is at first intrigued as to why he was

called to direct a 19th century British drama, later on he understands and agrees with the studio's choice.

> I thought they were crazy: I was brought up in Taiwan, what do I know about 19th-century England? About halfway through the script it started to make sense why they chose me. In my films I've been trying to mix social satire and family drama. I realized that all along I had been trying to do Jane Austen without knowing it. Jane Austen was my destiny. I just had to overcome the cultural barrier. (Lee, 1995, p.2).

Emma Thompson does not take for granted that she is going to be casted as Elinor. In fact, she tries to convince the producers to cast Vanessa Redgrave's daughters, Natasha and Joely Richardson as the Dashwood sisters. However, as soon as Ang Lee meets Thompson he is sure she will make the perfect Elinor. The only problem pointed out by Thompson is the fact that, at 36, she can hardly pass off as the 19-year-old Elinor. Lee suggests then that the age of the character is changed and Elinor becomes a 27 – year-old (which helps modern audiences better understand her spinsterhood). In the same way that Elinor's age has to be changed to better suit the actress portraying her, many other aspects also have to (and they will be discussed in the following chapters), not only to make the story more appealing to modern audiences but also for time-related or budgetary reasons. Thompson's inexperience in producing causes her to overlook some practical elements and Ang Lee's unfamiliarity with movie-making in England also does not help. For those details the insights of the producer Lindsay Doran and the co-producers James Schamus and Laurie Borg are of invaluable importance for many times the scenes envisioned by Thompson are simply impossible – or at least unviable without reasonable funds. The whole beginning of the movie, for instance, had to be eliminated because of the reasons aforementioned. The first idea was to have the film start with the hunting accident that would be the reason for Mr. Dashwood's death. It turns out that the scene would demand too much in terms of money and time so it has to be cut. And so is the same with many other ideas and suggestions given by Thompson. Things need to be adapted in order to fit the budget they have. Because of these

restrictions Thompson and the producers have to constantly go over the script to find out ways of saving money.

The film is carefully crafted to make sure that everything seems credible and according to the time period it is supposed to portray. For instance, Doran says in an interview for the Chicago Tribune (DORAN, 1996) that at some point in shooting, daisies are handpicked from the location by the crew because they realize that they are not supposed to be in season at the time. Or the scene in which Margaret is given a bath in the parlor that is vetoed by the art department since at the time people would usually bathe in their rooms or in the kitchen. Sometimes it is Thompson who fights with the art department; when the Dashwoods are having an outside meal she demands the exquisite picnic arranged to be taken away. "Cheese, bread, apples and beer", Thompson says, "They're poor" (THOMPSON, 1995, p.234).

The shooting is not without its problems, starting with the unusual work method of Ang Lee. What is considered mainstream in Taiwan is not in the West, which causes some misunderstandings between Lee and his crew and actors. He resorts to meditation at the beginning of the shooting and requires written homework from the actors who are not accustomed to this sort of approach. But, as Thompson well puts, these adjustments are part of any film:

> The beginning of a film is like watching a huge newborn centipede trying to get up on its hundred legs and go for a walk. Keeps tripping up until it's worked out how to coordinate. Any film will take two to three weeks to get in its stride –some never do. I think the key is good communication. (Idem, p.221)

The cultural shock is soon overcome and things are able to progress as smoothly as possible. Unfortunately, like in any other project, things go wrong and sometimes get delayed by circumstances out of anyone's reach. *Sense and Sensibility* was no different. Kate Winslet has phlebitis and collapses a few times, the sheep used in location die of heat exhaustion and the British weather does not cooperate.

The film, which had a budget of $16, 5 million (source: IMDB), took 65 weeks to be filmed on locations, in several regions of England. The film made $134,582,776 worldwide (IMDB) and received 60 nominations for several awards, having won 30 of them. Among several other prizes, Emma Thompson won the Oscar and the Golden Globe for best screenplay and the Bafta[4] for best actress. The film also won the Golden Bear in Berlin and many other awards for film, screenplay, best actress, best director and best supporting actress (for Kate Winslet)[5].

Besides the success in the box office, Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility* has another merit: it is one of the works responsible for the triggering of the phenomenon known as Austenmania. Alongside the BBC's acclaimed *Pride and Prejudice,* the landmark series featuring Colin Firth, several other productions - including *Clueless*, two productions of *Emma* and one of *Persuasion* - are made at the time. These films bring to light the somehow forgotten Jane Austen, who had most of her reading public restricted to England and Literature courses. The massive success obtained by these works makes Austen available to a new public and makes her critical fortune rise in a way it had never before. In a way, what happens to Jane Austen in the 1990s is similar to what happens to William Shakespeare in the 18th Century: they turn from great authors into top canon names and cultural icons. When Lindsay Doran decides she wants to adapt *Sense and Sensibility* to the screen she knows that will be a risky endeavor, since Jane Austen is not a synonym of box office success then. Her obstinacy and certainty that the novel has the elements of a great film, together with Emma Thompson's screenplay and Ang Lee's direction are, in a way, somewhat responsible for this upraise in Austen's reading tradition. Another element to be considered is the increasing use of the Internet as an element to connect people interested in the same subjects. Several Jane Austen blogs and communities are created all over the world, and the more people see the films and hear about the author, the more they want to read the novels.

Thompson's role in the film's triumph was delicate and complex: she is the one with the task of adapting Austen's language to a modern audience. And Austen's use of language, more than plot or any other aspect, is the top element in her novels.

[4] The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). Official site: http://www.bafta.org/ .
[5] For the complete list of awards go to Annex 5.

Thompson's challenge is to manage to maintain the quality of the author's style while adapting it and making it understandable to a wider range of viewers. Thompson's wit allows her to create a similar combination of irony and romance to the one found in Jane Austen. The diaries Thompson writes during the making of the film help us follow the challenges she has to overcome. They are later published alongside the screenplay of the movie under the title *The Sense and Sensibility Screenplay and Diaries: The Making of the Film Based on the Jane Austen Novels* (1995). Thompson's text is both humorous and clever and this tone impregnates the whole movie. Even though the focus of the film lies in the love plots, it does not lose its comic parts. A proof that Emma Thompson understands the way Austen conceives the world is found in the speech given at the Golden Globe ceremony in which Thompson received the award for best screenplay, transcribed here in the oral form in which it was delivered:

> Thank you very much. Good Heavens. Um, I can't thank you enough, Hollywood Foreign Press, for honouring me in this capacity. I don't wish to burden you with my debts, which are heavy and numerous but, um, I think that everybody involved in the making of this film knows that we owe all our pride and all our joy to the genius of Jane Austen. And, um, it occurred to me to wonder how she would react to an evening like this... [Puts down statue on stage, reads paper] This is what I came up with:
>
> Four a.m., having just returned from an evening at the Golden Spheres, which despite the inconveniences of heat, noise and overcrowding was not without its pleasures. Thankfully, there were no dogs and no children. The gowns were middling. There was a good deal of shouting and behaviour verging on the profligate, however, people were very free with their compliments and I made several new acquaintances. There was Lindsay Doran of Mirage, wherever that might be, who's largely responsible for my presence here, an enchanting companion about whom too much good cannot be said. Mr. Ang Lee, of foreign extraction, who most unexpectedly appeared to understand me better than I understand myself. Mr. James Shamis, a most copiously erudite person and Miss Kate Winslet, beautiful in both countenance and spirit. Mr. Pat Doyle, a composer and a Scot, who displayed the kind of wild behaviour one has learned to expect from that race. Mr. Mark Kenton, an energetic person with a ready smile who, as I understand it, owes me a great deal of money. [Breaks character, smiles] TRUE!! [back in character] Miss Lisa Henson of Columbia, a lovely girl and Mr. Gareth Wigan, a lovely boy. I attempted to

> converse with Mr. Sydney Pollack, but his charms and wisdom are so generally pleasing, that it proved impossible to get within ten feet of him. The room was full of interesting activity until 11 p.m. when it emptied rather suddenly. The lateness of the hour is due, therefore, not to the dance, but to the waiting in a long line for a horseless carriage of unconscionable size. The modern world has clearly done nothing for transport.
>
> P.S. Managed to avoid the hoyden Emily Thompkinson, who has purloined my creation and added things of her own. Nefarious Creature!
>
> Thank you. (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 1)

After the success of this movie, many adaptations of *Sense and Sensibility* and other works by Jane Austen followed, but still today many consider the 1995 version the one responsible for the resurgence of Austen as a best seller, embracing two different kinds of public, the academic one and the common readers. [6] This is the only among Austen's adaptations to win so many important international awards as the Oscar, the Golden Globe, the BAFTA, and the Golden Bear in Berlin. It has a wider viewership than other film adaptations from the same time.

1.1.2 Ang Lee

Taiwanese director Ang Lee (born October 23, 1954, aged 41 when the film was shot) comes from a family of academic origin, so for a long time he was a disappointment to his father for not having become a scholar himself. His parents are not originally Taiwanese; they were the only survivors when the communists killed their entire families during the Cultural Revolution. His parents escape to Taiwan, where his

[6] Even though the 1995 BBC series *Pride and Prejudice* – starring Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth- is also very important in the resurgence of Austen it did not reach audiences all over the world as was the case with the 1995 *Sense and Sensibility* film.

father, Shang Lee, becomes the principal of a school (the one where Ang Lee studied). Having a strong academic background, Shang Lee has high hopes for his son's making a career as a teacher as well. Because Lee is the first born, all the hopes rest on his shoulders – in China, still today, the first male child is the one who carries more expectations from the parents.

Lee, however, is not a brilliant student. He fails his University entrance examinations and decides to enroll at the Taiwan Academy of Arts. His parents are not pleased with his decision, but after having experienced being on stage for the first time, there is no turning back; he has found out his real call. After completing his studies at the academy (where he studied both acting and directing) and attending to his two-year compulsory service in the National Army, Lee goes to the United States to continue his education. He enrolls at the University of Illinois and gets a degree in Theatre. However, as his English is quite poor, he realizes he will have difficulty in finding a job as an actor. Then he decides to turn his energy into direction and screenwriting. During this period he meets and marries his wife, Jane Lin, a microbiologist. After his graduation they go to New York, where he finally concludes his studies at Tisch School of the Arts. There, he is classmates with another Lee, Spike Lee, and works on the crew of Spike's thesis film *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads.*

Despite the success of Ang Lee's own thesis film, *Fine Line* – which receives awards and the respect of the independent film community – he is not able to land any substantial contracts. For six years he becomes a stay-at-home dad who takes care of the children while his wife is the sole breadwinner of the household. During the time Lee is at home he never loses faith that he will one day be able to direct his own movies, and so he focuses on many scripts concomitantly. (YI, 2007). When Lee is almost losing his hope, he decides to apply for a screenwriting competition sponsored by the government of Taiwan in which he submits two screenplays (*Pushing Hands* and *The Wedding Banquet*). He ends up winning first and second place. With the $500,000 money he gets as a prize, he is able to finally make his first film, *Pushing Hands*, at the age of 37.

At this time, James Schamus comes into Lee's life for what it comes to be a lifelong partnership. Schamus, and his partner Ted Hope have just started their own production

company*, Good Machine,* and are looking for new promising directors who have not had a chance to make their debuts yet. After meeting Schamus, Lee's career finally takes off. The two of them are responsible for almost all the screenplays in Lee's films (with the exception of *Sense and Sensibility*, *Brokeback Mountain* and *Life of Pi*). Another important help comes from the Central Motion Picture Corporation from Taiwan, which is willing to finance films that will improve the image of the country abroad.

After *Pushing Hands* in 1992, comes *The Wedding Banquet* in 1993, both filmed in New York, but mostly spoken in Chinese. In 1994 Lee returns to Taiwan to film *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*, a story about three sisters in Taipei. These three films are called by Lee the "*Father Knows Best Trilogy*" because all three talk about the relationship between fathers and children. The films become immediate successes – *The Wedding Banquet*, for instance, makes over 3 times its investment - and that is why Lee is considered for the direction of *Sense and Sensibility*; his treatment of the themes and his subtlety seems a great fit for Emma Thompson's screenplay. After *Sense and Sensibility* Lee directs, among others: *The Ice Storm, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *Brokeback Mountain*[7] (for which he wins the Oscar for best director). Currently (2013) Lee has a new film in the theaters, the highly-acclaimed *Life of Pi*, for which he won his second Academy Award for best director.

Lee is a reserved, polite, and attentive-to-details director. The myth surrounding his poor command of English makes him even more willing to be quiet and not to say much. His typical instructions for the actors consist of "more", "less", "now do it like you're a bad actor", but everybody who works with him leaves the set transformed. Sydney Pollack says in an interview to New York Magazine, "He's a very quiet director, self-effacing in a certain way. He's a philosopher. Maybe he doesn't know it yet but that's what he is". (POLLACK, 1996, p.44)

Lee's foremost characteristic as a director is the fact that he puts a lot of emphasis on his characters. He frequently admits that his films will hardly ever win awards for his cinematographer since the focus is always on the characters and what makes them move. As Pollack comments, Lee is a "self-effacing" (Idem) kind of director; he does not

[7] A comprehensive list of Lee's films can be found in Annex 3.

impose his presence in the film, he prefers to let the story flow and let the characters be in charge of telling it. "…The story and the characters are at the core of his films- not flashy cinematography (Ibid). Because he studied acting at the University, Lee gives importance to characterization, so his attention to detail has become his trademark. He became famous as an actor's director. As CHESHIRE (2001) remarks, the acting on his films is always extraordinary, producing many acting nominations for prestigious awards. He is also "very interesting (sic) on the flow of energy in a film. Always thinks of everything in its widest context." (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 224). Thompson says that Lee showed her that attention to details pays off. Every little detail helps to tell a story and that is why he is so particular about what he wants from his movies. He wants exactly what he has envisioned in his mind and nothing less. THOMPSON (1996) says that it is not always very simple to apprehend what Lee wishes; usually what he wants is something less obvious and more subtle. This method may cause strangeness in the West since it is so different from what most actors are used to. Still, it goes well with the notions of British subtlety and understatement. This is probably why the conjunction of Ang Lee's, Emma Thompson's and Jane Austen's perceptions functions so well.

When working with Kate Winslet in *Sense and Sensibility,* Lee would have sessions in which he "took her aside and ran her through acting exercises loosely derived from *t'ai chi chuan*, which included crawling along the floor, hitting herself on the shoulder and spinning around in circles, to loosen up." (KERR, 1996, p.43). Lee's use of words is sometimes a bit harsh because of his unusual sincerity. After Winslet's first scene he sends her a note that reads "You'll get better". To Emma Thompson, he asks her not to look so old. Though frustrating at times, his method works because he knows very well what he wants to achieve from a scene. During the pre-shooting of *Sense and Sensibility* he caused quite a stir among the actors because he required things from them that no one else ever did (THOMPSON, 1995). Written homework is apparently a must in his technique. He makes the actors really ponder about the inner life of their characters; in *Sense and Sensibility* many of the actors were asked to write about the background of their characters, in order to set themselves in the mood. Not all of them approved of the idea, but everybody did it anyway. Another of his rituals is that, at the beginning of every movie, he performs a "Big Luck" ceremony in which all the actors and crew sing, lighten

incenses and, according to Emma Thompson (Idem, p.217) "offer a prayer to the God of their choice".

Lee is also quite particular when it comes to casting and puts a lot of emphasis on physiognomy: "Physiognomy matters a great deal to him. Not whether a person is good-looking but the spaces between their lower lip and chin and between the bridge of the nose and forehead. Praxitelean proportions, virtually." (Ibid, p.210). Thompson goes on saying that Lee is full of contradictory traits; even though he does *t'ai chi* he has a slouch, he eats a lot but is very thin, he meditates but also smokes and he looks much younger than his age.

Even though Lee (and his producer and co-writer James Schamus) claims to try to do films that are very different from each other – family dramas (his "*Father Knows Best*" trilogy), period films (*Sense and Sensibility*), comic book stories (*The Hulk*), martial arts (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*), polemic romances (*Brokeback Mountain*) and dramas with eroticism (*Lust, Caution*)– one cannot fail to notice that no matter how different they seem at surface they share the same authorial mark. Lee is fond of the outsiders, probably because he relates to them, being a foreigner himself. In an interview to Roger EBERT (2005), he says: "I was never a citizen of any particular place." "My parents left China to go to Taiwan. We were outsiders there. We moved to the States. Outsiders. Back to China. Now, we were outsiders there, too – outsiders from America". All his films in one way or another talk about people who are underdogs, who are struggling to find their identities and have to fight to live their lives their own way. We can see that in *The Wedding Banquet, Brokeback Mountain* and *The Hulk,* films where the main characters are 'different' and struggle to accept and cope with their feelings. No matter if his characters are Asian, Westerners, comic book heroes, gay or heterosexual, they all strive to be accepted the way they are, never really belonging anywhere specifically. Besides the outsider theme, CHESHIRE (2001) also points three other current themes in his work: The Father Figure, Rites of Passage and The Generation Gap. All his films fall into at least one of these categories. His first three movies (*Pushing Hands, The Wedding Banquet* and *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*) specially have the theme of the father figure very present; they all portray children trying to deal with a very strong paternal presence who does not accept their lifestyles; the generation gap is also approached in them.

Apart from *Brokeback Mountain* and the most recent *Life of Pi*, *Sense and Sensibility* is the only other film Lee directed that did not have a screenplay written by him and Schamus. Even though the screenplays are not his, the films ended up being very similar to the kind of work he creates. *Sense and Sensibility* was his first international movie, shot on location in England, all spoken in English, with British actors and, to boot, an adaptation of a classic early 19th century novel. Despite the apparent nuisance – who would hire an Asian director who could hardly speak the language to an adaptation of Jane Austen? – the enterprise was thoroughly successful. Lee confesses that when he received the unexpected proposal, he had no previous knowledge of the author or of the way things worked in a British set. However diametrically opposite the themes might seem at first, coincidentally some of the same concerns and subjects portrayed in Lee's first three films are also at the core of *Sense and Sensibility*. As DARIOTIS and FUNG (1997) call our attention to, *Sense and Sensibility* is also about the intricacies existent in family relationships.

> As in Lee's earlier works, the displacement of the individual and the family is a central concern of Sense and Sensibility, both in the original novel and in Lee and Thompson's adaptation. The heroine must move away from home in order to discover the truth of her situation. Being at home somehow blinds her, as well as the rest of Lee's protagonists, to what they can discover about themselves when they are forced to cope with the displacement of their identity. (Dariotis; Fung, 1997, p.213)

Lee fits perfectly as a director for this film because, as in Emma Thompson's case, he also shares the same balance between satire and romance, so present in Jane Austen. Lee realizes that all his life he has been writing Jane Austen movies without knowing, and because he was raised in a society quite similar to that in early 19th century England – as strange as this may sound – he can easily understand the drives of Austen's characters:

> In some ways I probably know that nineteenth-century world better than English people today, because I grew up with one foot still in that feudal society. Of course, the dry sense of humor, the sense of decorum, the social code is different. But the essence of social repression against free will – I grew up with that. (Lee, 1996, p.47)

Thompson is delighted to find out how similar Lee and Austen are, as they share the same sort of unsentimental sentimentality. Lee says:

> I've become this weird mixture of drama and anti-drama, and that's become my style. I think that's why I got hired to do Jane Austen. She's very ying- and- yang, like a t'ai chi pole – everything has a flip side. When you think something is a really mean-spirited, cynical joke, there's a warm side to it. When you get involved with emotions and you feel embarrassed, there's a joke behind it. (Idem.)

DARIOTIS and FUNG (1997) also point out how similar *Sense and Sensibility* is to other Lee's films. That happens because they share the same subject manner, the "(dis)placement of the father figure" (Idem, p.217). In his first three films, Lee works on the strong presence of a father and the conflicts this generates; in *Sense and Sensibility*, the conflicts arrive due to the absence (the death) of the father. The Dashwoods' lives are turned upside down with the passing of Mr. Dashwood, which is the beginning of all their troubles. Also, as CHESHIRE (2001) remarks, *Sense and Sensibility* is extremely alike to its predecessor *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman*. Both movies address the lives of three sisters in which the eldest is mature, responsible and conformed to the rules of society; the middle sister is eye-catching and full of life, attracting the attention of many men and the youngest is adventurous and "fights the conventions and expectations of girls on the verge of adulthood in their society" (Idem p.49).

Lee brings to the set of *Sense and Sensibility* much of what is considered normal in Asian filmmaking, but that caused some friction in an entire British cast and crew. The cultural shock happens in both ways and the ability to adapt is a merit of each of the

parts. However, this takes some time to happen, and triggers some misunderstandings. In Taiwan, the director is a king, no one dares to challenge his ideas or doubt the value of a scene. In the West, this relationship is more open and actors suggest changes all the time. As Lee did not know that, he is offended and hurt when Emma Thompson and Hugh Grant make a suggestion for a scene. Afterwards, when both parts realize that the event is nothing but a cultural gap, Thompson writes a letter apologizing and Lee gets pleased with the gesture. Lee's anti-confrontational personality is one of his best known characteristics. "I can't take argument, he says. If there is a conflict between me and a person, I get very uncomfortable, I try to dissolve it, make harmony out of it – get back to the person later and prove by action what I really mean." (LEE, 1996, p.44).

Lee's Asian way of film making added much to *Sense and Sensibility*: the long shots, the tendency to restrain the acting to a more constricted tone – that is much in tune with this particular Austen novel. It provides the film with density and personality. Even though Lee seems to "deflect attention away from himself" (KERR, 1996, p.44), one cannot fail to notice his signature in his films. Many of the important scenes in *Sense and Sensibility* are not even shown on screen, for example (CHESHIRE, 2001, p.50), the proposal of Edward to Elinor. For this same scene, Lee gave Thompson very strict directions; she should not under any circumstance look to the camera during the whole shooting. Lee's idea is to avoid the typical, conservative BBC way of making film adaptations, explains Schamus (KERR, 1996), softening the British inclination to overacting. While the producer Lindsay Doran often feels the need for more emotion, Lee always asks for less. Lee wants the acting restrained, not over the top, things should be subtle, there is no need to show everything, since, in his opinion, implying triggers the same effect and is more in tune with Austen's style. Not only does Lee put emphasis in the characters, but also in the setting. The house is as fundamental for the telling of the story as the people. If we pay attention, we can see that the camera concentrates in the rooms and how they change when another element is added.

This attention to detail helps Ang Lee tell his stories in a delicate way, focusing on the people inhabiting them and showing their conflicts and transformations in a manner that is both ingenious and sensitive.

> Their films [Lee and Shamus's] combine artistic depth and narrative pathos, a sensitivity toward human connections as only the cinematic medium can capture. Forged from a thriving creative dynamic, their films aim at creating a panorama of the human experience in its entirety: fleeting, tragic and often profoundly moving. (Liu, 2009)

1.2 THE SOURCE

1.2.1 The Novel: *Sense and Sensibility,* by Jane Austen

Before 1811 Jane Austen had already tried to have *First Impressions* and *Susan* (respectively, the first versions of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Northanger Abbey*) published, without success. As *Sense and Sensibility* is considered her "most orthodox novel both aesthetically and morally" (FERGUS, 1997, p.19), Austen imagined she could have better success with this work. And she was right; *Sense and Sensibility* was the first of her novels to go public in 1811. No one knows which of her novels was written first; there were so many revisions of their texts that it is impossible to find out exactly how much has been changed from the first original drafts to the versions that were finally printed. According to Mary FAVRET (2002, p.373) *Sense and Sensibility* was possibly first written in 1796; initially, it was called *Elinor and Marianne*, and had the form of an epistolary novel in which the correspondence was exchanged between the sisters, their friends and family. Later, after extensive rewriting, the novel reached the form it has today, with a third person homodiegetic narrator whose focalization lies mostly in Elinor, the eldest sister. The novel reached considerable success – contrary to what Jane Austen expected – having "two good reviews and a steady sale" (FERGUS, 2002, p.331). According to Fergus, Austen was so sure of *Sense and Sensibilty'*s failure in sales that she saved a considerable amount of her income to cover the losses she was sure would come with

the publishing of her first book. Fortunately it was not so and the book was praised and bought by many in her time.

In an unsigned review in the *Critical Revue* of February 1812 (one year after *Sense and Sensibility*'s publishing) the critic called it "well written; the characters are in genteel life, naturally drawn, and judiciously supported. The incidents are probable, and highly pleasing, and interesting…" (ANONYMOUS, 2002, p.313). This critic points that the author shows great understanding of her characters making in all, a good combination of light subject matter and worth. In another unsigned review, characterization is also mentioned as being "happily delineated and admirably sustained" (ANONYMOUS, 2002, p. 315). In *Sense and Sensibility* (as well as *Pride and Prejudice*), contrasting for example with *Northanger Abbey*, the "literary satire is subtler and the social satire is broader, and the narrator's engagement with the heroine [in *Sense and Sensibility*, two heroines] and the fiction is more complex (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p.42)

Sense and Sensibility tells the story of two sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood - who are different in their manners and opinions - and how they manage love and relationships in their own ways. It is also a story about money and how it affects a woman's life. Having lost their father – who had a son by a previous marriage – they lose the bulk of their money, since the inheritance goes solely to the male heir. Although Mr. Dashwood, on his deathbed, asks his son to provide for his half-sisters and their mother, the promise is broken and the Dashwoods (mother and her three daughters) have to move to Barton Cottage, a modest house belonging to a distant cousin. While Elinor, the eldest, is mature, practical and sensible, Marianne is dramatic, passionate and oversensitive. Elinor soon finds herself drawn to Edward Ferrars, her sister-in-law's brother, who spends some time with them in Norland before they leave to Devon. Later on, however, she finds out that he is secretly engaged to Lucy Steele, a vulgar girl who makes a point in rubbing her attachment in Elinor's face, while pretending to be pure and naïve. Marianne, on her part, catches the attention of two men; the older, stable, Colonel Brandon and Willoughby, a youth full of energy. Discarding Colonel Brandon as old and uninteresting, Marianne falls for Willoughby, with whom she shares a passion for music and poetry and a mutual pleasure for disdaining Colonel Brandon. Willoughby,

however, is far from being the perfect man. He goes away without giving Marianne an explanation, leaving her desperately depressed. At the end of the novel, all misunderstandings and problems are solved, Elinor is finally able to settle down with Edward Ferrars and Marianne grows to admire Colonel Brandon and accepts his love.

In a way, the story echoes some aspects of Jane Austen's life, in the sense that she, as well, after the death of her father, had to move from place to place with her mother and sister, trying to find affordable accommodation with the little money they had. TEACHMAN (2000) remarks that the ordeal of being part of a female household with no man to provide for them must have had influence in the way Austen portrays the story of the Dashwoods.

In spite of the two good reviews mentioned above, in *Critical Review* and *British Critic*, *Sense and Sensibility* received its share of bad criticism over the years, being considered a lesser work. The dissatisfaction most complained about is the lack of charm of the male protagonists, and the quick shift of interest from Willoughby to Colonel Brandon on the part of Marianne. Reginald FARRER, in his 1917 critical review, complains of dullness, disposable characters and a dissatisfying ending,

> There are longuers and clumsiness; its conviction lacks fire; its development lacks movement; its major figures are rather incarnate qualities than qualified incarnation. Never again does the writer introduce a character so entirely irrelevant as Margaret Dashwood, or marry a heroine to a man so remote in the story as Colonel Brandon. (Farrer, 2002, p. 324)

As DUNCAN (2000) remarks, the novel for quite some time was paralleled to the works of authors such as Maria Edgeworth[8], since it portrays two heroines of polar opposite personalities in which one has to learn how to be as virtuous as the other. This didactic view of the novel generated much criticism. According to WALDRON (1999),

[8] Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) is a writer whose work focus on Irish life (although English she lived in Ireland), social commentary or children's education in morals. She is often referred to as the "Irish Jane Austen" due to her wit. Her first published novel is *Castle Rackrent* (1800).

there are two lines of criticism when it comes to *Sense and Sensibility*. The first follows the Christian view that virtue trumps individualism; the second preaches that Austen was criticizing the society of her own time, specially the way money was dealt with. That has changed, however, in the recent years, as many authors have surpassed this view and written praising *Sense and Sensibility*'s for the way it portrays women, money and power relationships.

For Jane Austen, says FERGUS (2002, p.326), "self-control *was* a theme central to *Sense and Sensibility*", since in the battle between Elinor's sense and Marianne's passion Elinor's ability to control her emotions has the upper hand. Even though Marianne's ardor and lack of social restraint is seen as positive by many, it is Elinor with her maturity and fair judgment that sets the pattern as someone to be admired and followed. Elinor is ready, Marianne is the one who needs to change and find herself, mirroring herself in the actions of her elder sister and meet her halfway. Austen, however, refuses to reward one sister and punish the other, since in the end they are both rewarded with a (supposedly) happy marriage (BROWNSTEIN, 2008). The fact that the narrative point of view subscribes Elinor's actions, and yet seems to admire Marianne's enthusiasm, well marks the position of Jane Austen as a transitional author, at a moment when the aesthetic taste was shifting from the Neoclassical into the Romantic mood. POOVEY (2002) says that for the most part of the novel, the aesthetic plan accredits Elinor's behavior, reinforcing the moral principles followed by her, weighing every character to traditional, conservative values. "Jane Austen's version of 'sensibility'- that is, individualism, or the worship of self, in various familiar guises – is as harshly dealt with here as anywhere in the anti-Jacobin tradition." (BUTLER, 2002, p.337) The author continues by calling attention to the first chapters of the novel, in which Marianne's sensibility is nothing but a synonym of romantic idealism, with little practical use, which is contrasted with Elinor's more realistic and perhaps even cynical point of view. BROWNSTEIN (2008, p.43) complements: "Elinor's view of the self as social, not isolated, is also the narrator's." The way the heroines present themselves to the world makes a difference in how they are perceived and the narrative insists on showing to the reader that social practices are, indeed, important. BUTLER (2002) even compares

Austen's writings, *Sense and Sensibility* specifically, to the conservative writer Jane West[9] who also resorted to a more skeptical approach to choosing an appropriate husband. In *Sense and Sensibility* the heroes, Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon (the ones who eventually marry the sisters) are not what most readers would call "interesting men". For BUTLER (2002), in *Sense and Sensibility* - and as a consequence in Jane Austen's world - there is no need for a man to be physically attractive or share the same interests as his beloved, for marriages are based on more practical terms, and second attachments – contrary to what Marianne thinks – are often desirable, since they tend to be more dependable than immediate attraction. This is one characteristic shared by all three male protagonists in the novel: Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon and John Willoughby have already had previous attachments. Not to mention Mr. Dashwood himself. With the exception of Willoughby, all end up finally marrying their second love, which is seen with much better eyes than their first attempts.

For POOVEY (2002, p.339), nonetheless, the "most fundamental conflict [in *Sense and Sensibility*] is between Austen's own imaginative engagement with her self-assertive characters and the moral code necessary to control their anarchic desires". Even though the moral, traditional values are present in the work, it also displays that these principles are quite flexible, for we can reach the conclusion that "more often than not, individual will triumphs over principle and individual desire proves more compelling than moral law" (Idem, p.339). Values can be quite malleable and, when necessary, fall into a grey area in which everything may be accepted, under the right circumstances.

SPACKS (2002) brings up the fact that *Sense and Sensibility* is a novel of concealment, since every single character seems to be hiding something from the others. Edward hides his engagement to Lucy; Elinor hides the fact that she knows about it; Marianne hides her real situation involving Willoughby, not mentioning whether they are engaged or not; Colonel Brandon hides his past with Willoughby (the fact that he knows Willoughby is the one who disgraced his ward, Elisa); and finally Willoughby conceals his real motivations, his past and further engagement. The plot is, therefore,

[9] British author Jane West (1758-1852) became known for her didactic novels such as *The Advantages of Education*(1793) *and A Tale of the Times* (1799). She often used the pseudonym Prudentia Homespun to sign her work.

concentrated on solving these entanglements so as to finally make the truth come up. Truth, nevertheless does not have any "salvationary force" (Idem, p. 361), it does not bring any aid to the characters, for it does not alter the fact that life is essentially unfair, ruled by relationships of power in which the one with more strength (either, physical, financial or persuasive) will have its way. Here we have another instance of the fact that Austen's world is, ultimately, more neoclassical than romantic: nature does not bend so much according to the needs and wishes of the protagonists as it would do in a romantic construct. Nevertheless, we have already sporadic unexpected twists of the plot so that the protagonists may be allowed to be together at the end. In a more negative mood, BROWNSTEIN suggests that the novel makes a point at showing that "men merely use dependant women, that virtue goes unrewarded, that ingratitude, caprice and selfishness prevail, that people do active harm and yet remain respectable." (2008, p.45). And this power does not come only from men; women can be powerful as well, more often than not, when they are rich (the case of Mrs. Ferrars) or lack morals (such as Lucy Steele).

> There is much to support the idea that in Sense and Sensibility Austen no longer found the simple moral dichotomies of contemporary fiction merely funny. The novel probes deeper into the mores of contemporary society to find, not the obtuse but ultimately impotent snobbery of Lady Catherine [from Pride and Prejudice] but selfish greed and malice prepense, which are rendered both respectable and potentially destructive by the support of the society within which they operate. (Waldron, 1999, p.62)

In this way, *Sense and Sensibility* is a darker novel than *Pride and Prejudice* or *Northanger Abbey*, since Elinor and Marianne are up against much stronger economical forces than the Bennets, for instance. BROWNSTEIN, however, seems to disagree, as she says that, "Like all Jane Austen's novels, *Sense and Sensibility* is a comedy that ends in marriages, which traditionally affirm the connections between sexes and families, and between desire and public ritual or social conventions." (2008, p. 46). This does not mean that marriage is seen as the solution to all problems. As SPACKS mentions, the

novel insinuates that maybe getting married does not determine the settlement of all issues. In her words “neatness may prove illusory” (2002, p.362).

Irony, Austen’s most admirable characteristic, is not lost in the novel. The greatest example lies perhaps in chapter two, when John Dashwood and his wife Fanny are discussing how they should help (financially) his half sisters,

> "It was my father's last request to me," replied her husband, "that I should assist his widow and daughters."
>
> "He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one but he was light-headed at the time. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own child." (SS, p.9)
>
> (…)
>
> "To be sure," said she, "it is better than parting with fifteen hundred pounds at once. But, then, if Mrs. Dashwood should live fifteen years we shall be completely taken in."
>
> "Fifteen years! my dear Fanny; her life cannot be worth half that purchase."
>
> "Certainly not; but if you observe, people always live forever when there is an annuity to be paid them; and she is very stout and healthy, and hardly forty. An annuity is a very serious business; it comes over and over every year, and there is no getting rid of it. (Idem, p.11)
>
> (…)
>
> "To be sure it will. Indeed, to say the truth, I am convinced within myself that your father had no idea of your giving them any money at all. The assistance he thought of, I dare say, was only such as might be reasonably expected of you; for instance, such as looking out for a comfortable small house for them, helping them to move their things, and sending them presents of fish and game, and so forth, whenever they are in season. I'll lay my life that he meant nothing farther; indeed, it would be very strange and unreasonable if he did. Do but consider, my dear Mr. Dashwood, how excessively comfortable your mother-in-law and her daughters may live on the interest of seven thousand pounds, besides the thousand pounds belonging to each of the girls, which brings them in fifty pounds a year a-piece, and, of course, they will

> pay their mother for their board out of it. Altogether, they will have five hundred a-year amongst them, and what on earth can four women want for more than that?—They will live so cheap! Their housekeeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind! Only conceive how comfortable they will be! Five hundred a year! I am sure I cannot imagine how they will spend half of it; and as to your giving them more, it is quite absurd to think of it. They will be much more able to give YOU something." (Ibid, p.11)

The way Fanny convinces her husband (who readily complies) to decrease the amount of money offered to the Dashwood ladies, alleging that her “poor boy” Harry will deeply miss this money, and the way she manages to go from £3.000,00 to an eventual gift of game or fish is proof of Jane Austen’s brilliancy in social critique. Behind the humor in the passage lies a strong criticism of the way women were seen at the time. As Fanny puts it, why would women need money for?

That brings us to another point mentioned by ARMSTRONG (2002), who provides many ironic remarks. Like other set of women characters in Jane Austen’s novels, the Dashwoods are seen as intellectuals which contributes to their being so often misinterpreted by others. The irony is present in the fact that frequently their observations are not understood by their counterparts; what is supposed to be a display of sarcasm or intelligence is simply missed by their less clever interlocutors as in the example provided by Armstrong:

> "Aye, aye, I see how it will be," said Sir John, "I see how it will be. You will be setting your cap at him now, and never think of poor Brandon."
>
> "That is an expression, Sir John," said Marianne, warmly, "which I particularly dislike. I abhor every common-place phrase by which wit is intended; and 'setting one's cap at a man,' or 'making a conquest,' are the most odious of all. Their tendency is gross and illiberal; and if their construction could ever be deemed clever, time has long ago destroyed all its ingenuity."

> Sir John did not much understand this reproof; but he laughed as heartily as if he did, and then replied,
>
> "Ay, you will make conquests enough, I dare say, one way or other. Poor Brandon! he is quite smitten already, and he is very well worth setting your cap at, I can tell you, in spite of all this tumbling about and spraining of ankles." (SS, p.35)

Sir John does not understand Marianne's remark, but laughs anyway, proving that Marianne, and all her family for that matter, is more cultured and well-read than the people they are constrained to live with.

No other family in the novel displays such love and puts so much importance in the intellect as they do. Even though the male protagonists may be quite cultivated, they do not seem to pursue knowledge as seriously as the Dashwoods. They are certainly absolute exceptions among the women in the novel. None of the others has any intellectual interest displayed in their conversations, which revolve solely around children, beaus, matchmaking and social gatherings. That is also why the Dashwood clan is eyed with such suspicion, envy even, by other women, as we can see in this passage from chapter thirty six:

> Their hours were therefore made over to Lady Middleton and the two Miss Steeles, by whom their company, in fact was as little valued, as it was professedly sought.
>
> They had too much sense to be desirable companions to the former; and by the latter they were considered with a jealous eye, as intruding on THEIR ground, and sharing the kindness which they wanted to monopolize. Though nothing could be more polite than Lady Middleton's behaviour to Elinor and Marianne, she did not really like them at all. Because they neither flattered herself nor her children, she could not believe them good-natured; and because they were fond of reading, she fancied them satirical: perhaps without exactly knowing what it was to be satirical; but THAT did not signify. It was censure in common use, and easily given. (SS, p. 173)

The other women, lacking intellectual motivation and having their lives revolved around trivial affairs, cannot understand the Dashwood girls; therefore, they look at them with dislike and suspicion. "As intellectual women, the Dashwoods put Lady Middleton on the defensive. She is thoroughly suspicious of them. And they, in their turn, are only too aware of her limitations." (ARMSTRONG, 2002, p.364). Even though quite conventional in their behavior (except for Marianne, with her wilder ways), their thoughts are more modern than the average woman's. They consider cultivation an important trait and take their pursuits very seriously. ARMSTRONG says,

> The Dashwood women – for Mrs. Dashwood is included in the cultivation of the mind – are distinctive, and perhaps distinctive not simply in this text but among Jane Austen's women figures, in being deliberately presented as thinking, articulate, and intellectually aware. Aesthetic practices gives them a sense of autonomy and identity. (Armstrong, 2002, p.365)

Lynch calls our attention to the same topic: Austen makes a point of linking Marianne and Elinor to cultivation. "Both are committed to developing their aesthetic sensibilities" (LYNCH, 2002, p.383). Elinor's love for drawing and painting, Marianne's for Cowper's[10] poetry and music is what makes these women distinguishable. Their misfortune is not only financial but also intellectual, for they are forced to leave their house in Norland Park to live among people who are for the most part obtuse and unable to follow their standard of conversation. Their social circle provides "more pain than pleasure" (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p.42) and I dare say that it brings them much more dismay than their newfound poverty.[11] Instead of hunting for husbands, continues

[10] William Cowper (1731-1800) was one of the most important poets of his time. Instead of writing about nature (as it was common in that period) he wrote about scenes of the English countryside and ordinary facts of life. Some of his works are *John Gilpin* (1782) and *The Task* (1785).

[11] The sisters, particularly Marianne, seem to forget that although not as cultivated as themselves, the Middletons and Mrs. Jennings had the good heart of welcoming the Dashwoods in their estate, probably charging very little, something that their own family was not willing to do.

Brownstein, they prefer to discuss the picturesque or the newest poem by one of their favorite authors.

Perhaps the most important point in discussion in *Sense and Sensibility* is the social critique to the way women were treated by custom and by law. Jane Austen unveils how dangerous and insecure a woman's life could be if she had neither money nor a man to support her. Her own experience of being an unmarried woman with no father gave Austen the authority to write about and criticize that condition. The Dashwoods are forced to change their lives drastically and are only able to afford a house because it belongs to a cousin (making the rental terms probably more payable). As TEACHMAN, says, "Women like Marianne and Elinor Dashwood had few options other than reliance on man for support." (2000, p.51). Their only possible "careers" would be as a governess or as a teacher, but none of these options were seen with the best eyes, since the salaries were very low and the work intense. Besides, Teachman proceeds, women who had an employment were hardly ever marriage material and for a woman with no special skills, getting married was always the first option. No matter how independent and intellectual the Dashwood sisters were, they knew that their best choice was to find a husband to support and protect them. However, as Teachman points out, marriage would cut any shred of independence a woman might have had previously. After her wedding, a woman was completely dependent on her husband, even her money would not belong to her anymore, since legally a woman was not considered fit to control her own possessions. VASCONCELOS reinforces that: "Excluded from the world of labour, women had very little possibility of getting themselves a real occupation and the answer society found for them was marriage, childbearing and domesticity". (2002, p.319)

1.2.2 Jane Austen

Jane Austen was born on December 16th, 1775 in Steventon, in Hampshire, a rural village very much like the ones that provide the setting for her novels. The circumstances of her neighbors, relatives, and especially the members of her family

evoke the kind of community we meet in Austen's fictional world. Her parents were Rev. George Austen, the town's rector, and Cassandra Leigh, a member of one of the traditional genteel families in the place. The Austen couple had eight children, by order of birth: James; George; Edward; Henry Thomas; Francis William; Cassandra Elizabeth; Jane; and Charles John. Cassandra and Jane never married. As they - along with their mother - outlived their father, we can say that these three women had a first-hand experience of some of the horrors that haunt the imagination of destitute genteel females. Happily, the male portion of the family was always present and did not forsake them. One of the six brothers, George, had mental problems and - as was a habit at the time - was looked after by a neighboring surrogate family. James, the eldest, and Henry Thomas followed their father's footsteps in the clergy.

Francis William and Charles John joined the navy, and both rose to the rank of admiral. Edward was adopted by the local squires and eventually inherited the richest property in the place. A glimpse at Jane Austen's family offers a microcosm of the society we meet in each of her novels, and accounts for the fact that the characters, in her fictional world, mingle so easily among the slightly different strata in that restricted social context. Adding to the family group, there were also several pupils that their father lodged in their house. Jane's only sister, Cassandra, was also her best friend. They were inseparable.

According to GRUNDY (2008) Jane Austen was brought up surrounded by books; her father's library was by no means insignificant, having more than 500 items. The whole family consisted of avid booklovers who would read everything they could put their hands on. It was not just the great poets they would read; they were also fond of novels. Jane Austen's formal education was limited, as she only stayed one year at school; but that does not mean that she was not exposed to books and culture. The Austens were devoted to artistic manifestations. It was common for them to have the children enact plays they had themselves created or adapted.

Jane Austen was eleven years old when she started writing her Juvenilia[12], which comprised, among others, *A History of England by a Partial, Prejudiced and Ignorant*

[12] For a complete list of Austen's works refer to Annex 6.

Historian and *Love and Freindship* (sic), her first novel. The Juvenilia period extends until 1793 when she was 17 years old. After that Austen started writing the novels that made her famous to the world. However, when in 1801 her father surprised the family with the announcement that he would like to retire and move to Bath, the two (unmarried) daughters had to follow the couple when they left the countryside to live in the excitement of Bath. Maybe because Austen did not appreciate the life in a bigger city, she wrote very little during her five-year-stay there.

In 1805 her father died, and, not unlike her characters in the novel *Sense and Sensibility,* the women of the family suffered a heavy financial predicament, having to live out of the generosity of the Austen boys, now married and settled. First they moved to Southampton, to live with Jane's brother, Frank (the navy officer) and his wife. Later, in 1809, they finally settled down in Chawton, in the property of Edward (the adopted heir). It was in Chawton that Jane Austen lived her most productive years, having written and published her books. The first to be published was *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), followed by *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1816). *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* were posthumously published in 1818. At the end of her life she was writing a seventh novel, *Sanditon*, but her illness prevented her from finishing it. During Austen's lifetime her books were never published under her own name, as women writers were frowned upon. The novels bore the signature "By a Lady". After her death, however, the novels were identified as hers by her brother Henry. Jane Austen died in 1817 died, at the age of 41, possibly of what today it is known as Adisson's Disease (adrenal insufficiency). Her remains are buried in Winchester Cathedral. There is no mention of her novels on her grave:

In memory of
JANE AUSTEN,
youngest daughter of the late
Revd. GEORGE AUSTEN,
formerly Rector of Steventon in this County.
She departed this Life on the 18th July 1817,
aged 41, after a long illness supported with
the patience and the hopes of a Christian.

The benevolence of her heart,
the sweetness of her temper, and
the extraordinary endowments of her mind

obtained the regard of all who knew her, and
the warmest love of her intimate connections.

Their grief is in proportion to their affection
they know their loss to be irreparable,
but in the deepest affliction they are consoled
by a firm though humble hope that her charity,
devotion, faith and purity have rendered
her soul acceptable in the sight of her
REDEEMER.

It was only in 1872 that a plaque was put up in the Cathedral, that would disclose her identity as a novelist (after her biography had been published by her nephew James Edward Austen Leigh):

JANE AUSTEN
known to many by her
writings, endeared to
her family by the
varied charms of her
Character and ennobled
by Christian faith
and piety, was born
at Steventon in the
County of Hants Dec.
XVI MDCCLXXV, and buried
in this Cathedral
July XXIV MDCCCXVII.
"She opened her
mouth with wisdom
and in her tongue is
the law of kindness."
-- Prov. XXXI v. XXVI.

Austen wrote about the things she knew best: the reality of some who lived in the countryside, who were neither too wealthy nor too poor, who belonged into the rural gentry and had connections with people who owned shops, or farms, or belonged in the clergy, or in the navy, or in the army. In her letter of September 9th, 1914, she tells her niece Anna: “3 or 4 Families in a Country village is the very thing to work on.” (AUSTEN-

LEIGH & AUSTEN-LEIGH, 2007)[13]. Anna was also an aspiring novelist, and asked her aunt for guidance in her writings. To add to this desired truthfulness to reality, Austen did not approach several events that, in spite of happening at the time, did not belong in the daily lives of her middle-classed country living characters. The fact that Austen does not overtly mention events such as the French Revolution does not mean that they are not present in her work. The prestige of the navy officers, for instance, is an echo of their success in the Napoleonic wars, as we witness so bluntly in Captain Wentworth's sudden rising fortune, in *Persuasion.* It is Austen's choice to depict those events indirectly, as this kind of thing usually affects common people's lives: at the background, in ways that we are not even made aware of, sometimes. Politics, violence and crime are rarely mentioned in Austen's fiction. She does not offer much in terms of internalization of her male characters – except for one conversation in *Mansfield Park*, there is always a woman present or at least overhearing when two men engage in conversation. The love scenes are often unromantic, there is no kissing and no overt display of affection. Jane Austen is also very sparing in her descriptions of places and people. Her reader does not receive much in terms of physicality; most is left to the imagination. In the same letter from September 14th she criticizes Anna's excessive use of description: "your descriptions are often more minute than will be liked. You give too many particulars of right hand & left."

Austen may not have been explicit in writing about the current events of her era, but there is one topic she would talk about extensively: money. Money was of fundamental importance at the time (as it still is today, but perhaps for other reasons). At that time, for a woman, money was vital. Marriage and money were intimately associated, and perhaps much more important than fulfilling the dream of romance. Marriage meant financial stability for a woman. Unless you were really wealthy, getting married to a man with funds was the insurance of a life without great worries, with a roof over your head. In each of her novels we are told the worth of each one of the characters in sterling pounds. The subject of money is central to all her books.

[13] Except when explicitly informed all the citations from Austen's letters come from the referred source.

> (…)money, especially money as spendable income, is the love-tipped arrow aimed at the hearts of Jane Austen's heroines and her readers: first of all, for its power to acquire the material goods that can support the all-important signs of her rank's claims to genteel station; second, as the prod of anxiety that focuses its own potential for loss. (Copeland, 2008, p.132)

In *Sense and Sensibility*, in the first chapter, Mr. Dashwood's financial situation, and as a consequence, the one of his wife and daughters, is discussed. It is not only the abundance that is made relevant; the lack thereof too, for "in the world of Jane Austen's novels, all the people who do not inherit property depend for their lives on what the neighbours say about them, spend their time exchanging gossip or 'news' about one another." (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p.34).

Another of her favorite topics (which shows that she was extremely aware of what was relevant in her days) is class. Jane Austen was very much acquainted with class distinction and knew how important social rank was; therefore, this subject was always central to her stories. "The novelist, and especially Jane Austen, always cares [about class], because it is the business of the novel to represent people – not exclusively, but prominently – in their social roles, and to be precise about the differences between them." (McMASTER, 2008, p.128). The author even goes further saying that if class distinction was not a reality it would probably have to be invented since it provides so much richness for the text. Austen's concern for social matters "is the source of much of her comedy and her irony, as of her social satire. (Idem, p.129). Irony is perhaps the characteristic most remembered when one thinks of Jane Austen. She could capture like few the tension between what you are and the "character" that you have to play in order to live in society. This clash between what a character felt, intimately, and the social constraints they had to follow is the source of much amusement in her work. Her acute observance of social practices was brought to her novels, very often ridiculing the particularities of life in society.

Jane Austen is unique in her style, according to BURGESS (2002). However she was harshly criticized in her own time for not writing in the way her peers would. It was

common at the time to write novels that would have an educational view; books should teach a lesson and be inspirational, which was never an intention in Austen's works. One of the things that single her out from other writers is the weight she puts on the delineation of her characters. She was able to create people who are real to anyone, at any age; they share qualities and vices that are familiar to all her readers, and that is one of the reasons that her novels have been appreciated throughout the years: their timelessness. Her characters "are both ordinary and unforgettable" (STILLINGER & LYNCH, 2006, p. 515). TOMALIN (2000) points out that Austen's characters always speak to one another in a very realistic and natural way, contrary to what happens with the characters of other authors, who seem to be delivering speeches. One can feel that those are true exchanges, the kind that can be usually heard in everyone's day-to-day life. Perhaps this comes from the fact that Austen used to read her novels aloud to her family, so that she could feel what sounded natural and what did not.

Austen's works share one very important and singular characteristic: they all portray a very small part of society. Jane Austen chose to write on a narrow scope since she was so fond of veracity. How to talk about something that you have no personal knowledge of? Her ultimate goal was to depict with perfect veracity the lives and aspirations of her characters and the only way to do that effectively was by focusing on what she knew. This concern of hers can be seen in some of the correspondence exchanged with her niece, Anna. In one letter from 1814 Austen says that the characters in Anna's novel should not visit Ireland because she (Anna) did not know the country. "You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath and Foresters. There you will be quite at home." The fact that she only wrote about what she was acquainted with does not mean that her novels are in any way necessarily autobiographical. Her family and friends were certainly not short on interesting stories that she could reproduce in her writings, but she preferred not to do so. "The world of her imagination was separate and distinct from the world she inhabited." (TOMALIN, 2000, p. 170). No matter how worthy of fiction the lives of the people around her were, she would rather count on her vivid imagination when it came to her novel writing.

The people in her novels are very human, in the sense that they share the same flaws and virtues as any one of us, real people. Nobody is perfect and we may have

mixed feelings towards her characters - sometimes we love them, sometimes we dislike them, just like any of our friends in real life. And she always "goes in for fine distinction, whether between the degrees of quality of mind in her characters or the fine shades of difference in their social standing." (McMASTER, 2008, p. 128). It is not despite her narrow scope but because of it that her characters are so unique and full of life. Because she chose to use only the subjects and the kind of people that she really knew intimately she was able to achieve this new degree of realism in her novels. In there lies her originality. For the first time an author was able to produce multi-faceted characters that had more than one side. Real people do not change completely, but simply, if fortunate enough, grow and mature; her characters act in the same way; the lucky ones acquire some knowledge along the way and become wiser, the unlucky remain the same, as RENWICK (1974) points out.

Jane Austen did not live an adventurous life; she shared the same kind of life that most women of her times led. She did not travel extensively, and her days were mostly spent at home with her family, doing the things that a woman in the 1800's would do. Her only act of rebelliousness was her writing, and the fact that she never married possibly resides in the fact that she felt that under this circumstance she would not be able to dedicate herself to her writing so intensively:

> Living in the same class-bound and male-dominated society, Austen presents in her work the same conflicting views on marriage and on the nature and place of women which were so characteristic of fellow novelists and women writers. (Vasconcelos, 2002, p.321)

The secret of Austen's timelessness probably lies in the very fact that made her so criticized, her refusal to plunge into the historical events of her time. Reginald FARRER said, in 1917: […] "Jane Austen can never be out of date, because she never was in any particular date (that is to say, never imprisoned in any), but is co-extensive with human nature." In restricting herself to mention only the social lives of her characters rather

than debating over current events she earned her place as a timeless writer that still appeals to audiences 200 years after her death. Her themes are still relevant because love, relationships, marriage, money are still – and probably will always be – major concerns of human beings no matter in what century they live. In here lies Austen's gift, being able to address problems that do not cease to exist no matter what century we are.

1.3 FROM PAPER TO SCREEN: THE IN-BETWEEN

1.3.1 Literature and Film

Since the start of the moving picture industry, the debate whether cinema should be connected to other arts has caused a lot of stir among film analysts. According to STAM (2000) many theorists sought to understand what the particularities of the cinema were, i.e. what made it unique. Some supported the idea that movies should be pure, unblemished by other arts. Others had the opposite view: film was undeniably connected to other arts. The only thing that both sides agreed on was their certainty about the fact that film was indeed an art. Once that question was settled, came the inevitable comparison with other art forms, especially literature. However different in innumerous aspects, both literature and film share the same basic principle; they are narratives with beginning, middle and end. Nevertheless, cinema has been more often than not unfavorably compared to literature:

> Literature has often been seen as a more venerable, more distinguished, essentially more "noble" medium than film. The results of millennia of literary production are compared with the average productions of a century of film, and literature is pronounced superior. The written word which brings with it the aura of scripture, is said to be intrinsically a more subtle and

> precise medium for the delineation of thoughts and feelings. (Stam, 2000, p.12)

Students of Cinema argue that we cannot claim the superiority of one art over the other, because they use different materials and tools. Literature, for instance, is built on words; movies are built on visual images and sound. Many argue that for this reason film is a more complete medium, since it has more resources with which to transmit its message. Others say the contrary: the less you see, physically, the less constricted you are and the more possibilities you have of creating your own settings out of the words you read. In any case, it is not the purpose of this thesis to embark on this discussion. We will, however, accept the fact that, for a number of reasons, the written word has been always considered a more distinguished form of art. This notion has provoked, for a long time, a sort of disregard for the movie as a higher form of art, and a belief that there is an intellectual difference in the audience of the two arts. As MAST (1982) points out, up to some years ago there was a great cultural and economical gap between people who had books as their biggest entertainment and the ones who preferred films. In the beginning, the movie audience was formed by a more popular class, whereas the elite still regarded films as second class entertainment. Mast believes that this disdain for the movies only changed when the values of the higher classes also changed. The fact that many serious scholars and thinkers put a lot of effort into trying to explain how film works may have also helped to change the elite's views on the subject. One of the most important film theorists, Christian METZ, tried to explain film initially through Saussure's language theory and later moving to a wider semiotic approach.

In his analysis of the movies, Metz poses two questions: whether film was actually a language; and what was specific to film. He concludes that film is indeed a language in its own right. Nonetheless, contrary to natural language, it is not instinctively accessible. In order to "speak" film language, talent, training and opportunity are required. "To speak a language, in other words, is simply to use it, while to 'speak' cinematic language is always to a certain extent to invent it." (STAM, 2000, p.111). There is another distinction:

> While verbal language deploys two expressive materials (phonic sound for oral language, graphic traces for written language), cinematic language is the set of messages whose matter of expression consists of five tracks or channels: moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, and writing (credits, intertitles, written materials in the shot). Cinema is a language, in sum, not only in a broadly metaphorical sense but also as a set of messages grounded in a given matter of expression. (Idem, p.33)

Later in his studies Metz broadens his views on film by adopting a semiotic approach in which the word "code" substitutes the word "language". According to this view, "film has no 'master code' shared by all films" (METZ, 2000, p.34). Movies are constituted by the combination of two intertwined sets of codes; the ones specific to film and the ones shared with other languages.

BOYUM (1986) says that film has a very similar mode of apprehension to literature and Levinson (1986, p. 28) points out that "in the cinema, one extracts the thought from the image; in literature, the image from the thought." Image and word must both be decoded in order to be understood. BOYUM (1986) says that in order to apprehend an image we have to relate it with others in our "data base" and in that, experience and knowledge has a great influence.

An important objective of the semiotic approach, says STAM (2000) is finding out what movies and other media have in common and what their differences are. MAST (1982) puts the film in an intermediate stage between plays and novels, sharing some characteristics with each one. Analogous to a play, film is meant to be performed for an audience, gathered at a certain time at a certain place. Also, as well as in a play, movies show the interaction between real people instead of abstract characters. Another important similarity between plays and films is the fact that they are both constricted to a two-hour period, give or take. We can also see many similarities when comparing films to novels. For one, a book and a reel of film are concrete objects (even though that can be debatable nowadays, since we also have digital film and e-books). As already mentioned, a film is a narrative in which the narrator is the camera. In a novel we are only able to

know what the narrator wishes us to know. The camera plays the same role; we only see what it shows us.

Metz (2000) also compares film and other media in terms of their signifiers. He says that literature and cinema share a perceptual signifier. These two spectacles are also both auditory and visual. The distinction among them lies elsewhere; the theatre and the opera are not made up of images and the action takes place in the same space shared by the audience. "(…) everything the audience hear and see is actively produced in their presence, by human beings or props which are themselves present." (Ibid, p.409). In this case film is less perceptual, once we see nothing but a shadow of real life. What is seen is, in a certain way, false: "(…) the activity of perception in it is real (the cinema is not a fantasy), but the perceived is not really the object, it is its shade, its phantom, its double, its replica in a new kind of mirror." (Ibid, p.410).

Despite their many differences, literature and film seem to complement each other and that is why they have been so overtly compared and analyzed in the way they relate. Since the beginnings of the movie industry films have used literary works as their primary source. Adapting a novel (particularly one with a big readership) to the movies is almost a guarantee of box office success. The fact that both media aim at telling a story turns them into a perfect match. As long as three main aspects are taken into consideration, there is no reason why a novel should not be transformed into a movie, according to MAST(1982). The first point to have in mind is duration; film has to be constrained to a two-hour period. The second is the transformation of something purely verbal (the novel) into something else that also includes sounds and images. Finally it is necessary to dramatize the scenes that are only narrated. Nonetheless, one cannot forget the fact that in changing from one medium to another we will be facing a new story, as it is absolutely impossible to transpose everything from page to screen.

Adaptations are not a recent phenomenon. Authors have been adapting material for a long time; Shakespeare adapted stories from his own and other cultures to be shown on stage, reaching a new public[14]. The movies, however, have become one of the

[14] One cannot forget as well how, long before Shakespeare, the Romans adapted many Greek tragedies and comedies, for instance.

most prolific means for adaptations. No wonder, according to HUTCHEON (2006), around 85% of the best-picture winners at the Oscar are adaptations, which also abound on TV series and made-for-TV movies. All sorts of materials and genres are transposed to the screen nowadays; there are films based on videogames (*Sin city*), TV series (*Sex and the City*), Broadway musicals (*Mamma Mia*), self-help books (*He's Really Not That Into You*), plays (*Carnage*)[15] and so on. The majority, nevertheless, is made of adaptations of novels or short stories which seem to be the easiest kind of text to be adapted.

In adaptation studies there has always been a debate concerning their "second-hand" status. This inferiority quality to the primary source (in our case, the novel) leaves one wondering what the purpose of transposing a novel to the screen is, if we are going to have, as a result, a secondary, less noble, product. That is the mentality of many, and for many years the studies on adaptation have focused on its negative side. George BLUESTONE, in his book *Novels into Film* (1957) was the first to produce a major study on adaptation. In it he basically concludes that although literature and film share some similarities, the product of the transmutation from one medium to another will produce something of a different quality if compared to the original (with the adaptation usually losing the comparison). In his own words, "cinematic and literary forms resist conversion" (BLUESTONE, 1957, p.218). However, one thing that has to be taken into consideration is that, in the words of HUTCHEON: "(…) to be second is not to be secondary or inferior; likewise, to be first is not to be originary or authoritative." (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. xiii). Besides that, the adaptation may only be secondary to the ones familiar with the original text (although not necessarily, even when familiar with an original text one may find the film superior to the base source); many people will see an adapted film as an original since they did not have any previous knowledge of the source material.

However intense the debate as to how adaptations are seen, in this thesis we are not concerned about judging which medium has more value and any comparison between them escapes the focus and the purpose of this work. For this research, for

[15] A comprehensive list of all the example films cited in the thesis can be found in Annex 8.

instance, both *Sense and Sensibility* (novel and 1995 film) will be treated as two separate works, each one with their own characteristics, rules and merits. It is not my intention to state which work is better. As two different media, novel and film have their own audience and objective and the interests of each one of these media is taken into consideration. The choices made in producing them are unique to their characteristics and therefore adapted to their specific circumstances. One must not use the criteria of one medium to judge the other since they are of distinct nature. Thus, my only concern here is to analyze the efforts of Emma Thompson and the rest of the film crew to transpose the story (and more specifically the characters) from one medium to the other and examine the choices made without any value judgment.

The discussion around the secondary character of adaptations comes from the fact that, in trans-mediating a story to the screen, changes become vital. One of the main reasons for that is time. A book can be as long – or short – as the author wishes it to be. A film, however, needs to confine itself around a two-hour period; there is a limit for the time the audience can remain comfortably seated and interested. Several aspects can be changed in order to retell a story. There are sometimes changes in point of view, when the story is retold through the eyes of a character other than the original narrator. Other times what changes is the beginning, or the ending, or the timeline. There are even cases in which only part of the story is retold. This reduction is often felt as something negative for it is associated with the loss of density and complexity. Indeed, adapting a long novel will require cuttings, but this does not necessarily mean that they are in detriment to the complexity of the plot and characters. The adaptation of a short story, however, posits the opposite challenge. It is necessary to add scenes and characters that are not present in the original story or that are minor in it. As we can see, the idea of fidelity in an adapted work is an impossible feat. “Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication.” (Ibid, p.7), meaning that “the form changes with adaptation (…); the content persists” (Ibid, p. 10).

But why are adaptations so profuse today? For one thing, because of financial reasons. Adaptations are usually synonym of success at the box office, as for instance, could be seen in the film adaptations of *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*, to name a few. Capitalizing on a success is part of the industry. In times of late Capitalism, if a

product is very lucrative in a certain medium, it will certainly be transmuted into as many others as possible in order to make it even more profitable. Books become films, video games, internet platforms and theme parks; publishing companies use images of the adapted film on the cover of their novels to retro-feed the sales, and many endless other strategies are used. The movie industry generates deals in big money, because it reaches an immense public all over the world. This is taken into consideration whenever an adaptation is made. Every decision must be based not only aiming at quality but also at profit.

BOYUM (1985, p.5) points out that when a prestigious novel is adapted, the film borrows some of its prestige and quality. Practicality also has a place in the process. It is simpler to go after a text that already exists than to come up with something completely original. Other than that, despite its denigrators, adaptations have many fans. As Linda HUTCHEON (2006) suggests, it is the possibility of seeing something one already knows in a different package that moves audiences. BOYUM (1985, p.20) also says; "…there's a natural impulse to want to vivify a work of literature that has moved us and mattered to us."

Adaptations always imply the other work(s) that came before them. For HUTCHEON (2006), the process can be explained from three different perspectives. First, it can be seen as a product, a transmutation from one work to another most often in different media. This transposition may require other changes in genre, ontology or point of view, among others. Second, it can be studied as a process of creation, one which calls for "(re)interpretation and then (re-)creation." (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 8). Finally it can be seen as a process of reception where adaptation is a form of intertextuality.

Hutcheon continues comparing adaptation to translation. In the same way that there is no such thing as a literal translation there is also no literal adaptation. Many aspects have to be considered when the transposition occurs and they always involve gains and losses. Some aspects may be improved, others may have to be eliminated but only one thing is certain, the result will be a mesh of old and new, the view of the author entangled with the view of the adapter.

It is probably clear to anyone that reading a story on paper is a different experience from seeing it unfold in front of your eyes on the screen. Some things are easily shown on paper, such as the inner thoughts of the characters that are, if not impossible, extremely difficult to be done on screen. The creativity of the adapter is put to test at these times. How to portray in a film something that consists of abstract thoughts and ideas? In a circumstance such as this, change is bound to happen, a confidant is added to the plot so that the protagonist may tell his inner thoughts, or his personality has to be shown through actions not present in the original source. If we consider the matter of time, distinctions are also bountiful. Explaining an action takes longer than showing it; on the other hand, it is sometimes easier to grasp the motivations of the characters through the description of their characteristics than through the showing mode:

> (…) even the briefest shots convey an immense amount of information simultaneously: foreground and background action; physical setting; patterns of light, composition and shadow; camera distance and angle; variations in either the color or monochromatic spectrum; sounds; music; even, perhaps, spoken words themselves. (Mast, 1982, p. 299)

One interesting point made by MAST (1982) about the differences between paper to screen and the search for fidelity is that faithfulness is a relative concept. Each person has their own interpretation of any given work of art so, most often, when someone says that an adaptation was not accurate they are talking about accuracy in relation to *their* interpretation of the story. “Seen in this manner, the critical problem is not of two competing works of art (film versus literary text) but of two competing interpretations (the critic’s and the filmmaker’s) of the same work of art.” (Idem, p. 281). Nonetheless, the question of fidelity is always present when it comes to adaptations. But, as HARRIS (2003) questions, fidelity to what? To the work written by the author and imagined by him or the one read and interpreted by the reader? Certainly the world envisioned by the writer differs from the world imagined by the reader simply because it is impossible

for two people to have the exact same interpretation and understanding of a text. At least the image created in each one's mind of the landscape, the characters and their surroundings will be distinct. Then, the question is: Is it possible to be completely faithful to a piece of work? Obviously it isn't. The adapted film has to be judged by its own merits and it must be accepted that some things will inevitably be changed. HUTCHEON (2006, p.18) therefore concludes that "adapters are first interpreters and then creators." And she continues: "whatever the motive, from the adapter's perspective, adaptation is an act of appropriating and salvaging, and this is always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new." (Idem, p.20)

Contrary to what one may think, the choice of adapting a work is not only done because it is an easier task than writing an original one. Adapting takes courage and talent since it is a big challenge to transform the work of others into your own. It is not a mere case of copying someone else's work by simply transposing it to a different media. There is much more creativity involved in adaptation; the originality of an adaptation lies in what the adapter accomplishes with his source material. Besides that, it can be a cruel task, as HUTCHEON (2006) remarks, since adapters are doomed to be compared unfavorably to the original source and receive the most common criticism of all, "the book was better". "What motivates adapters, knowing that their efforts will be compared to competing imagined versions in people's heads and inevitably be found wanting?" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p.86). Different people have different visions and interpretations of the same text and therefore can produce completely distinct adaptations. One example is the innumerous adaptations of Jane Austen's books. Even though she wrote only six novels each one of these six have been adapted several times, and each time we have a different film. Each adapted work is a hybrid between the original work and the perception that the adapter had of the previous text. In this thesis for instance we have three different readings: the one made by Thompson while adapting the novel, the one made by Ang Lee who transposed the screenplay to the screen and my reading of their readings. A good adaptation, as Hutcheon points out, is not the one that is most similar to the source text, but the one that can join both the style of the adapter with the one of the author of the primary text (Idem). In there lies the secret of the success of an adaptation; when one feels that the original work has become different while remaining

the same in its essence. Also, one cannot forget that the idea of adapting a book usually comes accompanied by two basic reasons: (a) the plot is adaptable to the cinema (because of special effects, formulas that sell well, etc.) which will translate into box-office profit or (b) is a literary classic written by a prestigious author. In this last case, because of the importance of the source material it is always better to have someone of equal prestige to write the adaptation and direct the film[16]. In this way the chances of the enterprise failing are mitigated. Jane Austen, as well as Shakespeare, is an example of an author who combines both worlds: her work is artistic and acclaimed but also highly entertaining to the masses.

As already mentioned, money has a fundamental role in any film adaptation. In the words of CAUGHIE (2000, p.29): "Film –at least at international level – is a tradable good, and what it ultimately deals in are marketable images". The movie industry, as any other industry, is market-oriented and, in order to obtain the highest possible profit, has to mold itself to the taste of the audience. Despite individual talent, ultimately an adapter and a director have to make a film that pleases them but also the viewers. Especially in Hollywood a film must obtain the approval of the public; movies are shown many times to a group of pre-viewers before they are released, to see their reaction. If the reaction is negative, changes are made, for no studio will invest a significant amount of money in a failure. "…the possible response of the target audience to a story is always going to be a concern of the adapter(s)" (Idem, p.114). The audience is therefore a fundamental element in the equation of a successful adaptation. In the case of adaptations, we may divide the public into two categories, each one with specific characteristics: the group that is acquainted with the story and is therefore aware that they are watching an adaptation, and the group that does not have any previous knowledge of the primary material. The first group is the most critical; they have their own ideas about how the movie should be done, and are frequently disappointed by the fact that the version seen on screen does not correspond to the one they had in mind. However critical, this group also acquires more from the film since, as Hutcheon says, many times the screenwriter counts on the previous knowledge of the audience to fill in

[16] Some examples of famous directors who were responsible to the adaptation of classic novels: John Huston (*Moby Dick* and *The Dead*); Francis Ford Coppola (*Bram Stocker's Dracula*); John Ford (*The Grapes of Wrath*).

the gaps to what is missing or not well explained in the film. The problem with the second group is that, without the previous knowledge of the story, sometimes the movie does not make sense, or leaves the "unknowing audience" (term used by Hutcheon) confused. (HUTCHEON, 2006, p.)

Linda Hutcheon also talks about the role of the adapter pointing out that when it comes to movies the adapter is sometimes relegated to a second plan. How many people remember who are the responsible for the adaptations they watch? Certainly very few. In the majority of the cases the name that people remember is the name of the director, as if he was the only responsible for bringing that particular work to the screen. Being "invisible" is one of the peculiarities of this kind of profession. However, it is not because they are often forgotten that they are less important. Quite the contrary, they are the ones who move the industry. When screenwriters go on strike (the most recent in 2008-2009) the whole system collapses and a lot of money is lost. Without a story there is no film, series or play. The only time that a screenwriter is remembered is when they are famous in any other capacity, for example, actors in the film, which is the case in *Sense and Sensibility* (in which Emma Thompson is the lead actress and the adapter).[17] But it was certainly not because Thompson was famous that she earned the right to adapt Austen's work but due to her degree in Literature and her vast and experienced reading of the author. The fact that she was an up and coming actress surely did not harm but it would be unwise to hire her for the job just because of that. Nobody disputes that a good screenwriter can make or break a film and most definitely the studios know which ones are good and which ones are not; the fact that they are unknown to the great public does not affect their intrinsic value. There are many people responsible for an adaptation, Hutcheon insists – since the story starts with the adapter, is transformed by the director and once again put into action by the actors – but ultimately "the director and the screenwriter share the primary task of adaptation. The other artists involved may be inspired by the adapted text, but their responsibility is more to the screenplay and thus to the film as an autonomous work of art." (Idem, 2006, p.85).

[17] Another example is of author Aldous Huxley (*Brave New World*) who went to Hollywood as a screenwriter when he was already famous for his work as writer.

Characters are one of the most important elements in a story, and that is why they must sometimes suffer changes when a novel is adapted into a film. Stories with many characters can become confusing for the audience (after all in a film one cannot get back and reread a passage to remember who someone is) so, if that is the case, some of them may be eliminated or condensed into one. Also, according to SEGER (1992) people tend to be more lenient to characters in novels, but when they go to the movies they want to know right away who they are supposed to love and to hate. Characters who are ambiguous tend to reflect badly in the box office and that is something to be avoided. Another very important point is that of appearance. Experience proved that the audience does not like to see unattractive people on screen (unless it is a monster or a criminal). That is why sometimes a character that is described as ugly, plain or unattractive in a novel is transposed into film as someone much more pleasant to look at. This is certainly the case of Edward Ferrars' character in *Sense and Sensibility*, dull and uninteresting, who became charming Hugh Grant. In short, a good, solid character that the audience can empathize with and relate to is an important asset to any story, and that is why so much thought has to be put into transcoding them to the screen. There is also the fact that attached to the image of every actor comes an expectation from the public. Some actors pass the image of the Good Samaritan, others the villain and so on so forth. This strategy is always used even if to subvert the pattern (as when a good girl is cast to be the bad one)[18].

Jane Austen's novels have proved excellent material for adaptations to the movies or TV. One may wonder why her novels have become such an important source of inspiration. No matter how many adaptations there are – according to the website http://www.janeausten.org they are 60 to date, including TV series, films and modernized versions of her texts – , these works always draw hordes of people to watch them. The explanation given by Emma Thompson is that Austen works do not have to be seen necessarily as period pieces, because they also have their timeless dimension: "You don't think people are still concerned with marriage, money, romance, finding a partner? Jane Austen is a genius who appeals to any generation." (THOMPSON, 1995). No matter

[18] As when Audrey Hepburn (well-known for her good girl roles) was cast to be Holly Golighthly in the 1962 adaptation of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

how modern the audiences have become, they are still concerned with the same basic things they did in Austen's time. In an era when it is so difficult to maintain a stable relationship, people still hope to find things such as the feeling of being safe, accepted, liked and respected as they are, of belonging, of growing as persons. Although practically all of these conditions could only be fulfilled through marriage, in Austen's time, this does not mean that, conversely, no one wishes to find a "suitable match" nowadays.

"... Austen is unique among writers of her period for none of her contemporaries transcend the narrow precincts of 'classic literature' bookshelves." (MACDONALD, G, MACDONALD, A, 2003, p.1). Because Austen's books have this inherent quality that makes them still interesting and relevant 200 years later, studios all over the world keep producing films based on her novels. Their quality varies, and the more films there are the more creativity becomes a necessity. Each film strives to be unique among all the vast number of productions and it takes a good adapter to accomplish different ways to tell the same story, either by changing the period setting, adding or cutting characters and situations, dialoguing with another film or series that lies between itself and the original. Sources are endless and if used wisely can produce effective results pleasing the audience and, as a consequence, generating income.

Adapting period pieces like Jane Austen's poses many challenges. For one thing the research must be intense if the production is striving for historical accuracy. What is seen on screen should give an authentic feel of what life was like in a different century. However, some liberties may be necessary some times, as total accuracy is not something to aim at. There are some limits as to what a modern audience is willing to accept. Even if people did have bad teeth, oily hair and bad skin in the previous centuries, such characteristics are best left alone, since most people respond negatively to that, particularly when it comes to romance films (unless, of course, the purpose of the movie is exactly that). Another aspect to be taken into account is that most people (especially the international audience) are not aware of the habits and particularities of life in the early 19th century England. The screenwriter has to find a way to explain those aspects in a natural way, so that the audience gets acquainted with the information without even noticing it. These are just a few of the elements that are

present in an adaptation. And this is the kind of challenge Emma Thompson had to face when transmuting Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* to the screen.

1.3.2 The Screenplay: *Sense and Sensibility,* by Emma Thompson

Being a great fan of Jane Austen, we can easily imagine how honored Emma Thompson felt as she was invited to write the screenplay of *Sense and Sensibility*. At the time, circa 1990, she was not so well-known as an actress outside Britain, and even less as a writer; but her experience as an actress, on top of her knowledge of the author and her degree in Literature certainly helped her to accomplish the task: five years – and almost two dozen drafts later – the work was ready.

The first difficulty was finding the right tone. Thompson wanted to preserve Austen's feel and language; but she also had to take into consideration the needs of her studio and of her intended audience. MAST (1982, p.280) says: "A film adaptation of an important literary work has an obligation to be faithful to the spirit (or, even, the letter) of the original text and, at the same time, to be a cogent and unified work in its own terms." As *Sense and Sensibility* was intended for an international audience, Sydney Pollack, the executive producer, wanted to guarantee that different audiences all over the world would cope with the particularities of Austen's world. As TROOST and GREENFIELD (1998, p.6) observe, "how many of us these days understand the significance of owning a barouche as opposed to a curricle?"[19] The film also had to speak to the audience of the late 20th century. As WHELEHAN (2000, p.12) says, "Adaptations of classics can reveal as much about the concerns of their own time as they can about those of the original text". The conjunction of historical accuracy with modern relevance seems to be the recipe for an auspicious adaptation of a classic. Thompson's work consisted "in choosing which generic conventions are transposable into the new medium, and which need to be discarded, supplemented transcoded, or replaced."

[19]**Curricle:** a small lightweight carriage usually drawn by two horses. **Barouche:** A more aristocratic form of transportation drawn by four horses.

(STAM, 2005, p.6). Choices had to be made and not only had to take into consideration the best possible way to tell an early 19th century story to a late 20th century public, but also had to accommodate all the factors involved in the production of the film such as budget and time.

Austen's works' most well-known characteristic is their irony. And irony is a complex thing to be translated into film. TROOST and GREENFIELD (1998, p.7) explain why sometimes films prefer to give less emphasis to satire, not trusting that the public will understand it: "in the movie theater or during a first showing on television, one cannot reread some previous sentence to double check for a suspected irony" (Idem). And even when it is possible to do that, who has the patience to rewind innumerous times a film to check its innuendoes?

Having a background in comedy (Thompson wrote a series of comic sketches that went on air in British Television), she could certainly deal with humor in *Sense and Sensibility*[20], but she certainly had to tone it down. There are, however, different sorts of humor in Thompson's screenplay. The most obvious is the exchange between Fanny and John in which she cleverly convinces her husband to transform his financial help to his half-sisters into nothing. The conversation is presented in the 1995 screen version. Some other comic scenes and remarks not present in the novel were added by Thompson. The relationship between Edward and Margaret provides moments of light comedy. Edward tells Elinor that Margaret "is heading an expedition to China shortly. I am to go as her servant but only on the understanding that I will be very badly treated." (THOMPSON, 1995, p.48). Not only does this conversation lightens the mood but it also sheds some light into Margaret's and Edward's personalities. Another pleasant addition to the text occurs when Willoughby leaves the Dashwoods' house after he has rescued Marianne with her twisted ankle:

> Marianne: Mr. John Willoughby of Allenham!
>
> Mrs. Dashwood: What an impressive gentleman!

[20] She says in her diaries: "Before casting began I remember saying to Ang that nothing mattered more than that every actor be funny." (THOMPSON, 1995, p.212)

> Marianne: He lifted me as if I weighed more than a dried leaf
>
> Elinor: Is he human?
>
> (…)
>
> Margaret (leaving reluctantly): Did you see him? He expressed herself well, did he not?
>
> Mrs. Dashwood: With great decorum and honor.
>
> Marianne: And spirit and wit and feeling.
>
> Elinor: And economy – ten words at most.
>
> From below stairs we can hear Margaret wailing.
>
> Wait for me!
>
> Marianne: And he is to come tomorrow!
>
> Elinor: You must change, Marianne – you will catch a cold.
>
> Marianne: What care I for colds when there is such a man?
>
> Elinor: You will care very much when your nose swells up.
>
> Marianne: You are right. Help me, Elinor.
>
> Margaret comes back with the bandages.
>
> Margaret: What has happened?
>
> Elinor: We have decided to give you up to the Gypsies. (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 91)

We can feel the humor in these exchanges among the Dashwood women, but the witty remarks always come from Elinor. This shows Thompson's hand in the text; the Elinor from the novel is not like that, in fact we do not see Elinor being droll at any point in the novel. Thompson, however, chose to make her so in the screenplay, perhaps an influence of her own personality, and also as an artifice to help in making the character less stiff and austere. The humor present in Austen is still there, but in a slightly different way.

In movies there is no time to talk about all the aspects present in the original source, as mentioned by STAM (2004), so the focus had to be placed in only one major

point. In Thompson's case that was love, not only the love shared by the sisters with their suitors, but also the affection between each other. Thompson often said that she did not want this to be only a story about women waiting for their men to come and rescue them from their miserable lives. The love between the two sisters and the strong connection shared by them is of great importance in Thompson's screenplay. The story revolves entirely around them. Thompson certainly stresses their differences but in spite of that the audience feels how important one sister is to the other.

As in most adaptations Thompson had to eliminate some characters, but she only cut the ones that are only present in the original to generate social commentary or provide the reader with some comic relief. Miss Steele, Lucy's sister, and Lady Middleton and her children were removed from the film, and the screenplay became more compact and cohesive. In the same manner, Thompson expanded the role of one character, Margaret, the younger sister, who was hardly ever talked about and seen in the novel. The fact that now Margaret has a voice serves many purposes; the first and perhaps most important for the development of the story is the fact that Margaret's presence helps to present Edward Ferrars in a better light. Making Edward fond of children and one that can specially win the heart of a 13-year-old who has recently lost her father was a clever move on Thompson's part. By adding their friendship to the screenplay, she was able to convey the reasons, which are not so clear in the novel, why Elinor (and the audience) should fall in love with him.

The second reason why Margaret's part was enlarged is perhaps less obvious. Contrary to what DIXON (1998) says, Thompson does not "kill" the feminism in *Sense and Sensibility*, she just makes it more current and moves its focus. One of the ways of doing so is by giving a voice to Margaret, the young girl who has a bold personality and dares go against the society in which she lives. Margaret is modern, and has a more contemporary point of view. Even though she is just a girl the audience can already see in her a change from the way in which her sisters were brought up. Margaret has a tree house, where she can be alone and the owner of her own thoughts. She wants to be a pirate and is fascinated by distant lands – as we can see by her love of her atlas, or by the way she gets excited when Colonel Brandon tells her that the air in India is "full of spices" (THOMPSON, p.72). Margaret does not seem to have the romantic views on life of

a typical 13-year-old (especially one in the early 19th century). She does not agree with the secrets kept in society and with the fact that in her house certain things are not talked about. She truly admits liking Mrs. Jennings because "she talks about things" (Idem, p.74), when in their house they never do. Margaret is a free spirit who already points to the new generation of women who will follow her; in this way Thompson addresses the topic of feminism in a suitable manner that fits the purpose of the novel.

There is also a third practical way in which Margaret helps the story. Because she is a curious, inquisitive child, she is always making questions about what she does not understand. Through her sisters' answers we, the public, are also explained the peculiarities of the society of the time. One example is when she does not understand why they cannot keep their house after their father dies. Elinor then explains to her that "houses go from father to son (…) – not from father to daughter. It is the law." (Ibid, p.34). The audience, that may have the same doubt as Margaret, now understands the situation.

The challenge faced by Thompson was the same faced by anyone trying to adapt a period piece, finding the perfect balance between maintaining the historical details accurate without making them incomprehensible to the new viewers who may not be acquainted with such particularities. One cannot take for granted that everyone in audience is familiar with the laws and customs of other ages (which most people, I dare say, are not)[21]. Eliminating the period-related angles would lessen the story but filling it with explanatory dialogues would make the film lose its rhythm; one of the possible solutions was doing what Thompson did, making the explanations flow simply and naturally along the unfolding story. Nothing better than having an inquisitive child to pose these questions, so that her family could clarify her doubts. The fact that Margaret, although quite clever, is still a child, makes the simple short answers sound more natural. Another fact enhanced in the film is the Dashwoods' difficult financial condition after the death of Mr. Dashwood. In the novel, Barton Park has four bedrooms, so they do not have to share a room; and they are also able to bring three servants with them. In

[21] Sydney Pollack was very useful in this sense. He wanted to know things as "why Elinor and Marianne couldn't just go out and get a job. Why was Edward so dependent on his mother, why he keeps his promise to Lucy when he clearly no longer loves her."(THOMPSON,1996, p.265) These were questions that the public would also make and therefore they had to be addressed in the movie.

the film, Thompson wanted to make sure that everybody understood the difference in social class that now exists between Edward and Elinor, so that it becomes easy to perceive why Edward's mother would be against their marriage. Therefore, the house is smaller, and Elinor and Marianne have to share not only a room, but also a bed; there is not enough wood for the fire, and Elinor complains to her mother that they cannot even afford buying sugar.

Thompson was concerned with giving the film the right tone; the right language was important to her, and she was very demanding in relation to that. "The language in the novel is complex and far more arcane than in the later books. In simplifying it I've tried to retain the elegance and wit of the original and it's necessarily more exacting than modern speech." (Ibid, p. 252).

Coherence, budget, and period accuracy very often got in the way of Thompson's screenplay. When one reads the original screenplay, one realizes that many scenes and dialogues are not present in the film; they had to be rewritten later on. This is the consequence of many variables. Very often it was the expense and the necessary resources in order to shoot a scene that made it unviable, as in the whole first scene imagined by Thompson in which we could see the death of Mr. Dashwood. At other times, it was the art department who vetoed a scene because of lack of historical accuracy: they wanted to bathe Margaret in the parlor, but the idea was not accepted because that was not usual at the time. At other times, it was the option of the director to cut something at the edition to reach a better effect, as in the kissing scene between Edward and Elinor at the end, which was shot but later eliminated because Ang Lee decided it was better to leave that to the audience's imagination. Accommodating all these aspects made the screenplay be changed and rewritten several times before it was actually considered finished.

Being an actress, and actors deal with characters, Thompson put a lot of thought in portraying the characters in *Sense and Sensibility* in the best way possible. We can see by reading her diaries that she made a point of making the characters understood by the audience, leaving no doubts as to what they represent. One of the first scenes they shot (which also takes place at the beginning of the movie) involves Marianne and Mrs.

Dashwood. We can feel how concerned Thompson is with properly delineating and presenting the characters to the public,

> They [Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood] talk about Elinor's growing attachment to Edward and in her responses Marianne reveals her romantic sensibilities and sets up the image of her ideal man. We're also aware that behind Mrs. Dashwood's equally romantic visions is a harder-edged reality – she must get her daughters married for their financial and social security. To find the balance between profound familiarity and informing the audience about character is hard. (Thompson, 1995, p. 217)

Even in a small scene like this one we can see how much is at stake; in a short period of time many things have to be accomplished, showing how the characters think and how they relate to one another. Thompson had to make sure from the beginning that her characters were solid, not leaving any doubts as to what their personalities and goals were.

1.3.3 Emma Thompson

Emma Thompson was born in Paddington, London, in April 1959. Her parents were the actors Eric Thompson and Phyllida Law, both from working class families who managed to become successful in their area. Emma is also sister to the well-known actress Sophie Thompson, who was born in 1962. Their family was known and liked by everyone in the neighborhood for its idiosyncrasies. In spite of her parents' profession, Emma had no interest in becoming an actress as a child. She loved books, and spent hours reading. As a student, she was very accomplished, having always earned the praise of both her teachers and classmates. She got the highest grades and was very dedicated to her studies.

It was only in the 1970's when she started watching *Monty Python*, that she discovered her love for comedy. At this time she began to write her own material, mostly comic sketches. She decided to study English Literature in Newham College, at Cambridge University. There she remained an excellent student. She wrote her final thesis on George Eliot's female characters. In Cambridge she had an opportunity that would change her life. Martin Bergman invited her to participate in the Footlights comedy group, where her career as an actress started. The Cambridge University Footlights Drama Club was founded in 1883 and is probably the biggest producer of comedians and actors in England. Among its past famous members they have John Cleese, Hugh Laurie, Stephen Fry, Germaine Greer and Sacha Baron Cohen. Thompson was soon cast as Alladin, in the play of the same name, and received raging reviews. She even managed to get an agent, Richard Armitage, although she still had two more years until graduation. Her Cambridge period was very fruitful; she became close friends with Hugh Laurie (whom she briefly dated) and Stephen Fry. Soon she became one of the most important actors in the group, participating in almost every production of Footlights.

Her career properly started after she graduated. In the beginning she was known as a comedian, participating in many comic sketches and series, such as *Alfresco* and *The Young Ones*, both with Laurie and Fry, and her own sketch series *Thompson,* which was canceled after its first season. She also played the lead role in *Me and My Girl*, a West End success, receiving critical acclaim for her performance. Her first dramatic role came in 1987 with *Fortunes of War*, a BBC drama series where she met Kenneth Branagh, whom she would later marry. In the same year, Thompson worked in *Tutti Frutti*, a BBC Scotland dark comedy series that brought her to the spotlight and raised her to national success.

After their marriage in 1989, Thompson and Branagh set up a production company and starred in many films together, such as *Henry V* (her debut in the cinema), *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Dead Again*. Although Emma started her career as a comedian, it was as a serious actress that she became internationally famous. Recognition came in 1992, when she played Margaret Schlegel, Helena Bonham Carter's older sister in the critically acclaimed *Howards End* (based on the homonymous novel by

E. M. Forster). She won twelve awards for that film, including her first Oscar, Bafta and Golden Globe. During the shooting of *Howards End* she was already working on the script of *Sense and Sensibility*, which would only be shot three years later, in 1995. *Sense and Sensibility* was responsible for her second Oscar, this time as a screenwriter. To this day, she is the only person to have received both, one Oscar for acting and one for screenwriting. It was in this film that she started her career as an adapter and as a writer. The project took five years to come into production. In a 2009 Oscar roundtable interview when asked with what she most identifies with Jane Austen, Thompson says: "With her humor, with her wit, her fantastic perspicacity and wit. The fact that she really saw things through what they were and was able to write them down not only with compassion but with a very clean, clear eye." (THOMPSON, 2009)[22].Very few people know that, but because she is an expert on Austen she was asked by Joe Wright to write some additional dialogues to his *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), while she was in the middle of the shooting of *Nanny McPhee*. Although she says she does not like to mix writing and acting, she also says it was a funny experience to write Austen while dressed as the horrible nanny. Her contribution is uncredited, though.

Thompson continued playing critically acclaimed dramatic roles in films as *The Remains of the Day, Carrington* and *In the Name of the Father*, for instance. At this time, her marriage to Kenneth Branagh ended and she married Greg Wise, whom she met during the filming of *Sense and Sensibility*, where he played the part of Willoughby. Later, in 1999 Thompson gave birth to the couple's only biological daughter, Gaia. Some years later they adopted their son Tindyebwa Agaba. Throughout the years Thompson went on playing intense and light, dramatic and comedic, small and big roles.[23]

One of Thompson's recent successes is *Nanny McPhee*. The movie from 2005 was adapted by Thompson from the series of books *Nurse Matilda* written by Cristianna Brand. The first film was so well received that Thompson was asked to write a sequel, released in 2010, *Nanny McPhee and The Big Bang*. She has also recently written the screenplay for the remake of 1964 Oscar winning *My Fair Lady*, which is not yet in production. When asked about how she approached the task, she said she just thought

[22] Interview available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPflevjvOsA
[23] A complete list of Thompson's films can be found in Annex 2. For her works as a writer, go to Annex 1.

about how she could make the story better instead of being scared by the image that the classic has in the minds of so many people. In spite of being a musical, Thompson tried to reflect a bit more on the real meaning of the film. Instead of taking the fact that Eliza Doolitle was sold by her father lightly, Thompson gave an extra weight to this detail of the story.

In all her screenplays Thompson tries to bring in the real world and its questions, so that the audience not only leaves the theatre entertained, but also intellectually stimulated. No matter if it is Jane Austen, a children's story or a musical, there is always space for some criticism. Thompson says that she thinks movies are about evolution and how one's opinion of a character can change from the beginning to the end. (MURRAY, 2005). Being an actress, she pays attention to her characters and is one of the few screenwriters who is able to create a whole world for each and every one of her characters, no matter how small they are. According to her friend and fellow actor Hugh Laurie, in his speech on her Walk of Fame Event in 2010,

> I know of no other writer who writes for an entire ensemble of characters the way Emma does. I don't just mean she gives a good line to the taxi driver. It's much more profound than that; it reflects the view Emma has of the world, of people, that everyone she meets and everyone she conjures up in her own imagination has a real life, and their life has a real meaning and there is great humanity in the way she can invest meaning in an entire cast of characters in a movie and an entire cast of people she knows. (Laurie, 2010).[24]

Thompson is so much invested in her newfound career as a writer that she was invited to be the first person to write a new Peter Rabbit[25] book which takes the adorable rabbit to an expedition to Scotland. The book is called *The Further Tale of Peter Rabbit* and was released on September 18, 2012. In her opinion, writing is much more difficult than acting, but just as pleasurable. She feels much better after writing in the

[24] His complete speech is available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xdwpwmwlA8&feature=related.
[25] Peter Rabbit is the most famous character by British children's writer and illustrator Beatrix Potter (1866-1943). Peter first appeared in *The Tales of Peter Rabbit* and later appeared in other five books.

same way she feels better after acting. Another original writing work is *Effie*, currently in post-production and due to be released in 2013. In it, Thompson takes a look at the love triangle formed by the art critic John Ruskin (Greg Wise), his wife Effie Gray (Dakota Fanning) and Pre-Raphaelite artist John Everett Millais (Tom Sturridge). This new film is the source of a disagreeable controversy; Thompson and her husband Greg Wise were accused of misappropriating Gregory Murphy's off-Broadway play *The Countess*. The author claims he had sent Emma Thompson his screenplay and was later surprised to see that another one, very similar, was written by her. Thompson claims she has never received his screenplay.

Emma Thompson has a quiet, secluded life, but is unreserved when it comes to her political, environmental and social views. She is an active member of Greenpeace and an ambassador for Action Aid. Through this last organization she traveled to Uganda, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Liberia and Burma trying to make people know their work. It was in 2003, when Thompson and Wise were at a Refugee Council party, that they were introduced to their son Tindyebwa, who was a 16-year-old Rwandan refugee.

An actress of extreme talent, and a writer who excels at her craft, Thompson has so far received forty awards and forty six nominations; she has worked in 39 films and is credited as a writer in 12 productions. There is a great coherence between these two sides of her life, the actress and the writer. While she is still mostly remembered for her acting career, her writing has grown exponentially over the years. Not only does she adapt novels to the screen but she also writes original material. *Sense and Sensibility*, however, is the beginning of all that. In it she learns to stick to her views on what a good story and good characters should be, and is to remain consistent to this viewpoint in all her other endeavors.

2 EFFECTS OF THE TRANSPOSITION

2.1 CHARACTERS

Characters are commonly understood as beings that inhabit fictional worlds. They are similar to real human beings, but not the same. They only exist as long as they appear before us, and one cannot interact actively with a fictional character, the relationship between a reader/viewer and a character is one-handed. We may have a wider knowledge of a character than we have of a real person, since we often have access to their most intimate drives and thoughts, ideas and feelings. On the other hand, in other respects we have less information about them than we would have with a human being, because we are only aware of the aspects of their inner life that are shown to us. Fictional characters cannot be separated from the work they populate for they "owe their existence to these texts" (EDER, JANNIDIS, SCHNEIDER, 2010, p.10).

Fictional characters are always incomplete constructs, since the information that we have on them is limited; one cannot know everything there is to know about a character because besides being impossible, it would be boring to fill the reader/viewer with all the minutiae that constitutes a human life. Characters mirror human lives without being exact transpositions of them. "If the medium that constitutes [the characters] provides no information on a certain property, this property is simply lacking in the fictional world – there is a gap, as it were, in that world." (Idem, p. 11). This gap is filled in any way the reader/viewer sees fit; that is why there are as many readings of a text (written or visual) as there are people in the world. Each unique individual will construe their mental picture and interpretation of the gaps provided in the work they are experiencing.

In the case of an adaptation – in our case the adaptation from a novel to a movie – two situations may occur. In the first the film viewer has a previous knowledge of the

novel, and, as a consequence, of the characters; in the second, the viewer is not acquainted with the source material and therefore has his first experience from the derivative characters. The second case is easier to deal with, since this person does not have any preconception of what the character should look like or how they should behave in the original. The first case, however, is the one where we find a more demanding audience. The viewers of the film are also the readers of the book and have already established their views on the characters, based on their particular readings of the material. This is usually the most difficult audience to please, since they may not accept a reading that is different from their own.

> Critics who claim that a film violates the integrity of the original material can only mean that the film violates either their own interpretations of the original or the general consensus regarding the interpretation of the original work. Seen in this manner, the critical problem is not of two competing works of art (film versus literary text) but of two competing interpretations (the critic's and the filmmaker's) of the same work of art. (Mast, 1982, p. 280)

Since it is impossible to have this synchronicity with every single person who will watch the film, the role of the adapter is to present their own reading of what they believe the majority of the audience would mostly empathize with.

2.1.1 Main Characters in the Novel

The novel *Sense and Sensibility* presents two sisters who have different approaches to life; they behave according to their beliefs, and suffer the consequences of their two different outlooks in the outcome of their life events. It is not a case of deciding whose behavior or attitude is the more appropriate, but of exploring the different possibilities that come with the different perspectives. Even though the protagonists

share many similarities, it is in their differences that the novel focuses, as Poovey points out: "Consistently, Elinor makes the prudent choice, even when doing so is painful; almost as consistently, Marianne's decisions are self-indulgent and harmful, either to herself or someone else" (POOVEY, 2002, p. 340).

Elinor is the eldest daughter, the one who is more mature, down-to-earth and practical. She is the one who helps their mother administer the house and their finances, who is always available for advice and who does not despair in face of adversity. She is thus described in chapter one:

> Elinor, this eldest daughter, whose advice was so effectual, possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally have led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart;—her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them: it was a knowledge which her mother had yet to learn; and which one of her sisters had resolved never to be taught. (SS, p. 8)[26]

Although she is only nineteen years old, she shows the maturity and steadiness of an older person, at least for our present-day standards. She is the one who advises her mother in all subjects and seems to be able to keep control and remain civil and polite on no matter what circumstance. As Elinor is practical, she is the only one in the family who really seems to grasp what it means when they are faced with the loss of their fortune. She is referred to as being prudent and having a steady judgment. While her sisters and mother have no idea of what they can actually afford with the little money they are left with, Elinor is the one who takes them into their new reality. Elinor stops Marianne from accepting Willoughby's offer of a horse, because Marianne has no clue as

[26] As this section brings many quotations from *Sense and Sensibility*, we will use simply use the abbreviation "SS" followed by the page number of the 2002 Norton indicated in the bibliographical references at the end of the work.

to how expensive keeping a horse would be. Elinor also prevents her mother from looking at houses that are now too expensive for them. Elinor is also realistic when it comes to love; she does not deny the importance of love, but she is well aware that it cannot be the only ingredient in a successful relationship. She understands the importance of an income to keep one's life running, as we can see in this conversation she has with Marianne,

> "You have no ambition, I well know. Your wishes are all moderate."
>
> "As moderate as those of the rest of the world, I believe. I wish as well as every body else to be perfectly happy; but, like every body else it must be in my own way. Greatness will not make me so."
>
> "Strange that it would!" cried Marianne. "What have wealth or grandeur to do with happiness?"
>
> "Grandeur has but little," said Elinor, "but wealth has much to do with it."
>
> "Elinor, for shame!" said Marianne, "money can only give happiness where there is nothing else to give it. Beyond a competence, it can afford no real satisfaction, as far as mere self is concerned."
>
> "Perhaps," said Elinor, smiling, "we may come to the same point. *Your* competence and *my* wealth are very much alike, I dare say; and without them, as the world goes now, we shall both agree that every kind of external comfort must be wanting. Your ideas are only more noble than mine. (SS, p. 67).

It is Elinor's point of view that is endorsed in the novel, where external appearances do not always reflect the way characters feel inside. This is especially true concerning Elinor, who is so reserved and unwilling to reveal her feelings and ideas. Much that goes inside her remains a mystery to the other characters. As a consequence, she is often misapprehended by her sister Marianne, who seems to think that Elinor

does not feel things as strongly as she is supposed to. We, the readers, however, know that Elinor feels things as intensely as Marianne does, but she simply does not want to cause any further distress to her family, who already has so much to worry about. When Edward Ferrars leaves, she feels desolate, but refrains from exteriorizing her thoughts.

> This desponding turn of mind, though it could not be communicated to Mrs. Dashwood, gave additional pain to them all in the parting, which shortly took place, and left an uncomfortable impression on Elinor's feelings especially, which required some trouble and time to subdue. But as it was her determination to subdue it, and to prevent herself from appearing to suffer more than what all her family suffered on his going away, she did not adopt the method so judiciously employed by Marianne, on a similar occasion, to augment and fix her sorrow, by seeking silence, solitude and idleness. Their means were as different as their objects, and equally suited to the advancement of each.
>
> Elinor sat down to her drawing-table as soon as he was out of the house, busily employed herself the whole day, neither sought nor avoided the mention of his name, appeared to interest herself almost as much as ever in the general concerns of the family, and if, by this conduct, she did not lessen her own grief, it was at least prevented from unnecessary increase, and her mother and sisters were spared much solicitude on her account. (SS, p. 76)

As we can see in the passage above, Elinor is deeply affected by his leaving, but chooses not to cause further sorrow to her mother and sisters. Elinor is careful not to let others know what is going on inside her. When Marianne, at the beginning, thinks that Edward lacks something, Elinor promptly goes in his defense in a passionate manner so unlike her ways. Then she realizes that perhaps she has shown too much, and regrets having done so,

> Elinor started at this declaration, and was sorry for the warmth she had been betrayed into, in speaking of him. She felt that Edward stood very high in her opinion. She believed the regard to

> be mutual; but she required greater certainty of it to make Marianne's conviction of their attachment agreeable to her. (SS, p.17)

No matter how tenderly she loves her sister, it is difficult for Elinor to admit her feelings about a man when she does not know if these feelings will materialize into something else. Perhaps she is afraid of appearing vulnerable; having always been the mature sister, she cannot let herself be thought of as someone who builds castles on air, like her sister and mother do. Or rather, precisely because the rest of the family is like that, she feels that someone has got to keep their feet on the ground. Elinor is also careful in her choice of words, she refuses to use the word *love* when it comes to Edward. She prefers to use verbs as "like" and "esteem" to refer to her feelings.

Civility is very important to Elinor. No matter what the circumstances are she always plays the part of the perfect hostess, being kind and interested (or at least pretending to be) in what her interlocutor has to say. When Edward visits them for the first time in Barton Park (the small place they move to after they lose their fortune) he seems cold and distant. Although his behavior is very different from what she expected it to be, Elinor gives him the benefit of the doubt and treats him with the same respect she would like to have been treated with.

> His coldness and reserve mortified her severely; she was vexed and half angry; but resolving to regulate her behaviour to him by the past rather than the present, she avoided every appearance of resentment or displeasure, and treated him as she thought he ought to be treated from the family connection. (SS, p.66)

Another example of the importance Elinor gives to conforming with the rules of society (that so strongly contrasts with her sister's demeanor) can be seen when Lucy

Steele refers to Lady Middleton as a “sweet woman” (SS, p. 89). Since Marianne is incapable of delivering a social lie, Elinor is the one who has to do so, behaving more tenderly than she felt.

Even after Elinor finds out about Lucy Steele’s attachment to Edward, she manages to disguise the shock and horror she is feeling. Astonishment and amazement are the words used to describe her sentiments, but not even then does she exteriorize her real thoughts: “though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity, and felt no danger of a hysterical fit, or a swoon.” (SS, p. 94). Elinor ends up believing in Lucy Steele, not because she is easily influenced but because Lucy is able to prove her case with evidence of their commitment to each other. Elinor is not easily fooled. If she acts as if she does not have anything against anyone, it is because it suits her to do so; she is not naïve, she knows exactly who she is dealing with. She maintains her composure and treats Lucy with all her consideration, but she has no illusions about the character of Edward’s fiancée. Elinor, differently from her sister Marianne, believes in facts, not in assumptions. She does not allow herself to be taken into reveries. When Willoughby leaves Marianne at Barton without much explanation, for instance, Elinor is the only one who doubts his character. She even has a quarrel with her mother because of that, since Mrs. Dashwood has a hard time understanding Elinor’s feelings and how she refuses to see only the good in people.

Elinor is pragmatic and refuses to fill her mind with the hopes and dreams so typical of her mother and sister. She struggles internally; even though she has intense feelings, she does not want them to dominate her. If they do, she may lose her strength to go against their difficult new situation. She wants to believe that Willoughby is a good man, with her sister’s best interest at heart, but factual evidence is too strong to be dismissed or disregarded. She suffers alone, and does not let her more sensible self be erased by appearances. Even after she realizes that Edward is indeed engaged to Lucy, she does not let her indignation cloud her judgment.

> Her resentment of such behaviour, her indignation at having been its dupe, for a short time made her feel only for herself; but other ideas, other considerations, soon arose. Had Edward been intentionally deceiving her? Had he feigned a regard for her which he did not feel? Was his engagement to Lucy an engagement of the heart? No; whatever it might once have been, she could not believe it such at present. His affection was all her own. She could not be deceived in that. (SS, p.99).

Elinor tries to explain Edward's engagement to Lucy in a rational manner; despite her sorrow, she cannot help being worried about the fate of the man she loves. "She wept for him, more than for herself". (SS, p. 100) Even then, she maintains her dignity and behaves as if nothing significant has happened:

> When she joined them at dinner only two hours after she had first suffered the extinction of all her dearest hopes, no one would have supposed from the appearance of the sisters, that Elinor was mourning in secret over obstacles which must divide her for ever from the object of her love (…) (SS, p. 100)

Marianne is different from her sister in many ways. If Elinor is prudent and chooses very carefully what she is going to say, everything about Marianne is surrounded by passion and sentiment. She believes in love at first sight and in romantic couples that share the exact same interests; she refuses to conform to the rules of society if they mean that she has to abandon her ideas about love and romance. Even the vocabulary used to describe Marianne and her feelings is intense. She is associated with words such as "rapturous delight" (SS, p. 16), "indignation" (SS, p. 18), "astonished" (SS, p. 18), "ardent mind" (SS, p. 41), "violence of affliction" (p.62). Marianne lives life to the fullest and dreams of finding the perfect match, he who, in her opinion, is the one who shares the same passion for life and interests she has. As we can see in chapter three, "I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own.

He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both." (SS, p. 15) Love, for her, is something that only the young are allowed to pursue; a man such as Colonel Brandon, who in her opinion is past his prime at the age of thirty-five, is doomed to remain alone, and is ridiculed for having feelings for her. Her frame of mind does not allow for second attachments either, one has to find love at their first attempt. That shows some inconsistency on her part, as her mother was her father's second wife, and they seem to have been quite happy while he was alive.

Marianne's sensitivity is intense. She is proud of showing all of her feelings to anyone. She feels as if she would be betraying herself if she did not allowed herself to grieve and suffer intensely after the failure of her relationship with Willoughby. Elinor refers to that in chapter fifteen: "her sister's affliction was indubitable; and she thought with the tenderest compassion of that violent sorrow which Marianne was in all probability not merely giving way to as a relief, but feeding and encouraging as a duty." (SS, p. 58) It is as if Marianne saw her suffering as a duty to her philosophy. She thrives on it and, even though she does feel devastated, she seems to exaggerate the feelings even more in order to prove her point. Another instance is presented in chapter sixteen, where we can see how proud Marianne is of her own suffering:

> Marianne would have thought herself very inexcusable had she been able to sleep at all the first night after parting from Willoughby. She would have been ashamed to look her family in the face the next morning, had she not risen from her bed in more need of repose than when she lay down in it. (SS, p.61)

Concealment is also against her sensibilities; in the same way that she is proud of announcing her feelings to anyone she refuses to say something she does not believe in. Marianne cannot lie, not even if it is to spare her sister from suffering. When they talk about Edward, in chapter four, she cannot disguise her dislike of his shortcomings: "She would not wound the feelings of her sister on any account, and yet to say what she did

not believe was impossible." (SS, p. 17). Marianne cannot conceal her growing attachment to Willoughby, she

> (…)abhorred all concealment where no real disgrace could attend unreserve; and to aim at the restraint of sentiments which were not in themselves illaudable, appeared to her not merely an unnecessary effort, but a disgraceful subjection of reason to common-place and mistaken notions. (SS, p. 41)

Marianne is not tolerant; she refuses to be civil with those who do not share her opinions about things. She does not have "much toleration for anything like impertinence, vulgarity, inferiority of parts, or even difference of taste from herself" (SS, p. 92). This behavior makes her rude and insensitive at times. She is quick to judge and to decide that she does not like someone, does not have any patience towards the ones with less intellectual abilities than herself, and refuses to act politely around people she dislikes. Her distaste for Colonel Brandon comes only from the fact that he is older and seems to have developed some feelings for her. She is easily influenced by Willoughby's opinions, who disapproves of Brandon for his own motives. According to her Brandon "has neither genius, taste, nor spirit. (…) his understanding has no brilliancy, his feelings no ardour, and his voice no expression." (SS, p. 40). This is her opinion about a man who has done nothing wrong to her, and who has demonstrated to be a good friend of her family. If someone does not share her same beliefs and aspirations, then this person is doomed to her total disregard. What is worse, she does not keep these opinions to herself, but is more than willing to spread them to whoever wants to hear them. She is not only unkind to Colonel Brandon but also to the Middletons and to Mrs. Jennings. The latter, who in spite of her faults shows nothing but affection and kindness towards the Dashwoods, is a constant target for her complaints. When Edward asks Marianne about their neighbors, she replies that they "could not be more unfortunately situated" (SS, p. 66). She never tries to hide her displeasure, and pays no attention to the rules of civility.

Elinor, as usual, is left to excuse her attitude and to make amends. Marianne does not care about the opinions other people may have about her. She is rude to Mrs. Jennings, who has kindly invited them to spend some time with her in her London house. Marianne only puts up with the invitation because it serves her purpose of meeting Willoughby again. Even under such circumstances, she does not make any effort to be kind with her host; during her entire time as a guest in Mrs. Jennings' house Marianne hardly says a word to her, so concerned she is with her own problems and circumstances. Marianne is the typical romantic character. Her feelings are always extreme, she either loves unconditionally or despises entirely. She fails to see things in proportion to the parameters of reality. In this sense, she is what we would nowadays call a typical teenager, who finds that her way of seeing and doing things is the only right one, and refuses to accept opinions that clash against her own. What others think of her does not matter, the only thing she cares about is to be able to live her life and love to the fullest. In order to do so, she risks defying decorum and does things a decent young woman should not do. As soon as she bonds with Willoughby, she starts discussing passionately with him on all subjects that interest her. She has barely met him, and believes they already know everything there is to know about each other – which is something frowned upon in her day and age. "It was only necessary to mention any favorite amusement to engage her to talk. She could not be silent when such points were introduced, and she had neither shyness nor reserve in their discussion." (SS, p. 36). Marianne is reproached by Elinor for acting that way, but she only disdains of her sister's opinion:

> I have been too much at my ease, too happy, too frank. I have erred against every common-place notion of decorum; I have been open and sincere where I ought to have been reserved, spiritless, dull, and deceitful—had I talked only of the weather and the roads, and had I spoken only once in ten minutes, this reproach would have been spared. (SS, p. 37)

Marianne is still young and naïve. She thinks that living according to the rules of society is not living at all and by ignoring them completely she forgets that she may cause discomfort to her family, hurt people's feelings, and ruin her own future. She thinks that if any of the things she does were wrong she would know, and she is often led by her own imagination. Her opinions are often misguided, but somehow, in the end, they are not so incorrect, after all. Even though she is so enthusiastic, Marianne could not be called a lively girl. Quite on the contrary, she is often filled with grief, drama and melancholy. This is how Elinor describes her sister: "I should hardly call her a lively girl—she is very earnest, very eager in all she does—sometimes talks a great deal and always with animation—but she is not often really merry" (SS, p. 69).

Elinor and Marianne, however, are not so different when all things are considered. When it comes to the people around them, they often share the same opinions; the difference lies in the fact that whereas Elinor keeps her thoughts to herself, and treats everyone with respect, Marianne does not hide her scornful look. As Brownstein suggests, "[they] register the failings of their neighbours with more pain than pleasure, scornful Marianne usually averting her eyes while Elinor struggles civilly to keep her countenance." (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p. 42). This is not the only way in which the sisters are similar. One of their most distinct characteristic – that applies also to the other Dashwood women – is their intellectuality. They read extensively, listen and play the best music and are interested in all forms of cultural activities, something that none of the other female characters of the novel seem to share. ARMSTRONG (2002) calls attention to the fact that the difference between the Dashwoods and the other ladies in the story is that even though all of them, to some extent, paint, play and recite, none does it with the commitment and passion of Elinor and Marianne. They do not pursue these activities simply because it is expected that a single woman entertains herself before she finds a husband, but because they truly want to cultivate themselves, and find pleasure in doing so. They are, in this sense, very advanced for their time- as most Austen's women - for they are not afraid of showing themselves as people who think and are able to have their own opinions instead of simply sharing the opinions of their fathers and husbands. Proof of that is how frustrated the girls feel when they are around Lady Middleton and the Steeles, who seem only able to talk about children or possible suitors.

“As intellectual women, the Dashwoods put Lady Middleton on the defensive. She is thoroughly suspicious of them. And they, in their turn, are only too aware of her limitations.” (…) This seriousness gives dignity to their poverty. It makes Marianne arrogant on occasion.” (ARMSTRONG, 2002, p. 364).

The three main male characters, Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon and Willoughby also share similarities and differences. Brandon and Edward especially, who are both the opposite of what one may think of an ideal man. Edward is reserved, quiet, sedate even, and is constantly referred to as a man with no physical attractions. In chapter three he is described as follows:

> Edward Ferrars was not recommended to their good opinion by any peculiar graces of person or address. He was not handsome, and his manners required intimacy to make them pleasing. He was too diffident to do justice to himself; but when his natural shyness was overcome, his behaviour gave every indication of an open, affectionate heart. His understanding was good, and his education had given it solid improvement. But he was neither fitted by abilities nor disposition to answer the wishes of his mother and sister, who longed to see him distinguished—as—they hardly knew what. They wanted him to make a fine figure in the world in some manner or other. His mother wished to interest him in political concerns, to get him into parliament, or to see him connected with some of the great men of the day. Mrs. John Dashwood wished it likewise; but in the mean while, till one of these superior blessings could be attained, it would have quieted her ambition to see him driving a barouche. But Edward had no turn for great men or barouches. All his wishes centered in domestic comfort and the quiet of private life. Fortunately he had a younger brother who was more promising. (SS, p. 14)

Edward is a man with no particular interests in life, who does not seem to be suited to any profession, who has no special abilities. He asserts that he has no inclination for the public life, and does not wish to be distinguished anywhere; he is a man of no ambition, who wishes to remain like that and “cannot be forced into genius and eloquence” (SS, p. 67). He is “quiet and unobtrusive” (SS, p. 14) and does not bother

Elinor with never ending conversation. His biggest quality is the fact that he is the opposite of his sister and this is already complimenting enough. Elinor, however, is not discouraged by the fact that he may not correspond to her idea of how a man should be; once she realizes that there is a good heart under his quietness, she starts seeing him with different eyes.

We only see Edward through the eyes of Elinor and Marianne. While the first develops a fondness for him, the latter takes longer to accept that such a colorless man may have virtues of his own:

> Edward is very amiable, and I love him tenderly. But yet—he is not the kind of young man—there is something wanting—his figure is not striking; it has none of that grace which I should expect in the man who could seriously attach my sister. His eyes want all that spirit, that fire, which at once announce virtue and intelligence. (SS, p. 15)

Edward Ferrars is not particularly brilliant, and one may understand why Marianne would wish someone different for her sister. Once she gets to know him better, however, she learns to overlook these apparent flaws in favor of his attention to his family, and especially to her sister. Edward shares a common characteristic with Elinor; they are both practical people, who do not share the romantic reveries of Marianne. When asked about the scenery in Barton, Edward replies that although very beautiful they do seem a bit dirty. Marianne does not understand how he can criticize something that for her is so flawless, but Edward just relates what he sees, he does not romanticize anything.

Elinor sees Edward through a better light, though. She sympathizes with him from the beginning, which is proved by the way she defends him when Marianne shows her doubts about his personality. She goes in his defense in a passionate way, which is atypical in her:

> "Of his sense and his goodness," continued Elinor, "no one can, I think, be in doubt, who has seen him often enough to engage him in unreserved conversation. The excellence of his understanding and his principles can be concealed only by that shyness which too often keeps him silent. You know enough of him to do justice to his solid worth. But of his minuter propensities, as you call them you have from peculiar circumstances been kept more ignorant than myself. He and I have been at times thrown a good deal together, while you have been wholly engrossed on the most affectionate principle by my mother. I have seen a great deal of him, have studied his sentiments and heard his opinion on subjects of literature and taste; and, upon the whole, I venture to pronounce that his mind is well-informed, enjoyment of books exceedingly great, his imagination lively, his observation just and correct, and his taste delicate and pure. His abilities in every respect improve as much upon acquaintance as his manners and person. At first sight, his address is certainly not striking; and his person can hardly be called handsome, till the expression of his eyes, which are uncommonly good, and the general sweetness of his countenance, is perceived. At present, I know him so well, that I think him really handsome; or at least, almost so. (SS, p. 17).

In spite of the fact that she loves Edward, Elinor knows that he is not handsome. He is not what most people would expect the romantic interest of the female protagonist in a 19th Century novel to be. Although he is acknowledged as being very good and considerate, Edward has many flaws. He is able to lie and to lead Elinor on by not telling her about his engagement to Lucy Steele. Although he is aware of Elinor's growing attachment to him, he does not even attempt to tell her about his previous commitment. Not only that, he lies to her face when he says that the ring that he is wearing contains the hair of his sister, when it is Lucy's. Edward acts as if he is offended when Marianne accuses him of being too reserved and not telling them everything. Whereas he is very honorable in remaining attached to a woman he no longer loves, in order not to cause her harm, he is also capable of deceiving the woman he really loves by not telling her the truth about something that directly affects her.

Contrary to Edward, Willoughby outwardly appears to be the perfect knight in shining armor that emerges into Marianne's life as if out of a fairy tale. He is eloquent, charming, handsome, and knows exactly how to make a woman feel important and interesting. Willoughby is outspoken and is not afraid of showing and saying what his feelings are. He is well-read and appreciates all the same things that Marianne does, as Elinor notices in chapter ten,

> Elinor saw nothing to censure in him but a propensity, in which he strongly resembled and peculiarly delighted her sister, of saying too much what he thought on every occasion, without attention to persons or circumstances. In hastily forming and giving his opinion of other people, in sacrificing general politeness to the enjoyment of undivided attention where his heart was engaged, and in slighting too easily the forms of worldly propriety, he displayed a want of caution which Elinor could not approve, in spite of all that he and Marianne could say in its support. (SS, p.38)

Willoughby charms the whole family into thinking that he is going to marry Marianne, except Elinor, the only one who sporadically has her doubts about his intentions. He manages to maintain his image for some time, but cannot hold to it forever. He is a lover, as Elinor suggests, but he is also an ambitious man, accustomed to the good things in life; when the time comes for him to choose between Marianne and a wealthy heiress he has no doubt in choosing the latter. He acts cowardly because he does not have the courage to face Marianne and tell her the truth. He behaves poorly and is not honorable enough to stand the consequences of his choice. Although he in fact cares for Marianne, he cannot help forsaking her in order to obtain what is more important to him, a marriage that would ensure his financial stability.

Colonel Brandon, like Edward, is not described in inspiring touches. Although not unattractive, he is described as being too old for Marianne.

> He was silent and grave. His appearance however was not unpleasing, in spite of 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. (SS, p. 27)

Brandon is described as "neither very young nor very gay" (SS, p. 27). His age is often brought up as the reason why he is so inadequate for Marianne. Even though the other characters try to convince her otherwise, she is adamant; she cannot conceive that a man his age can still love anyone. When he complains about pain in his shoulder, on a cold day, he is doomed; Marianne immediately associates that with rheumatism and decay. Colonel Brandon, however, is far from being this old man seen through Marianne's eyes. He is certainly grave and serious, though. Despite his feelings towards Marianne he is able to avoid being in raptures when he watches her sing and play. Actually he is the only person who does not seem to be awed by her talents, in spite of being the one who most admires her.

Brandon, however, finds a good friend in Elinor. She makes a point of defending him from the attacks of Marianne and Willoughby, always trying to convince them of all his qualities.

> [Brandon] is a sensible man; and sense will always have attractions for me. Yes, Marianne, even in a man between thirty and forty. He has seen a great deal of the world; has been abroad, has read, and has a thinking mind. I have found him capable of giving me much information on various subjects; and he has always answered my inquiries with readiness of good-breeding and good nature. (SS, p. 39)

Elinor feels sorry for the disinterest – sometimes even disrespect – that her sister shows to Brandon. Brandon is seen with much more appreciation through Elinor's eyes:

> She liked him—in spite of his gravity and reserve, she beheld in him an object of interest. His manners, though serious, were mild; and his reserve appeared rather the result of some oppression of spirits than of any natural gloominess of temper. Sir John had dropped hints of past injuries and disappointments, which justified her belief of his being an unfortunate man, and she regarded him with respect and compassion. (SS, p. 38)

Col. Brandon has a sad romantic story in his past. As a young man, he had his first love for a girl named Eliza denied to him. In his career he has seen a deal of the world, but that has not made him insensitive, simply reserved. In a way, he is like Elinor, they both prefer to maintain their feelings bottled up inside, and always think of others first. Although he is in love with Marianne, he does not tell her about Willoughby's character; at least not before Willoughby is already engaged to another woman.

Brandon is presented through the perspective of several people in the novel. Each one of them paints a different picture, and that says more about their own character than about Brandon himself. Marianne finds him lacking "genius, taste and spirit" (SS, p. 40). She does not find him particularly clever, or passionate and eloquent at the beginning of the novel, and she shows to be highly influenced by Willoughby's opinion. The latter, who has his own reasons to dislike Brandon, does not show any concrete argument to support his opinion. His motives are foolish; in the words of Willoughby: "he threatened me with rain when I wanted it to be fine; he has found fault with the hanging of my curricle, and I cannot persuade him to buy my brown mare." (SS, p. 40). Since he cannot give his true reasons for his distaste of the Colonel, he comes up with silly jokes to justify his views.

Among these three men, however, Brandon is the only one who does not intentionally deceive the woman he loves. Edward and Willoughby, no matter how different from each other, cause pain to Elinor and Marianne because they lack the courage to tell them the truth about their motives, intentions or past mistakes. Both act selfishly and lead the two sisters on, making them think that they are free to marry them, when they are either not willing (Willoughby) or not free (Edward) to do so. Brandon does not tell the whole truth to Marianne – about his past with Willoughby – but he does that more to protect her from suffering and for fear of interfering in her life – which she would clearly have a problem with. On the other hand, Brandon shares a common trait with Edward and Willoughby; all of them have had previous attachments with other women, Edward to Lucy, and Brandon and Willoughby with the two Elizas, mother and daughter, respectively. Contrary to what Marianne thinks, their second attachments were better suited than the first, whether they were successful or not.

The characters in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*, except for Elinor, whose thoughts we are aware of, are seen either through each other's eyes or through their actions; we do not have access to their inner life, so we can say that our experience with them is second hand. There is the need to filter some opinions, because many of them may be the result of the prejudices and personal views of the other characters. As in real life, the way we see someone is influenced by our background, character and our own history with the person. It is not different in the story, where each character is described in a number of ways according to the personality and beliefs of each individual character. It is mostly through the characters' actions that the reader is able to evaluate their thorough colors.

2.1.2 Main Characters in the Film

In novels, characters can be understood through three different ways: their internal thoughts, the way they talk and relate to one another, and through their own actions. In Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* the last two instances predominate. The only

internal thoughts that we are acquainted with are Elinor's; the remaining characters are shown to the reader either through Elinor's thoughts about them, through what other characters say about them, or the characters' actions. We are left with fewer elements when these characters are transposed to the screen. We do not have free entrance into the minds of the filmic characters, so other elements have to be added in order to show their feelings and thoughts without having to use voice-overs (a narrator's voice heard over the visuals of a film). There are several devices that help express the internal feelings of each character, that include the choice of actor, the clothes and physical appearance, the tone in which they talk, and many more. When transposing the characters of *Sense and Sensibility* to the screen, Emma Thompson made sure that the public would understand and relate to the characters in the way she considered the best. That was her major preoccupation while writing the screenplay.

The two protagonist sisters are, early in the film, shown as polar opposites. As the film starts they have recently suffered the loss of their father, and consequently of their fortune.[27] While Marianne shows openly her grief and indignation with their newfound poverty – by refusing to talk to her brother and sister-in-law and playing endless sad music in her piano – Elinor remains apparently unchanged. In the first scene where the two sisters appear we have a close-up of Marianne, looking rather disconsolate playing a song at her pianoforte. The song is very melancholy, portraying the feelings of the player. Then comes Elinor, who does not show her grievance openly, asking Marianne to play something less mournful, so as not to distress their mother any further. Elinor is clearly the one "holding the fort"; while everyone else is falling apart, enable to cope with their own feelings of grief, she manages to take care of things and to think about the feelings of others.

Elinor is also the only one who truly seems to grasp the seriousness of their current financial situation. Although her mother and sisters show sadness and feel outraged by their brother's attitude (the fact that he did not show any intention to

[27] Besides his widow and his three daughters, late Mr. Dashwood also leaves a male son, from a previous marriage. According to the British law, property goes to the elder male heir in each family. As Elinor and Marianne's half-brother breaks the code of gentility and does not support them, Mrs. Dashwood and her three daughters are left practically destitute, having to count on their scarce income and on the good will of friends and distant relatives.

support them financially and take care of them as he should by the gentility code) they are unaware of the real practical implications of their newfound poverty. Elinor is the only one who shows knowledge of the price of things and how much money they will have from then on. Her mother, in her first scene after the loss of her husband, is already packing her things in order not to be around when her stepson and his wife arrive to take over Norland Park (Mr. Dashwood's estate). Elinor is the one who convinces her to reconsider since they "have nowhere to go". (THOMPSON, 1995, p.32). Even seeing her mother's distress she does not cry and give in to her real feelings. Elinor understands that under their impoverished condition they cannot afford to act on impulse; they have to be practical and think very well before taking any steps since anything they decide now may change the courses of their lives even more than it already has. If that means having to put up with the presence of their brother John and his wife Fanny, whom they despise, so be it. Elinor's pragmatic personality refuses to surrender to grief; the only way that she feels in control of the situation is by doing things. It is probably her way of dealing with all the things that have been happening with her family. Some days before they were a happy family, with a caring father, living in a comfortable, beautiful house where their only concern was what to wear for a party or what new book or sheet music to buy next. All of a sudden, all is turned upside down and their lives change completely; a woman who they do not even like becomes the owner of their house and their brother who should be their provider as stipulated by their late father does not seem to intend to do so. Since her mother and sister are too distraught to take matters into their own hands, Elinor does so. She looks for affordable houses for them to move in, prepares presents to the servants they must leave behind, plays the host to their odious sister-in-law Fanny and tends to Margaret, her younger sister, who does not completely understand why they have to leave their house.

From the first minutes in the film we can see that Elinor is mature and practical, trying to live according to the good rules of society. The Elinor in the film is ten years older than Marianne. This fact (provoked as a consequence to the choice of Emma Thompson to play the role) adds to the feeling that Elinor is the most reliable adult in the family. She controls herself not to show any extreme emotions; whereas around her, her sisters and mother are screaming, crying, grieving out loud, she hardly ever changes

her external self. Although not the most enthusiastic of people (for the obvious reasons) she does not forget to play her part as a suitable host, who makes polite conversation with her guests, asking questions and pretending to be interested in their affairs.

Besides being so practical, the viewer soon finds that she also has a very good heart. The scene involving the gifts to her employees (all wrapped very beautifully), in a time of great suffering for the whole family, shows that. She truly cares about those people who served them for probably a long time and feels sorry about having to leave them (and even responsible for their fate). She makes a point into talking to the servants herself explaining the family's situation and why they will not be able to take all of them to their new house. In the scenes when she is shown by herself, the audience perceives that she feels as deeply as any other person in the house, she simply prefers not to make these feelings known to others so as not to intensify their suffering. The first time we see that Elinor is as bereft as any of the other women in the family is when, after Edward's arrival, she is found by him, sneaking on Marianne and listening to Marianne's playing their father's favorite music in tears. The screenplay describes the scene like this:

> Edward comes into the doorway and sees Elinor, who is listening to Marianne playing a concerto. Elinor stands in a graceful, rather sad attitude, her back to us. Suddenly she senses Edward behind her and turns. He is about to turn away, embarrassed to have been caught admiring her, when he sees she has been weeping. Hastily she tries to dry her eyes. He comes forward and offers her a handkerchief, which she takes with a grateful smile. We notice his monogram in the corner: ECF.
>
> ELINOR (apologetic): That was my father's favourite. (THOMPSON, 1995, p.45)

She controls herself in front of others but she is not unfeeling. However, she almost apologizes for behaving like that, as if she were not allowed to do so. Feeling versus practicality is her struggle during the movie. As the film unfolds, she finds it harder to control her spirits, until she finally bursts into tears three times: when she cannot hide that Edward and Lucy are engaged; when Marianne is on the brink of dying;

and when she finds out that Edward is not married to Lucy. Elinor is not that cold after all; she simply has more difficulty than her sister in expressing her feelings. One of the things we find in this movie is a slow journey on the part of each of the sisters to overcome their limitations. Getting to control herself is a great achievement to Marianne at the end of the story, as well as learning to express her emotions is also a great victory to Elinor.

The attachment between Elinor and Edward becomes clear right at the beginning of the movie. When Edward finally finds Margaret under the desk in the library and calls Elinor to take her out their bond is evident. Elinor is already impressed (as all the Dashwoods are) with Edward's sensitivity towards the family suffering and she becomes even more moved by his attitude towards her younger sister Margaret. The way he deals with Margaret shows that he is capable of great sympathy and this is probably one of the reasons why Elinor becomes so fond of him. Although never openly talked about, the feeling that they have formed an attachment that may transform into marriage is underlying. The fact that Elinor is given Edward's handkerchief is a proof of his sentiment towards her (or so it would be understood by any unmarried girl at the time). When Edward catches her crying, at the pianoforte scene, he gives her the aforementioned handkerchief, which becomes a cherished token of their affection. Whenever Elinor misses Edward she turns back to his handkerchief as comfort, as shown on scene 70: "Close on Edward's handkerchief. We can see the monogram ECF clearly. Close on Elinor staring out of the window. Tears stand in her eyes but she presses the handkerchief to them before they fall." (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 102). Elinor is , therefore, capable of great feelings which are almost solely expressed alone, in the safety of her own bedroom.

Elinor is also very prudent and always chooses her words very carefully. She does not allow herself to voice things that she is not completely sure about. Perhaps because she does not want anyone to feel sorry for her, because if they do she will not be able to keep in control of herself anymore and that is very important for her. When Marianne asks Elinor about her feelings towards Edward she refuses to use the word 'love':

> Marianne: Do you love him?
>
> The bold clarity of this question discomforts Elinor.
>
> Elinor: I do not attempt to deny that I think very highly of him – that I greatly esteem him – that I *like* him.
>
> Marianne: Esteem him! Like him! Use those insipid words again and I shall leave the room this instant!
>
> This makes Elinor laugh in spite of her discomfort.
>
> Elinor: Very well. Forgive me. Believe my feelings to be stronger than I have declared – but further than that you must not believe. (THOMPSON, 1995, p.55)

Even though she ended up admitting that she indeed had feelings for Edward, Elinor refused to fall into her sister's trap, avoiding compromising herself too much. Another circumstance in which we can see the same reaction by Elinor towards her feelings in relation to Edward is when the family receives their atlas by post (although Edward had promised to deliver it himself). Her mother cannot help noticing the sad look in her daughter's eyes and tries to comfort her. Elinor, however, pretends it is nothing of great importance since they do not have any commitment to each other.

> Mrs. Dashwood: You must miss him, Elinor.
>
> Elinor looks very directly at her mother.
>
> Elinor: We are not engaged, Mamma.
>
> Mrs. Dashwood: But he loves you, dearest, of that I am certain.
>
> Elinor looks down. She speaks slowly, choosing her words with care.
>
> Elinor: I am by no means *assured* of his regard for me.
>
> Mrs. Dashwood: Oh, Elinor!
>
> Elinor: But even were he to feel such a…preference, I think we should be foolish to assume that there would not be many obstacles to his choosing a woman of no rank who cannot afford sugar…

> Mrs. Dashwood: But Elinor – your heart must tell you –
>
> Elinor: In such a situation, Mamma, it is perhaps better to use one's head. (Thompson, 1995, p. 83)

As already pointed out, Elinor struggles to show her softer side and cannot help thinking of her condition as a destitute as an impediment to her happy ending. Thompson's Elinor is not just seriousness, though; she has a great capacity for humor as well. On many occasions she comes up with funny remarks that lighten up the humor of the scene. The exchange she has with Edward in Norland's library, while Margaret is under the table, is a good example of that. Although she does not quite understand Edward's strategy at first, Elinor follows his lead and ends up having great fun by speaking nonsense with him. The scene goes on like this:

> Edward: Oh, Miss Dashwood! Excuse me – I was wondering- do you by any chance have such a thing as a reliable atlas?
>
> *Elinor looks up at him in astonishment.*
>
> Elinor: I believe so.
>
> Edward: Excellent. I wish to check the position of the Nile.
>
> *Edward appears to be utterly sincere.*
>
> Edward: My sister says it is in South America.
>
> *From under the table we hear a snort. Elinor looks at him in realization.*
>
> Elinor: Oh! No, no indeed. She is quite wrong. For I believe it is in – in- Belgium.
>
> Edward: Belgium? Surely not. You must be thinking of the Volga.
>
> Margaret (from under the table): The Volga?
>
> Elinor: Of course. The Volga, which as you know, starts in –
>
> Edward: Vladivostok, and ends in –
>
> Elinor: St. Albans.

> Edward: Indeed. Where the coffee beans come from… (Thompson, 1995, p.43)

Their gibberish pays off; not only is their plan successful (Margaret finally appears) but also their mutual affection flourishes and the audience understands that between themselves these two shy, modest people can feel comfortable enough to play fools and enjoy themselves while doing so. In all her sobriety, Elinor can also be quite humorous and light.

Another instance in which we can see Elinor's wit is when she criticizes Marianne. Her remarks are not only clever but quite funny and Emma Thompson, with her subtle sense of humor, is able to perform that in a very appealing way. When Marianne first meets Willoughby and is in raptures after he leaves their house Elinor cannot hide her amusement at the situation, asking if Willoughby is human and making fun of Marianne and their mom's enthusiasm. Also, when Marianne criticizes Edward for her poor reading of a poem by Cowper we see Elinor controlling herself not to burst out laughing. She finds her sister's passions quite comical; even though she does not share the same feelings she does not censure them; she just probably attributes it to her youth.

Filmic Elinor is also intelligent and, as a woman who reads and thinks about her condition in the world, is not silent about it. She can be very articulate and show her opinion when she feels it is appropriate to do so. Since she feels quite at ease with Edward's presence he is the one who is the recipient of her views on her situation as a woman (and especially one who has been destitute of her wealth). When Edward and Elinor are riding in Norland and he complains of feeling idle and useless, we have the following conversation:

> ELINOR: You talk of feeling idle and useless – imagine how that is compounded when one has no choice and no hope whatsoever of any occupation.
>
> EDWARD nods and smiles at the irony of it.
>
> EDWARD: Our circumstances are therefore precisely the same.
>
> ELINOR: Except that you will inherit your fortune.

> He looks at her slightly shocked but enjoying her boldness.
>
> ELINOR (cont.): We cannot even earn ours. (THOMPSON, 1995, p.49)

It is not because Elinor complies with society's rules that she accepts them as right. She can be critical, and boldly asserts her dissatisfaction with her condition as a woman when it comes to their lack of financial independence. However, Elinor is also a realist and no matter how unjust she thinks life for women is when it comes to earning their living, she lives in that society and therefore has to follow its rules. Getting married is almost the only option for a woman in those days and Elinor certainly cannot take her mind off the fact that, if she marries Edward, she will be not only fulfilling her need for love and affection but also securing her future alongside a man who will care for her. Worrying about money is certainly strenuous for Elinor; she only does it because if she does not nobody else will do; the rest of her family is either too out of touch with the practicalities of life or too caught up in their own issues. The arrival of Edward brings her joy because she found a man whom she can appreciate and appreciate her back but also a possibility of having one of the family's problems solved (the eldest daughter is married and out of their mom's responsibility, meaning more money for the remain of the family).

Marianne is also very opinionated, but contrary to her sister, she does not control what she says aloud. She is outspoken and will not tune her opinions down in order not to hurt the feelings of others. She is all emotion and does not care for conventions, shocking some people with her freedom and, at times, rudeness. As she herself ironically points out, she frequently errs against decorum, by seeming too enthusiastic in front of a man she barely knows, by riding with him alone in his curricle in such a speed that the whole village comments about it, or embarrassing herself in front of everyone in the London ball where she sees Willoughby. In Elinor's words: "Marianne does not approve of hiding her emotions. In fact, her romantic prejudices have the unfortunate tendency to set propriety at naught." (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 106). When a girl meets a man for the first time she should act accordingly, neither too eager nor too uninterested, but

Marianne puts this rule to the ground. When she meets Willoughby she already shares all her thoughts and dreams with him instantly. Elinor criticizes her for her attitude:

> Elinor: Good work, Marianne! You have covered all forms of poetry; another meeting will ascertain his views on nature and romantic attachments and then you will have nothing left to talk about and the acquaintanceship will be over.
>
> Marianne: I suppose I have erred against decorum. I should have been dull and spiritless and talked of the weather, or the state of the roads…
>
> Elinor: No, but Mr. Willoughby can be in no doubt of your enthusiasm for him.
>
> Marianne: Why should he doubt it? Why should I hide my regard?
>
> Elinor: No particular reason, Marianne, only that we know so little of him- (THOMPSON, 1995, p.101)

Marianne does not understand that there are principles of behavior that are expected of a single woman which, if not properly followed, may ruin all their chances of ever finding a suitable husband. Marianne thinks only about her present, how she is feeling at the moment and forgets that a woman in her circumstance cannot allow herself to do that. Being a spinster, and even worst, a spinster with a bad reputation would be the ruin, not only of herself but also of her mother and sisters. She, however, persists on breaking the laws of decorum and thinking of nothing but her own feelings. When Marianne goes to London, she does not care about her reputation and sends several letters to Willoughby, even though she receives no answer from him. She even wakes up the footman in the middle of the night so that he may deliver a letter for her. Her doctrine of ostensive sensibility makes her determined to show exactly what she feels, and that, of course, triggers misunderstandings and hard feelings all around. Even if unconsciously, she hurts her sister when she tells Elinor what she thinks about Edward, and manages to aggravate that when she asks Elinor what is wrong with her

heart, as she does not show any emotion even when she knows that Edward is engaged to another woman.

Examples of Marianne's rudeness and selfishness abound in the film. When Colonel Brandon comes to invite them to a picnic in his estate she looks obviously bored and uninterested, but the moment Brandon mentions that Willoughby will be there she lightens up. If she can be constantly rude to Brandon, such as when she refuses to play a duet with him by saying that she does not know any, she is even harsher when he is not around. Influenced by Willoughby she talks about Brandon as if he were a horrible, dull man who cannot offer anyone anything. She does the same when she makes a point of disliking Mrs. Jennings, and then seems to change her mind when the lady invites them for a season in London. Immediately after the invitation, Marianne tells Elinor: "What a kind woman she is! I like her more than I can say." (Idem, p. 130). A woman who she was always complaining about, all of a sudden, becomes her favorite person in the world. She is the typical teenager who thinks only of herself and does not realize that there are other people around her who may get hurt by her attitude. [28]

Marianne does not understand how people can hide their feelings; in her opinion, feelings are to be felt and exteriorized to their maximum. Living without experiencing everything intensely is not living appropriately. Marianne wants the intensity of life; she yearns to be the protagonist of her own novel – and the more dramatic the better. Dying for love would be sublime; she admires all the tragic love stories she has read and wishes one day to be able to live her own. She criticizes her sister for not feeling the same way. In her opinion "to love is to burn – to be on fire, all made of passion, of adoration, of sacrifice! Like Juliet, or Guinevere or Heloise" (Ibid, 1995, p.52). When her mother comments that these women all had sad endings, Marianne disagrees effusively: "To die for love? How can you say so? What could be more glorious?" (Ibid, 1995, p.52) Marianne's ideas on love are drastic, and she almost accomplishes a similar ending

[28] The wealthy local families, as a rule, would join their efforts to take the young unmarried girls to London or Bath so they could find suitable husbands. Once a girl was married she became a problem of her husband (he was the one who would support her financially) and she would not have to be a burden to her neighbours and relatives. In the Dashwoods' case, a situation that should be administered by their brother is left to their neighbours. It is a clear break in the gentility code he should be following.

when, abandoned by Willoughby, she takes a walk in the cold rain, catches a fever and almost dies.

Marianne is a gloomy character most of the time. The only period in which she is happy and behaves as a sprightly seventeen-year-old is when she is with Willoughby. Before and after that she is melancholy, erratic and surly. The combination of her father's death, the loss of their house and mostly, the loss of the man she loves transforms her into a zombie and eventually almost takes her to her deathbed. It is only after her near-death experience that she starts seeing the world in a different light. She finds out the truth about Willoughby and is able to see Colonel Brandon with her own eyes – instead of Willoughby's biased point of view.

Willoughby is the attractive villain of Thompson's film. He leads Marianne to think that he would marry her and manages to charm the whole family into sharing Marianne's thoughts. Nevertheless, he never had any intention of marrying Marianne, not because he did not like her (he probably did), but because money is crucial to his lifestyle and he knows that she will inherit none. Because of his past of depravity, having impregnated Beth and leaving her alone to her luck, he loses his aunt's inheritance. He does not have the courage to tell Marianne that he has to abandon her too in order to find a more promising marriage. Willoughby is not bad, he is weak, a man who will do anything to secure a comfortable financial position.

The audience can understand why Willoughby has such a power not only over Marianne, but over almost anyone who knows him. Played by British actor Greg Wise who was doing his first film at the age of 29, Willoughby exudes masculinity. Even though unknown to the international audience (Wise had only worked on television so far), and perhaps because of that, the character was able to convey exactly what was expected of him. With no preconceptions as to what the actor may be like (the villain or the good guy), the audience could share the same feelings of the protagonists. Not only is Willoughby very handsome and charming, he also exudes a sexuality that no other male character in the novel does. All these characteristics also contribute to the mystery surrounding him. People seem to know him but not quite well and there is always this feeling that he has something else in his past that he has not shared. His first Byronic

appearance is a sign that this is not an ordinary man. As if out of a cloud he arrives on his white horse to rescue the lady in distress; he carries her in his arms as if she weighed as much as a feather. Willoughby is the stuff of Marianne's wildest dreams suddenly substantiated; one who loves poetry as much as she does, who carries Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in his pocket, who proficiently recites her favorite poem by heart. The way he reads it – so differently from Edward – is precisely the way she feels it, ardently and passionately. "He is merry, voluble – a breath of fresh air." (THOMPSON, 1995, p.97). Everything Willoughby does is surrounded by an erotic feel, as when he cuts Marianne's lock of hair. Elinor witnesses the moment and feels strangely "transfixed by this strangely erotic moment" (Ibid, p.103). His charms go beyond Marianne; he manages to enchant Mrs. Dashwood as well, by complimenting her house. His power over the family is so strong that even with all the evidence against him, they refuse to believe that he is nothing but a good man with Marianne's best interest at heart. Nevertheless, in spite of all his charm Willoughby can be mean and disrespectful when it comes to Brandon. Only later in the film we will know the reason for his hatred of Brandon. He makes a point of criticizing and ridiculing the colonel to anyone's eye, perhaps to make sure that if his past comes alight no one will believe Brandon.

The Col. Brandon in the movie, played by the enticing English actor Alan Hickman, is a man in his forties, grave and composed, who demonstrates to have a kind heart. He is willing to help his friends and is extremely faithful to them. Even if he appears not to have that much in common with Sir John Middleton (with whom he had served in the East Indies) he demonstrates great appreciation for his friendship and respects him dearly. This is a result of the fact that, according to Mrs. Jennings, Brandon "would have done himself a harm if not for John" (Ibid, p.77).[29] His first appearance in the film takes place after dinner at Sir John's house where the Dashwoods have gone for the first time. Marianne is playing the piano and singing and, not wanting to interrupt, Col. Brandon stays by the door, unnoticed by anyone. His face expresses everything that he is feeling at that moment; he is besotted with the sight of Marianne. As THOMPSON puts in the screenplay: "He gazes at Marianne with an unfathomable look of grief and

[29] This refers to the event when Brandon's father found out about his affair with a ward of his family and forbade their romance.

longing. He breathes in deeply." (Ibid, p. 71) Later on we understand the reason why he longs and grieves at her sight; Marianne reminds him too much of Eliza, his first love, who he had to abandon when his father learned of their relationship. Eliza was just a ward of the family and therefore, poor; such kind of relationship was impermissible under those circumstances. What made the matters worse for Brandon is that he carried a great feeling of guilt towards Eliza's fate. After being expelled from the Brandons´ house she suffered a lot, passing from man to man and ending up dying in a poor-house with an illegitimate child. This explanation occurs at the beginning of the audience's acquaintance with the character, which produces a great deal of sympathy for him. He is silent and reserved, but there is a good reason why he is the way he is. Brandon is a man who has seen his share of tragedy, not only personal but also in his duties as an Army Colonel, when he was stationed in India. He says very little but it is almost impossible to ignore his presence. When he hands Marianne a knife while she is trying to cut some rushes for basket making, he does not say anything but we cannot help feeling the "electricity" in the air.

Brandon appears to see himself as someone too damaged to deserve the love of a sprightly young girl such as Marianne. Mr. John, who always shows his most tender side to his friend tries to encourage the colonel to take action but Brandon does not want to hear about it:

> Sir John: The word is that you have developed a taste for – certain company…
>
> Brandon stays resolutely silent. Sir John is emboldened.
>
> Sir John: And why not, say. A man like you – in his prime – she'd be a most fortunate young lady –
>
> Brandon cuts across him.
>
> Colonel Brandon: Marianne Dashwood would no more think of me than she would of *you*, John.
>
> Sir John: Brandon, my boy, do not think of yourself so meanly –
>
> Colonel Brandon: And all the better for her.

> Sir John subsides. Brandon is clearly as angry with himself as he is with Sir John. (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 75)

Even if aware of the fact that Marianne does not have any romantic interest in him, Brandon continues to show his affection for all the Dashwoods, helping them whenever he can. He wishes Marianne to be happy, and if this means letting her be with Willoughby, so be it. Brandon admires Marianne's passion for life and her disregard for life as it is then, at the opening of the 19th century. He calls Marianne "wholly unspoilt" (Ibid. p.106) and reprimands Elinor when she desires her sister to be more "acquainted with the ways of the world". (Ibid.) It is Marianne's resemblance with Eliza that endears him.

Brandon is not that different from Willoughby, though. When it comes to love of the arts, they are alike. Brandon plays the piano very well (according to Mrs. Jennings), is fond of poetry, as we can see at the end of the movie, when he recites *The Faerie Queene*[30] to Marianne, and can appreciate all forms of fine arts. Like Willoughby, he is a bold rider, owns a beautiful horse, and has traveled around the world. He is an experienced man. His looks are virile and mysterious; one can see that he is a man who has been through things.

On the other hand, Edward is quite different from Marianne's suitors, as expected. Behind his timid façade hides a man with great generosity who takes his duties very seriously even if that means having to give up the woman he loves. If in the novel he is attractive in an inconspicuous way, the choice of Hugh Grant, one of the favorite British actors of international renown at the time, helps to give more visibility and to enhance Edward Ferrars' charms considerably. Grant plays the part of Edward by emphasizing his tenderness, his clumsiness and his good heart. The scene in which he refuses the bedroom he was first offered in Norland Park (which belonged to Margaret) and proceeds to make friends with her, shows he is capable of great sympathy and

[30] *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), written by Edmund Spenser over the course of almost a decade, is an allegoric epic poem and the first to use the Spenserian Stanza (eight lines of iambic pentameter and a final alexandrine – ababbcbcc)

sensitivity. He understands how difficult Margaret's life must be after everything was turned upside down, and becomes a father figure for her, giving the attention she so much needs at that moment. Edward seems a man torn between duty and desire. On one hand he has a commitment with Lucy, made at a time when he was quite young and inexperienced; on the other, he finds out he does not love his fiancée, he loves Elinor, with whom he has formed a strong attachment. He tries to tell Elinor about his ordeal many times, always unsuccessfully, and is extremely sorry for the pain he caused. Still, his sense of duty speaks more loudly than his wishes.

In one of his most intimates conversations with Elinor we can have a very good idea of what kind of man he is and what he wishes for his future. The dialogue unfolds like this:

> Edward: All I want – all I have ever wanted – is the quiet of a private life but my mother is determined to see me distinguished.
>
> Elinor: As?
>
> Edward: She hardly knows. Any fine figure will suit – a great orator, a leading politician, even a barrister would serve, but only on the condition that I drive my own barouche and dine in the first circles.
>
> His tone is light but there is an underlying bitterness to it.
>
> Elinor: And what do you wish for?
>
> Edward: I always preferred the church, but that is not smart enough for my mother – she prefers the army, but that is a great deal too smart for me. (THOMPSON, 1995, p.49)

Edward is a man of little ambition who, by then, had not had the courage to fight for his aspirations. Of all the options that life produces for him, the clergy is the least dissatisfactory in his opinion; he does not have any vocation to the church but it seems a reasonably quiet life that would suit his personality. He is not a man of action; his

mother subdues him completely, which for the purpose of the story comes in handy – not daring to tell his mother of his secret engagement to Lucy Steele, he avoids getting married, which helps him find true love in the arms of Elinor. The only time that he speaks his mind is when defending the Dashwoods to his sister – and even then he does it quite subtly and politely. He certainly tries to tell Elinor of his commitment but never actually manages to do so and the whole engagement situation is found out only because Lucy tells his sister Fanny. If that had not happened, would he have had the courage to do so? When he loses his wealth (by being dishonored by his mother), his only option is to finally pursue his plan of joining the church and making things work with Elinor.

The audience does not have much time with Edward so a conclusion of his personality and behavior must be drawn from his first interactions. What is concluded is that he is a charming young man, who although shy and unassuming, has true affection not only for Elinor but for her entire family. The family shares the same appreciation for him and despite his clumsiness in dealing with his commitment with another woman, ends up managing to fix his predicament finally leading the life he had always aspired for.

2.2 ANALYSIS

2.2.1 Changes in the Male Characters

Adapting a classic into a movie version often means reshaping it in order to fit the modern audience's taste. Considerable changes have taken place in the world since the publishing of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811. In the production of Thompson/Lee's version of the novel a number of things had to be considered in order to respect the ethos of each age. What was then accepted as desirable may not have the same impact in our lives now, characteristics that were considered positive may have

changed to become the opposite to the present public. All those things the adapter Emma Thompson had to have in mind when, in 1995, she transposed a novel that had been published 184 years previously. Hers was the delicate decision of what to maintain and what to adequate. There were also the issues involving translation of habits and modes of behavior peculiar to that time and place into the different circumstances of present-day international audiences. EDER, JANNIDIS AND SCHNEIDER (2010) point out that all the people who are directly or indirectly related to characters, such as writers, audiences or critics are faced with a number of questions that cannot be avoided. The first point at issue lies in the realm of production: "how characters can be crafted in a way that allows them to evoke certain thoughts, feelings and lasting effects in the target audience" (EDER; JANNIDIS; SCHNEIDER, 2010, p.4). The second lies in the field of interpretation: "how characters can be understood, interpreted and experienced, and by which stylistic devices they are shaped" (Idem.). Finally, the third point focuses on cultural analysis, which considers "characters as signs of empirical production and reception processes embedded in their socio-cultural contexts in different historical periods and (sub-) cultures" (Ibid.). Those were aspects Thompson had to concern herself with when transforming the novel characters into the filmic ones. She had to draw feelings from the audience, finding the best way to achieve this, while not forgetting the socio-cultural aspects of the age she was working with. Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* posited a great challenge to Emma Thompson in relation to that. For a long time this novel had been criticized for its non-creditable heroes. Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon – the two men the sisters finally marry – were usually considered dull and unattractive, unworthy of Elinor's and Marianne's love. As Thompson comments:

> Making the male characters effective was one of the biggest problems. In the novel, Edward and Brandon are quite shadowy and absent for long periods. We had to work hard to keep them present even when they're offscreen. Willoughby is really the only male who springs out in three dimensions (a precursor to her other charm-merchants, Frank Churchill in *Emma*, Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* and Henry Crawford in *Mansfield Park*). (THOMPSON, 1995, p.269)

As we can see, there are many aspects present (or absent) in the novel that may work in the printed page but which needed revising in order to achieve the goal of satisfying a film audience. Not only do Edward and Brandon have to become more appealing, they have to become more present as well. Lindsay Doran, the producer, shows concern regarding the sister's love stories. Their heroes "spent so much time off screen – and neither is ever seen acting like a lover. Prevented by circumstances – so it's all implication" (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 271). It is Thompson's task to fix that on screen. The story will remain the same, but the characters have to be transformed.

Even though Edward and Brandon are the ones who receive more complaints, one can see a considerable similarity in Austen's men. If paid close attention one may realize that they all share some key characteristic; the fact that they are all reserved and undemonstrative, people who hardly ever show what their true feelings are. Austen conceived her characters in that way because these traits were then considered desirable in a potential suitor. As Nixon says: "A brief consideration of Austen's heroes reveals that masculine emotional restraint, and not display, provides proof of the heroes' worthiness". (NIXON, 1998, p. 25) And she provides us with examples to illustrate that: Darcy, from *Pride and Prejudice* conceals his part in Lydia's wedding (knowing that Lizzie's awareness of the fact would make her uncomfortable), Wentworth, Tilney, Knightley and Edmund hide their feelings towards the protagonists even when they have all the chance in the world to display them. In *Sense and Sensibility,* more specifically, Edward never reveals to Elinor his engagement to Lucy Steele, and Colonel Brandon does not expose Willoughby's past with Eliza, even though that could help him to win the attention of Marianne. Based on all these examples we can get to the conclusion that, indeed, the honor of a man is measured by what he can conceal so much as by how much he displays. One example of that is the fact that, despite his concealment of his past, Willoughby passes the image of a man who shares all his feelings, who is not afraid of exposing himself. Still, he hides whatever is detrimental to him, and ends up as the villain in the story. "Austen's emotionally extravagant, supporting male characters […] are punished by social censure and lack of marital fulfillment. If the male protagonist displays a lack of emotional restraint, he is similarly punished but also reformed and

ultimately rewarded." (Idem, p.26). Everything was restrained in Austen's time and her writing reflects that. Her men may seem plain and uninteresting to us now, but at the time that probably meant they were being discreet as to their own merits.

However, what was once considered desirable now might be misapprehended as dull, and if the male characters in *Sense and Sensibility* remained with the same attributes as in the primary text the audience might not respond favorably to the film. We have to be reminded that the majority of the viewers of Jane Austen's adaptations are women, and women do want to see romance on screen, no matter how much the critics fight about that. Therefore, not only the choice of the actors, but also the way they behave towards the heroines has to be credible. When I say credible, I do not necessarily mean realistic, but credible in the sense that the audience must understand why the protagonist would fall for this man and, with that, to root for the consummation of the romance.

There are three main male characters in *Sense and Sensibility,* Edward, Brandon and Willoughby, all of them inadequate according to the parameters of the late 20th century. Edward and Brandon are uninteresting. Edward is described in the novel, in chapter three, as thus:

> Edward Ferrars was not recommended to their good opinion by any peculiar graces of person or address. He was not handsome, and his manners required intimacy to make them pleasing. He was too diffident to do justice to himself; but when his natural shyness was overcome, his behaviour gave every indication of an open, affectionate heart. His understanding was good, and his education had given it solid improvement. But he was neither fitted by abilities nor disposition to answer the wishes of his mother and sister, who longed to see him distinguished—as—they hardly knew what. (SS, p. 14)

Therefore, Edward misses both the early 19th and the late 20th century standards of what a hero must look like. Although no one can argue that this is the description of a good man, with a good heart, it is not the description of a man who would probably

provoke intense feelings in the protagonist, bound to win her affection and conquer her heart by the end of the novel. Edward, as written by Jane Austen, does not convince as a romantic hero. As to Colonel Brandon, he is described as a middle-aged man at the age of thirty five, who suffers from rheumatism and wears flannel waistcoats, which Marianne associates with “aches, cramps, rheumatisms, and every species of ailment that can afflict the old and the feeble." (SS, p. 30) Hardly the type fit to impress an energetic, romantic young woman like Marianne.

It was Thompson’s task then to reformulate these characters, so that the female public could relate to them. As SEGER suggests (1992) whereas it is not necessary to have sympathetic characters in a novel, this is fundamentally important in a film. That is the first thing producers and directors consider when they evaluate their materials. In a film the audience tends to cherish characters that they can have an emotional connection with, and that is easier to be achieved in films with lovable, compassionate characters. Elinor is the protagonist of the film, and through her eyes we see the world; nothing fairer than giving her a suitor who truly deserves her attention. Thompson started writing the screenplay with one actor in mind: Hugh Grant, whose suggestion was accepted by the director Ang Lee (who is, after all, the one who actually signs the casting of the actors). Members of JASNA (Jane Austen Society of North America) did not appreciate the choice, complaining that he was too handsome for the part; everyone else approved of the choice.

It was not just Edward’s physique that was refreshed; the most significant changes are related to his attitudes and personality. Hugh Grant had a lot to do with that. At that time of his career he had not yet been exposed to the variety of dramatic roles he has ever since. He had not done many internationally prestigious films yet, perhaps only *Maurice* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, so his acting formula had not been worn off. According to Thompson, “He’s made Edward rather troubled and halting, almost a stammerer. It’s particularly good because it illustrates how relaxed he feels with Elinor, with whom he can both be funny and fluent.” (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 220). Grant did what he does best, portraying a handsome but insecure man who seems not to know his way around women, but who is adorable while trying to do so.

Despite the actor's influence in the portrayal of the character, the deepest alterations come from Thompson's screenplay. Contrary to what was expected in Austen's time, women nowadays want men to display their feelings, not to hide them, so these characteristics had to be incorporated into Edward's character. And since film is a medium in which things have to be clear from the beginning (there is no time for the public to be in doubt about who they should cheer for), audiences all over the world had to fall for Edward from his first appearance. The fact that he is good-looking helps, but not enough to get the sympathy of the viewers. Thompson added two stories alien to Austen's novel to accomplish that. Before Edward first appears in the movie we see a conversation between Fanny and Mrs. Dashwood, in which the first requests Margaret's room for her brother since it has a prettier view. This scene is interesting not only to show Fanny's carelessness with others' feelings but also to build a suspicion that is proven wrong when Edward arrives. The audience is left thinking that Edward may be as obnoxious and unfeeling as his sisters, but this idea is put to ground when he is asked about his opinion on his bedroom.

> Marianne (dangerous): How do you like your view, Mr. Ferrars?
>
> Elinor glances at her warningly but Edward replies with careful consideration:
>
> Edward: Very much. Your stables are very handsome and beautifully kept, Mrs. Dashwood.
>
> Fanny: Stables! Edward – your windows overlook the lake.
>
> Edward: An oversight, Fanny, let me to the wrong room. I have rectified the situation and am happily settled in the guest quarters. (Thompson, 1996, p.40)

Thompson writes in the screenplay: "She [Elinor] is impressed." (Idem, p. 41). And so is the audience. At this moment, minutes after his arrival, the audience has established an opinion of Edward as of a sensitive, caring man who certainly deserves the love and respect of the protagonist. To top all that, Thompson gives Edward another

endearing characteristic, his being fond of children. Margaret is not thirteen, as in the novel, but eleven, which makes her more childlike. After the death of her father Margaret spends hours hiding in her tree house, or in places that no one knows about. That is how Edward finds her by chance. He is sensitive enough not to force her out of the library, where she is hiding under a desk. Instead, he calls Elinor and performs a little role play to make Margaret show up.

Their funny exchange provokes Margaret into coming out and joining them so she can elucidate that the Nile has its source in Abyssinia. This added scene contributes to the delineation of the characters, as well as to show how they feel towards one another, and about the awkward situation in which they are all involved. It shows that Edward knows how to deal with children in an intelligent way, that he is sensitive and possesses a sense of humor. “In addition to displaying all of the charms of the twentieth-century father, Edward also attempts to display the sensitivity of a twentieth-century husband.” (NIXON, 1998, p.35).We are also made aware that serious, reserved Elinor is capable of being funny and that she feels comfortable enough with Ferrars to share that moment with him. As innocent as their exchange may be, it also projects a sexual note, since their interaction seems so perfect, one completing the sentences of the other, at some point even passing the idea that they may have forgotten what the original purpose of the role play was. They seem to be enjoying themselves so much that they might continue with it forever.

Edward becomes almost a substitute father figure to Margaret, being the one in the house who is able to make her laugh and behave like a child again. He receives the admiration of everyone because of that and the public is assured that both he and Elinor belong together. Edward is funny in a quiet, reserved way which makes him even more attractive. He plays at fencing with Margaret and stimulates her avid, creative mind by assigning himself as her servant when she heads her expedition to China.

Edward also seems to be embarrassed by his sister’s callousness, and as a consequence, of her husband’s attitude toward his sisters. Edward, not unlike Colonel Brandon, Sir John and Mrs. Jennings later on, is concerned with the family’s fate now that they were left with almost nothing. If not for the good heart of Mrs. Dashwoods

distant cousin and his mother-in-law (who obviously also had interest in the girls settling down so they would not have to help them financially in case of need) they would be left with no place to stay and no support system whatsoever. Edward understands that the Dashwoods lives will never be the same again and he is willing to do the little he can to mitigate their suffering (even if it is just by giving attention to Margaret, who is only a child). His greedy sister, however, is not so easily convinced.

One problem Emma Thompson mentions concerning the transposition of the male characters to the screen is the fact that they do not appear much in the book. Thompson tried many different forms to make them more present, especially Edward, who shows up in the beginning of the novel and only reappears close to the end. Thompson says that she even considered making Edward come by in the middle of the film, so that he would be more present in the minds of the viewers. But she eventually found another way to make his presence felt without transforming the original so much. She does that through metonymy, as noticed by NIXON (1998). He was represented by objects directly identified with his character. The first is Margaret's atlas, the object that brought Elinor and Edward together and that has a special meaning for them. The atlas is associated with the father figure that Edward became to young Margaret, so he will be remembered whenever the atlas is present. In the original there is no mention of the atlas being left in Norland when the Dashwoods left for Barton Cottage. In the film, Thompson created a subterfuge: the atlas being possibly too heavy to be transported with the family, Edward promises – not only Margaret but also to the rest of the women – that he will bring the book himself to the Dashwoods' house as soon as possible. This promise makes the whole family hopeful – and certainly Elinor – that their relationship (Elinor and Edward's) has a future and that they may become engaged soon. Nevertheless, when the atlas finally arrives, it comes without Edward. There is only has a note from him addressed to the whole family (and no special note for Elinor):

> 'Dear Mrs. Dashwood, Miss Dashwood, Miss Marianne and Captain Margaret – it gives me great pleasure to restore this atlas to its rightful owner. Alas, business in London does not permit me to accompany it, although this is likely to hurt me far more than it hurts you. For the present my memories of your kindness must be

> enough to sustain me, and I remain your devoted servant always, E. C .Ferrars'. (THOMPSON, 1996, p.80)

Elinor can hardly restrain her disappointment. The atlas has served its purposes of showing the audience that Elinor has strong feelings for him and of making Edward present *in absentia*.

The expectation of Edward's arrival in Barton Cottage is not only because the family's regard for him but also for a simple practical reason; were he to marry Elinor, all their problems would be solved. Because he is an heir to his family estate, the Dashwoods' lives would be fixed from then on. They would no longer have to worry about their financial lives; their eldest married to a wealthy man means that the family is safe, being taken care of by one of its known. Their lives as it is at the moment they arrive in Barton Park are extremely uncertain, but if only one of them could make a good marriage they would be able to breathe in relief. And once one of the sisters has secured a wealthy husband that would take precedent for the others, since when one marries, it marries the entire family. It is much easier to make a good marriage if your other sisters are also married to distinct men.

The fact that Edward is the heir of his father's estate (being the eldest) comes with an obligation. Not only does he have to marry, but he has to marry well, which in that time meant to marry a woman with a considerable dowry, who would increase the family value even more. This, however, is something that Elinor no longer has. No matter how much in love he is with Elinor, the decision of whom he is going to live the remaining of his life is not entirely his. Edward has to follow the rules that are imposed by his position as an heir and as he does not seem to be a man to go completely against what is expected of him, he does not have the courage to make his engagement to Lucy known or publicly display his love for Elinor. Once the whole Lucy affair is found out (he never has the nerve to tell anyone about it), he is finally free to do whatever he wants with his life. He is no longer the heir and, therefore, does not have to account for whom he is going to marry. The entire disclosure was a relief to him because despite his dissatisfaction with his situation he would not have the courage to go against society.

The other object not present in the novel, but which has a similar function to that of the atlas – maybe even a more important, since it has a direct link to Elinor – is the handkerchief. As previously mentioned, the handkerchief was given to Elinor still in Norland, when Edward catches her crying. He offers her his handkerchief and does not accept it back. This handkerchief has his initials on it, and it becomes an important token for Elinor. This is a clever strategy used by Thompson both to make the audience be reminded of Elinor's intense feelings for Edward (even though she does not display them to anyone else) and to bring him back into the memory of the viewers. Although Edward is away during a good part of the film, the audience keeps being reminded of his existence through these objects that are directly associated with his presence.

> This simple scene is a major revision of Edward and Elinor's relationship (there are no such symbolic ties), of Edward's capacity for self expression (he never gives her a personal item), and of the character which the novel positions as the embodiment of "sense" (Elinor never meditates on her emotions for Edward in such an obvious manner). The film gives the hero and heroine a means of expressing emotions that the novel leaves unrepresented. (Nixon, 1998, p.37)

As Edward has remained close to the memory of the audience with the help of the aforementioned devices, the moment he finally reappears in London seems quite natural. The handkerchief has another important part in convincing Elinor that Lucy is in fact engaged to Edward, since Lucy has one exactly like Elinor's. This subterfuge of metonymy is useful to convey meaning without the use of words. Instead of lengthy dialogues to explain Elinor's feelings and to approximate Edward to her or to the audience, the same effect is obtained – perhaps even more effectively - through the use of silence.

There is another point that had to be changed when the novel was transposed to the screen. In Austen's novel – since the typical Austen hero never shows his real intentions – Edward simply leaves the Dashwoods without explaining why. When writing the screenplay, Thompson felt the need to indicate to the audience that Edward's

good character must be trusted in spite of the dubious circumstances. In order to do that while maintaining the suspense about his engagement to Lucy, Thompson had to change the story. In the film (differently from what happens in the novel) Edward is shown many times trying to explain to Elinor about his engagement to Lucy, but he is always stopped or interrupted by someone else. The first time the public – and Elinor – realizes he is struggling to say something is right before the Dashwoods leave Norland. Elinor is in the stables, saying goodbye to her horse, when Edward comes in, seeming to want to talk about something important. He starts talking about his education – to Elinor's surprise – and when he is about to get to the point, Fanny arrives with an urgent message demanding he goes immediately to London.

> Edward: Miss Dashwood – Elinor. I must talk to you.
>
> *The use of her Christian name – and in such a loving tone – stops ELINOR's breath altogether.*
>
> Edward: There is something of great importance that I need…to tell you-
>
> *He comes closer still. The HORSE breathes between them. ELINOR is on fire with anticipation but EDWARD looks troubled and has less the air of suitor than he might.*
>
> Edward: -about – about my education.
>
> Elinor (after a beat): Your education?
>
> Edward: Yes. It was less…successful than it might have been.
>
> *EDWARD laughs nervously. ELINOR is completely bewildered.*
>
> Edward: It was conducted in Plymouth – oddly enough.
>
> Elinor: Indeed?
>
> Edward: Yes. Do you know it?
>
> Elinor: Plymouth?
>
> Edward: Yes.
>
> Elinor: No.
>
> Edward: Oh – well – I spent four years there – at a school run by a – a Mr Pratt –

> Elinor: Pratt?
>
> *ELINOR is beginning to feel like a parrot.*
>
> Edward: Precisely – Mr. Pratt – and there, I – that is to say, he has a –
>
> *As EDWARD flounders, a familiar voice cuts through this unexpected foray into his academic past.* (Thompson, 1996, p.60)

It is Fanny who comes to stop him from telling the truth to Elinor. Even though he is not successful, the message has already been registered and once Lucy comes around it is not difficult for the audience to connect the dots and infer what he wanted to tell Elinor about. It is also clear that the affair is more complicated than it seems. But this is not his only attempt; once more, when Elinor and Marianne are in Mrs. Jennings' house in London he pays them a visit. Unaware of Lucy's presence, he bursts into the room saying: "Miss Dashwood, how can I…" Elinor, however, interrupts him, afraid he would say too much. As Nixon (1998, p.38) again points out, neither the audience nor Elinor knows how this sentence would have been concluded but, contrary to Elinor, who really has no clue as to what he could possibly say, the audience can infer that the sentence could be completed with "…apologize", "…explain myself" or anything in the same line. The viewer is aware of his pain and when Edward finally says "Forgive me" they know what his plea for forgiveness is about. He feels guilty for encouraging Elinor's feelings and the possibility of a commitment that could never exist. Besides that, during the scene we are able to see in Edward's eyes how badly he feels (and perhaps imagining that Lucy may have told her about the engagement).We know that, in spite of the turmoil of his life, and his bad choice of a fiancée, Edward is basically a decent man, faithful to his principles. It is only because of this reason that he is not engaged to Elinor instead of Lucy. In this scene, although nobody says much – and certainly not anything of much importance – we can acquire so much about Edward's interior turbulence. His verbal inadequacy proves his enormous feelings and one can notice that it pains him very much to be apart from the woman he loves but his morals prevent him from breaking up an

engagement done when he was very young and inconsequent.[31] He is obviously displeased with Lucy and can hardly disguise his feelings towards her. When Lucy invites herself to be escorted by Edward we can see that he is extremely pained at having to say yes.

Once again, when he returns to Mrs. Jennings he starts by saying "Miss Dashwood, God knows what you must think of me…" (THOMPSON, 1996, p. 169) He is distraught and appalled by what he did to Elinor and does not seem to have words to make up for his mistakes. Edward certainly knew, when he first met Elinor, that any move on his part (showing interest for Margaret's well being, giving Elinor his handkerchief and spending time alone with her) could be seen as a sign of his interest towards her.[32] If he was already engaged to Lucy Steele how come he did not take that into account? In spite of knowing it was the wrong thing to do he chose to ignore that and encourage Elinor's interest in him. Even if unintentionally he played with Elinor's feelings; not only that, he played with the sentiments of her entire family. He was not unaware that his attachment to Elinor meant a great deal to her mother and sisters but, nevertheless, he was weak not to disclose his true situation. He chose to get the best of both worlds, neither having to confront his mother to fight for a marriage that he did not even want to happen, nor breaking Elinor's heart and losing any chance of being with her. After Edward realizes that his secret has come out he is even more vexed, because all the good impression that he had left in Elinor may have been ruined by his cowardice to tell her the truth. He did try to tell her the truth, but not hard enough perhaps. If he really wanted to do so, he would have found a way. However, filmic Edward is still much more reliable than Austen's, since he never had the nerve to lie to Elinor's face as he did in the novel when he says the ring he is wearing has Fanny's hair instead of Lucy's.

However, both in Austen as in Thompson, good people can make mistakes and get away with it. Elinor never feels angry with Edward even though he misleads her. In the film we can see that when she passes along Col. Brandon's offer of a parish in his estate. Elinor truly seems worried about his well being now that he no longer is an heir and is

[31]And besides that, "social conventions gave the woman, but not the man, the power to break off an engagement. Hence it is up to Lucy." (SHAPARD, 2011, p.249)

[32] "...When in public the slightest expression of interest in or concern for a member of the opposite sex [...] could be taken by the onlookers as an indication of matrimonial intentions." (LE FAYE, 2002, p.113)

as destitute as herself. Edward says: “Your friendship has been the most important of my life.” Elinor answers: “You will always have it.” (Idem, p. 171) This is an understatement, a declaration of love in disguise. Convention stops them from being clearer.

Is Edward’s attitude so much different from Willoughby’s, though? In my view they have quite similar stories; the only difference is the outcome of these stories. Both fell in love with women who they knew had no money, no dowry to give in case of a marriage and even so they made them believe (each in his own way) that one serious attachment was possible. All their attitudes led everyone around them to take as certain their affection to the sisters and of a consequent marriage. Edward and Willoughby also knew that such marriages would not be possible if they wanted to maintain their status quo as heirs to the fortunes of their father and aunt respectively. That did not stop them. The difference lies in the fact that Willoughby was much greedier than Edward - who did not really care for money and was only following the role that was expected from him. None of them ever told their beloved of their past mistakes (Beth’s pregnancy and the engagement to Lucy); Elinor and Marianne only became aware of their secrets through the revelations of others and Edward and Willoughby were dishonored by their relatives because of these mistakes. Since their personalities were different the result of their loss of money was also distinct. Edward is finally free to live his life with Elinor; Willoughby, no matter how much he loved Marianne, loved money more; therefore he had to find another woman who could provide him with what he needed. All in all, in a twisted way Edward got lucky since destiny found a way of giving him the quiet life that he wanted (despite losing his fortune to his brother). Fortunately for him the woman he fancies does not wish to live a luxurious life; Elinor just wants to feel secure knowing that she has enough to get by comfortably not having to worry about her fate or that of her mother and sisters.

One point regarding Edward that was a big concern for Thompson when writing the script was the fact that he was not very present in the story. In a film that lasts more than two hours (136 minutes to be exact), Hugh Grant’s character occupies less than twenty five minutes. However, through the subterfuge of adding the atlas and the handkerchief to the plot Edward is never forgotten by the audience. In the novel it seems that there is a long period in which we almost forget the importance of Edward in

Elinor's life (we are just reminded of him by the presence of Lucy Steele) and that is not a real problem to the development of the story, since it is even understandable that after all that Elinor has been through that she does not have the time or the mind to fixate on Edward so often; in the film, however, as a visual medium, there is the necessity of bringing him to the audience more frequently. We, as viewers, must be able to understand his importance in her life so that the ending makes sense. This result was accomplished with the motifs already discussed without having to add too much dialogue that would have further lengthened the film.

Edward's character was not the only one to be modified to suit the taste of the modern audience. Brandon was also altered considerably. His description in the book stresses how ill-equipped he is to suit the expectations of a romantic, passionate seventeen-year-old girl. Chapter seven presents him this way: "He was silent and grave. His appearance however was not unpleasing, in spite of his being in the opinion of Marianne and Margaret an absolute old bachelor, for he was on the wrong side of five and thirty". (SS, p. 27) Later, Marianne accuses Brandon of being old enough to be her father and states that at his age he should not have any hopes to find love as he is already too sick to expect any joy from life. "Thirty-five has nothing to do with matrimony" (SS, p. 30), says Marianne. In Austen's novel Brandon is hardly the man who would win the heart of one of the protagonists.

This disdain for Brandon is understandable even to our twenty-first century eyes. What seventeen-year-old would feel attracted to a thirty-five-year-old? Certainly not many. Nowadays a man (or woman) of thirty-five is in his prime but still being so, for a seventeen-year-old he *is* old. What kind of interests would they have in common? No matter how young at heart you are it is undeniable that one would have a hard time keeping up with the other. The matter gets even worse when an impulsive handsome young man of twenty-five comes along. It is obvious that Marianne would prefer Willoughby instead of Brandon. They are closer in age, they enjoy the same things and as a teenager Marianne has a hard time being sensible. She wants passion in her life, not stability and since Willoughby seems to be able to provide her with both she falls blindly in love with him. Her romantic ending (which is not really romantic in Austen) comes with someone else, though.

It is interesting to understand why romantic relationships were so unromantic in Austen, though. Marriage in the Georgian period was merely a financial arrangement; love was not something relevant when contemplating it. If the couple happened to love each other, even better, of course, but it was not the main objective of matrimony. Women had to be a little mercenary at times because the only way of being truly respectable in society was by being married (and preferably right after their debut in society). Marrying to a wealthy man would assure them not only the respect of their peers but also financial stability. Since "respectable women could have no profession except matrimony" (LE FAYE, 2002, p.113), mothers were really invested in finding a suitable match to their daughters. Very often any marriage was better than no marriage.[33] This is why Mrs. Dashwood is so thrilled by any of the men who show interest in her daughters. The Dashwoods situation is even more serious due to the fact that they have no male relative to look after them. Differently from Jane Austen herself and her sister Cassandra who, after their father's passing, were taken after by their brothers, the Dashwoods are not so lucky. John Dashwood, influenced by his wife, refuses to provide any substantial help to his sisters. Not only is he breaking the promise he did to his father's on his deathbed but also breaking one of the most important codes of the time: the protection of the women by their own family.

If getting married was a mere business the whole goal of a family when arranging a marriage between a couple was so that they could provide a male heir who would carry the family's name and take over the property when the time came to it. In this fact lies another one of Brandon's inadequacies; he certainly could still have children, but maybe would not have the time to produce as many as desirable at the time (according to Marianne in chapter eight, he could only expect to live as far as fifty-five). One of the reasons why people got married early was to have time to have many children. After a certain age, people were indeed considered too old since they did not have much social purpose. We cannot disregard another fact, though. Marianne does not appreciate the idea of being linked to Col. Brandon because she is already in love with another man. And when someone is so much in love as Marianne is, the idea of any other suitor is

[33] This can be easily seen in the case of Charlote Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice* who prefers marrying tedious Mr. Collins to remaining single and a burden to her own family. At 27 she was already considered an old maid.

unthinkable. She does not want to encourage a sentiment that she does not have the intention to reciprocate. In any way, it is with Brandon that Marianne finishes the story, so changes had to be made so that the transition for one man to another appeared less farfetched to the audience. Marriage nowadays is a romantic moment and the audience wants to see people in love when they commit to each other.

It was Thompson's job to make Brandon credible for her viewers. The first strategy obviously is the choice of the actor. Alan Rickman is a mature actor, sharing with Brandon the characteristics of looking serious and saturnine, but also known for his magnetism and sex-appeal. He has an interesting figure, discreet physical attributes and a manly attitude. Rickman was 46 years old when he played the part of Brandon. The actor is older than his colleague Winslet, who was 19 at the time, but the couple can be easily accepted by the viewers. Centuries ago, a young woman would marry an older man for his respectability, status and power. Things are different now, but couples with age differences are still common. Sometimes for the same reasons, other times because of natural affinities. The greatest difference concerning age is that now it takes longer for a person to be considered old. A man in his forties can be considered at his prime now, not an old man. Most of the famous male stars in movies nowadays are past their forties, such as Richard Gere, Mel Gibson or George Clooney[34] and still manage to keep their status as romantic protagonists in many movies. In *Sense and Sensibility* Brandon, in his silent way gradually and convincingly wins the battle against dashing Willoughby. It is not only the reasonable side of the audience that is summoned here; Rickman's Brandon can be attractive on other levels of reception as well. Contrary to what happens in the novel in which sometimes the readers were somewhat disappointed and baffled as to why Marianne ended up with a man so different from her expectations, in the film the viewers are able to root for Brandon and are relieved to see him finally have his happy ending with the woman he loves. With the intent of making the film work, Thompson transformed Edward and Willoughby, who are the key players in the romantic side of the story (in the same way that Darcy was made much more manly and sexy when played by Colin Firth in the 1995's BBC's *Pride and Prejudice*). Marrying a

[34] Richard Gere (*Pretty Woman*), 62 years old; Mel Gibson (*Braveheart*), 57 years old; George Clooney (*The Descendants*),51 years old.

man such as Hugh Grant, Colin Firth or Alan Rickman is the wish of many women. Having them as the male leads of the production makes the romance more credible to the audience. In Austen, the purpose of marriage was another, so a handsome hero was unnecessary. The lack of charm of the protagonists in Austen lead us to think that they got married for practical reasons, while in the film, even if practical reasons were also at stake, love (or simply affection) also plays an important role in the attachments.

Thompson's solution was to approximate Brandon to the characteristics that Marianne appreciates. While Willoughby always makes a point of professing his love for music, poetry and books, Brandon, who shares the same interests, keeps them to himself. It is through Lady Middleton that we are led to know what a great pianist he is, as he never discusses his merits with anyone. After all, Brandon is not that different from Willoughby, as far as the good characteristics of both characters go. To emphasize that, several scenes and dialogues were added in the film. Both ride beautiful horses; Willoughby, a white one; Brandon a brown one. Often, when she listens to the noise made by the trotting of an approaching horse, Marianne mistakes one for the other; she thinks that Willoughby is the one arriving when in fact it is Brandon. Perhaps if Marianne had met Brandon when he was ten years younger he would have caused the same impact in her as Willoughby did.

Brandon is less restrained in the film than in the novel. Austen's narrative technique grants her means and time enough to present a character through silence. The circumstances she paints tell the things the characters refuse to verbalize, out of discretion or modesty. In the movie, such qualities have to be presented in a more aggressive form. Thompson's Brandon must be more demonstrative of his emotions. Nowadays, sensitive men are perhaps better appreciated than in the 19th Century. A man who appreciates the arts is associated with sensitivity, which is probably why Thompson chose to make Brandon so overtly interested in art. The audience's emotional move from Willoughby to Brandon happens gradually; whenever one of the characters does something, the other does the same thing, so that the audience may sense this symmetry between them. Differently from the novel, in the film the first time Colonel Brandon sees Marianne she is playing the piano and he is affected both by her beauty and by her talent. Being a music lover, he responds to Marianne's ability to play. He is

also moved by the fact that Marianne reminds him of his past love, Eliza. All these things we get to know because of the close-ups on Alan Rickman's face. In Austen, when Brandon and Marianne first meet (before the interference of her feelings for Willoughby), the focus lies on her respect for him: "Colonel Brandon alone, of all the party, heard her without being in raptures. He paid her only the compliment of attention; and she felt a respect for him on the occasion, which the others had reasonably forfeited by their shameless want of taste." (SS, p. 28) In Thompson's screenplay the focus lies on how he reacts to her: "…he stays in the shadow of the front door and no one notices him. CLOSE on his face. He gazes at MARIANNE with an unfathomable look of grief and longing. He breathes in deeply." (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 71). In Thompson, his sobriety is preserved, since he does not make any comments on her performance, but the fact that we see him so moved evokes both how impressed he is with her, and the fact that that scene reminds him of something from his past. When Marianne twists her ankle Brandon pays her a visit and brings her beautiful flowers. Willoughby does the same, but since at this point Marianne is already smitten by his young good looks, she disdains of Brandon's flowers, asking Elinor to take them away, and is overjoyed with Willoughby's – she puts them in a vase very close to her so that she can better admire them.

Another fabrication of the film is the scene in which Colonel Brandon, at the end of the movie, sends Marianne a pianoforte, along with music sheets, after her recovery. In Norland, the Dashwoods used to have a pianoforte, a very expensive instrument when compared to the harpsichord that most genteel families would possess at the time. When they leave their home, they cannot bring the piano along with them. At the end of the movie, Brandon sends the Dashwoods a piano, along with music sheets, after Marianne's recovery. Such an expensive gift could only be sent by a very close person. In this sense, the piano – and its music – becomes their connection; another metonymic exchange, as NIXON (1998) points out. It is around the pianoforte they see each other for the first time, and also around it that they start their romance after Marianne recovers from her illness.

Thompson's Brandon receives more gallant touches in the movie than in Austen's. We see him a lot on his horse, implying that he is a bold rider – which is often

associated with masculinity – and outdoors, providing Marianne with his own knife while she is cutting some reeds. The emphasis in his physical attributes has the same amount of importance as his emotions. Thompson provided the audience with a more "complete" man – in the way we see it in the 20th century; Brandon is not only trustworthy and reliable, he is also attractive and able to show his sentiments, even if with certain difficulty. In my opinion Thompson managed to keep the character's main characteristics while transforming him in other respects. As a result, filmic Brandon is more interesting than Austen's. The fact that Marianne finally falls in love with him is understandable and this fact removes the number of possible layers of reading. While different readers may have created their own reasons why the marriage happened, in the film we do not have this doubt. When Marianne is sick, the close-ups showing the despair in Brandon's eyes tells us about his deep feelings for her. And the scene in which he asks Elinor for something to do so as not to go mad reinforces the fact that he is a man of action.

Thompson's objective with Brandon's character is to make him little by little more interesting to both Marianne and the public. One of the scenes that help her to achieve that is when he explains his past with Willoughby to Elinor.

> The trick is to break up the bulk of information with character and to make it a scene about – as Alan [Rickman] puts it – a man thawing out after having been in a fridge for twenty years. The movement of blood and warmth back into unaccustomed veins is extremely painful. The scene has existed in many different forms – flashbacks, stylized imagery – until I realised it was emotionally more interesting to let Brandon tell the story himself and find it difficult. (THOMPSON, 1996, p.251)

As we can see, Brandon has been emotionally frozen for many years, and little by little, through this (still) unrequited love for Marianne, the more he exposes himself to the world, the more desirable he gets. Thompson continues: "Brandon is, I suppose the real hero of this piece but he has to grow on the audience as he grows on Marianne." (Id. p. 269)

The parallelism of Willoughby and Brandon has its apex in two scenes where both, in a certain way, seal the beginning of a new attachment. When Willoughby first appears, he rescues Marianne who has fallen down and hurt her ankle (a bombastic entrance both in the novel and in the film). In the movie, it is raining heavily and Willoughby carries Marianne home through the storm. The scene is striking, and works well in the movie, a handsome man carrying the heroine in his arms. A similar scene is fabricated in the film to mark the beginning of Marianne's second attachment to Colonel Brandon. When she roams on her own in the Palmer's estate, it starts raining, and now it is Brandon's turn to find her. It is now Brandon who appears from the mist bringing his beloved in his arms. Thompson writes in the screenplay: "It is like seeing Willoughby's ghost." (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 179). These similarities between Willoughby and Brandon end up favoring the latter and making Marianne's final attachment to Brandon more convincing than it is in the novel. The man she chooses to marry is not that different from what she first had in mind, only that he reads Spenser rather than Shakespeare.

Willoughby, among the main characters, is the one who least suffered transformation from the novel into the film. Jane Austen's books usually present a change of focus, demanding that the readers (as well as certain characters) reposition themselves as to the point of perception of things. Marianne had to reassess her parameters not only in relation to Brandon but also to Willoughby. As the impression that the audience has (of Willoughby being too good to be true) is confirmed, he does not have to change from the novel to the film or in the perception of the audience from the beginning to the ending of the movie. His charm is perhaps even more exacerbated, but in essence he remains the same. Thompson, however, transfers much of his seductiveness to Brandon and Edward (SAMUELIAN, 1998), to diminish the discrepancies involving their ability to captivate. Willoughby's film appearance is even more dramatic than in the novel. Thompson describes his arrival thus: "Through the mist breaks a huge white horse. Astride sits an Adonis in hunting gear." (THOMPSON, 1996, p. 85). Willoughby radiates confidence and masculinity, besides extreme beauty; no wonder seventeen-year-old Marianne is drawn to him from the first time. He is as full of passion in the film as in the novel, but the displeasing aspects of his personality are more emphasized in Thompson than in Austen, probably because the less perfect

Willoughby seems, the more plausible Marianne's shift toward Brandon will seem. In the novel, Willoughby has a chance to explain himself to Elinor and ascertain that his parting from Marianne is caused by the force of circumstances, in spite of his strong feelings for the girl. Elinor is able to understand his motivations and even feel sorry for him. To her, the simple fact that he is relinquishing to spend the life of his life with Marianne seems punishment enough. This conversation, however, is omitted in the film, where this duality has to be eliminated. Without his confession, Willoughby seems more cowardly. As already mentioned Edward and Willoughby have very similar paths, what happens is that in Edward's case his behavior is mitigated by his attempts to tell Elinor the truth and in Willoughby's his attempt (present in the novel) is eliminated to exacerbate his viciousness.

2.2.2 Changes in the Female Characters

Whereas the changes made to the male characters are substantial, the ones made to the two female protagonists are less obvious, but not less significant. The stories of Elinor and Marianne receive the same importance in the film as they do in the novel. Nevertheless, in the film it is through the eyes and perception of Elinor that the viewer accompanies the unfolding of events. Because of that, Elinor becomes the real protagonist in the filmic production. The character had to be modernized in some respects. In the novel Elinor is described as a young girl who

> (…) possessed a strength of understanding, and coolness of judgment, which qualified her, though only nineteen, to be the counsellor of her mother, and enabled her frequently to counteract, to the advantage of them all, that eagerness of mind in Mrs. Dashwood which must generally have led to imprudence. She had an excellent heart; - her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong; but she knew how to govern them. (SS, p. 8).

Elinor is, therefore, surprisingly mature for one so young (especially for a twentieth-century audience), someone who knows how to deal with adversities in life and seems to be unaffected by emotions. As the novel unfolds the reader gets progressively more aware of the stoicism in her nature. As Elinor's mind is hardly ever externalized, the reader knows what she is going through, but the other characters do not. Not even Marianne, who is so close to her, seems to understand her sometimes. This fact posed a challenge to Thompson in the transposition. How to make these feelings known to the audience without undermining Austen's text? Thompson's Elinor is still a reserved, put-together woman, but in the film it is important that she may exteriorize her emotions from time to time. This increase in Elinor's sentimentality was criticized by Rebecca Dixon, who sees that as a betrayal to Austen's character. She says:

> In Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Elinor's self-restraint is an achievement. But in the film, that self-restraint needs correction. Therefore in Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility,* it is Elinor who transforms and 'faces herself', not immature and self-involved Marianne – the exact opposite of what Austen intended. (Dixon, 1998, p.51).

What displeases Dixon is the fact that Elinor is one of the few Austen's protagonists who do not need to change in the course of the novel. Austen makes her complete from the start, she does not have to accomplish anything in terms of self-improvement. Marianne, on the contrary, needs to go through her ups and downs before she is able to mature and become an adult. In Thompson this is lost, because the two sisters seem to meet half way, one becoming more expansive, and the other less so. I understand Dixon's point, and I believe Thompson was also aware of that, and took pains to emphasize this change as least as possible. Still, the transposition from one media into another, demands some adjustments and characters have to go through some changes to become more consistent in their new condition, so that a greater empathy may be achieved. Nowadays, contrary to what happened in Austen's times, we tend to admire people who are able to express their emotions. Even though self-control is an

admirable characteristic, it is seen as a hindrance if taken to extremes. If Elinor remained like that in the film, never showing her emotions, as in the novel, it would be hard for the audience to relate to her. That is why Thompson fabricates the three scenes in which Elinor bursts out, that only exist in the film.

In the novel, when Marianne learns that Edward was engaged, she feels surprised, but mostly she feels sorry for her sister. Elinor explains to her that even though she loves Edward, she loves her family as well, and her consideration for their feelings was stronger than anything else. As we can see in this passage:

> "I understand you.—You do not suppose that I have ever felt much.—For four months, Marianne, I have had all this hanging on my mind, without being at liberty to speak of it to a single creature; knowing that it would make you and my mother most unhappy whenever it were explained to you, yet unable to prepare you for it in the least. (...)If you can think me capable of ever feeling—surely you may suppose that I have suffered NOW. The composure of mind with which I have brought myself at present to consider the matter, the consolation that I have been willing to admit, have been the effect of constant and painful exertion;—they did not spring up of themselves;—they did not occur to relieve my spirits at first.— No, Marianne.—THEN, if I had not been bound to silence, perhaps nothing could have kept me entirely—not even what I owed to my dearest friends—from openly shewing that I was VERY unhappy."—
>
> Marianne was quite subdued.—
>
> "Oh! Elinor," she cried, "you have made me hate myself for ever.—How barbarous have I been to you!—you, who have been my only comfort, who have borne with me in all my misery, who have seemed to be only suffering for me!—Is this my gratitude?—Is this the only return I can make you?—Because your merit cries out upon myself, I have been trying to do it away." (SS, p. 186)

As we can see, there is no argument between the sisters. Although Marianne is confused by the way her sister chooses to deal with her feelings, she admires Elinor for that. Actually, this conversation plays an important role in the story and in the development of Marianne's character. This is the point in which Marianne starts seeing

the world in a less selfish way, when she starts considering other people's points of view and realizes how selfish she could seem. In the film, we have a different approach to the issue. This same conversation is also key to the plot, but to different effects. It triggers Elinor's first outburst, causing Marianne to realize that she is not cold-hearted at all, and how much it costs her to keep her emotions bottled that way. Marianne and Elinor argue in the film, when Elinor tries to explain why she kept the information to herself,

> Marianne: Always resignation and acceptance! Always prudence and honour and duty! Elinor, where is your heart?
>
> ELINOR *finally explodes*. *She turns upon* MARIANNE *almost savagely.*
>
> Elinor: What do you know of my heart? What do you know of anything but your own suffering? For weeks, Marianne, I have had this pressing on me without being at liberty to speak of it to a single creature. It was forced upon me by the very person whose prior claims ruined all my hopes. I have had to endure her exultation again and again while knowing myself to be divided from Edward forever. Believe me Marianne, had I not been bound to silence I could have produced proof enough of a broken heart even for you. (THOMPSON, 1996, p.167)

It is only after Elinor's explosion that Marianne finally understands her motives. In my opinion, the scene was thus changed for two reasons. Firstly for dramatic effect: cinematically speaking it is interesting to have the protagonist, who is always the calm, put together type, prove that she is also capable of having strong shifts when that is asked for. The scene, as it is in the novel, does not provide the climax effect that it does in the film. Secondly, because it was necessary to show the public how intense Elinor's feelings were and the best way to do that was to having her vent them to Marianne. In spite of preserving to the most part Elinor's composed nature, Thompson added a more heart-felt side to her, which helped her being better accepted by the audience.

The second inserted scene where Elinor's emotions come forth happens when Marianne is ill. In the novel Elinor, despite being relieved with her sister's recovery does not show any signs of external happiness:

> Elinor could not be cheerful. Her joy was of a different kind, and led to any thing rather than to gaiety. Marianne restored to life, health, friends, and to her doting mother, was an idea to fill her heart with sensations of exquisite comfort, and expand it in fervent gratitude;—but it led to no outward demonstrations of joy, no words, no smiles. All within Elinor's breast was satisfaction, silent and strong. (SS, p. 223)

However, this would not work in a film. Elinor's composure is laudable in the novel, but it would not work in a present-day film. Who – especially someone so attached to her sibling – would behave that way nowadays? That would not contribute to Elinor's image. Therefore, she bursts into a fit of crying.

The third time Elinor cries is in front of Edward and her family when she realizes that Lucy has, in fact, married his brother Robert, and that Edward is still single. She also cries in the novel, but in private, which is congruous with her personality. Since in the film the goal is to show her softer side, and as she has already burst two other times, it makes sense that her outburst this time comes in front of everybody she cares about. No one now has any doubts that Elinor can show her feelings – although she would rather not to. Elinor prefers to keep control. Nevertheless, when the pressure gets too high, she breaks down, like anyone else.

Probably due to a tradition that starts with Jane Austen, heroines of today are not the ones who are better than the others, but the ones who are just like anyone else - people with whom we can identify. Regardless of their shortcomings, though, they are also capable of great achievements. They do not have only one side to their personality.

Some aspects that were normal at Austen's time and are not anymore now had to be worked out too. One of them is the fact that Elinor is so wise and mature at nineteen – an age at which she is also facing the prospect of spinsterhood. Had an actress of the same age been cast for the role an effect of awkwardness and improbability would ensue. Nowadays it would be even considered inappropriate for a woman that young to marry, before finishing her studies or opening herself professionally. It would also be a

rare - almost insalubrious thing - to have a teenager behaving so abnegated towards her family, putting their interests before her own. Before her father's death Elinor probably did not have much to worry about, and her life had been more sheltered. So, it is probably only recently that these traits in her personality have showed. The sight of a more mature character, as the one displayed by Emma Thompson, puts all that in a different perspective. The choice for casting her came from Ang Lee and, as previously mentioned, Thompson only accepted when they settled that the Elinor in the movie would be twenty-seven years old. [35]. Although ages are not mentioned in the movie, it is clear that Elinor is older than Marianne, even if due to the fact that Emma Thompson was thirty-six then and Kate Winslet (who played the role of Marianne) was nineteen. Once again, the changes made the character more plausible to the viewers, but infuriated most Austen purists.

According to the practices of English Regency rural gentry, a young woman would be introduced to society at the age of sixteen. From sixteen to eighteen it was expected that she got engaged. If for some reason that did not occur, both her family and the neighboring community would see that she would spend some seasons in London or in Bath, where it would be easier to find a suitable match. If, in spite of all that, the woman reached the age of twenty-four or more still unengaged, the prospect was that she would become a spinster, having to live on the expense of her relatives and friends. The problem with the Dashwood sisters is aggravated by the fact that their elder half-brother is not willing to take up that responsibility. On that respect, he says: "But I feel for Marianne – she will lose her bloom and end a spinster like Elinor." (THOMPSON, 1996, p.150). Casting an elder actress would save Thompson and the film the trouble of having all that explained through intricate devices.

Another fact raised by Dixon is that she thinks that Thompson erased all the feminist elements of *Sense and Sensibility*. According to Dixon, when Thompson makes Elinor display her vulnerability, she goes against Austen's point that a woman in that condition should stand tall and not acknowledge her need to be supported by a man's

[35] In her diaries Thompson says of Elinor: "She seems now to be perfectly normal – about twenty five, a witty control freak. I like her but I can see how she would drive you mad. She's just the kind of person you'd want to get drunk, just to make her giggly and silly". (THOMPSON, 1995, p.253)

money. This is a delicate point, because Jane Austen's personal circumstances were not very different from Elinor's. Still, although Dixon's plea is legitimate, I still believe that Thompson could not have acted otherwise, because she has a task to perform, and her first commitment is to help the film come out. As a proficient Austen reader, Thompson will do all that is possible to cling to the truth of the novel. Still, at some points, compromises must be made. This is one of those points. As to what Dixon says about feminism, I would rather think that those ideas have not been eliminated, they have rather been modernized. The woman to be admired nowadays is the one who does not accept labels; the fact that Elinor is mature, independent and in control of her emotions makes her a modern woman to our contemporary parameters. In this sense, the wheel comes full circle: the Elinor of the novel is a modern woman to the standards of her time: she remains true to herself and does not give in or change during the story. The film heroine reaches the same effect, through another road: she overcomes her difficulty in expressing her needs and stands up to claim the things she believes she deserves from life. So, in making her different from the first Elinor, Thompson eventually reaches the same effect upon a new public.

Marianne follows the opposite trajectory. In the original work she undergoes a progressive transformation, whereas in the screen version she remains basically the same. Filmic Marianne moves between extremes. She is either extremely happy or painfully sad and gloomy. Her only true joyful moments happen when she is with Willoughby. Before she meets him she is mourning her father and too busy hating her sister-in-law and the new condition derived from their loss of Norland. When Willoughby leaves her she becomes depressive and obsessive; the only thing she thinks about is the possibility of seeing him again. Her surliness affects everyone and everything. If she was not willing to be polite to those she did not like when she was well, that becomes even worse when she has the excuse to behave in a nasty way. In my view, the Marianne in the film is even more self-centered and audacious. She is solely focused on what is happening to herself, and acts without thinking of the consequences of what she is doing. In the ball where she sees Willoughby for the first time after he left her, the drama is enhanced. In the novel her conversation with him is taken in a more

private way, but in the film she makes a scene before everyone in the ball; her disgrace in this case is much more public than in the novel.

Marianne goes against everything that is considered appropriate for a woman to do. All a girl had in that time was her reputation and her virtue and of that her whole life would depend. She would hardly ever find a suitable husband if there were rumors about her; a marriageable woman had to be on her best behavior; otherwise she ran the risk of becoming a spinster. These facts were common knowledge and Marianne was certainly aware of the risks she was taking in showing herself off as she did. She did not care, though; she remained vexing her family (because her ill fame would spread to her sisters as well) only to pursue what she believed was true love. By going out alone with a man in his curricle at high speed for the whole town to see[36], Marianne started building a reputation for herself and becoming the target of impertinent remarks. When she arrives in London, she does the inadmissible: she sends not one, but many letters to Willoughby[37]. After learning that her sister wrote to Willoughby, Elinor is convinced that they are engaged since it is unthinkable for her that Marianne would commit such an unspeakable fault without having a serious commitment to him. Her attitude at the ball, when she sees Willoughby and almost makes a scandal when he does not talk to her properly, is the last straw. Her reputation is, if not ruined, badly damaged. This brings some questions which deserve to be analyzed. Does Marianne's marriage to Brandon really come from a change in her views or because she realized he was her only remaining option? After the loss of Willoughby and her consequent illness Marianne has time to rethink her life and her attitudes towards it. She may come to the realization that everything her sister told her about exposing herself too much and becoming a source of gossip in the neighborhood was true and that she may as well have spoiled her chances of getting married. Not only that, she could damage her sisters reputations to boot. She starts seeing Col. Brandon as a valid option; she surely feels affection for him and in retrospect she sees that he always wanted her best, but her decision of opening up to him may have come accompanied to a more practical reason. To what extent is he a consolation prize to Marianne? She is exhausted with all her suffering, she now

[36] "It was not acceptable for a young unmarried woman to be alone in the company of a gentleman (save for close family friends." (Byrne, 2005, p.300)

[37] The exchange of letters between unmarried people who were not engaged was strictly forbidden.

understands that she made a huge mistake in betting all her cards on Willoughby and started to look around for the first time. She caused great pains to her family and perhaps she just wants someone who loves her more than she loves them. The fact that Brandon is a wealthy man and will be able to give her all the material possessions that she wants does not do any harm too. And if we think of Brandon and his love for Marianne, is it real or he only loves her because of her resemblance to Eliza? The reason he does not want Marianne to change is because Eliza was obliged to change and had a horrible fate, for which he feels responsible in some levels. Brandon tried to make amends by looking after her daughter (Beth in the film, Eliza in the novel) but did not succeed since she suffered the same fate of her mother, abandoned by the man she gave herself to and with a child in her arms. It is highly possible that Brandon is trying to fix for the third time what he could not in the past. Letting Marianne regain people's respect by marrying her may be his own way of atoning for his past mistakes. He feels responsible for Eliza, thinking that he could have done something to help her at the time. In my view his affection for Marianne is due to the good feelings she brings back to him, much more than real passion. Marianne is Brandon's second chance of making up for what he did not do for Eliza. With her, so similar to his first love (even in age), he can find happiness again and go back to his better days of the past. All things considered Marianne and Brandon both have ulterior motives to get together which does not mean they do not have great fondness for each other. In the film that becomes more palatable than in the novel because in it they share many interests and have the same love for the arts.

Thompson uses her Cambridge background in literature to draw on the use of poetry to define characters, especially in Marianne's case. We often find her reciting poems, or having them read to her, or participating in scenes that seem extracted from a fictional setting. Marianne seems to be better understood through music and poetry than through a rational line of thought. In Austen, high-pitched artistic sensitivity is commonly associated with romantic emotional and sensitive moods. As her world can be tragic and intense, Marianne's perception of her love story anticipates touches of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. The idea of dying for love, which Marianne finds so appealing in the film (there is nothing like that in the novel), and the way she

pronounces his name, almost as in a reverie, when she walks to Combe Magna in the rain, reminds one of Catherine's frenzy when she is abandoned by Heathcliff. The scene goes on as thus:

> Marianne has reached the top. Soaked to the skin, she stands with the storm raging around her, staring at the spires of Combe Magna, the place that would have been her home. Rain streaks her face and the wind whips her hair about her. Through frozen lips she whispers: Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds/Or bends with the remover to remove:/O, no! It is an ever-fixed mark/That looks on tempests and is never shaken...(...)
>
> MARIANNE stares at Combe Magna, a strange smile playing about her lips. Then she calls to WILLOUGHBY as though he were near. The effect is eerie, unworldly.
>
> MARIANNE: Willoughby...Willoughby. (THOMPSON, 1996, p.177)

All the imagery used in the movie regarding Willoughby and Marianne's love story reinforces the idea of a *Wuthering Heights* kind of story. Let us compare the scene in which Willoughby is introduced in the novel with the one in the film. In Austen:

> A gentleman carrying a gun, with two pointers playing round him, was passing up the hill and within a few yards of Marianne, when her accident happened. He put down his gun and ran to her assistance. She had raised herself from the ground, but her foot had been twisted in her fall, and she was scarcely able to stand. The gentleman 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. Then passing through the garden, the gate of which had been left open by Margaret, he bore her directly into the house, whither Margaret was just arrived, and quitted not his hold till he had seated her in a chair in the parlour. (SS, p.33)

In Thompson:

> She [Margaret] dashes off. As she goes into the mist we hear the thunder of hooves. CU Margaret's terrified expression. They seem to be coming from all around. She wheels and turns and then – Crash! Through the mist breaks a huge white horse. Astride sits an Adonis in hunting gear. MARGARET squeals. The horse rears. Its rider controls it and slides off. He rushes to Marianne's side. (THOMPSON, 1996, p. 85)

As we can see, all the gothic and the romantic elements were added by Thompson. In Austen, Willoughby does not arrive through mist in a white horse. Thompson also enhances the sexual tension between the two of them. After seeing him, filmic Marianne is "transfixed" (Idem, p. 85) and "almost swoons with embarrassment and excitement mixed" (Ibidem, p.86). When he enters the Dashwood house, only inhabited by women, we can feel, through their reactions, his virility impregnating the room. Besides being extremely vigorous, he also shares Marianne's intense feelings for poetry. It is Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116* that they recite to each other in Willoughby's first official visit to Marianne:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

(Shakespeare, 1609)

Thompson comments in her diaries that this was the way she found to give a sensual tone to their conversation. Besides the connection that exists between the theme of the poem and their circumstances, there is also the underlying erotic element in the whole scene. “Difficult to give poetry reading a sexy hue in this day and age but what else can he do? Give her a massage?” (THOMPSON, 1996, p.244). This poem is essential not only to define Marianne’s character, but her relationship with Willoughby, because it reproduces everything she believes in. True love for Marianne is only possible between two people who share the same thoughts and ideas, who view the world through the same perspective. Love follows this unwritten rule and is not changed by the passing of time, it remains unmoved by the circumstances. The fact that Willoughby, like her, can recite the sonnet by heart, and keeps it in his pocket, is a sign to Marianne that she has finally found her companion for life, and the same kind of love Shakespeare’s sonnet describes. Their connection is instantaneous, and the poem makes this connection even more clear than in the novel.

HARRIS (2003) and GAY (2003) call the attention to another erotic moment that was heightened in the film and that also relates to poetry. Willoughby cuts a lock of Marianne’s hair, as a reference to the poem *The Rape of the Lock*, by Alexander Pope. This action is witnessed by Elinor, half reluctant, half fascinated. This scene sheds light to the personality of the three characters. It reinforces Willoughby’s sexual, virility, shows the transgressing side of Marianne, and proves that under Elinor’s seriousness there is an ardent woman with desires. In a scene in the screenplay (that was not shown in the film) Thompson informs us that Elinor, while mesmerized by the scene she sees, finds herself writing the name of Edward. Thompson tried to find a way to adding some sexual elements in the story without shocking the purists.

The firm poem, though, that is read in the film, is read by Edward. It is *The Castaway*, the last poem written by William Cowper (1731-1800). This poem helps us understand Marianne, and can also be interpreted as a metaphor for Edward’s feelings then. In the film, Edward is reading the end of the poem which goes like this:

No voice divine the storm allay’d,
No light propitious shone;

When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd, each alone;
But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he.

(Cowper, 1799)

The poem can be a metaphor for the feelings of sadness that Edward experiences. Although in love with Elinor he knows he cannot have her because of his engagement to Lucy. According to the rules of the time a man could never break off an engagement; only the woman was allowed to do so (and Lucy was clearly not willing to let off the perspective of marrying an eldest son of a rich family). Also, even if Edward had not been engaged he would have a hard time convincing his mom that marrying Elinor was the right thing to do. First-borns were the sole heirs of a family estate; "In the Georgian Period it was accepted that of the several sons of a family the eldest son inherited the paternal estate intact, and the second son could hope to inherit some land or money from his mother's side of the family"[38] (Le FAYE, 2002, p.73). With the responsibility of managing the family property comes the necessity of marrying wisely, which means a woman with a substantial dowry. A woman's dowry would add to the fortune of her husband's family; this sum would "assist in paying for the upkeep of her future children, go towards her matrimonial home and provide her own income if she were left a widow." (Idem, p.115). Elinor has nothing to offer Edward in this sense and no matter how much he is uncomfortable with his circumstance as the elder son he does not have the courage to go against what is expected of him. If Edward were the second son he would not have to abide by this rule and would be free to marry whomever he wanted.

Caught in a circumstance in which his social function counts more than his personal wishes, Edward feels like the castaway in Cowper's poem, alone in the world, because no one can help him solve the conundrum he is trapped in. The way he recites the poem is the way he feels at the moment, sedated and hopeless, and that innerves Marianne, who cannot understand how anyone can lack passion while reading such a dense, passionate poem. She keeps constantly correcting him, not only showing her

[38] Col. Brandon is a second son, for instance, and that is why he had to join the Army. Only recently he inherited Dellaford, the family property, due to his brother's passing.

know-it-all side but also trying to instigate in him the same ardor she feels. Marianne expresses herself through art, so it is through art that she often gives her opinion on things. When she is frustrated by how inappropriate Edward and Elinor's feelings seem, and as they seem to find difficulty in communicating feelings to each other, Marianne makes use of Coleridge's sonnet VII.

Is love a fancy, or a feeling? No.
It is immortal as immaculate Truth,
'Tis not a blossom shed as soon as youth,
Drops from the stem of life—for it will grow,
In barren regions, where no waters flow,
Nor rays of promise cheats the pensive gloom.
A darkling fire, faint hovering o'er a tomb,
That but itself and darkness nought doth show,
It is my love's being yet it cannot die,
Nor will it change, though all be changed beside;
Though fairest beauty be no longer fair,
Though vows be false, and faith itself deny,
Though sharp enjoyment be a suicide,
And hope a spectre in a ruin bare.

(Coleridge, 1833)

Coleridge's poem, in the same way that Shakespeare's, is used by Marianne to express her worldview. We can see how she firmly believes in the poems she reads; they are not just pretty things to her, but an access to truth. The last lines used by Thompson to explain Marianne's character are from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. After her illness, Colonel Brandon is shown reading this stanza to Marianne:

Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:
Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,
For whatsoeuer from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide vnto an other brought:
For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought

(Spenser, 1596)

This particular stanza tells about the moment the couple is experiencing and about how feelings can change. Marianne was once in love with Willoughby, but after finding out about his limitations, her feelings changed and migrated somewhere else. She understood that second attachments are indeed possible. When Brandon reads: "For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought", he points that even though one has lost one's faith in love at a certain moment, there may come a time when things change again, provided one keeps and open heart and looks for it. Love comes in many forms, and that is one lesson that Marianne comes to understand in the end of the film, when she agrees to open her heart to a man who has always liked her and shown her nothing but kindness and consideration. Little by little, as she matures, she understands that life takes some opportunities in order to give us others, sometimes better, or simply different, because one can be happy in many different ways.

Thompson's reading, and subsequent adaptation, of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* is largely influenced by her own background as an actress, as a professional of literature, and as a highly political person who is concerned with people's condition in the world. As previously mentioned it is impossible to please everyone, because each individual has their own reading of a text. As a consequence, the only reading possible is one's own – that was what Thompson did. She made her choices, maintained what she considered to be important and possible to maintain, and cut what would not work or be accepted. Being both in front of the cameras and in the background gave her opportunity to see the process through different angles. She understood that in order to be efficacious, her screenplay had to be appealing for her public, an audience located in all corners of the world, the late 20th century world. In the words of Penny Gay,

> For the film to succeed, (…), it must achieve a double effect: it must create the impression of keeping faith with the original text (by not straying *too* far from the plot), and it must engage the audience with the sense that the story speaks to them of their own concerns. (Gay, 2003, p. 90)

This is exactly what Emma Thompson managed to do; she remained faithful to the book as much as possible, but not so much as to make her characters incomprehensible for her audience. In order to modernize the classic (for modernization was necessary) she had to rethink Austen's characters and make them a hybrid of a credible early 19th century person with one that a late 20th century audience would relate to. The focus of the film is still the relationship between two sisters and the battles they fight to open their way through love and marriage. As it is a film, the emphasis goes to the love plot, so the narrative spins around Elinor's and Marianne's different approaches on life, and the men who will eventually win their hearts. Out of the four protagonists, the two male characters had to be made more palatable, and the two female characters had to alter their behavior and become more modern. The choice of actors played a part in that, and the adjustments in the scenes also contributed so that the story became more agreeable, so that the audience of 1995 could interact with the production and make of it the great success it proved to be.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Introduction, I am one of those readers who first saw the movie and then read the book. That is why, when I first read the novel, my attention was immediately caught by the differences involving the shaping of the characters, the difference in the way they seem to have been first conceived by Austen and then reshaped by Thompson. I grew so interested in the pursuit of an answer for this puzzle, that it eventually was turned into the objective of my masters' thesis: to analyse Emma Thompson's reading of Jane Austen's first published work, *Sense and Sensibility,* and the things Thompson herself had to change so that her reading could develop into the screenplay for the film. During the process, I kept asking myself why they had to be so transformed, and if in the end they still maintained the essence of what was envisaged by Austen. When we take five important characters from *Sense and Sensibility* to examine, which was my aim here, and compare them to their counterparts in this 1995 film, we find there is a whole world of change. Still, no one can say that these are not Jane Austen characters. They have changed in some aspects, for specific reasons, but in essence they remain the same.

Because I had the opportunity of taking two undergraduate courses, Communications and Languages, I have grown interested in how unique each medium is, and in the many ways the same story can be told, if we change the medium of its presentation. This becomes especially evident when we consider the adaptation of a printed work of literature into a cinematographic product. Although literature and cinema have much in common – starting with the fact that both tell a story – they use distinct resources and possibilities. Having that in mind, one cannot expect that a book be transmuted into a film without transforming itself into something else.

Great part of this change has to do with characterization. Characters often have to be transformed in order to fit the requirements of the new medium. In a novel, characters can unfold slowly. The reader will acquire more and more information about them as the reading develops. If they feel the need to retrace something, they simply

return to previous pages and re-read some parts of the story. Therefore, in this sense literature is more contemplative than film, it can be carried out at the reader's pace. Film, however, requires speed, because it has to tell a story within a time frame of more or less two hours. Characters have to be clearly delineated to the audience, and the sooner this is done, the better. Unless the plot of the movie requires doubt and uncertainty – as in a thriller, for example, characters have to be well delineated in order not to provoke doubts in the viewer's mind. The audience is to understand from an early stage what is expected of each character, who is whom, what their personality traits are and how they go about their lives. Seger (1992) explains that audiences want to know who to root for and that is why it is so important to explain the characters efficiently in a movie.

The character, according to Candido (1968, p.51) in the chapter *A Personagem do Romance* in the book *A Personagem de Ficção,* may be seen as the glue that binds the story together; because it is the one element in any story – be it a novel, a film, or a play – that appeals to the emotions of the reader/viewer. The character is what brings the plot and the ideas surrounding it alive. Characters in novels are in great part left to the reader's imagination, they ultimately draw their own conclusions on what they should look like. That does not happen in film. "The existence of the physical being precedes and determines the trait that the human figure will demonstrate in the work." (MAST, 1982, p.292). The director is the one responsible for finding the actors who will most likely fit the description proposed by the screenwriter, and that fact will largely influence the idea that the audience will have of a character. When it comes to an adaptation of a famous novel such as *Sense and Sensibility*, which possesses millions of fans worldwide, this task is a difficult one. The screenwriter and director's view of the character may not be the one shared by many Austen's fans, but it is the one that will gain the screens.

The closer I looked into such issues, the more my admiration for Emma Thompson grew. This happens both with her work as an actress and as a writer. A graduate in English Literature from Cambridge University, she is both extensively well read and witty in her ways of observing the world and portraying it. All this is reflected not only in her screenplay for the 1995 *Sense and Sensibility* film, but also in the way she

performs her role as Elinor. In this thesis, I concentrate on Thompson's function as a screenwriter, but there is also much to say about her acting choices as well, which I unfortunately could not do because of the risk of losing my track. In this thesis, I kept to the analysis of her task of transmuting Austen's world into a film that maintains the original characteristics of Austen's authorship, but also manages to approximate them to the needs of the audiences of the late twentieth century.

Being an actress with some years of experience at the time she undertook this task, Thompson was aware of the demands of the movie business. She knew that the film had to appeal to the target audience as something fresh. And as this target audience was an international audience, it was formed by people from different cultures. Also, there were the more experienced (and demanding) Austen's readers, and people who had never read her books. Another aspect that has to be taken into consideration is whether the fact that Thompson ended up playing the role of the protagonist had influence on how she constructed the character. Since only after the screenplay was ready she was invited to play the role of Elinor, I believe she did not have a chance to mould the character to her characteristics as an actress. However, having such knowledge of what goes on with the protagonist certainly helped her to bring to life the Elinor she envisioned in Austen and consequently in her own screenplay of the novel.

Not everyone in the world is aware of the intricacies of life in the early nineteenth century rural English countryside, and certainly not everyone would know what forms of behaviour were commonly expected from a man or a woman in those times. No matter how acquainted someone is with the history of a period, it is always a challenge not to view a story with the mind of the period we are living in. Intellectually speaking one can understand certain attitudes because they are typical of a certain period in time, but emotionally we cannot help but feel with our present-time point of perception.

Having that in mind it was essential for the success of *Sense and Sensibility* as a movie that some of the characters were modernized, in order to fit the expectations of the new audience. The most obvious change was perceptible in the male characters, that had to be customized into the standards of manhood and appeal peculiar to the late twentieth century. Originally, Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon are neither particularly interesting nor "hero material" (considering the expectations of a modern

audience). They are not physically attractive, they are reserved, sometimes even brooding. All in all, they lacked the characteristics that would make the audience root for them to get the heart of the protagonists. The movie industry requires profitability and only with more appealing protagonists the film would be lucrative. The roles of Edward and Brandon were given respectively to Hugh Grant and Alan Rickman, who, by themselves, contribute a number of extra characteristics to the two characters. Their curriculum as actors, their appeal, the image they project, trigger expectations on the audience even before the movie is seen. They come closer to our idea of what a romantic hero is than the characters in Austen's original novel.

But there were other changes to be made by Thompson. Ferrars and Brandon were invested of all the characteristics considered important for the current female audience, for Austen's is predominantly a female world. Among them we rank their love for children, and their adorable awkwardness. In Edward, we have the several attempts to tell Elinor the truth about his engagement to Lucy; in Brandon, his relation to the love for the arts, his mystery and virility. These new, improved men are more plausible as protagonists to the new international audiences, who were able to breathe in relief when the couples were joined together at the end of the story. Willoughby, on the other hand, remained the same, maintaining his sex appeal and enthusiasm for life, although one could say that these traits were combined with a moral character which is worse than the one we see in the novel.

Sense and Sensibility, however, spins around the two major protagonists, the sisters Elinor and Marianne. At first, they do not seem so changed, but when we analyse them closer, the differences start to show. Of course they remain as polar opposites. But the fact that Elinor is more mature is further stressed by her upgrade of ten years in age. Still, while remaining mature and put together, Elinor receives further touches of sentimentality, so that it becomes clear to the audience that the fact that she is reserved and sensible does not mean that she is unfeeling. In many scenes – invented by Thompson – we see this softer side of Elinor, in which she cries and shows her inner feelings. Thompson also adds some further feminist views in the story. Elinor is seen complaining to Edward that she cannot even inherit her fortune because she is a woman. Marianne is pure emotion, and these traits are accentuated when her dramatic persona

is taken to the extreme of aspiring for a love as tragic as Romeo and Juliet´s or Abelard and Eloise´s.

Part of the objective of the film (as it is in the novel) is to expose the points of view of these two sisters who, although they share many common characteristics, have distinct approaches on life. More than developing on who is right or who is wrong, the film presents their different ways of dealing with feelings and situations. The audience is made aware, from an early stage, that the two characters have contrasting personalities. In the novel, this is known through description. As this cannot be done in the film, Emma Thompson used a number of resources to achieve a similar result. She showed the sisters in their "habitat"; Marianne playing her piano, suffering, refusing to be civil with her sister-in-law and Elinor doing the house accounts, preparing gifts for the servants, and being a lovely hostess even while suffering the loss of her father. Thompson also found a way to insert Marianne's love for the arts as a great asset to the outlining of her character. We can reach Marianne's deepest thoughts and feelings as they are translated into the kind of poetry that expresses her approach to life.

Thompson's reading of Jane Austen can be characterized as deeply knowledgeable. Even when she adds scenes to the source material she maintains the same original language and reveals to have a good mastery of Austen´s style and tone. Both Austen and Thompson are masters of subtlety and British humour. This likeness is probably why Thompson´s writing style manages to keep the same inherent quality in the adaptation. Humour is a very important part of her film, as it is in the original novel. Austen's witty irony is not lost in Thompson's screenplay. When transferring almost to the letter a comic situation, or when she adds her own bits in the narrative, Thompson remains faithful to Austen's style. It is also clear that her writings always come accompanied by a touch of her feminist views which, in my opinion, is done in a subtle way, that does not corrupt the storyline. Thompson´s acting experience helped her to write the screenplay, in my view, in two ways: firstly, in the creation of consistent, interesting characters, whom the audience could trust and admire; secondly –and a consequence of the first – in making these characters relatable to the concerns of the late twentieth century viewer. Without completely subverting Austen's characters

Thompson was able to change them just enough to make them more likeable and understandable to the modern audience.

We cannot forget, though, the role played by Ang Lee, the director of the film. His views on cinema had a great influence in the final product; his subtle way of making movies that focus much more on what is inferred than on what is actually said added greatly to the success of the adaptation. Surprisingly, the fact that he is Taiwanese only helped in portraying Austen's world and characters.

In this thesis I have come to the conclusion that a good adaptation is usually the one that does not lose sight of its primary source; one which, however different, still remains with the main aspects of the original and that any knowledgeable viewer (who is previously acquainted with the source) feels that the story does justice to the one was intended by the author of the novel. How to achieve that is a matter of experience, knowledge of the primary source and the new target audience and very often, creativity. Some stories are easier to be adapted than others, but that does not mean that a good combination of the conditions above cannot make successful the adaptation of the most difficult text.

The world of adaptation is a fascinating one; after two years of study I still wonder why would anyone be willing to take over such a task that is, more often than not, the source of so much debate and discontent by part of the audience. Adapting, however, is an art that cannot be done just by anyone; it is necessary to understand profoundly the intricacies of the primary source, its characters, the time they lived in and all the other aspects that make that original work unique. It is no wonder Emma Thompson took five years to write her own screenplay of *Sense and Sensibility*; during this time she had to immerse herself into the novel's and her author's world so that she could portray Austen's world to its best. It was a true pleasure for me to understand all the efforts that go behind the transposition of my favorite Austen's book into a film that was so true to the author's essence. In my view the changes made to the characters do not denigrate them in any way or make them less credible to Austen's fans. I was one of these people some years ago, and having been able to learn a little more deeply about Jane Austen, the adaptation of her novels to film and more specifically the adaptation done by Emma Thompson of *Sense and Sensibility* in 1995 gives me certainty that the

more good adaptations of Austen exist, the more people will continue to leave the movie theaters and go to the closest bookstore to get acquainted with her other novels. And they will fall in love with them as I did, and another cycle of fans will be born, perpetuating Austen's genius to many generations to come.

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ANNEX 1

WORKS BY EMMA THOMPSON AS A WRITER:

Source: IMDB

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000668/

1982. *Cambridge Footlights Review*. (TV movie).

There's Nothing to Worry About! (TV series). 3 episodes.

1983. *An Evening for Nicaragua.* (TV movie).

1983/1984. *Alfresco.* (TV series). Additional Material.

1985. *Emma Thompson: Up for Grabs* (TV movie).

1988. *Thompson*. (TV series). 6 episodes.

1995. *Sense and Sensibility*. (Screenplay).

2001. *Wit*. (Teleplay).

2005. *Pride & Prejudice*. (Additional dialogue – uncredited).

2005. *Nanny McPhee*. (Screenplay).

2010. *Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang.* (written by).

2013. *Effie.* (written by). Post – Production.

ANNEX 2

WORKS BY EMMA THOMPSON AS AN ACTRESS:

Source: IMDB

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000668/

1982. *Cambridge Footlights Revue* (TV movie).

There's Nothing to Worry About! (TV series)

1983. *The Crystal Cube* (TV movie)

1984. *The Comic Strip Presents* (TV series)

The Young Ones (TV series)

1983-1984. *Alfresco* (TV series)

1985. *Assaulted Nuts* (TV series)

Emma Thompson: Up for Grabs (TV movie)

1987. *Tutti Frutti* (TV series)

Fortunes of War (TV mini-series)

1988. *Thompson* (TV series)

1989. *Look Back in Anger* (TV movie)

The Tall Guy

Theatre Night

Henry V

1991. *Dead Again*

1992. *Cheers* (TV series)

Howards End

Peter's Friends

1993*. Much Ado about Nothing*

In the Name of the Father

1994. *My father the Hero* (uncredited)

The Blue Boy

Junior

1995. *Carrington*

Sense and Sensibility

1997. *Hospital!* (TV movie)

The Winter Guest

Ellen (TV series)

1998. *Primary Colors*

Judas Kiss

2000. *Maybe Baby*

2001. *Wit*

2002. *Treasure Planet*

2003. *Love Actually*

Imagining Argentina

2004. *Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban*

2005. *Nanny McPhee*

2006. *Stranger than Fiction*

2007. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*

I Am the Legend

2008. *Brideshed Revisited*

Last Chance Harvey

2009. *An Education*

The Boat that Rocked

2010. *Nanny McPhee and The Big Bang*

The Song of Lunch (TV movie)

2011. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: part 2*

2012. *Men in Black III*

Playhouse Presents (TV series)

Brave

2013. *Beautiful Creatures* (completed)

Love Punch (post-production)

Effie (post-production)

Saving Mr. Banks (post-production)

The Secret Evidence (pre-production)

2014. *Voyage of Time* (post-production)

ANNEX 3

FILMS DIRECTED BY ANG LEE

Source: IMDB

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000487/

1992. *Pushing Hands*. With: Bo Z. Wang, Sihung Lung and Lai Wang.

1993. *The Wedding Banquet*. With: Winston Chao, May Chin and Ya-lei Kuei.

1994. *Eat, drink, man, woman*. With: Sihung Lung, Yu-Wen Wang and Chien-lien Wu.

1995. *Sense and Sensibility*. With: Emma Thompson, Kate Winslet and Hugh Grant.

1997. *The Ice Storm*. With Kevin Kline, Joan Allen and Sigourney Weaver.

1999. *Ride with the Devil*. With: Tobey Maguire, Skeet Ulrich and Jewel Kilcher.

2000. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. With: Yun-Fat Chow, Michelle Yeoh and Ziyi Zhang.

2001. *Chosen*. With Clive Owen, Mason Lee and Sonom Gualson.

2003. *Hulk.* With: Eric Bana, Jennifer Connelly and Sam Elliot.

2005. *Brokeback Mountain*. With Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal and Michelle Williams.

2007. *Lust: Caution*. With: Tony Leung Chiu Wai, Wei Tang and Joan Chen.

2009. *Taking Woodstock*. With: Demetri Martin, Henry Goodman and Edward Hibbert.

2012. *Life of Pi*. With: Suraj Sharma, Irrfan Khan and Adil Hussain.

ANNEX 4

FILMS PRODUCED BY LINDSAY DORAN

Source: IMDB

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0233386/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1

1991. *Dead Again*. With: Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson and Andy Garcia.

1992. *Leaving Normal*. With: Christine Lahti, Meg Tilly and Patrika Darbo.

A Private Matter. With: Sissy Spacek, Aidan Quinn and EstelleParsons.

1993. *Fallen Angels.* With: Dan Hedaya, Lynette Walden and Peter Gallagher.

The Firm. With: Tom Cruise, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Gene Hackman.

1995. *Sense and Sensibility*. With: Emma Thompson, Kate Winslet and Hugh Grant.

Sabrina. With: Harrison Ford, Julia Ormond and Greg Kinnear.

2005. *Nanny McPhee.* With: Emma Thompson, Colin Firth and Angela Lansbury.

2006. *Stranger Than Fiction*. With: Emma Thompson, Will Ferrell and Kathy Bates.

2010. *Nanny McPhee and The Big Bang*. With: Emma Thompson,Maggie Gyllenhaal and Ralph Fiennes.

ANNEX 5

AWARDS RECEIVED BY ANG LEE'S SENSE AND SENSIBILITY (1995)

Source: IMDB

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114388/awards

Academy Awards for Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material Previously Produced or Published: Emma Thompson.

BAFTA for Best Film: Lindsay Doran, Ang Lee.

BAFTA for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: Emma Thompson.

BAFTA for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role: Kate Winslet.

Golden Berlin Bear (Berlin International Film Festival): Ang Lee.

BSFC (Boston Society of Film Critics Awards) for Best Director : Ang Lee

BSFC Award for Best Film

BSFC Award for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

British Society of Cinematographers Award for Best Cinematography: Michael Coulter

Critics Choice Award for Best Picture

Critics Choice Award for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Actress: Kate Winslet

Evening Standard British Film Award for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

German Film Awards for Best Foreign Film: Ang Lee/USA

Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture- Drama

Golden Globe for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

Guild Film Award for Foreign Film

ALFS (London Critics Circle Film Awards) for British Screenwriter of the Year: Emma Thompson

LAFCA (Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards) for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

NBR (National Board of Review) Award for Best Actress: Emma Thompson

NBR (National Board of Review) Award for Best Director: Ang Lee

NBR (National Board of Review) Award for Best Film

NBR (National Board of Review) Award for Top Ten Films

NYFCC (New York Film Critics Circle Awards) for Best Director: Ang Lee

NYFCC (New York Film Critics Circle Awards) for Best Screenplay: Emma Thompson

Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor is Supporting Role: Kate Winslet

STFC (Society of Texas Film Critics Awards) for Best Actress: Emma Thompson (also for Carrington)

STFC (Society of Texas Film Critics Awards) for Best Screenplay, Adapted: Emma Thompson

USC Scripter Award for Jane Austen/Emma Thompson

WGA (Writers Guild of America) Award for Best Screenplay Based on Material Previously Produced or Published: Emma Thompson

Writers' Guild of Great Britain Award for Film- Screenplay: Emma Thompson

ANNEX 6

JANE AUSTEN'S WORKS

Source: Wikipedia

Novels:

Sense and Sensibility (1811)

Pride and Prejudice (1813)

Mansfield Park (1814)

Emma (1815)

Northanger Abbey (1818, posthumous)

Persuasion (1818, posthumous)

Short Fiction

Lady Susan (1794, 1805)

Unfinished Fiction

The Watsons (1804)

Sanditon (1817)

Other Works

Sir Charles Grandison (adapted play) (1793, 1800)

Plan of a Novel (1815)

Poems (1796-1817)

Prayers (1796-1817)

Letters (1796-1817)

Juvenilia – Volume the First (1787-1793)

Frederic & Elfrida

Jack & Alice

Edgar & Emma

Henry & Eliza

The Adventures of Mr. Harley

Sir William Mountague

Memoirs of Mr. Clifford

The Beautifull Cassandra

Amelia Webster

The Visit

The Mystery

The Three Sisters

A Beautiful Description

The Generous Curate

Ode to Pity

Juvenilia – Volume the Second (1787-1793)

Love and Freindship

Lesley Castle

The History of England

A Collection of Letters

The Female Philosopher

The First Act of a Comedy

A Letter from a Young Lady

A Tour through Wales

A Tale

Juvenilia- Volume the Third (1787-1793)

Evelyn

Catharine, or the Bower

ANNEX 7

FILM AND TV ADAPTATIONS OF AUSTEN'S WORKS

Source: janeausten.org

2014. *A Modern Persuasion*- Film adaptation of *Persuasion.*

2012. *Austenland* – A *Pride & Prejudice*-obsessed woman visits a Jane Austen theme park in search of her own Mr. Darcy.

2011. *From Prada to Nada* – Film adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility.*

A Modern Pride and Prejudice - Film adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*

Jane Austen Handheld- Film based on *Pride & Prejudice;* comedy/drama as told through the lens of a documentary-style film crew.

2010. *Aisha*- Film adaptation of *Emma*

2009*. Emma*- BBC TV mini-series adaptation of *Emma*

2008. *Sense and Sensibilidad*- Film based on the novel

Lost in Austen- TV mini-series based on the novel

Jane Austen Trilogy- Bibliographic documentary

Miss Austen Regrets- TV movie based on Jane Austen letters

Sense and Sensibility- TV mini-series based on the novel

2007. *Persuasion*- TV movie based on the novel

The Jane Austen Book Club- Six Californians find their relationships resemble that of Jane Austen's characters.

Northanger Abbey- TV movie based on the novel

Mansfield Park- TV movie based on the novel

Becoming Jane- Film based on Jane Austen letters

2005 *Pride & Prejudice* - Film based on the novel

2004 *Bride & Prejudice* - Film based on the novel

2003 *Pride & Prejudice*- Film based on the novel

2002 *The Real Jane Austen* - TV movie based on Jane Austen letters

2000 *Kandukondian, Kandukondian*- Film based on *Sense and Sensibility*

1998 *Mansfield Park*- Film based on the novel

Wishbone – "Pup" Fiction – TV series episode based on Austen's work

1997 *Wishbone – "Furst Impressions"*- TV series episode based on Austen's work

1996 *Emma*- Film based on the novel

Emma- Film based on the novel

1995 *Sense & Sensibility*- Film based on the novel

Clueless- Film based on the novel *Emma*

Pride & Prejudice- TV mini-series based on the novel

Persuasion- Film based on the novel

1990 *Sensibility and Sense*- TV movie based on *Sense & Sensibility*

1987 Northanger Abbey- TV movie based on the novel

1983 Mansfield Park- TV mini-series based on the novel

1981 Sense & Sensibility- TV movie based on the novel

1980 *Jane Austen in Manhattan*- TV movie

Pride & Prejudice- TV mini-series based on the novel

1972 *Emma*- TV mini-series based on the novel

Novela- Persuasion- TV series episode based on Austen's work

1971 *Persuasion*- TV mini-series based on the novel

Sense & Sensibility- TV movie based on the novel

1968 *Novela- La Abadia de Northanger*- TV series episode based on Austen's work

1967 *Novela- Emma* - TV series episode based on Austen's work

Pride & Prejudice- TV mini-series based on the novel

1966 *Novela- Orgullo y Prejuicio* - TV series episode based on Austen's work

1961 *De Vier Dochters Bennet*- TV mini-series based on *Pride & Prejudice*

1960 *Persuasion*- TV mini-series based on the novel

Camera Three- TV series episode based on *Emma*

Emma- TV movie based on the novel

1958 *General Motors Presents* - TV series episode based on *Pride & Prejudice*

Pride & Prejudice- TV presentation based on the novel

Pride & Prejudice- TV series based on the novel

1957 *Orgoglio e Pregiudzio*- TV mini-series based on *Pride & Prejudice*

1956 *Matinee Theater*- TV presentation of *Pride & Prejudice*

1952 *Pride & Prejudice*- TV mini-series based on the novel

1950 *The Philco Television Playhouse*- TV presentation based on *Sense and Sensibility*

1949 *The Philco Television Playhouse*- TV presentation based on *Pride & Prejudice*

1948 *Emma*- TV presentation based on the novel

1940 *Pride & Prejudice*- Film based on the novel

1938 *Pride & Prejudice*- TV presentation based on the novel

ANNEX 8

OTHER FILMS MENTIONED IN THE THESIS

Maurice (1987): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0093512/?ref_=sr_2

Four weddings and a Funeral (1994):
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109831/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1

Sin City (2005): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0401792/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1

Sex & the City (2008): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1000774/?ref_=fn_al_tt_2

Mamma Mia (2008): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0795421/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1

He's Just Not That into You (2009): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1001508/?ref_=sr_1

Carnage (2011): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1692486/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1

Harry Potter (2001): http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0241527/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1

*The Lord of the Rings (2001)*http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120737/?ref_=fn_al_tt_4

Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop:We Cut Heads (1993).
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085758/?ref_=fn_al_tt_1