Sense And Sensibility

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March 29, 2008
I . Introduction

I want to explore the difference between sense and sensibility based on this book. Is it good for modern human beings to be more emotional than sensible?

What Elinor did when facing the problem of love was absolutely not easy for us to do the same. She solved those problems with resolution and sensibility. Compared with Elinor, Marianne often solved them by sense, which showed that people usually did irrational behavior owing to emotion.

There is no denying that both sense and sensibility are important and they are also essential for our lives. Therefore, when we deal with problems, try to think about what is the proper choice between rationality and emotion and do the right thing.

So, the purpose of our paper is to investigate the different influences of sense and sensibility on our behavior by analyzing the characters in this book. We can judge the standard of emotion and rationality through their conversation.

II . Thesis

In this paper, we mainly analyze the characters to discuss the relationship among the four main characters. They all have something to do with love; however, they choose different ways to solve it. The focus on this paragraph is to generalize the difference of sense and sensibility by the conversation and behavior of the characters.

1. Background

The two sisters with different characters lead their lives to dissimilar course in the circumstances of love and living. The best-selling book’s author---Jane Austen often leads us to see the love concept of modern youth and the upper society of British in 19th century by her humorous writing style and elaborative concept.

Elinor is a gentle and well-thought-out girl who falls in love with sister-in-law’s brother—Edward. Marianne is a girl with purity and enthusiasm. When facing love, she is always single-minded and serious. She meets her true love—Willoughby in the farmland and they are soon infatuated with each other.
However, after a temporary separation the two sistes hear that Willoughby is
going to marry and a girl who calls herself Edward’s fiancée disturbs the two sisters’ lives.

2. Characters

The introduction of family Dashwood, inclusive of Elinor Dashwood, the eldset daughter of the family, Marianne Dashwood, the second daughter, Edward Ferrars and John Willoghby.

“Elinor Dashwood”— Sense and Sensibility has, in fact, two heroines, though the story is told primarily through nineteen-year-old Elinor, the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood. She is talented, intelligent, and pragmatic. Because every decision Elinor makes is the product of rational thought, her mother and sister sometimes mistake her composure for coldness. The irony here is that Elinor often refrains from telling them the truth because Marianne and Mrs. Dashwood are both excitable and reactionary.”(1)

“Marianne Dashwood”— Marianne, Elinor’s younger sister, is our second heroine. She is matched with Elinor in talent and intelligence, though her expression that of a romantic. Marianne feels everything intensely. It is this excess of emotion that leads her to disaster when she is spurned by the object of her affection, John Willoughby.”(2)

“Mrs. Dashwood”—Elinor and Marianne’s mother has more sensibility than sense. Though well meaning, she sometimes makes rash decisions that are not always in the best interests of her daughters, and Elinor is left to be the voice of reason.”(3)

“John Dashwood”—Henry Dashwood’s son by his first marriage and thus inheritor of Norland Park when the senior Dashwood dies at the novel’s onset. John Dashwood is weak-minded, miserly, and controlled by his wife, Fanny, who is even more selfish.”(4)

“Edward Ferrars”—Edward Ferrars is John Dashwood’s brother-in-law and Elinor’s love interest. Elinor meets and falls in love with him at Norland. Quiet and shy, Edward is decidedly against the future his mother and sister have
planned for him, though in their eyes he lacks ambition. Both he and Elinor are good-natured and sensible, but his reserve fives Elinor mixed signals about his affection for her.”(5)

“John Willoughby”—John Willoughby is the dashing young man who willfully deceives Marianne and callously breaks her heart. Like Marianne, Willoughby is a lover of art and music, and initially, the two seem perfectly matched. Marianne suffers immensely from his rejection, though by the end of the novel we learn the devastating extent of Willoughby’s recklessness and realize she is better off without him.”(6)

“Sir John Middleton”—Sir John Middleton is a distant relation of Mrs. Dashwood who offers her and her daughters a cottage on his Barton Estate following the death of Henry Dashwood. He is well meaning though somewhat unsophisticated and can fond little to occupy his time other than hunting and entertaining. He is constantly arranging dinners and social events to which the Dashwoods are invited and expected to attend.”(7)

“Colonel Brandon”— Colonel Brandon is a friend of Sir John Middleton. When the Dashwood sisters meet him at Barton, he is instantly taken with Marianne. Though Marianne considers him, at thirty-five, to be too much her senior, he and Elinor become good friends. Eventually, his extreme kindness toward their family is rewarded with Marianne’s affection.”(8)

“Mrs. Jennings”—Sir John Middleton’s mother-in-law seems, at first pass, an obnoxious gossip and somewhat illmannered. She makes it her project to see the Dashwood sisters married and to this end invites them to stay with her in London.”(9)

3. The analysis of character’s conversation

Conversation I

“Elinor: I do not attempt to deny that I think very highly of him—that I greatly esteem, that I like him.
Marianne: Respects him! Likes him! Also was using this kind of insipid phrase. I really should rush out through the door immediately.”(10)

Analysis: We will know the difference of the two sister’s characteristics. Elinor is conservative and Mairianne prefers to express her feelings straightforwardly.

Conversation Ⅱ

“John Dashwood: Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties if the sum were diminished one half. Five hundred pounds would be a prodigious increase to their fortunes!

Fanny Dashwood: Oh! beyond anything great! What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if really his sisters! And as it is—only halfblood! —But you have such a generous spirit!

John Dashwood: One had rather on such occasions do too much than too little. No one, at least, can think I have not done enough for them: even themselves, they can hardly expect more.

Fanny Dashwood: There is no knowing what they may expect, but we are not to think of their expectations: the question is, what you can afford to do.”(11)

Analysis: After her husband inherits a big amount of money, Fanny eggs her husband on decreasing the maintenance to her stepmother and her sisters.

Conversation Ⅲ

“Margaret: Yes, yes, we can guess where he is: at his own house at Norland to be sure. He is the curate of the parish I dare say.

Sir John Middleton: No, that he is not. He is of no profession at all.

Marianne: Margaret, you know that all this is an invention of your own and that there is no such person in existence.
**Sir John Middleton**: Well then he is lately dead, Marianne, for I am sure there was such a man once, and his name begins with an F.”(12)

Analysis: We can know that Sir John Middleton is interested in Miss Dashwood’s rumor and humiliates others. He never cares about what others think.

**Conversation IV**

**“John Willoughby**: You are now using me unkindly. You are endeavouring to disarm me by reason and to convince me against my will. But it will not do. You shall find me as stubborn as you can be artful. I have three unanswerable reasons for disliking Colonel Brandon: he has threatened me with rain when I wanted it to be fine; he has found fault with the hanging of my curricule, and I cannot persuade him to buy my brown mare. If it will be any satisfaction to you, however, to be told that I believe his character to be in other respects irreproachable, I am ready to confess it. And in return for an acknowledgment which must give me some pain, you cannot deny me the privilege of disliking him as much as ever.”(13)

Analysis: Willoughby is smart and is good at pleasing ladies by sweet words and poems.

### III. Conclusion

Sense is the wisdom of pursuing truthfulness. Elinor is this kind of person. Sensibility is the changes of emotions affected by outward people, things and etc. Marianne is the symbol of sensibility.

Sometimes sense and sensibility has something to do with communication and people’s points of view. A people with sense will solve problem with rationality and objectivity. Because what a sense person shows is so objective that people will receive his/her manner without hate and sorrow. What about sensibility? Sensibility means consideration, blandness. A sensitive person always treats people considerately and creamily. Owing to this characteristic, people would like to make friends with sensitive person. In this society, sensibility plays an important role, so if you try to pay attention to everyone
around you, I think you will make everyone feel of your love toward them.

Because both sense and sensibility are essential, how to make a decision between them is now what we should learn. And what will happen if we put sense and sensibility into management? Will the enterprise be successful if the manager is sensitive or just sensible? The answer is no. A successful person must have the characteristic of sense and sensibility. In this book, only Elinor can be an outstanding manager. She can manage her staff strictly and handle problem with calm and determination. With these experts, she won’t have problems in both communication and management and lead her company into a promising future.

Reference

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