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Love and Marriage in Jane Austen's Novels

Parallels of Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice

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Abstract

That Jane Austen's most beloved novels *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) have many things in common can be rather easily deducted by any reader. In this essay, I take that view one step further and claim that there are direct parallels in Austen's main characters in the two novels, and that this is a conscious choice made by the author. The moral of both stories is that to have a happy marriage, the spouses should not only have courted for some time, instead of falling head over heels for each other, or marrying for money, but they should also be compatible and have a friendship based on affection and mutual respect. To ascertain this moral, Austen makes use of archetypical characters of various degrees of maturity to show that if you lead your life a certain way and have certain character traits, you are more likely to have a happy and long-lasting romantic relationship.

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Introduction

Jane Austen was born the seventh of eight children of a reverend in 1775, and died at the age of 41 in 1817. Austen was never married and had no children, but left a great legacy: she is to this day one of the world's most famous authors. In her lifetime, Jane Austen wrote six novels; *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*. Austen's works often reflect her own life or that of the people around her, and describe the way of life in a time where class-distinction was very important, and portray the possibilities of marriage and romance, two things that did not always go hand in hand at this time. Her two most famous novels, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* are the centre on which I will build this essay.

There are obvious similarities between the two novels, something that was already discussed during Austen's own lifetime, but in this essay, I will take things one step further and claim that there are direct parallels between the two novels' main characters and their relationships, and that this has a purpose. I claim that, through presenting and consciously re-using archetypal characters in parallel-pairings for which the circumstances are quite similar, Austen promotes a certain type of love and marriage: one that is not based on passionate love at first sight nor on material gain, but on a mutual affection and respect, it is a type of love based on friendship and compatibility.

There are three parallels in the male characters in the two books, and two female parallels. These parallels are: Colonel Brandon/Mr Darcy, Willoughby/Wickham, and Edward Ferrars/Mr Bingley on the male side, and Elinor Dashwood/Jane Bennet, and Marianne Dashwood/Elizabeth Bennet on the female.

Sense and Sensibility was first published in 1811, and was Austen's first published work. The novel treats the life of the three Dashwood-sisters, Elinor, Marianne and Margaret, and their mother following the death of their father. As a consequence of only having daughters, the surviving family is left at the mercy of an older half-brother, and they are forced to make major adjustments in their life, such as moving from the estate they have previously lived at, to a relative's cottage. Elinor and Marianne are the main characters, as they are the older sisters and those who take an interest in

potential suitors, such as Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon and Willoughby. We follow their romantic adventures in a society where life for unmarried women was not always easy.

Pride and Prejudice, published in 1813, became the best received of Austen's novels, and continues to top lists of "most loved books." *Pride & Prejudice* is the story of Elizabeth Bennet and her family, and how the family is affected by the new arrivals in their neighbourhood, namely Mr Darcy, Mr Bingley, Mr Wickham, and Mr Collins. Elizabeth Bennet is the second sister in a family of five daughters – a fact that leaves them with little other choice than to marry, since daughters did not have the right to inherit their fathers/parents – and is the witty and conscious one in the midst. She quickly develops a hostile relationship with their new neighbour Mr Darcy, based on just what the title suggests: their (mutual) pride and prejudices. Meanwhile, a romance grows between Elizabeth's sister Jane and Mr Darcy's best friend Mr Bingley, but will this romance survive? The relationships evolve throughout the story, and the novel ends with the marriages between Elizabeth and Darcy, and Jane and Bingley.

While doing research for this essay, I have found that while marriage and romance in Austen's books has obviously been handled by critics, it seems this particular theme of parallels between characters has not been previously examined. Authors who focus upon subjects related to love and marriage in Austen's works include Patrice Hannon, who, in her book *101 Things You Didn't Know about Jane Austen*, handles the theme of love at first sight and growing love in the two novels, as well as Hazel Jones, who writes about Austen and the view on romantic relationships during Austen's time in *Jane Austen & Marriage*. Although critics have remarked on likenesses between characters, it has been in passing; this is the first work concentrating on the parallels and their possible meaning and importance, which makes this essay all the more pertinent and interesting, as it introduces a new view on Austen's two most famous novels.

In both *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen promotes a certain type of romantic relationship: a "duller" long-lasting relationship – which may be equally as happy during a longer period of time – before passionate love-affairs, and I believe that Austen meant that it is more

important for a couple to get to know one another before starting a relationship or getting married, than to fall madly in love at first sight. However, she does not promote completely love-less marriages entered solely for practicality (as in the case of Mr Collins and Charlotte in *Pride and Prejudice*) or money, it is clear that a mutual interest and respect are needed.

An archetype is a typical example of something, a certain type of character that can be multiplied, but does not have to be identical in its every appearance, but have certain personality traits in common, and this is the basis on which I build the case of parallels existing in these two novels. In the studies of archetypes, there is according to Robert Moore's *Warrior, King, Magician, Lover*, a very important difference in maturity within archetypes, and this becomes highly obvious and very important in the characters in the novels by Jane Austen. The main characters in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* seem quite clearly to adhere to these different degrees of maturity, and this leads to them having very different kinds of romantic relationships.

Throughout the essay, the theoretical base are the discussions of Robert Moore, and Tami D. Cowden on archetypes. The method is that of close-reading in order to establish parallels within the main characters and connecting each parallel with a certain archetype.

This essay will be constructed by two main chapters; the first concentrating on the parallels of the male characters, in which I will also expand on the theory of archetypes, the second on the female parallels, which also includes the view on romantic relationships in Austen's works. Each chapter will have sub-chapters devoted to each parallel-pairing.

Chapter 1 Male Characters – Bad Boys and Good Guys

In her book *Fallen Heroes: Sixteen Master Villain Archetypes* Tami D. Cowden, explains an archetype as the following:

The word was coined by Carl Jung, who theorized that humans have a collective unconscious, "deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity [...] a kind of readiness to reproduce over and over again the same or similar mythical ideas." This shared memory of experiences has resulted in a resonance of the concepts of hero and heroine that transcends time, place and culture. Jung called these recurring personalities *archetypes*, from the Greek word *archetypos*, meaning "first of its kind." (p.1)

Cowden further states "there are recurring types who have starred in story after story, entertaining and informing the human experience for millenia." (p. 1) This explains how Austen could make use of archetypes, although the expression had not yet been coined.

Examples of archetypes are the "best friend," the "warrior," the "charmer," the "bad boy," the "nurturer," and the "waif." In this essay I will be presenting the main parallels I have found as the "bad boy," the "warrior," and the "best friend" to represent the male characters, as well as the "nurturer" for the female characters.

According to Robert Moore, there is a question of maturity in archetypes, which is very important in this essay, as I consider the parallels from a perspective of archetypal maturity. Moore observes that depending on the maturity of an individual he or she acts and thinks in different ways; a person reasons one way if they have reached full maturity, and in another if they have not had the possibility to mature completely. This becomes essential in my discussion of parallels in Jane Austen's novels. Personality traits of a mature character can be to affirm those who deserve it through seeing and noticing them (Moore, 61) or bring stability and calm (Moore, 62). Furthermore, mature behaviour can be to delight in others and give authentic praise (Moore, 62), as well as feeling compassionately and emphatically for others (Moore, 121). A person who has not yet reached full maturity can show this through arrogance or pride, as well as childishness or irresponsibility (Moore, 23).

Among the main male characters, there are three that stand out in each book, and these characters are also the ones having a parallel in a character in the other book. The three pairs are: Mr Bingley and Edward Ferrars, Mr Darcy and Colonel Brandon, and Wickham and Willoughby. Each pair also holds a specific type of archetype and represents a certain level of maturity, which makes their parallels even more interesting and poignant. In the following discussion, each pair will have a section devoted to them.

1.1 Colonel Brandon / Mr Darcy

Colonel Brandon and Mr Darcy personify the mature man in their respective novel, which can be seen in their character traits as well as their relationships with others. When the Dashwoods, in *Sense and Sensibility*, are forced to leave their home and move into Barton Cottage, they socialize with Mrs Dashwood's cousin Sir John, his wife and mother-in-law. Soon, the Dashwoods are also acquainted with Sir John's good friend Colonel Brandon, an army-man of 35, who rapidly forms an interest for Marianne. He is quiet and slightly shy, and Marianne sees very little of interest in him, despite Sir John's and his family's insistence on them being a good match. As for Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, he is acquainted with the Bennet-sisters and their parents when his friend Bingley moves into a house in Netherfield, and Darcy and Bingley's two sisters and brother-in-law accompany him. Darcy's first impressions of the countryside are not favourable, and unfortunately, he expresses them in a poor manner to Bingley, when Elizabeth Bennet is in earshot. As Lizzy is not impressed by what she overhears, her dislike for Darcy grows; meanwhile he is increasingly attracted to her. Colonel Brandon quickly holds Marianne in high esteem, but due to his character, he courts her very slowly and carefully. Mr Darcy, after having insulted Elizabeth and her entire circle of friends and family, develops positive feelings towards her as they spend some time together when she is caring for her ill sister. Neither man is obvious about his attraction or regard for their heroine, but their feelings grow and as men who are in a position to choose if they want to marry, it is obvious that

Elizabeth and Marianne are, in their eyes, suitable partners. Colonel Brandon in *Sense and Sensibility* and Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, are serious men, with much responsibility. They are both landowners, and therefore also employers, as well as both of them having wards (in the case of Darcy, it is his sister Georgiana, and in Brandon's it is a young woman called Eliza, the daughter of his first love). Being responsible and mature men, they take more into account than lust at first sight, an agreeable exterior, and the wealth of the women they are interested in.

Both Brandon and Darcy feel obligated to inform their love interests about the previous lives of their previous suitors, and thus tell the women their wards' stories. When Marianne has been deemed unsuitable by Willoughby's relatives and he is threatened with disinheritance, he leaves and marries someone with more money. As a result, Marianne is heartbroken. It is at this point that Colonel Brandon avows to Elinor, that as a young man he too was in love with someone who was deemed unsuitable, a woman whose life ended tragically, and that Brandon was made the guardian of this woman's daughter. Colonel Brandon, who is a very private man, chooses to tell Elinor about his ward and her tragic destiny when it is clear to him that Marianne needs to be informed of the mentality of her ex-lover. Willoughby has seduced Brandon's ward, who has been protected and cared for by Colonel Brandon, after Willoughby abandoned her, while she was pregnant. He recounts this to Elinor, so that the Dashwood-sisters will know who Willoughby really is, which may make it easier for Marianne to get over her infatuation and heart-break.

'It is now three years ago (she had just reached her fourteenth year,) that I removed her from school, to place her under the care of a very respectable woman, residing in Dorsetshire [...] But last February, almost a twelvemonth back, she suddenly disappeared. I had allowed her, (imprudently as it has since turned out,) at her earnest desire to go to Bath with one of her young friends, who was attending her father there for his health. [...] The first news of her that reached me of her' he continued 'came in a letter from herself, last October. [...] Little did Mr Willoughby imagine, I suppose, when his looks censured me for incivility in breaking up the party, that I was called away to the relief of one whom he had

made poor and miserable; but had he known it, what would it have availed? [...] He had left the girl whose youth and innocence he had seduced, in a situation of the utmost distress, with no creditable home, no help, no friends, ignorant of his address! He had left her, promising to return; he neither returned, nor wrote, nor relieved her.’ (Sense and Sensibility, p. 218)

Due to Brandon’s shy and introverted character, his speech about Willoughby and Brandon’s ward Eliza shows that he sees this as extremely important information, otherwise he would not have told them, especially as this is highly personal to him. Willoughby’s abandonment of Eliza, as well as his very open regard for Marianne, something that was frowned upon at the time (Jones, 17), and then his public loss of interest for her, makes Colonel Brandon less than impressed by the younger man. *Pride and Prejudice’s* Mr Darcy is also a private man, and he too does not divulge unnecessary information about Mr Wickham, until he feels obligated to, as he discovers that Elizabeth has been gravely misinformed of Wickham’s and of Darcy’s own personalities. He then informs Lizzy of Wickham’s wrongdoings towards Darcy’s sister and ward.

‘My sister, who is more than ten years my junior, was left to the guardianship of my mother’s nephew, Colonel Fitzwilliam, and myself. About a year ago, she was taken from school, and an establishment formed for her in London; and last summer she went with the lady who presided over it, to Ramsgate; and thither also went Mr Wickham, undoubtedly by design; for there proved to have been a prior acquaintance between himself and Mrs Young, in whose character we were most unhappily deceived; and by her convenience and aid, he so far recommended himself to Georgiana, whose affectionate heart retained a strong impression of his kindness to her as a child, that she was persuaded to believe herself in love, and to consent to an elopement. She was then but fifteen, which must be her excuse, and after stating her imprudence, I am happy to add, that I owed the knowledge of it to herself.’ (Pride and Prejudice, p. 157)

Both Darcy and Brandon are very honourable and quite selfless, which is highly visible when it comes to their confessions to Elizabeth and Elinor about their wards and their relationships with Wickham and Willoughby respectively. As neither man talks very much, and they are generally careful of what they say, what they say is all the more relevant, when they do choose to speak. This makes their personal confessions even more important. What is also highly interesting, when it comes to parallels between these two novels, is that the contents of Darcy's and Brandon's speeches about their wards hold great similarities: how both girls had been taken from school into the care of someone seemingly trustworthy, later to be taken to holiday-towns, where they were later seduced by Willoughby and Wickham respectively.

In time of need, both Mr Darcy and Colonel Brandon show their heroic traits in a quite self-less manner. Marianne discovers Brandon's positive qualities more and more in a time of need. After having been a faithful friend to her family, he rises further in her esteem when she is surprised by bad weather when she is out walking and he saves her after she collapses. When Marianne is ill after her collapse, he personally fetches her mother so that she can have her at her side, which also makes her see him in a new light. When it comes to Darcy, he is held higher in esteem by Elizabeth after he tells her about the true character of Wickham, especially about Wickham's seduction of Darcy's sister and ward, Georgiana, and later when he helps the Bennet-family restore their honour after the youngest Bennet-sister Lydia's elopement with Willoughby. After Brandon's and Darcy's help in dire situations, Marianne and Elizabeth see their heroes in a more and more positive light, and finally fall in love with them and then marry them. Another testament to their upstanding characters is their sense of responsibility and empathy: Darcy is described by his housekeeper as "the best landlord, and the best master", and Colonel Brandon helps Edward Ferrars when he is disinherited, giving him the parish at his estate, since Edward wishes to join the clergy. These are facts that make them mature, by the criteria set by Moore (121).

Colonel Brandon and Mr Darcy both adhere to the "warrior-"archetype, which is, according to Cowden's book *Heroes & Heroines – Sixteen Master Archetypes*, "a noble champion, he acts with

honour. He's noble, tenacious, relentless, and he always sticks up for the underdog." (43). In *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover*, Moore describes the mature part of what he calls the King-aspect (the four archetypes of the title are very often interwoven) of the warrior, "It gives stability and centeredness. It brings calm. [...] It also has the power of inner authority" (62), qualities that describe both Brandon and Darcy very well. These two men keep their calm and are authoritative in stressful situations (during e.g. Marianne's illness, and Lydia's disappearance), and act out of experience and knowledge in these situations; and from the beginning, Brandon and Darcy also show themselves capable of giving authentic praise (for example for the musicality and beauty of the objects of their affections), which are clear signs of maturity.

1.2 Willoughby / Wickham

If we consider Mr Darcy and Colonel Brandon to be mature characters, Willoughby and Wickham are examples of men who have not yet – if they ever – reached maturity. Through their selfishness, their priorities and the way they treat others, it is clear that these two men are not yet mature. However, this does not mean that they are depicted in a completely negative way, instead they are the initial love-interests of the heroines. When Willoughby is introduced in *Sense and Sensibility*, it is as a hero who sweeps in and saves Marianne when she has hurt her ankle. He gives a very favourable impression and very soon shows his affection towards Marianne quite openly. Wickham's entrance in *Pride and Prejudice* is also quite heroic, since he is part of a regiment that settles at Meryton, the town near where the Bennets live. He too gives a positive impression at first, and charms Elizabeth. Both Wickham and Willoughby are, on the surface, interesting and attractive, not afraid of complimenting their love-interest of the moment. However, they both show their immoral characters in seducing, or trying to seduce, Brandon's and Darcy's wards. When Darcy reveals the true story of Wickham to Elizabeth, he tells her that Wickham had planned to elope with the innocent Georgiana Darcy, and there are allusions to Wickham having "improper" relationships in the

novel. Wickham is presented as a cad with, in the end, few forgiving qualities. On parallel lines, Willoughby has seduced, with a child as the result, Colonel Brandon's young ward.

The importance of money is essential in the cases of Wickham and Willoughby, as they both aim to marry someone with a considerable wealth. Instead of marrying the woman he truly loved, Marianne, Willoughby chooses to marry for money.

'Well, it is the oddest thing to me, that a man should use such a pretty girl so ill! But when there is plenty of money on one side, and next to none on the other, Lord bless you! They care no more of such things!' 'The lady then – Miss Grey I think you called her – is very rich?' 'Fifty thousand pounds, my dear. Did you ever see her? A smart, stylish girl they say; but not handsome.' (*Sense and Sensibility*, p. 204)

Willoughby's story is tragic, since he really was in love with Marianne, but because of his selfishness made a priority of money before love. In the case of Wickham, his plans do not go quite as he had thought. After having shown initial interest in Elizabeth Bennet, his interest quite rapidly moves to a young woman with greater funds.

'Her heart had been but slightly touched, and her vanity was satisfied with believing that *she* would have been his only choice, had fortune permitted it. The sudden acquisition of ten thousand pounds was the most remarkable charm of the young lady to whom he was now rendering himself agreeable' (*Pride and Prejudice*, p. 118)

However, Wickham was not content with only money, but his also let his libido control him, as he eloped with the youngest Bennet-sister, Lydia. After what was probably to have been only a brief affair based on sex, Wickham finds himself trapped in a marriage because of his selfishness and primitive drives. And so, Wickham's and Willoughby's stories both end tragically; Willoughby abandons the woman he loves, and instead marries for money. He will never be happy as he has known love, and has chosen a materialistic life-style before true love. Wickham is a constant seducer, and has been known to seek the pleasure of the flesh instead of commitment several times. His down-fall started with his attempt to seduce Georgiana, and ended with his choice to seduce Lydia

which forced him into marriage, instead of marrying for money, which was probably his initial goal, if his attempts to court Miss King are any evidence.

Both Willoughby and Wickham are described as libertines in Hazel Jones' *Jane Austen & Marriage*: "opportunities existed for libertines to take advantage of youth and inexperience – Colonel Brandon's seventeen-year-old ward, ranging the streets of Bath and mixing with unsuitable companions, is an easy conquest for Willoughby. Given George Wickham's sexual proclivities, we can guess what he might get up to on his visits there without his wife." (50). Consequently, I believe that Wickham and Willoughby behave in what Moore considers immature behaviour, having "the "primitive" or "infantile" drives, amoral" traits (22), and a "superiority complex that covers a real sense of vulnerability, weakness and superiority." (22) As for their archetypal category, they would adhere to "the Bad Boy" who is "dangerous to know [...] but also charismatic" (Cowden, LaFever, Vider, 10) with the description "his only mission is himself" (143), which is proven in both men's attractiveness to the opposite sex, as well as their strive to marry for money, successful or not.

1.3 Edward Ferrars / Mr Bingley

After having presented one mature parallel in Darcy and Brandon, as well as the immature characters of Wickham and Willoughby, we proceed to the final male parallel; that of Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility* and Mr Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice*. In this parallel, we find characters who show maturity, but who have perhaps not reached full maturity at the beginning of their respective novel. We see this "lack" of maturity in the control their families have over them, especially in romantic issues, as both the Ferrars and the Bingleys have intended in mind for the young men.

Edward Ferrars becomes acquainted with the Dashwood-sisters through his sister, their sister-in-law. He is a mild-mannered, sensible character who befriends and then falls in love with Elinor Dashwood. Because of his careful nature, his family tends to control him, especially in the beginning of the novel, when his mother and sister influence him greatly.

She took the first opportunity of affronting her mother-in-law on the occasion, talking to her so expressively of her brother's great expectations, of Mrs. Ferrar's resolution that both her sons should marry well, and of the danger attending any young woman who attempted to *draw him in* [...] (*Sense and Sensibility*, p. 31)

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Bingley arrives at Netherfield in the company of his friend Darcy, his two sisters and his brother-in-law. Bingley, like Edward Ferrars, is mild-mannered and kind, and is taken in by Jane, the older Bennet-sister. Bingley, like Edward, is initially influenced by the people surrounding him. "Miss Bennet was therefore established as a sweet girl, and their brother felt authorised by such commendation to think of her as he chose." (*Pride and Prejudice*, 16) shows the influence his sisters and friend had over his romantic choices. Furthermore, it is Darcy and Bingley's sisters who convince him to leave Netherfield for London, thus leaving Jane. "Bingley has great natural modesty, with a stronger dependence on my judgment than on his own. To convince him, therefore, that he had deceived himself, was no very difficult point." (*Pride and Prejudice*, 155), again shows their influence on him. Since both Edward and Bingley are modest men, careful and slightly shy, and Elinor and Jane are sensible, no promises are made, and when Bingley leaves for London, and Edward too, there is nothing that speaks of any type of commitment between them.

Both Bingley and Edward Ferrars have been romantically involved previously; as is shown in Darcy's comment to Lizzy "I had often seen him in love before." (*Pride and Prejudice*, 153). However, the reader discovers more of Edward's background, than Bingley's. Edward turns out to be engaged to a young woman in secret, but this proves to be a youthful indiscretion, and instead of being negative, it shows Edward's strength of character. Despite being disinherited and especially no longer in love with the woman, Edward refuses to break off the engagement, only so that he can be true to his word. Fortunately after the disinheritance, the lady in question prefers his now richer brother, and in the end, when all misunderstandings have been cleared up, Bingley marries Jane, and Edward marries Elinor.

Bingley and Edward can be seen as the perfect embodiments of the archetype “the Best Friend” which is described as “sweet and safe [...] kind, responsible and decent. [...] This man doesn’t enjoy confrontation and can sometimes be unassertive because he doesn’t want to hurt anyone’s feelings.” (Cowden, LaFever, Vider, 16). In *Edward Ferrars and Mr Bingley*, we see characters who, initially, may not quite have reached total maturity, but still display great signs of maturity throughout the novels. Because of a final “coming of age,” these two men dare to stand up to those around them and finally have happy marriages with the women they love. Their final journeys into full maturity take place outside of the story, if the explanation cannot simply be regarded as the love for a mature and good woman. Their initial immaturity can be seen in the fact that Bingley lets himself be influenced by his family and by Darcy, and Edward does the same, as well as having had a relationship based on “attraction at first sight” with Lucy Steele. However, their coming into complete maturity is shown in the fact that they realize the “error in their ways” and make amends by marrying their heroine. Edward’s maturity is even more evident in his unwillingness to break his promises and release himself from his prior engagement to Lucy Steele at her expense, although he knows he loves Elinor and that they are better suited for each other. Edward’s and Bingley’s maturity is shown in their “calm stability” and their “ability to delight in others” (Moore, 62) (e.g. Bingley in Jane’s beauty and Edward in his relationship with the Dashwoods) and their compassionate and emphatic nature.

The male characters are thus easily paired in parallels, and each parallel adheres to a specific archetype; the helpful and responsible warrior, the kind, good-natured best friend, and the bad boy, who is charming but not a good companion. Through their mature traits, Darcy and Brandon, and Bingley and Edward, make for better partners to their heroines than the immature Willoughby and Wickham, as the maturity in the first parallels give them better possibilities when it comes to happy, long-lasting relationships.

Chapter 2 Female Characters: Sensible or Sensitive?

Through the use of archetypes in her stories, Austen shows her preference for a certain type of romantic relationship, one that Hazel Jones describes as “the very best kind of union, based on compatibility, affection and respect” (1). The theory that Austen promotes a certain kind of romantic relationship is further supported by Jones who writes “one certainty emerged: that marriages based on love and esteem were more likely to endure the test of time than those contracted for material gain” (1). Jones further states that “Friendship within marriage, first cultivated over a long period of courtship, was lasting rather than fleeting” (1). Further evidence for Austen’s promotion of relationships based on a longer acquaintance can be found in *101 Things You Didn’t Know about Jane Austen*, in which Patrice Hannon states that Elizabeth and Marianne are “saved from marrying their first favourites and in that regard are much luckier than the men and women who pick spouses based on superficial criteria without real knowledge of their characters and live to regret their bad decisions.” (161).

The female archetype Austen uses for all of the four heroines is that of the nurturer – a person who is capable, serene and optimistic, as well as a listener who takes care of everyone (Cowden, LaFever, Vider, 92), however, the two different parallel-pairs can be differentiated by stages of maturity, as Jane and Elinor have reached complete maturity, while Elizabeth and Marianne are still developing this side of them. The fact that Elizabeth and Marianne have not yet reached full maturity leads to them to make certain decisions and to adopt certain attitudes in the novels that are not entirely positive (e.g. falling for the charms of Wickham and Willoughby), before reaching full maturity by the end of the books, and thus making the “right” romantic decisions.

The parallels between the female characters are not as clear-cut as those of their male counterparts, much due to the great resemblances between the four main female characters, who in terms of archetypes are all embodiments of the same archetype: the nurturer. And when it comes to the level of maturity, the differences are not as important as they are with the male characters, all four women are mature; the difference lies in whether or not they have reached full maturity. There are

more facets to the women, especially as we find out more about the female characters' personalities than we do of the men, but also a mixing of their traits. Something that mixes the characters is for example the fact that both Marianne and Jane fall ill after having been out walking in bad weather, and are nursed by their respective sister. There are, however, a few general ideas that lead to the following main parallels.

2.1 Elinor/Jane

Elinor Dashwood and Jane Bennet are both the oldest sister in their respective family, and both are level-headed and sensible. Early in their respective novels, both women befriend and soon become infatuated with, a gentleman coming into their acquaintance: Edward Ferrars in the case of Elinor and Mr Bingley in that of Jane. The two couples are similar in nature and in what they consider important in life; all four are calm, thoughtful and sensible characters who do not show their emotions in an obvious manner. However, this sensible nature is to become detrimental as no promises are made and no one is completely certain of the other's feelings, which is remarked upon by Charlotte Lucas to Lizzy, concerning Jane's feelings towards Bingley (Jones, 18). As they are separated from their love interests, both women accept it, and are, outwardly, not particularly disturbed by it, as they are prone to keep things to themselves.

'You doubt me, cried Jane, slightly colouring; 'indeed you have no reason. He may live in my memory as the most amiable man of my acquaintance, but that is all. I have nothing either to hope or fear, and nothing to reproach him with. Thank God! I have not *that* pain. A little time therefore – I shall certainly try to get the better.'*(Pride and Prejudice, 106)*

As both women's families believe that more has been said than actually has been said, it is, in fact, the families who make assumptions and make references and allusions to a possible relationship. This is hurtful to Elinor and Jane, but they keep this to themselves as far as possible. The more romantic Marianne confronts Elinor, who again shows her sensibility in her answer.

'Excuse me' said she; 'and be assured that I meant no offence to you, by speaking, in so quiet a way, of my own feelings. Believe them to be stronger than I have declared; believe them, in short, to be such as his merit, and the suspicion – the hope of his affection for me may warrant, without imprudence or folly. But farther than this you must not believe. I am by no means assured of his regard for me.' (*Sense and Sensibility*, 29).

Jane and Elinor tell their sisters that they have feelings for Mr Bingley and Edward Ferrars respectively, but since no promises have been made they cannot logically expect anything to come from their feelings. Both women are level-headed and sensible, which is the reason for them reacting seemingly calmly to their love-interests' departures. Jane and Elinor both observe social conventions to a higher degree than their sisters, since "it was considered highly improper for a woman to fall in love before the gentleman's preference was declared." (Jones, 17). This is further examined by Claire Tomalin who states "In *Sense and Sensibility* [...] Austen compares the discretion, polite lies and carefully preserved privacy of one sister with the transparency, truth-telling and freely expressed emotion of the other." (155). The level-headedness of Elinor and Jane makes it important for them to be certain of their heroes' feelings before they themselves can assume anything regarding their relationships. And so, in the end of the novels, when Elinor and Jane are reunited with their love-interests, and finally come to an understanding that there is a mutual interest and high esteem between them, they marry.

Elinor and Jane can be considered mature characters, as they have a calm and stable presence, as well as an ability to delight in others (Moore, 62), especially their sisters. Despite an early attraction, they stay sensible and do not assume anything about their relationships with Edward Ferrars and Bingley thanks to their maturity. They may be hurt, even heart-broken, when they believe that nothing will come of their relationships with these men, but they do not let their attraction dictate their lives, and they are pragmatic enough to be able to move on, even though they do not need to in the end as they are reunited with their heroes. Through Jane's and Elinor's attention to others and

taking care of everyone around them, and listening to others (Cowden, LaFever, Viders, 92), especially as their sisters' confidantes, they are to me the perfect embodiments of the nurturer.

2.2 Marianne/Elizabeth

Marianne Dashwood and Elizabeth, or Lizzy, Bennet are the second-born daughters in their families. Both are young intelligent women, showing their wit and musical talent. In *Jane Austen A Life*, Clare Tomalin states "she (Lizzy) resembles Marianne Dashwood in energy and wit." (p. 160) Both Marianne and Lizzy have romantic and idealistic views on life, and the first impressions they get from people are essential to them, which means that they could be perceived to be slightly shallow. Elizabeth's first impression of Wickham can be seen as representative of a slightly superficial, initial attitude: "His appearance was greatly in his favour; he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and a very pleasing address." (*Pride and Prejudice*, p. 59) and after having shown disinterest in Colonel Brandon, Marianne forms a positive opinion of Willoughby without knowing very much about him.

"But she had seen enough of him to join in all the admiration of the others, and with an energy which always adorned her praise. His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favourite story; and in his carrying her into the house with so little previous formality, there was a rapidity of thought which particularly recommended the action to her. Every circumstance belonging to him was interesting." (*Sense and Sensibility*, p.52)

In their rapidly formed impressions of their initial love interests, we see a certain impetuosity in both Marianne's and Elizabeth's actions.

Colonel Brandon and Mr Darcy are, early on in their respective novels, interested in Marianne and Elizabeth romantically, but do not show it very openly. However, these men are not interesting to the young women for different reasons, prejudice and preconceived notions in particular. Instead,

Marianne falls in love with Willoughby at first sight, and Elizabeth is impressed by Wickham at their initial contact. Both women listen to their love interests, and accept what they think of Brandon and Darcy. Wickham's interest for Elizabeth, and hers for him, fades relatively quickly (in comparison to Marianne and Willoughby's relationship) and his sights are instead set on a woman of more considerable wealth, a situation which Elizabeth accepts. Marianne falls more deeply for Willoughby and he in return for her, but at the threat of losing his inheritance, he opts to court a young woman with a considerable fortune, leaving Marianne heartbroken. Lizzy learns more and more about Mr Darcy, especially when he makes an important contribution in the search for her youngest sister Lydia, who has eloped with Wickham, and she learns how he is essential in saving Lydia's and their family's pride, through enforcing a marriage, instead of letting Lydia be lost to a life in sin. Marianne's opinion of Colonel Brandon is altered as he proves to be reliable and trustworthy even in times of need, as she falls ill, and he is the one to fetch her mother and bring her to her daughter's sickbed. During a longer period of time, both Marianne and Elizabeth have discovered positive traits in their respective hero, especially in the men's help and contributions in times of need. This is what brings both women to a realization of the possibility of a future, loving and healthy relationship between them. It is this realization that makes them finally fall in love with Brandon and Darcy respectively.

Lizzy and especially Marianne show a type of immaturity as they let themselves be taken in by the interesting and attractive surface of the immature men. However, both women reach full maturity as they finally understand what is really important (i.e. mutual interests, compatibility, reliability and friendship) and therefore take an interest in the mature man, which leads to their happy marriages, and long-term happiness. A lack of rationality can be seen in Elizabeth's character, when she refuses Mr Collins' proposal of marriage, and the same lack can be seen in Marianne's initial dismissal of Colonel Brandon, as they cannot possibly marry without love and their romantic notions. The possibility of falling in love with these men seems impossible. The difference between them, however, is that Elizabeth does not take the time or effort to get to know Mr Collins, with whom, in all probability she could not find mutual interests and affection, but does with Darcy later. Early in

Sense and Sensibility, Marianne thinks that, at the age of 35, Colonel Brandon is too old for love, and therefore she cannot see him as a potential love interest. When Marianne comes into maturity, she understands the appeal of Colonel Brandon, despite her initial superficial view of his being too old. These are attitudes that could be considered signs of immaturity, but they are obviously also traits of their personalities. Even after having reached full maturity, they favour romantic love, but their view is no longer as superficial, and they understand love can be expressed in different manners, not only those that they believed in before they reached a certain level of maturity. Marianne realizes during and after her illness that love can be expressed in different ways and comes to appreciate the not as “passionate” fashion, but also the importance of dependability and friendship. This can be seen as her coming of age or into maturity. Elizabeth’s final reaching maturity most probably takes place during a journey she undertakes with her aunt and uncle, and particularly during the crisis with regard to Lydia and Wickham. It is at this time she begins to see things differently and appreciate other qualities in people, and Darcy in particular. The heroines in Jane Austen’s works are thus individuals, sometimes in need of maturing, and not infallible, but they are real people. In *Jane Austen & Marriage*, Hazel Jones states “Jane Austen presents us with fallible women, who learn from their mistakes, because this is how experience is gained. They are individuals and respond to whatever happens to them with intelligence and common sense.” This is a statement that seems to be especially true with respect to Elizabeth and Marianne. Caring for others, listening to what others say (Cowden, LaFever, Viders, 92), especially in the case of their sisters, makes these characters embody “the nurturer”, especially after having reached maturity.

Based on what seems the outcome of the different romantic relationships in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, it would seem as though Jane Austen did have a preference for a “duller” type of marriage, a type that is based on mutual regard and friendship, formed during a prolonged acquaintance, instead of passionate, and perhaps superficial, love affairs in which the subjects invested themselves very quickly. Yet, it seems as though Austen still considers romantic feelings, and especially friendship and mutual respect, to be important, and that marriage for purely

convenient reasons such as money, is equally as unacceptable as marriage for “passionate love.” Elizabeth’s inability to understand her friend Charlotte who marries for practicality more than for love is one way of showing that this type of marriage is worth less. Patrice Hannon writes “The marriage of convenience is an important topic in Austen’s novels. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet’s opinion of her friend Charlotte Lucas never fully recovers after the latter accepts the hand of the “conceited, narrow-minded, silly” Mr Collins.” (p. 65). It would thus seem as though Austen did consider marriage for solely practical reasons less worthy than a romantic one, as those marriages are typically not depicted as happy ones. Just as she seems to have considered marriages entered for superficial reasons; such as the Bennets’, for which the reason was Mrs Bennet’s great beauty, instead of compatibility and mutual regard, lacking in value or possibility of long-term happiness.

Within the parallels on which this essay is concentrated, there are four happy marriages; Colonel Brandon and Marianne Dashwood’s, Mr Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet’s, Edward Ferrars and Elinor Dashwood’s, and Mr Bingley and Jane Bennet’s. These are all marriage based on compatibility and affection that have been allowed time to grow. Even though, both Edward Ferrars and Elinor, as well as Mr Bingley and Jane, were mutually attracted to each other from the early stages of their acquaintance, they took much time to get to know each other, and had built up a friendship and mutual respect when they finally married. Mr Darcy and Colonel Brandon may not have attracted romantic feelings in Elizabeth and Marianne initially; however, due to a prolonged acquaintance, these two women discover the positive - and mature - qualities in Darcy and Brandon, which lead to them forming friendships and finally happy marriages. All four of these marriages are based on mature behaviour and the positive sides of the respective archetypes that these eight characters embody. On the other hand, there are our “bad boys” Wickham and Willoughby, who have unfortunate endings, because they are driven by immature feelings and reasonings. Wickham, who constantly seeks the pleasures of the flesh, ends up married to Lydia Bennet after having been forced into marriage by Mr Darcy, only to save the Bennet-family from humiliation and ruin. Mr Willoughby

marries for money, instead of marrying for love, as he is unhappily married to Miss Grey with her fifty thousand pounds at the end of the novel.

Conclusion

The conclusion to this essay, is that as stated in the thesis statement, there are parallel-characters mirroring each other in Jane Austen's two novels *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, and that these parallels present certain archetypal personality traits, that determine their characters' ending. Through these archetypal parallels, Jane Austen promotes a certain type of behaviour and makes a statement about how the personality of characters decides what their romantic relationships are going to be like. If a character is sensible and responsible – considered to be mature personality traits – they are bound to have a long-lasting, happy marriage, whereas if he or she is governed by passion and superficiality, which can be considered immature traits, the character is destined to find himself in relationships for the wrong reasons, in which there is little or no happiness. This is easily exemplified by the main characters in the two novels; Jane Bennet and Mr Bingley in *Pride and Prejudice* and Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars in *Sense and Sensibility*, who find happiness in their matches that are based on sensible thinking and logic, as well as a longer courtship during which they get to know each other and become friendly. Elizabeth Bennet and Marianne Dashwood cannot find happiness with Mr Wickham and Mr Willoughby respectively, as their relationships are based on the impassioned first impressions they receive, based on appearance and superficial qualities; instead these women find true happiness with Mr Darcy and Colonel Brandon, men they did not appreciate at first, but as they got to know them better and found mutual respect and intellectual interests, they grew to love.

Thus, in brief, the conclusion is that Jane Austen made use of a certain type of character traits that can be found in the parallel characters, to prove and promote her vision of a happy, long-lasting romantic relationship.

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