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**CHARACTERS IN *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY*:
COMPARING NOVEL AND FILM**

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To my parents, whose love and support have always encouraged
me to pursue my dreams.

"Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort."

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*

ABSTRACT

Adapting a well-known novel to the screen is never an easy task. The adaptor has to make decisions as to what will remain faithful to the novel and what needs to be transformed. Therefore, changes will always be present in any work of adaptation.

This paper aims at analyzing the similarities and differences between the six main characters of *Sense and Sensibility*, by Jane Austen, and their screen versions in the 1995 adaptation of the novel, made by Emma Thompson. In order to achieve this goal we analyzed the characters in each media separately at first, comparing them afterwards.

The results obtained through this analysis show us that modification did occur and that many resources were used to help the delineation of characters. The characters suffered considerable changes in spite of remaining the same in their essences.

Key words: film adaptation, *Sense and Sensibility*, Jane Austen, characters.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| INTRODUCTION | 6 |
| 1 LITERATURE AND FILM..... | 8 |
| 1.1 FILM ADAPTATIONS..... | 10 |
| 1.2 CHARACTERS IN NOVELS..... | 12 |
| 1.3 CHARACTERS IN FILMS..... | 16 |
| 2 JANE AUSTEN – HER STYLE..... | 18 |
| 2.1 SENSE AND SENSIBILITY – THE NOVEL..... | 21 |
| 2.1.1 The characters | 23 |
| 2.2 CHARACTERIZATION IN THE FILM | 26 |
| 3 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN CHARACTERS..... | 31 |
| CONCLUSION | 42 |
| REFERENCES | 45 |

INTRODUCTION

Literature and film have always been connected. Both of them are narratives; the first only counts on words to transmit its story, the latter has the addition of sounds and images to express itself. Literature has always been a great source of material for screenwriters and directors. Adapting a successful novel to the screen, despite being a difficult task, can be very profitable if done correctly. For that to happen, certain aspects have to be taken into account. The most important one is to remember that literature and film are different media and it is impossible to transfer faithfully a novel to film. Each medium has its own specificity; therefore, things will have to be removed, added or transformed in order to fit certain requirements. Changing is inherent to adaptation.

Literature has always been considered a more noble art than cinema. However debatable that may be, the fact is that movies have become more popular throughout the years and with that comes the need to satisfy the public. Films are much more frequently done to fulfill the audience's expectation than novels. This is one of the aspects that need the attention of adaptors. Sometimes what works in a novel, which is constituted by a more restrict audience, does not work in a film.

Characters are one of the basis of any narrative, whether it is a novel or a film. As a consequence, it is very important that they make sense and that the spectators establish some connection with them. To establish this empathy between audience and character, very often characters have to be changed. Some are eliminated, others condensed into one, but the great majority of characters in a novel will suffer some kind of transformation in order to better suit the story narrated in the film.

This paper aims at analyzing how the characters of the novel *Sense and Sensibility*, by Jane Austen, have been changed when adapted to the screen in 1995, by Emma Thompson, and directed by Ang Lee. We are going to compare the characters in the novel and in the movie in order to investigate if they were changed and if so, in what aspects. We are also going to look into what resources were used to better explain the characters to the audience, and how these resources helped to redefine them. Our ultimate goal is to verify how different the characters became in the movie version.

In order to achieve that goal we are first going to look into some theoretical aspects concerning the relationship between film and literature and how characters are different in both media. In a second step we are going to analyze the main characters of the novel *Sense*

and Sensibility, followed by the study of the characters in the film. Finally, we are going to contrast them in both media and analyze what has remained true to the novel and what was altered to fit the screen.

1 LITERATURE AND FILM

Since the beginnings of the moving picture, film and literature have been compared and analyzed in the way they relate to each other. Both share the same basic objective, which is the telling of a story. However, they tell their stories in different ways; whereas literature has only language to convey its meaning, cinema has not only that but also images and sounds. Each medium has its own particularities, but it is undeniable that they are closely related. The fiction film that we are used to watching has the narrative in its foundation. It has to narrate facts in a certain order with beginning, middle and end.

There has been too much discussion on what medium would be superior to the other in a competition between critics of both areas. According to Stam (2000), for a long time, and still today, literature has been considered a more refined medium by many, probably because it has been around for centuries and, in comparison, cinema is fairly new. He goes on saying that the written word has always been surrounded by an aura of accuracy that portrays with fidelity the inner thoughts and feelings needed to be expressed in a narrative. Nevertheless, the fact that cinema is able to use more resources to express itself can be used as an argument to defend it. Cinema, because of its ability to use sounds and images as well as words, can be even more able to convey elaboration and depth. In the author's words (2000, p.12): "Cinema's audiovisual nature and its five tracks authorize an infinitely richer *combinatoire* of syntactic and semantic possibilities." The abundance of resources available to film turns it into the perfect environment for the exploration of various genres and forms of narrative.

If the cliché phrase suggests that 'image is worth a thousand words' how much more worthy are the typical film's hundreds of shots (each formed by hundreds if not thousands of images) as they interact simultaneously with phonetic sound, noises, written materials and music?" (STAM, 2000, p.12).

This is a discussion that generates a lot of polemic, but it is unquestionable that one medium benefits from the other and that they have been intimately connected throughout the years. This relationship becomes obvious when we think of the many film adaptations of works of literature. However distinct, both media share enough elements to make the transposition from one to another possible.

Stam remarks that, since its creation, the film has been subject to study. In these studies, critics have tried to reach its core and find out what elements made film singular and different from other arts. Mast (1982) also mentions the endless arguments that have arisen

between the ones who believe that literature and film are different, and the ones who believe in their similarities. However, in order to be able to compare both media, it is essential that some differentiations are made.

According to him, whereas a novel transmits information through words, a play uses sounds and images as well as a verbal text. The latter also happens in films, so that in some cases films are more similar to plays (although it is closer to novels in other aspects). Movies are parallel to novels because both of them are concrete; in the same way that you can hold a book in your hands you can hold a reel of film. Also, they are both narrative fiction, that is told by one voice (the narrator, or, in the case of the movie, the camera), and that is able to move fast through time and space. However, films resemble plays in the sense that they both are public presentations. They are performances meant for an audience, present at a certain space and time. Since people have limited attention span, it is necessary that the performance does not outlast the amount of time they are willing to spend. This is another aspect that makes films different from novels: they are constrained to a two-hour show, while a novel can be as long as the author wants it to be. Even though, similarly to what happens in a play, the scenes are acted by real people rather than by conceptual entities, the fact that the camera acts as a narrator that only allows us to know what the director wants resembles a novel. Therefore, as Stam suggests, the film holds a place in between plays and novels, sometimes with characteristics of one, sometimes with traits of the other.

As a consequence of the aforementioned similarities and differences, we can reach the conclusion that adapting a novel to the screen can be done if three steps are followed. According to Mast (1982) the first is to make it fit a two-hour format; the second is to transform something that is only verbal into something else that also uses sounds and images. Finally, it is necessary to dramatize the scenes that are only narrated.

As long as these steps are taken into account, there is no reason why a novel cannot be transformed into a film. The only thing that has to be remembered is that, when changing the medium, the story is inevitably changed, since there are so many aspects that have to be adapted in order to tell a coherent story.

1.1 FILM ADAPTATIONS

Adaptation, as Hutcheon (2006) points out, is not something exclusive to our days. Long before the era of cinemas, television and Internet existed, writers would get works from other sources and transform them to produce something new. Shakespeare did that, as well as Aeschylus and Racine. All of them - and many others – took narratives that were familiar to their culture and retold them in a different way, making them known to an even bigger audience. According to the author, an adaptation occurs when one piece of work is transposed into another piece of work, salvaging the essence of the original but bringing changes to the new piece. It requires interpretation of the source material, so that it may be recreated into something new. And finally, it involves intertextuality, since it deals with at least two works – the original and the adaptation itself. By the use of an already existing material, the adaptation produces another original work which, even though resembles the adapted piece, is an original in itself.

Many of the films we watch are adaptations of well-known novels. Some authors seem to be favorites of many adaptors and producers given the great number of adaptations made from their works, such as E.M. Forster (*Passage to India*, *Room with a view* and *Howards End*), Edith Wharton (*Ethan Fromme*, *The Age of Innocence* and *House of Mirth*) and Jane Austen – with all her novels transformed into movies. However, having a good story does not seem to be enough to guarantee the success of its screen adaptation. Many excellent novels dissatisfied the audience when turned into movies, whereas others managed to become even more successful than their book versions. The fact is that adaptation is an art, and like any form of art it requires sensitivity and attention to details. Novels and films are different media and, being so, deal with different elements that have to be taken into consideration during the process. The public of novels is more restrict and specific than the one who watches movies; films are much more expensive than books and therefore require more profit; films are constricted into a two-hour period that novels are not and so on.

Very often, when we go to a movie that is an adaptation of a book we have already read and liked, the expectations are high. Seger (1992) remarks that we all want to see the characters, stories and places that so much fascinated us in a narrative. This is almost impossible to be achieved, though. Adapting implies change and without it the project would not be viable. The kind of changes made to the original will depend on the adaptor; there are no rules to be followed that will guarantee the success of a movie. These changes may occur

in any of the elements of the novel. Perhaps the story is too complicated to be told in two hours, therefore, it may be simplified and some subplots removed or condensed. Sometimes it is the exact opposite; the novel has pages and pages of descriptive narrative that will take only a few seconds to be shown in film. Consequently, more content has to be added and dialogues created to fill the time. As Hutcheon (2006, p.40) says: “In the move from telling to showing a performance adaptation must dramatize: description, narration, and represented thoughts must be transcoded into speech, actions, sounds, and visual images.”

Let’s consider length. A novel can have as many pages as the author feels necessary in order to convey his message and the reader may take as long as he wants to finish it. A film, however, must tell a whole story in around two or three hours at the most. That means sometimes having to eliminate superfluous stories and characters, focusing on only one story line. Novels frequently have many story lines and characters that, although not utterly important for the understanding of the plot, bring some extra interest in it. If used in the film adaptation, they may confuse the audience instead of pleasing it. Since the public cannot rewind the film – at least not in the movie theatre – to check if they understood something correctly or remember who a character is, it is important that the number of characters and subplots are reduced to make easier for the audience to follow the story. This is very important because people tend not to like films that are too confusing. That can be acceptable in a novel, but, more often than not, detracts from the enjoyment of a movie.

A novel communicates everything through words. Images and scenery are described to the reader and the thoughts of the characters are shown in details. Since images and ideas vary from person to person, it is the reader’s imagination that will lead him through the pages of a novel. Each person will have a different internal image of what the characters and scenery look like. When the words are transposed to the world of action and image, some choices have to be made. In a film, the public does not count on their imagination; everything is ready for them to accept as the truth for that particular story being told. The adaptor and director of the movie must choose what they consider the most appropriate “face” for each story.

Seger (1992) also observes that money cannot be removed from the equation either. Nowadays filmmaking requires a good deal of investment, hence the need of attracting good audience and profiting from it. Studios cannot afford to lose money and compromise their image with a bad adaptation. The most common consequence of this need for profit is to make sure that the plot is adapted to the taste of the intended audience. Having in mind that many different kinds of people go to the movies to watch one same film, it is wise to try to please as much audience as possible. When it comes to period movies, for instance, it is sometimes

necessary to explain somehow the social and cultural habits of the time portrayed, so that the public grasps the plot more easily.

Characters often have to be changed to suit the needs of the film. Sometimes they are eliminated, sometimes created and very commonly condensed into one. According to the author they have to have a clear function in the story so that moviegoers can have no doubts as to whom they should root for. That frequently means making a character more likeable to the public, sometimes more physically attractive, even if that comes against the character in the novel. The choice of actors for the main roles sometimes already shows how the adaptor is trying to bring more public to watch the film. There are cases in which the character in the novel is described as repulsive or unattractive, but when it is transposed to the screen it becomes much more pleasant to look at. This is mainly to help the public sympathise with him or her. A character the public can relate and feel emotionally attached to is a great contribution to any film. As Seger well puts “A sympathetic character is not a necessity in novels and plays, but it is something filmmakers look for when they are considering material.” This is the main reason why producers try to have appealing lead characters in their films, because contrary to what happens in a novel, for instance, the audience feels the need to have an emotional connection to the character and this is certainly easier to achieve with likeable, pleasant characters.

1.2 CHARACTERS IN NOVELS

The base of a novel lies in telling a good story, one in which the reader is avid to know what follows, what happens in the following pages. Forster (1974) says that the novel is constituted by a series of events that comply with a certain time structure. No matter how much a novelist plays with the time, it is impossible to eliminate it completely, for the understanding of the story requires some relationship with that aspect.

But, perhaps the most fundamental feature of the novel is the fact that it is populated by characters. In the words of Lodge (p.67, 1992):

Character is arguably the most important single component of the novel. Other narrative forms, such as epic, and other media, such as film, can tell a story just as well, but nothing can equal the great tradition of the European novel in the richness, variety and psychological depth of its portrayal of human nature. Yet character is the most difficult aspect of the art of fiction to discuss in technical terms. This is partly

because there are so many different types of character and so many different ways of representing them: major characters and minor characters, flat characters and round characters, characters rendered from inside their minds, like Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway, and characters viewed from outside by others, like Christopher Isherwood's Sally Bowles.

That is, according to Forster, the most fascinating aspect of a novel. The novelist is able to show the reader the internal thoughts and emotions of his characters. This is the fundamental difference between fictional characters and real human beings. In our real lives we are only able to know the exterior of people, or at least what they let us know. There is no such thing as completely understanding a human being; we have to settle for what they are willing to give us. In a novel, we know the characters' motivations even if the other characters surrounding them do not. There are no secrets between the reader and the fictional people in the narrative. According to the author a character can be considered real when we have the feeling that its author knows everything that is to know about it. Even if there are some things that are left unexplained, we feel that this was only a choice made by the author, and that if necessary, he could easily explain a character's motivations and everything would make perfect sense. This particular facet of the romance makes us feel that it is more real than real life. In real life we have to be satisfied with a partial notion of others. We never know the real feelings of the ones around us. However, in a novel, we are presented with all the facets of a character's personality. We are acquainted with their deepest thoughts, and that turns us into accomplices of the action. But one should not forget that a novel is constituted of many other parts, such as plot, time, space, and so on. Thus, the characters have to fit into these aspects; they have to make sense and be real under the circumstances portrayed in the book.

One of Forster's biggest contributions to the study of characters is his division into flat and round characters. In his opinion, a flat character is the one that can be defined by one single characteristic. Flat characters, by definition, have no depth. They do not surprise the reader and we always know what to expect from them. On the contrary, round characters are like real people; they are full of different facets and are able to cause surprise. They are tridimensional, have depth and people can relate to them.

The richness of details provided by a character well developed is essential to distinguish the novel from other literary forms. The novel is the only literary form in which the reader is able to know the characters in all possible forms. It is possible to know the character through the words of the narrator and the words of the other characters, but we are also allowed into their deepest thoughts. When characters talk to themselves, we are invited to join. This is what makes the novel so special in relation to other art forms.

Bourneuf e Ouellet (1976) point out to the fact that the exterior also has a great impact in the characterization because it cannot be dissociated from the characters. The environment in which the character is placed can act as an extension of its personality. It may also prevent the character from acting a certain way, or explain why he does the things he does. The scenery described in the novel may be intimately connected to the spirit of the characters, and objects are often used to define certain characters in such a way that, every time we see the object mentioned, we are automatically reminded of the character. Objects and nature may also be filled with symbolic meanings that help us understand the underlying motives in characters, their inner selves.

The authors continue explaining the different functions that a character may have in a story. Sometimes a character does not have a real purpose in it; they are present merely to bring some color to the story or foster a funny commentary. They help set an atmosphere, but possess no factual importance to the plot. On the other hand, there are characters that are the center of the novel; the action will revolve around them. They are called the protagonist and the antagonist.

Candido (1968) reminds us of the fact that the story and the character are intimately connected, for one cannot be dissociated from the other. When one thinks about a novel, one remembers the facts pertinent to it and how the characters in the story lived through them. The character, therefore, is the one element that joins all the other elements of a narrative together, because it is the only one that appeals to the feelings of the reader. When well structured, they are likely to bring up the emotional attachment of the reader. Without a character, there is no story, or at least no story to which the reader can relate to. However, he also remarks that the character only makes sense when it acts according to the context in which it is placed. One element cannot succeed without the help of the other.

He goes on saying that a novel needs the help of well-constructed characters in order to succeed, and round characters are only acquired when they are molded in the form of real human beings. The relationship between fiction and reality must, therefore, be analyzed more closely. There must exist a feeling of truthfulness in every character, so that the reader can accept and connect it to his or her real life experiences. Real human beings are capable of committing the most surprising acts. They are always unpredictable, and no one knows another person so well as to not be able to be surprised by him or her. Thus, a character also has to have this ability of surprising us, so that it resembles real people. In reality, we are only allowed some scattered pieces of information to help us try to understand the ones around us. The good authors are able to do the same. The only difference is that in real life we have no

option, and in the narrative that is a choice of the author. He or she chooses what aspects he wants to disclose and what he prefers to leave unknown to the public. In a novel, we are led to believe in what the author intended, so our perceptions of the characters are less fluid than in real life. In the novel, even if we change our opinion throughout the development of the plot we are always following the line that the author drew for us. Each character has its coherence and that coherence does not vary greatly in the unfolding of the narrative. Hence, the tendency of them being more stable than we are. They cannot vary so much, but that does not mean they are superficial. Complexity is achieved through simplification. Authors are able to create beings of extreme complexity that, however, were brought up by the narrowing of its structure. The reader is only exposed to a certain number of traits of a character, usually the ones that will be helpful in the delineation of its personality and the development of the story.

Candido thinks that the greatest role that the novel plays in our lives is probably the fact that, at least in it, we are faced with people who are easier to deal with and that are more consistent. In the real world everybody is a mystery to us, we are hardly ever aware of the reasons and motivations of others. The novelist is able to solve this problem since he can show us not only the causes and the results, but also the motivations behind each performed action.

But novelists are not without limitations. Every character created by an author is born as a result of his or her own restrictions; characters are restricted to the author's imagination, life experience and worldview. There are seven ways in which characters can be created:

- Characters that are created under the influence of the author's direct experience. That happens when a character is based on characteristics of someone the author knew.
- Characters that are based on people who lived and that the author can obtain information about through documents.
- Characters based on a real person that was known to the author. This person was used as a starting point.
- Characters loosely inspired by a real model that have their virtues taken to an extreme and that the final outcome does not resemble the person portrayed.

- Characters that are originally based on one real person whose traits are predominant but that also have characteristics of other real people in a less dominant way.
- Characters that are a mosaic of different real people that, however, do not have predominance over one another.
- Characters that consciously do not follow any specific real person.

In any of the cases, the author goes through a state in which very often he cannot say exactly how much weight each aspect had in the creation of his or her characters. It is a process that involves not only creativity but also observation. Candido also remarks that the depth of each character will also depend on the intention of the novelist, of what kind of work he intends to produce. In a novel of manners, there is maybe not necessity to deepen the characters, but if the intention is to show the inner lives of human beings, it is essential that they are portrayed with more depth. The key word for everything is coherence; a character has to be constructed in a way that it can play its role in the novel and be consistent with the plot narrated.

1.3 CHARACTERS IN FILMS

Different from the characters in a novel in which we are able to understand them through various points of view (through the narrator's words, through the words of other characters and through their own inner thoughts), in film, as in real life, we are left only with the first two possibilities. Even though directors sometimes try having the characters narrate their feelings to the camera, that does not happen very often. In most films we cannot know what is going on inside their minds. However, we do have the help of other elements that facilitate the exposition of the characters. We are able to see the characters' facial expressions, the way they dress, talk and behave. The music and the scenery also help us form an idea on the character.

Cinema, in the words of Gomes (1968), embraces all forms of arts and languages but it is to the theatre and to the novel that it is more closely connected. This close connection owes to the fact that, as in the theatre, the characters are impersonated by actors, and as in the

novel, these characters are able to move through space and time with greater freedom. The story is often told using the point of view of one character, frequently the protagonist, but not necessarily so.

Even though there is a connection between film and narrative, we cannot forget that a basic distinction exists between the characters in both media. The character in the narrative is composed through the use of words. Everything the reader knows about any character was learned through the words the author chose to describe it. On the other hand, even in the cases in which a filmic character is expressed mainly by the words of others – for example, when a character is dead and all we hear about him or her is what others talk about – we still count on image to help us understand and capture the essence of the character.

Characters in plays and novels are very similar.

[They] are preexisted bundles of created traits – speeches, actions, thoughts, feelings- that take vague shape in our imaginations when we read a novel and more concrete shape on stage in production of a play. (MAST, 1982, p.292)

However, the same cannot be said of characters in films.

[...] character in a film is ontologically different from that in a play or in a novel. 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 difference, according to Mast, is that frequently when discussing characters in film we are actually discussing acting. It is very difficult to separate the actor from the character and the audience inevitably associates certain traits from the actor with the character. Contrary to what happens in a play, in which we cannot see in detail the facial expressions of the actors, in a film we can see everything and because of that we cannot dissociate actor from character.

The intelligibility of star presences is a powerful narrative advantage in narrative films, and to expect character in films to conform to our models from literature is to inflict yet another normative literary prejudice on our judgment of films. (MAST, 1982, p.294)

The use of a well-known actor who is constantly associated with a certain type can be a great asset to a production. It can spare the audience from certain explanations that are often not very entertaining, such as the identities and motivations of the characters. Many things may be inferred simply by the association of the actor's traits with the character he or she plays. This is why casting the right actor may make a great difference in the outcome of a film and the perception that the audience has of him or her. It is an aspect that has to be considered when adapting a novel to the screen.

2 JANE AUSTEN – HER STYLE

Jane Austen (1775-1817) is considered one of the most important writers of English Literature. She is, according to Daiches (1972, p.743) “the greatest of all the novelists of manners of this [Romantic Period] or any other period, and one who raised the whole genre to a new level of art [...]”. Even though she wrote her works during the Romantic Era, she cannot be considered a part of this movement. In fact she does not belong to any literary movement. Austen was highly criticized in her time because she wrote in a fashion so distinct from what people were used to. She refused to talk about the themes that were popular then and there are no static heroes in her novels.

Daughter of a rector in Chawton she started writing very early but her work only started being published in 1811, with *Sense and Sensibility*. After that her other works followed: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1818) and *Persuasion* (1818). These last two were published posthumously.

According to Burgess (2002) she is unique. What makes her writing so singular is the fact that she placed so much importance in her characters. She was able to portray characters that really resembled real people, with their virtues and vices. She possessed a wide understanding of the human nature and that is what makes her works so interesting and timeless. By her own choice her scope was very narrow. She wanted to be able to depict with perfection the lives of the characters that lived in her stories. Therefore, she never talked about things she was not acquainted with. These peculiarities can be noticed in the letters she exchanged with her niece Anna. In them, Anna asked her aunt for advice; she was also an aspiring novelist who resorted to the experience of Jane to help her better accomplish her goal. In the letter of August 10, 1814, Austen says:

[...] we think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland; but as you know nothing of the manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in dangers of giving false representations. Stick to Bath and the Foresters. There you will be quite at home.

She was also very concerned with the veracity of her writings. That can be noticed in the same letter when she mentions that she does not find appropriate to have one certain character visit the stables one day after breaking his arm. She points out that this is not acceptable, since most people do not do that when they are injured.

One of her most distinguishable traits was her use of irony. She understood very well the stress existent between showing what you really are without constraints and the need to follow certain social conventions (DAICHES, 1972). She brought these acute observations of life in society to her work. She frequently ridiculed extreme sentimentalism and was able to make fun of the difficulties inherent to social life.

Austen focused on what she knew best: some families who lived in the country, none of them too poor or too wealthy. That was pretty much the kind of life that she was used to. This is at the same time her most criticized feature (at her own time) and the one she is most acclaimed for (nowadays). In doing so, she was able to really explore her characters; the people in her story are never flat, they are all embedded in flaws and virtues like any normal human being. She was true to her ultimate goal: to portray a microcosmic world in which she could explore the details of her characters to perfection (DAICHES, 1972). Nobody is perfect in her novels; we can love and be annoyed by all the characters in them with the same intensity. Her critics say that she never talked about the war (although she wrote during the Napoleonic Wars). However, doing so would be going against the veracity that was so important to her. The reality is that the war was hardly ever discussed in the circles that she described. It was too distant from most people's everyday lives and conversations. Therefore, the war had nothing to do with her stories; mentioning it would seem too farfetched and would not bring any improvement to her plots.

She was very criticized by many in her own time due to her refusal in writing in the typical manner so popular in those days. She never resorted to common formulas. She never talks about violence and never explores passionate scenes between lovers. She also does not give much physical description of her characters. Her novels are all written in a woman's point of view and always revolve around the same plot: love, marriage and relationships. Even though her scope was so narrow, in there lies her originality. For the first time an author was able to attach depth of characters to a simple plot. Her ability to depict real people with their virtues and vices is what challenged her peers and makes her still important nowadays. As already mentioned, her characters "[...] are both ordinary and unforgettable [...]" (STILLINGER & LYNCH, 2006, v.d, p. 515). Like real people they do not really change, they are consistent and keep being themselves, the only difference is that they may have acquired some knowledge in the course of their lives and in the future will be wiser – or not. (RENEWICK, 1974).

As McMaster (2008) says, as a writer so concerned with writing stories that were true to life, Austen was very aware of the distinction among classes and always referred to them in

her novels. She was able to portray with great intelligence the society of her time and the issues concerning rank and social position that made part of all their relationships. However, she never seemed to be much impressed by royalty. Characters that possessed titles were, if not detestable, at least stupid. The author further explains (p.129, 2008): “The importance assigned to class distinction is the source of much of her comedy and her irony, as of her social satire.” Not less important and closely related to social status is money, another topic frequently debated in Austen’s novels. According to Copeland (2008), she always wrote an extensive account on the financial situation of her characters and that is often discussed among them. Such importance given to the income of the people inhabiting her novels, contributes to the veracity of her writings. These were topics of extreme relevance at the time, for people were judged by the presence or absence of any of them. The sums that each one possessed were discussed openly and taken into consideration when getting acquainted to anyone. In *Sense and Sensibility*, for example, the income of Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters is discussed in the first pages, as well as the financial situation of the girls’ suitors. We can also see how little control women had over their money, since inheritances tended to pass from father to son and women had no real legal rights. The lack of money is a very important aspect of many characters in her novels because “in the world of 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).

Austen was also very innovative when it came to the form of her narrative. According to Cohn (1983) she was one of the first important novelists to resort to free indirect style, also called narrated monologue. In it, the thoughts of the characters are dealt with as if they were the thoughts in their minds. However, there is no formal indication that they actually are, since there are no quotation marks to identify them. That causes a feeling of ambiguity in the reader since he or she does not know for sure if those words belong to the character or to the narrator.

All in all, Jane Austen is still considered one of the most influential authors to date. She changed parameters in novel writing, something that was very unheard of in her own time – especially coming from a woman with little life experience. With her irony and depiction of society, she showed a new way of building characters and plots which are still fresh and interesting for the current audience. She is read almost all over the world and the adaptations of her novels are frequently very successful.

2.1 SENSE AND SENSIBILITY – THE NOVEL

Sense and sensibility was the first of Jane Austen's novels to be published, in 1811, even though it had been written in the end of the 18th century - when it had the title of *Elinor and Marianne*. The novel tells the story of two sisters, who have totally different approaches to life, and how they manage love and relationships in their own ways. "*Sense and Sensibility* is as critical of literary and linguistic commonplaces as *Northanger Abbey* is, and its definitions of distinction are more discriminating." (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p. 43). The author remarks that, contrary to the novels of that time, *Sense and Sensibility* does not choose one side over another and give both sisters a happy ending. "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." (BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p. 46).

When Mr. Dashwood dies, all his money and property goes to his only son by a first marriage, John. That means that Mr. Dashwood's new family – wife and three daughters - is left with very little money. Even though his father asks John in his deathbed to take care of his half-sisters – which he promises to do – he fails to do so influenced by his greedy wife that wants the assets to go to their son.

Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters, Elinor, Marianne and Margaret, are forced to accept that their estate, Norland, is no longer theirs and have to put up with Fanny – John's wife – who arrives there trying to rule the house. Meanwhile, Mrs. Dashwood is trying to encourage the attachment of Elinor and Edward Ferrars, Fanny's brother, who was there visiting his sister at the time. However, after some months, they receive an offer to live at Barton Cottage and the family moves there.

Arriving at Barton Cottage they are welcomed by their cousin, Mr. John Middleton. They are also introduced to his wife's mother, Mrs. Jennings, and Colonel Brandon, a friend of his. When Mrs. Jennings says that the Colonel is interested in Marianne, she despises the idea, saying that he is very old and dull for her. One day, Marianne is taking a walk with her sister when she twists her ankle. She is rescued by John Willoughby, who takes her home in his arms. Marianne falls in love with him immediately and after that, Willoughby becomes a regular guest at Barton Cottage, where he and Marianne share the same interests and opinions and also a passion for disdaining of Colonel Brandon.

One day, the Dashwoods go out but Marianne stays under some silly pretense. When they return, they find Marianne crying and Willoughby saying that he has to rush to London on a business matter. Marianne gets desperate; she does not sleep or eat for many days, waiting for news of Willoughby. In the meantime, Edward arrives, more reserved than ever, leaving the Dashwoods intrigued by his behavior.

Soon, Lucy Steele and her sister arrive at Barton Park. They seem to know everything about the Dashwoods and Lucy is eager to make friends with Elinor. Although finding the Steeles quite ignorant, Elinor is too polite to refuse the attention and becomes Lucy's constant companion. In one of her chats, Lucy inquires about Edward and reveals that they have been secretly engaged for some years. She also tells Elinor that he was in Plymouth – where she lives – before going to Barton Park. Elinor is forced to keep the secret of their engagement to herself.

Mrs. Jennings invites Elinor and Marianne to spend the winter in her house in London and they accept, Marianne hoping to meet Willoughby there. Arriving in London, Marianne writes to Willoughby but he does not call on her. Finally, they meet one night at a ball, but Willoughby ignores Marianne, choosing to talk to Elinor instead. His behavior is unacceptable and Marianne writes him one more time the next day. He replies that he had never loved her and returns all her previous letters, putting an end to all her expectations. They soon find out that Willoughby is going to get married to Miss Grey, who is very wealthy.

After hearing the news, Colonel Brandon pays a visit to Elinor to disclose Willoughby's true character. He tells her that the daughter of a ward to his family was pregnant with a child from Willoughby, who disappeared, leaving her with no assistance. Elinor tells everything to Marianne who, in return, becomes more civil to the colonel. News of Willoughby's wedding arrives.

In London, Fanny Dashwood invites the Steeles to stay at her house and Lucy ends up revealing about her secret engagement to Edward. Fanny gets furious and expels Lucy and her sister. As word spreads, Elinor learns that Edward will be disinherited and will have very little money to start a family.

The Dashwoods are invited to go to Cleveland, at the Palmers estate. As soon as they arrive there, Marianne gets seriously ill and is taken care of by Elinor and Colonel Brandon.

When the colonel leaves to bring Mrs. Dashwood, Willoughby arrives. Though horrified with his presence, Elinor let him say what he wants. He says he does not love his wife and would be very happy to marry Marianne if it were not for the money. He insists that

Marianne is his only love but his need for money is superior to any other feelings he might have.

Marianne recovers and seems to have outgrown his disdain for Colonel Brandon. Elinor tells her about Willoughby's visit and Marianne accepts it calmly, admitting that she would never be happy with him. They all come back to Barton Cottage where Elinor learns that Lucy has married Edward's brother. Elinor and Edward marry, as well as Colonel Brandon and Marianne.

2.1.1 The characters

Renwick (1974, p. 93) discusses the characters in *Sense and Sensibility*:

When a character exemplifies a quality or habit, it must continue to exemplify it, and though the manner and incidence of the consequences may be made interesting, their effect is predetermined. Nor is the balance preserved. Sensibility meets its ironical fate in middle-aged worthiness; sense merely fades into inevitable respectability. Personification and symbol are tied but comedy is free.

The two sisters, Elinor and Marianne, represent the sense and sensibility of the title. Whereas the first is controlled by her mind and common sense, the latter is moved by her feelings. They are polar opposites that start as two extremes and that throughout the novel find their balance.

Elinor is a very sensible young lady who always tries to do the best for her family. Even while suffering she is able to maintain her coolness and control her feelings. In chapter two we have an important description of her personality: “ She had an excellent heart; her disposition was affectionate, and her feelings were strong: but she knew how to govern them [...]” (p.5). That is the essence of Elinor; even though being very young – she is nineteen at the beginning of the novel – she is very wise and able to advise her mother in various matters, including financial ones. She is the one who rejects several houses because they are too expensive for their new lifestyle, and the one who advises Mrs. Dashwood to sell the carriage and only keep three servants. Mrs. Dashwood trusts her instincts and frequently agrees to do what Elinor suggests because she knows how practical she is. Elinor often plays the role of the mediator between her mother and her brother and sister-in-law. She is the only one who manages to treat them well, even while suffering the loss of her father and her house. She is the one responsible for excusing her sister's attitudes. She does not show her feelings very

often, but that does not mean she does not have them. She is afraid of raising her hopes too high and then getting disappointed. That is what she does with Edward. The reader knows that she loves him and that she keeps the hope that he will not marry Lucy Steele. However, she does not show that to anyone in her family. “Elinor’s view of the self as social, not isolated, is also the narrator’s.” ((BROWNSTEIN, 2008, p.43).

Marianne, on the other hand, is totally different from her sister. She is the stereotypical romantic character; she is impetuous and does not let anything or anyone interfere with her opinions. She is filled with passion and, as a consequence, cannot understand how someone can accept life without it. Everything is black and white with her, there is no moderation in her feelings, she either loves or hates and everybody is able to realize that very quickly. She finds Colonel Brandon old and dull and most of the time makes no effort to be nice to him, especially after she meets Willoughby. Contrary to Colonel Brandon, Willoughby presents no flaws to Marianne; she only sees perfection in him. Marianne is portrayed as a girl who does not have many social skills in the sense that she says everything that comes to her mind and is not able to hold her feelings in order to be polite and sociable. When she does not like someone she is adamant in saying so and ends up being rude and unkind to the ones that do not share her interests. She disdains of Colonel Brandon and does not make a single effort to be pleasant to him in spite of all his kindness to her family. She is rude to Mrs. Jennings, even after she so kindly invites them to spend time in her house in London. During their stay in London she hardly ever speaks a word to her host. Although Marianne constantly complains and criticizes Mrs. Jennings, she is willing to put up with her in London to reach her goal, meeting Willoughby. Marianne is self-centered and childish and never hides her feelings, even when it would be wiser to do so. She falls so blindly in love with Willoughby that she loses the little common sense she had. Her notions of love are extremely romantic and unrealistic. In chapter three she says: “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.” (p.10). She criticizes the quiet, tranquil love of her sister for Edward, for she thinks they both lack enthusiasm.

Elinor and Marianne, however, have something in common. Both of them “[...] 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). Although having different styles they share most of their feelings towards the people who surround them. The author stresses how much more similar they are than can be noticed at first sight. Marianne is described in the first chapter as

possessing both sense and sensibility and Elinor as having a good heart as well as discernment. They seem to fight to intentionally be considered a foil to each other.

Edward Ferrars is Fanny Dashwood's eldest brother. Coming from a wealthy family he was the recipient of all the hopes of his mother and sister. They wish to see him well accomplished, with a distinct position in society, but Edward was not able to fulfill their expectations. He is a shy man, who talks little and whose greatest interest is to live a quiet life. "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." (p.9). He does not call too much attention at first, because besides his lack of physical attractiveness he does not possess any special talents. In spite of being considered a good person by all he is not without his flaws as pointed out by Ray (2005). He can be somewhat apathetic at times and conceals from Elinor his long-term commitment to Lucy. In spite of his attachment to another woman he does not discourage Elinor from building expectations towards their relationship. He can even lie to Elinor in order to conceal his secret engagement (that happens when he says the lock of hair in his ring belongs to his sister).

Contrary to Edward, Willoughby exudes self-confidence. He is a man who knows what he wants in life and seems to enjoy every moment without taking too much into consideration the opinions of others. He is a gentleman, who seems perfect at first sight, but who reveals a bad character as the reader gets to know him better. He shares Marianne's interest for poetry, music and romance and is adamant in defending his points of view. Throughout the novel, his real character is disclosed and the true colors of Willoughby are made known. He is a self-centered person whose only real interest in life is his own welfare and comfort. Even when he says he truly loves Marianne, this love is not strong enough to overcome his need for wealth and rank. He accepts getting married to a woman that he despises only because he cannot conceive life without money. He does not show any remorse, though. He seems to feel that it is very natural that he had to choose wealth over love.

Colonel Brandon is another key character in the plot. Austen describes him like this:

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. (p.17)

Colonel Brandon can be described as a broody man who shows great kindness towards his friends and who always finds a way of helping them (or their beloved ones) discreetly, without calling too much attention to his good deeds. He falls for Marianne but even when she

harshly rejects him he continues to be kind to her sisters and mother. He is the one to unveil the truth about Willoughby's behavior and character to Elinor and the one to offer a position in his parish to Edward (even though they were not acquainted).

Other secondary characters that are worth mentioning are Mrs. Jennings and Lucy Steele. Mrs. Jennings, Mr. Middleton's mother-in-law, is a plump, middle-aged woman who is very amiable and gay but somewhat indecorous and gossip. In spite of being a tattletale extremely interested in matchmaking, she has a generous heart and shows genuine concern for the Dashwood's welfare. According to Daiches (1972, p.748): Mrs. Jennings is skillfully portrayed as the apparent vulgarian whose good nature eventually emerges as more important than her vulgarity [...]."

Lucy Steele, on the other hand does not have a good nature. She is simple-minded and lacks sophistication and culture. She fools others into thinking that she is a good-hearted, naïve creature but she turns out to be an opportunist that is willing to go to great lengths in order to secure a position in society through a good marriage.

2.2 CHARACTERIZATION IN THE FILM

As movies are constricted to time (they should not take longer than two hours or so), there are some concessions that have to be done in order to be able to tell an interesting, understandable story in a short period. Unless the intention of the director or screenwriter is to cause ambiguity, it is necessary for the audience to capture the essence of the characters at an early stage. As Seger (1992) points out, the public likes to know for whom they should be rooting. Characters that do not become clear tend to work against the success of the film. The characters in *Sense and Sensibility* are often delineated in their first appearance.

In the first scene in which our protagonists are presented we can already see a perfect distinction between them that will explain their characters to the audience and that will help us understand how different they are from each other. In this scene, after their father's funeral, Marianne is playing the piano. The music is quite sad and her face looks dismal, filled with sadness and mourning. However, then comes Elinor, self-composed and practical, not an ounce of tear in her eyes, asking her sister to play a different piece because their mother cannot stop crying. In this small scene the opposites have been already established; Marianne

is the fragile, sensitive sister and Elinor the sensible and realistic one. The audience already knows to whom the title refers.

Elinor is indeed realistic. In another scene that follows the one just mentioned she is in her mother's room, trying to calm her down. Mrs. Dashwood is furious with the perspective of having to give her home away, especially to someone she clearly dislikes, as it is the case with her daughter-in-law, Fanny. Elinor certainly understands the feeling and sympathizes with her mother but she cannot forget the practical aspects of life and her good manners. First, there is the fact that they do not have any money and, therefore, cannot move to another house in such a short notice. On the other hand, there is the fact that they cannot mistreat John Dashwood and his wife, after all, they are part of their family, whether they like it or not. She calls upon her mother's common sense to convince her to be civil with John and Fanny, since there is not much they can do in order to change their situation in the house. Examples of Elinor being the one responsible for the practicalities of their lives are given throughout the film. We can see that her opinion is always asked for when it comes to these subjects and that even her mother counts solely on her to decide what to do. Elinor refuses one house because it has four bedrooms and that would be too big for them, hence, too expensive. She is also the one who informs the servants that they will only be taking two of them when they move. She does not let her mother buy beef for their meals because it is too costly. Every time that one financial decision has to be taken, Elinor is the one in charge and her mother always follows her advice. Another example of Elinor's sense is the fact that she is the only one in the family who attempts to have a friendly conversation with Fanny and her brother. She is very polite even to the ones who are not polite to her. She makes excuses for her sister and calls her attention when she does not show any trace of civility towards their brother's wife.

In spite of her coolness we can see very early on that she has a very good heart. The fact that she conceals her feelings does not mean that she lacks them. Early on, she is seen preparing gifts to give to the servants when they move away. That shows us that she is concerned with their well-being and that she feels affection towards them. She is the only one who does not despair after their father's passing, but that is not a sign of nonchalance. Once she feels that she is all alone, for example in the scene in which she listens to Marianne playing their father's favorite song, she sheds some private tears. Contrary to her sister, she avoids showing her real emotions. She is perhaps afraid that if she does that everything else will fall apart. She is the one who really brings the family together and, thus, has a great responsibility on her shoulders.

Whereas Elinor hides her emotions, Marianne shows them freely to whoever crosses her path. If we go back to that first scene mentioned, we are able to notice how emotional she is. She is first shown playing music, which is a characteristic associated with sensitive people, and we can see in her face all her agony and despair for the death of her father. Marianne is passionate and full of romantic ideas fostered by all the books she read throughout the years. When Edward reads the poem *The Castaway*, by William Cowper, she reprehends him for not giving the proper intonation to such a tragic piece of poetry. She criticizes both him and her sister Elinor for their lack of enthusiasm towards one another. When Elinor tells her that she greatly esteems Edward, she gets furious with her sister's choice of words. To Marianne it is unthinkable to talk about one's suitor in such an apathetic manner. We can really grasp her beliefs in everlasting love when she tells her mother that "to love is to burn, to be on fire like Juliet, or Guinevere or Eloise." (scene 6) And she goes on saying that she cannot think of anything as glorious as the idea of dying for love. These are the words of a person who, in spite of being naïve, feels everything intensely and is not satisfied with less. In the film, her favorite Shakespeare's sonnet is the 116, the one she and Willoughby recite when they meet. The poem goes as follows:

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 the edge of doom.
 If this be error and upon me proved,
 I never writ, nor no man ever loved.
 (William Shakespeare)

This poem is the most important in defining her character because it reproduces all that Marianne believes in, that love is not altered by the passing of time and that the only possible marriage is the one of minds that share the same interests and points-of-view. True love is unconditional and is not affected by lesser things such as the loss of beauty. That is

why their sharing this passion for this particular sonnet is so defining of her future relationship with Willoughby. The fact that he carries with him the very same book of sonnets that she has been reading to her family and that they are both able to recite it by heart, shows us that she has found the kind of love that she had always dreamed of.

She is not as kind to people as her sister; she frequently finds a way of criticizing the ones she considers dull or uninteresting. She calls Edward sedate, and together with Willoughby she mocks Colonel Brandon. She also hardly exchanges a word with her sister-in-law and never talks to Mrs. Jennings or if she does, replies rudely to her indiscretions.

Edward is quiet and shy but very charming in his own way. Even though he does not say much and it is not the most passionate character, he finds a way of showing kindness to others. In his first scene the audience can already see that he is nothing like his sister for he refuses to take Margaret's room and prefers to stay in the guests' area. He is able to fix the problem caused by Fanny calling it a misunderstanding, that way saving everyone from embarrassment while quietly putting his sister in her place. His first line is already adorable. When Mrs. Dashwood apologizes for the absence of Margaret by saying that she is shy of strangers, he replies: "I'm shy of strangers myself, and I have nothing like her excuse." This scene is very telling of his character and how the director and adaptor want him to be perceived by the audience. He is not capable of grand gestures but has good feelings towards everyone despite their rank or financial situation. Edward's mother has great expectations on him, but he confesses that he is afraid he will not be able to fulfill them. His idea of a perfect life is running a small parish in the countryside, something that his family will not agree with. He develops a strong relationship with Margaret and is the one responsible for bringing happiness in her life. His efforts in making Margaret happy is something that contributes to the Dashwoods liking him so much and therefore putting great hopes in his attachment to Elinor. Edward is understanding and sympathetic and seems to disagree with his sister's behavior. That is made obvious when they have a private conversation in which Fanny criticizes the Dashwoods. Edward immediately takes a stand by saying that their loss is reason enough for them to be acting the way they are.

Willoughby has a first appearance meant to cause a stir. He is the handsome knight in shining armor that comes to the rescue of a damsel in distress in a rainy day. He sees Marianne and immediately takes charge of everything, making sure that she has not broken her foot and taking her home in his arms. He is the man who will bring passion into her life and that will take care of her. Handsome and smart he has a way with words and shares Marianne's love for poetry. He is not afraid of breaking conventions since he is always seen

riding his carriage dangerously with Marianne and does not seem to care if that is appropriate or not.

Colonel Brandon is Willoughby's antagonist and different from him in every aspect, except in his regard for Marianne. When he is presented for the first time he is silently watching Marianne play the piano. He seems fascinated by her and yet, he does not make one gesture to accuse his presence, to make her notice his enthusiasm towards her. He is a man in his thirties that keeps his feelings to himself and seems to carry a great disappointment in his past. He looks mysterious but very charming and elegant and the only person who seems not to realize that is precisely Marianne, his love interest. He is wealthy, good-looking and solicitous and has all the qualities that a woman from the 19th century may find attractive. Nevertheless Marianne does not see his many attributes. Although he shares some of Elinor's traits, such as self-restraint, he also brings an enigmatic quality that is seen when he alludes to his past, but never seems to fully disclose it.

3 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES IN CHARACTERS

Seeger (1992) says that transformation is fundamental in order to adapt one medium into another. These transformations may be necessary for all kinds of reasons but the most important ones happen for dramatic objectives.

In *Sense and Sensibility* many changes were made to the characters in order to increase the dramatic possibilities of each one and also to make them more appealing to the audience of the late 20th century. Since it is always better to have fewer characters in a movie – so that viewers do not get confused trying to understand everybody's names and functions - some characters were eliminated in the film version. All the characters that were cut did not have an important role in the apprehension of the plot. As a consequence, their absence did not affect the unfolding of the film. For example, all the children present in the novel were left out in the film, except for Margaret that had her role expanded. Hence, Fanny and John Dashwood are childless, as well as Mr. John Middleton, who is now a widower, with no offspring. Another character that is not mentioned in the movie is the one of Miss Steele, Lucy Steele's older sister. Mrs. Ferrars is never seen in the film but she is mentioned, whereas these aforementioned characters simply do not exist on screen.

The greatest differences can be found in the portrayal of the male characters. They have been changed consistently from their counterparts in the novel. Apart from Willoughby, the men in the story could be considered rather apathetic to the taste of the current audience. In order to help the public sympathize with the characters and understand why those women fell in love with them, it became necessary to make some changes, not only in their personality characteristics but also in the way they looked. On that account, the actors chosen to interpret the male protagonists do not fit the descriptions given in the book. For instance, as pointed out by Ray (2005), in the novel, Edward is described as unattractive and lacking charm. That could not be more distant from what most people think of Hugh Grant, the actor who plays Edward in the movie. Most people see him as a handsome man with a boyish charm that can win any woman's heart. The choice of him for this part was key to help the audience – and particularly women – empathize with Elinor and her interest in Edward. Ray continues to mention that Austen depicts Edward as a person of few words and we can actually only hear him very little in the novel. In the film, however, many resources were added in order to turn him into a charming figure. His first appearance on the screen, as it was

mentioned before, shows us a character much more eloquent and pleasant than the one in the novel.

Margaret does not have an important role in the novel but she has a very important one in the film. She is there in order to aid Edward's character. She is the resource used by the adaptor to make Edward more interesting. He is the one who finds her in the beginning of the movie when she is hiding under a desk in the library. Tactfully he finds a smart way of getting her out of there. This scene sheds light to his character; he knows how to deal with children (which is something very endearing to women) and resourceful when it comes to find solutions to problems. The bond that he forms with the youngest Dashwood shows the purity of his nature. Many scenes were added to show how much he became affectionate towards Margaret and the strength of her admiration for him. They fence together and she invites him to go to her next "expedition" to China. A grown up man who can spend so much time with a child truly enjoying it must have a good heart and a great character.

Another difference mentioned by Ray is the fact that, in the novel, Edward is not very honest with Elinor regarding her engagement to Lucy. However, as the filmic Edward is supposed to be a man of scruples that would never hurt his beloved ones, that is somewhat changed in the movie. He makes an attempt to tell Elinor about his commitment in a scene that happens in the stables. He starts telling Elinor about his education and how it was conducted by a man named Pratt, when his sister arrives and demands his rush departure to London where his mother is waiting for him. Although he does not actually tell her, the intention is there. In order to corroborate with Edward's conduct, there is no mention in the film of the locket of hair in his ring. This passage is omitted. Austen's Edward is more deceptive than the one in the film.

It is clear that the male characters were changed to make them more seductive and interesting to women (who are the main audience of the film). The ideals on how a man should behave and what traits are more desirable in a suitor change through the centuries and perhaps what was considered appropriate in the 19th century may not be understood two centuries later. That is perhaps why all the men are much better looking and virile in the film. Besides Edward's character, played by Hugh Grant, we also have Alan Rickman playing Colonel Brandon. Although he does not have the charm of Grant, he cannot be considered a man who is, as Austen describes in the novel in the words of Marianne, in his "advanced years" (p.18).

Both Marianne's suitors could not have been more different from each other. Willoughby is enthusiastic and passionate just like Marianne is. Together they mock Colonel

Brandon for being dull and uninteresting; they exchange love poems and do not mind the attention that their outings alone can draw. Everything in their relationship is intense. After spending one afternoon in his company she already claims to know him like no one else. In the few hours spent together, they discussed all kinds of subjects, which was not the ideal behavior of a young girl in front of a possible suitor. He gives her his book of sonnets that he carried around with him; sharing her interest in the same poets can assure him of having captured her heart. On the contrary, the attention that Colonel Brandon gives to Marianne is sometimes minimum; he is satisfied in watching her from afar and never imposes his presence. Yet, the audience can sympathize with him because of his looks of sadness when he realizes that his company is not as welcomed as Willoughby's. He brings beautiful flowers to Marianne the day after she twists her foot, but she barely looks at them. When Willoughby arrives bringing the ones he picked in the woods and her face glows with enchantment. In the novel we never see this vulnerable side of Colonel Brandon; he is always very composed and reasonable showing little of his true feelings. Nonetheless, in the movie we can feel that deep inside he suffers with the rejection of his beloved one. Alan Rickman has always a look of a man who suffers with dignity but still suffers. His looks when he arrives at Barton Cottage to invite the girls to a picnic in his property and realizes that only by also inviting his rival will convince Marianne to go is endearing. The filmic character is more vulnerable than the one in the novel, at least in the way that modern audiences understand.

Contrary to Willoughby, who seems to be only concerned with his own interests, Colonel Brandon is truly generous, both in film and novel. He loves Marianne but asks for nothing in return; he shows great regard for the Dashwoods and is even willing to help someone he does not know— Edward — by offering him his parish just because he sympathizes with his situation. There is never any doubt that he is a worthy man and this contributes for the audience liking him and being satisfied with their marriage.

The fact that in the novel Marianne was so suddenly able to overcome Willoughby and transfer her attentions elsewhere has always caused criticism. In order to make it more believable that Marianne could change her mind and end up marrying Colonel Brandon a few resources were added to the story. Marianne sees men as her saviors and it is not strange that she falls in love with a man who rescues her when she is hurt and carries her in his arms. This is what happened with Willoughby — both in the novel and in the film. In the movie, when Marianne arrives at the Palmers, shortly after her great disappointment with Willoughby, she goes for a walk. It starts raining heavily (as it was in the day she first met Willoughby) and Brandon goes look for her. This time he is the one who saves her from trouble and arrives

bringing her in his arms. Now it is established that Marianne has found her new “knight in shining armor”. Brandon is the new man in her life who can give her everything she always desired. The exception is that this time there are no doubts as to the solid reputation of her new suitor. This idea of substituting one person for the other is further seen when, after Marianne’s recovery, Colonel Brandon reads to her in the garden. He reads from *The Faerie Queene*, by Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) the following extract:

Doe eate the earth, it is no more at all:
 Ne is the earth the lesse, or loseth ought,
 For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
 Is with the tide vnto an other brought:
 For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought.
 (Book V- canto II)

The reading of this particular stanza is very significant for the moment that the couple is living. In it, Spenser says that everything that dies is reborn somewhere else; exactly in the same way that happened with Marianne. She lost the love of Willoughby, but her affections started to grow somewhere else, in the quiet, resolute love of an older man who had always venerated her. When Brandon reads “For there is nothing lost, that may be found if sought”, he may be telling Marianne that even though she lost her faith in love, if she really wants to find it again, she only has to look for it. He is a man who believes in second attachments and Marianne never did. Once she is able to see the world in a more real perspective, she will understand that life takes away some opportunities but can always bring others, if sought.

One interesting difference observed by Wakefield (2007) is Brandon’s relationship with the music. During the Augustan Age a man’s interest for playing the piano was not seen with good eyes because a man should be concerned with other more practical aspects of life such as business. According to her, musical interest is not seen as something desirable for men in Austen’s novels because in them the ones who play it are not considered suitable spouses. They are frequently dishonest because in that period playing the piano was associated with idleness and that was not part of the requirements of a good suitor. “ In contrast, the ideal man displays not musical virtuosity but rather sincerity, respect, modest and duty” (WAKEFIELD, 2007). However, she also remarks that this is no longer true. Nowadays musical appreciation is seen as something highly positive because it shows a man’s sensitivity. That is probably why Emma Thompson, the screenwriter, decided to turn Colonel Brandon into a piano lover. In modern days the sharing of interests by a couple usually contributes to their enthusiasm towards each other. On that account, we often have Colonel Brandon associated with the piano. In the first time he appears on screen he listens to

Marianne play; he looks mesmerized by her virtuosity and touched in a way that demonstrates his sensitivity. When Mrs. Jennings tries to bring them together she mentions the possibility of a duet between the couple, saying that he has not played in a while. Whereas in the novel Marianne is able to bring her piano to Barton cottage with her, in the film this is turned into another opportunity to connect the colonel with Marianne's loved instrument. He is the one who sends her a new one alongside some sheet music when she is suffering for Willoughby. The arts, particularly poetry and music, are fundamental to Marianne and that is why both the men who love her must have some link to it, otherwise it would seem too farfetched having her loving them at different periods of her life. When she finally seems to accept her fate and starts seeing Colonel Brandon with other eyes, their connection happens through music and literature. Not only he stimulates her to start playing the piano again with his present but he also reads to her.

Marianne and Willoughby also share a love for poetry, this time Shakespeare. The first thing they find out to have in common is their love for his sonnets and particularly to *Sonnet 116*. Marianne is smitten by this man who is able to recite her favorite sonnet by heart. The fact that he mistakenly says *storms* instead of *tempests* and that she is able to correct him adds to the magic of this moment. Willoughby, however, is proven to be a weak man, with few scruples, contrary to Colonel Brandon who only proves to be even more dignified and fair throughout the movie. Emma Thompson probably felt that the Willoughby in the novel was much too despicable and decided to tone him down a little. In the novel he visits Elinor when Marianne is ill to try to explain his actions. In his speech we can realize that he has no remorse for what he has done to her. Although he says that Marianne was the true love of his life he also feels that his attitudes were justified by his need for comfort and wealth. The fact that Elinor and Marianne are able to eventually forgive him for his actions is too much for the current audience. Most people nowadays would not accept that he was absolved after causing so much pain. The choice in the film was to eliminate this passage. The audience gets to know of his misconduct towards Eliza but is spared of his justification to Elinor.

The women have also changed when transposed to the screen. In order to show the audience the differences between the two sisters, it became necessary that their traits became very clear at an early stage in the movie. As already mentioned, Marianne is shown at first at her piano, playing and crying, whereas Elinor is put together, taking charge of the house chores, in spite of her grief. Elinor is perhaps the character that has changed the least from the novel.

The filmic character of Marianne is better understood by the art involving her. Artistic sensibility is something usually associated with emotions and sensitivity, thus the choice of surrounding Marianne in a world full of poetry, literature and music. She aspires to live the lives that she sees represented in the works she reads. Very early in the film we can already feel how important the externalization of emotions is to her. She demands passion from everybody around her and she cannot understand how people, for example, read a piece of great intensity such as Cowper's *The Castaway* and do not feel all the despair that this work brings in it. This is the first poem read in the film.

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 gulfs than he.
 (Cowper, 1799)

This is the first of many poems that will be connected to Marianne during the film and they all, in some way or another, will help clarify her character and her beliefs. While Edward reads the aforementioned poem, she, visibly annoyed, corrects him in the way he reads. She teaches him how he should recite such a poem. The underlying message is that she wants to teach him how to feel with intensity, since she considers him to be too "sedated". In the movie, Marianne expresses herself through art and she frequently quotes from her favorite artists to better convey her thoughts. When she is annoyed by the fact that neither her sister nor Edward are able to communicate their feelings with the same intensity that she expects a person in love to do, she recites Coleridge's *Sonnet VII* to Elinor.

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 does 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, 1796)

Although she only recites the beginning of the sonnet, she is able to communicate her thoughts through the words of Coleridge. She really believes in what she is reading. To Marianne, love is an immortal, immaculate truth that is bigger than any other feelings she may have. She clearly does not have a sense of the real world for she has lived all her life in the care of her parents and older sister. She was allowed to spend her time dreaming, reading, and playing the piano. Throughout the film she is never seen doing any house chore or worried about the practicalities of life. She is constantly shown either playing the piano, reading, looking at the window or dreaming of a different life. She fancies a life that will start only when a handsome, passionate man comes to sweep her off her feet. That illusion becomes true in the persona of Willoughby, who comes into her life in the most extraordinary way, as if coming out of a fairy tale. It is no wonder that she believes she has met the love of her life. When she says, after only one encounter, that she feels that she knows him better than anyone else in the world, she is not lying. Being a character seemed to have come from the pages of a book or the lines of a poem, she really knows him. At a first glance he seems to be very easily understood for he behaves like all the heroes in the novels she has read. For a while she believes that she is living her dream and that, as in the novels, she will have her “happy ever after” moment. That is when real life struck and she realizes that there is more to it than what is written in the pages of a book. Before meeting him she is constantly talking about her views on love. This is very well perceived in this dialogue taken from the film (scene 6):

Marianne: Edward is very amiable.

Mrs. Dashwood: Amiable? But...?

Marianne: There is something wanting. He is too sedate. His reading...

Mrs. Dashwood: Elinor has not your feelings.

Marianne: Can he love her? Can the soul be satisfied with polite affections? To love is to be on fire. Like Juliet, Guinevere, Heloise.

Mrs. Dashwood: They made rather pathetic ends.

Marianne: Pathetic? To die for love? What could be more glorious?

She is the archetypical romantic character and in the movie her emotions are somewhat even more exacerbated. In the novel she does not say anything as radical as finding glorious to die for love. She is certainly passionate and emotional as well but she communicates these feelings even more in the film. After the aforementioned scene Marianne recites Coleridge’s sonnet to her sister, trying to make her change her attitude towards the man that she believes is her future brother-in-law. She fights with Elinor when she insists on saying that she esteems Edward. This is not the kind of word one uses to talk about their future husbands. This is one of the dialogs that really contrast their personalities in the film. Elinor admits that her feelings are greater than she is able to communicate but she clearly has

difficulty in sharing her sentiments. Marianne, however, does not believe in concealing them. The filmic Marianne is reckless. She does not care about what others may think of her behavior; when she is with Willoughby, she has neither shame nor fear. He drives dangerously through town causing a commotion among the passers-by and she refuses to accept any reproach by her sister for doing that. Like any teenager from nowadays she believes that only her opinions matter and that she is entitled to have fun, regardless the opinion of her family. As she is guided by her emotions, her mood swings are many. While with Willoughby she is all joy and excitement, when he leaves, she is quiet and pensive. She does not participate in the conversations that take place at Mrs. Jennings house and can only show some kindness towards her when presented with the opportunity to go to London. In only one aspect the Marianne from the film is softer than the one in the novel. Austen's Marianne is childish, stubborn and impolite to people when she does not get what she wants. She speaks evil of everyone she does not appreciate and does not make any efforts to be socially pleasant. In the film, although Marianne is very intense, she does not show this unpleasant side so often. Influenced by Willoughby she complains about Mrs. Jennings and Mr. John Middleton but when alone, she manages to be, if not agreeable, at least polite. In the novel, after the departure of Willoughby, Marianne loses all her liveliness; she starts not to care about her appearance and, even when invited to a party, appears to go only to please her sister. In the movie she is not so melancholic, she is obviously sad but still manages to follow her everyday life. She is very inappropriate in the way she is constantly disturbing the servants, waking them up in the middle of the night in order to send letters to Willoughby. That does not happen in the novel. She is more controlled then. A good example of that is when she first meets Willoughby at a ball in London. In the novel, the action happens more privately; even though they are in the middle of the ballroom their conversation cannot be overheard by others. Marianne asks for Willoughby's explanation and feels at a loss when he refuses to give it, but she does not make any scandal. In the film, however, she shouts his name from across the room and everyone gets silent for a second and looks at her. Her argument (and her shame) is now public. People comment on her erratic behavior, thus, her humiliation is bigger. She does not seem to mind that, though, as she does not believe in hiding her feelings.

Lucy is one of the characters that haven't changed. She is as much a sly and deceitful creature as she is in the novel. In both film and novel she appears to be harmless at first, but all her movements are studied to cause the best result. Everything she tells Elinor about her engagement to Edward has an ulterior motive. In the novel, that can be perceived by the way

Austen describes her side-glances every time she wants to know the effect she will cause in Elinor. Throughout the entire story, the reader – or viewer – has the sensation that she knew all along of Elinor’s attachment to Edward. She probably realized that somehow and was so eager to make Elinor’s acquaintance in order to ruin any expectations that she might have had. In the movie this is even more noticeable for Charlotte Palmer insists on reporting how much Lucy has talked enthusiastically about meeting Elinor. Why would that be so if she had not heard about Elinor? She would not be so eager to spill her long kept secret to someone she had just met. She uses the same strategies in the film as she uses in the novel. She says Edward sees Elinor as his sister and that she has never noticed him talking more highly of any lady. In the novel both Lucy and Elinor meet Mrs. Ferrars at the same night (in the film only Lucy meets her) and Lucy is delighted, both in novel and film, in commenting on how well she was treated by her and how sure she is that Mrs. Ferrars will, in time, accept her engagement to her son.

Elinor has not changed so much either. She remains as the practical sister, the only one in the family who seems concerned with carrying herself properly, that under the worst circumstances remain put together and able to take care of life’s practicalities. Yet, she shows her feelings a little more in the film than in the novel. She spends the entire movie hiding her emotions but towards the end she lets us see how she truly feels inside. In the scene after the one in which Mrs. Jennings tell her and Marianne of Edward’s engagement to Lucy, she is able to demonstrate to her sister how devastated she is. When Marianne accuses her of being cold for not sharing her secret with no one else, she finally vents and lets all her feelings out. She says she has suffered in silence for a long time and if Marianne had not been so selfish and were not only concerned with her own feelings she would have noticed it. This is the first time she loses control of her emotions. The second one is when she finds out that Edward has not married Lucy. Contrary to what happens in the novel, in which she runs to her room in order to be able to cry privately, in the film she burst into tears in front of Edward. It seems that Elinor has finally lost her fear of showing her feelings. They are left alone and he immediately (as it is understood by Margaret saying that she is kneeling down) proposes to her. Elinor, who always lived a life of resignation and acceptance, receives a “happily ever after” ending.

Elinor also reacts much more strongly in the film when she learns from Colonel Brandon the truth character of Willoughby. When Marianne tries to make excuses for him, Elinor is infuriated with her passivity. She feels betrayed by the man who did wrong to her sister and will not accept that Marianne does not feel the same way.

Throughout the years there has been much criticism involving the ending of *Sense and Sensibility*. Many people thought that it seemed too sudden the change in Marianne. From a childish, romantic creature who loved Willoughby she transformed into a woman who is able to use her senses to choose marrying Colonel Brandon. Both heroes, Brandon and Edward seemed too pale for the modern taste. Many readers and critics could not accept as real that these men would be the objects of affection of two young girls. If this reaction was already present in the readers from centuries ago, this became even more obvious with the readers from nowadays. The concept of romance has changed alongside the ideas of what a perfect suitor should be. In the early 19th century, it was not adequate for a man to have too much leisure in his hands. Man ought to be practical, concerned with more serious matters. Though appreciation of the arts was desirable, a good man ought not to spend much time performing it. They were admirers but hardly ever performers. Playing the piano, drawing and singing were virtues of women; those were the talents they acquired in order to entertain themselves, but also to make them more attractive to the opposite sex. As mentioned by Wakefield (2007), in Austen's novels, the male characters that have a talent for the arts are usually scoundrels or dilettantes. In the novel, Willoughby, who is constantly reading poems, singing and playing the piano with Marianne, is an excellent example of that. He turned out to be a man with few scruples who was able to change his love for a comfortable, wealthy life with a woman he despised. On the other hand, Edward – who has no ability to declaim a poem or draw a sketch – and Colonel Brandon – who is very modest in his musical skills– are the ones who deserve the love of the heroines. However, in the 21st century that is no longer true. A taste in music or an artistic disposition is usually seen as a sign of sensibility, an indicator that a man is in touch with his own feelings. The audience of 1995 would probably have a hard time believing that those two girls would be able to fall in love with two men who are (according to our modern point of view) so devoid of attractiveness. That is perhaps why in the movie Colonel Brandon plays the piano. Despite never actually seeing him play the piano, the audience is told that he has a pianoforte and that he is an excellent player. He is also the one who buys Marianne a new piano and sends her sheet music to cheer her up. Edward does not have any artistic inclination but he has so many other adorable characteristics that no one can doubt his good heart and why Elinor would be attracted to him. The same thing happens to Elinor. In the novel she is portrayed as an excellent sketcher and she spends most of her time drawing. In the film we never see Elinor drawing, only Marianne. The devotion of her time is to more ordinary and down-to-earth endeavors. She frequently reads but we never really know what kind of reading it is. She does not expose her feelings towards what she reads or listens and

therefore corroborate with the image of a pragmatic person, who, although appreciative of arts, do not have any special talents for it.

Many resources were used to turn *Sense and Sensibility* into a successful film. Some characters were removed since they were not necessary to the understanding of the story and others were made more interesting so that the audience could really support and root for their success. The difference between the two protagonists was set very early on by associating one with poetry and music and the other with practicalities and finance. Yet, their traits were softened when compared to the novel and became, little by little, more similar to each other so that the ending could seem more plausible.

The casting of the male characters, all very charming and handsome, was another point that helped the success of the movie. Had the wrong actors been casted perhaps the outcome would not have been to the taste of the present audience. The three main male characters were helped by the addition or omission of some of the traits and actions present in the novel. Edward was changed to a charming man with the help of his friendship with Margaret and with his attempt to tell Elinor about his engagement to Lucy. Willoughby became less of a scoundrel when his explanation to Elinor was removed. Colonel Brandon now is a man with a passion for music (even if it is a very discreet one) that can rescue his beloved whenever she needs him.

CONCLUSION

When a novel becomes a movie many changes are required. It is impossible to be completely faithful to the source material, since film and literature, although having their correlations, are different media with different characteristics and requirements. According to Mast (1982), words must be left out and be substituted by sounds and images.

Movies, unlike novels, are meant for a wider audience and have to respect the attention span of that audience. As a consequence, a whole story, with beginning, middle and end has to be told and understood in a two-hour period. This need requires that the adaptor make choices: choices on what to keep and what to discard, on what the focus will be and on what alterations may be necessary in order to make the story interesting and clear to the public. In making these choices the adaptor will be creating another piece of work; one that resembles very much the source material, but still bears enough differences to make it unique.

It is also important to bear in mind that a film is supposed to bring profit to a studio. Whereas a novel do not have to worry so much about the impact that will have in its readers, a movie made by a big studio has to take into consideration the likes and dislikes of the audience. Adaptors and directors must try to produce something that will be appreciated and, as a consequence, bring public to the movie theatres. The plot, therefore, has to be clearly understood, characters have to be well defined and the ending should be satisfying. The addition of a well-known actor can help in establishing the public's interest and sympathy for a character, for instance.

When *Sense and Sensibility* was adapted to the screen by Emma Thompson in 1995, that was not different. Some aspects, characters and storylines had to be removed in order to make the film coherent, understandable and pleasant to the viewer. The most important change occurred in relation to the characters. They were significantly altered to suit the tastes and opinions of the audience of the late 20th century.

For many years critics and readers alike have been dissatisfied with some aspects of Austen's first published work. The ending was especially criticized for it seemed too farfetched. It looked very unlikely that Marianne, who had always been a spoiled, romantic girl in love with Willoughby, would fall in love with Colonel Brandon, or even worse, accept marrying him without being completely smitten. If it was already difficult for the readers from centuries ago to believe in such plot it would be even harder for the modern audience. As a consequence, changes had to be made. Colonel Brandon became a more charming man in the

interpretation of Alan Rickman; a man who shares with Marianne an interest for music, who is able to cheer her up with a new piano when she is depressed and who rescues her in the rain, just like Willoughby had once done. But Marianne also changed. It seems more believable in the film that she learned to love Colonel Brandon because she was toned down a little. In spite of being the same incurable romantic whose idea of happiness is to die for love, she is kinder and less rude to the ones around her. Whereas in the novel Marianne can be quite irritating at times, in the film she controls her feelings a little more and, if she cannot be as polite and pleasant as Elinor, she, at least, does not mistreat anyone.

Another problem was the character of Edward that was very apathetic and uninteresting for the current audience. The solution was to cast Hugh Grant for the part and make him become Margaret's best friend. Choosing Grant for the role of Edward is a great example of what Mast (1982) believes. In his opinion, when the audience is able to associate the actor's characteristics (that have been shown in previous movies and public persona) to the character's, it becomes easier to make it more credible. Edward turned from boring to charming in no time.

According to Mast, literature is a more reflective activity, maybe because the reader is in charge of the speed he reads it. The viewer, however, cannot control a film for it passes by very quickly. We cannot go back nor have the time to think about details. The message has to be conveyed clearly so that the audience understands what the director wants to say. Resources have to be used to do so successfully. In *Sense and Sensibility* the resources were many: casting actors who already had a certain image to the audience, making one character grow in order to help explain another (that is the case of Margaret and Edward, for instance) and the usage of art, more precisely music and poetry, to express the feelings and beliefs of a character (Marianne).

The characters of the protagonists were early on established as polar opposites by associating each with one aspect of life. Throughout the film it is possible to see Marianne surrounded by poetry and music – art is often associated with feelings and inner life – while Elinor is calculating, writing letters and teaching her younger sister – all of them connected with pragmatism and real life.

Some characters were eliminated but the majority of them remained. The ones that were removed did not have any significant goal in the story; the adaptor focused in the characters that could, in one way or another, contribute with the unfolding of the story. Having in mind that this is an adaptation of a novel by Jane Austen, it was necessary that the film maintained the irony so common in her writings.

One challenge presents when the story being told is an adaptation of a well-known novel, especially one that is loved by many, which is the case of *Sense and Sensibility*. The tendency is that the audience will watch the film expecting to see an exact copy of the written text. Criticism, in this situation, is fierce. It is the role of the adaptor not to feel intimidated by the need for faithfulness that the public demands. A good adaptation must leave the audience feeling that, although there were changes, they were made for the improvement of the story and not otherwise. That was achieved by Emma Thompson and Ang Lee, who, in spite of the changes made to the characters, were able to tell Austen's novel in a new way still keeping its essence intact.

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