



AN ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR IN JANE AUSTEN'S SENSE AND SENSIBILITY: A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Individual behavior is an outcome reaction of a person to a social engagement or how they perceive themselves in a situation. In Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) Elinor and Marianne Dashwood's behavior is the polar opposite of each other at a certain situation. This study discusses Elinor and Marianne's behavior during the social events when they are facing situations that occur. This study aims to observe the cause for the characters' behaviors based on the Attribution theory by Harold Kelley. The method used in this study is the descriptive qualitative method. The data sources for this study are primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the novel itself and the secondary data sources are from online journals and websites. The result of this study draws a conclusion that the reason for the character's behavior is attributed to external and internal factors

INTRODUCTION

Human behavior in group settings is a captivating field of study that reveals how individuals interact, influence one another, and collectively shape outcomes. Individuals adjust their beliefs or actions to match those of the group, even if they differ from their personal convictions (Asch, 1956). The study of individual behavior is essential for

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comprehending the complex array of factors that influence how a person thinks, feels, and acts. As noted by Bandura (1986) in his Social Cognitive Theory, individual behavior is shaped not only by internal cognitive processes but also by observational learning and environmental influences. This theory highlights the role of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific actions.

Individual behavior refers to the actions, responses, reactions, and behaving ways of an individual in a particular position. Personal characteristics and external influences drive individual behavior. Understanding individual behavior is essential in a social setting as it can greatly impact individual performance. Positive behavior contributes to the success, while negative behavior can lead to losses. Factors that influence individual behavior include sex, age, education, abilities, marital status, personality, perception, attitudes, values, learning, economic conditions, political conditions, cultural values, and physical facilities. These factors shape the patterns of human behavior and determine how individuals respond to different situations and express themselves.

Sense and Sensibility is a novel written by Jane Austen and published in 1811. It was Austen's first published work, initially under the pseudonym "A Lady". *Sense and Sensibility* is praised for its insightful observations, astute characterizations, and witty narrative style, which are characteristics of Austen's works. The novel was well-received upon its publication and has since become a classic of English Literature. It has been adapted into various film, stage, and television adaptations, including the 1995 film directed by Ang Lee, which generated critical acclaim and renewed interest in Austen's novels. The novel explores the romantic relationships and experiences of the Dashwoods sisters, Elinor, and Marianne, against the backdrop of 19th-century middle-class life. The story centers round the Dashwoods family, who face financial difficulties after the death of their father. The sisters, Elinor and Marianne, embody two contrasting qualities i.e. Elinor represents "sense" or rationality, while Marianne embodies "sensibility" or emotionality. This showed that in the novel the two sisters have a contrast in the way they behave at social settings. The novel follows their journeys as they navigate love, loss, and personal growth. After their father's death, the Dashwood family, including their mother and younger sister, relocate to a cottage in Devonshire. There, they encounter various suitors and romantic entanglements. Marianne becomes infatuated with the charming and seemingly romantic John Willoughby, while Elinor develops feelings for Edward Ferrars. However, both sisters face obstacles and complications in their relationship.

Throughout the novel, Austen explores themes of societal expectations, the importance of balancing rationality and emotions, and the challenges of finding true love and happiness within the limitations of the time period. Thus arise the behavior which they showed throughout the events in their life.

There are reasons why the researcher is interested in analyzing Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* novel. First, this novel is fascinating with its way of describing each character practically and needs depth reading and good comprehension to understand the story plot. Second, the differences between the main characters are perceptible when it comes to their nature. Third, the researcher is interested in the issue because the novel reflects human behavior and the relationship between individuals and society; therefore, the researcher raises the issue in the study. Fourth, there is a great moral value that can be learned from this novel. Fifth, the researcher's interest is in individual behavior in *Sense and Sensibility*, for that reason the study is to analyze Elinor and Marianne's behavior, whether in social or private setting.

METHOD

The type of research the researcher conducts is descriptive qualitative research to explore human behavior in Jane Austen's "*Sense and Sensibility*" novel because the data were taken from the document to be analyzed in the form of narrative description. The researcher use objective approach is looking at character's development in the novel, their action and their role within the narrative structure, without considering the author's life experiences. The data sources of this research are taken from the novel and journals related to the research. The researcher took the following action to gather and analyze the data: (1) Initially, the researcher read the novel "*Sense and Sensibility*" by Jane Austen once, aiming to know and understand its content. (2) Re-reading specific parts which are the main characters dialogue, to get the data. (3) Reading related journals, books or other sources related to attribution theory. (4) The researcher took notes of the character dialogue based on the novel using a Microsoft Office Word Document to analyze the character's behavior using Attribution Theory. (5) The researcher made a conclusion based on the research data. The data focused on analyzing descriptively using a qualitative technique on the main characters in *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen using the attribution theory which identifies the reason and intention of someone's action.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Consensus

In attribution theory, consensus is a term used to describe the extent to which other individuals behave in the same way in a similar situation:

"He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both. Oh! Mama, how spiritless, how tame was Edward's manner in reading to us last night! I felt for my sister severely. Yet she bore it with so much composure she seemed scarcely to notice it. I could hardly keep my seat. To hear those beautiful lines which have frequently almost driven me wild, pronounced with such impenetrable calmness, such dreadful indifference." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.25)

In the dialogue above, Marianne sounds astonished by how her sister seems to be able to listen to Edward without a single complaint. As Marianne has her own standard of enjoying arts, she cannot stand a person who does not share the same taste as her. Her behavior indicates that she behaves differently from others who are also listening to Edward's reading. Mrs. Dashwood then jump in his defense that he reads decently. Marianne also makes another comment on how Edward has no taste in drawing, "what a pity is Elinor," said Marianne, "that Edward should have no taste in drawing." Which gets a response from Elinor that although he does not draw, he takes pleasure in seeing the drawing of others. Elinor reaction to Marianne comment does not align, which resulting in Elinor's low consensus.

"This was the season of happiness to Marianne. Her heart was devoted to Willoughby, and the fond attachment to Norland, which she brought with her from Sussex, was more likely to be softened than she had thought possible, by the charms that his society bestowed on her present home. Elinor's happiness was not so great. her heart was not so much at ease, nor her satisfaction in their amusement is so pure. They afforded her no companion that could make amends for what she had left behind, nor that could teach her to think of Norland with less regret than ever." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.77)

From the narration, the researcher found that both Elinor and Marianne feel the opposite of each other when facing similar situations. And in this case, both have low consensus.

"One morning, about a week after his leaving the country, Marianne was prevailed on to join her sisters in their usual walk instead of wandering away by herself. Hitherto she had carefully avoided every companion in her rambles. If her sisters intended to walk on the downs, she directly stole away towards the lanes; if they talked of the valley, she was as speedy in climbing the hills, and could never be found when the others set off. But at length, she was secured by the exertions of Elinor, who greatly disapproved such continual seclusion." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.119)

The narration above shows that Marianne's behavior tends to disagree with what her sisters were doing and instead does the opposite. Therefore, Marianne has low consensus.

"He was welcomed by them all with great cordiality, but especially by Marianne, who showed more warmth of regard in her reception of him than even Elinor herself. To Marianne, indeed, the meeting between Edward and her sister was but a continuation of that unaccountable coldness which she had often observed at Norland in their mutual behavior. On Edward's side, more particularly, there was a deficiency of all that a lover ought to look and say on such an occasion. He was confused, seemed scarcely sensible of pleasure in seeing them, looked neither rapturous nor gay, said little but what was forced from him by questions, and distinguished Elinor by no mark of affection. Marianne saw and listened with increasing surprise. She began to feel a dislike of Edward; and it ended, as every feeling must end with her..." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.121)

After Marianne's separation from Willoughby, she and Elinor met with Edward whom Elinor has feelings with. However, his attitude does not show any affection toward Elinor, making him disagree with Marianne. Although they have yet to confirm their relationship, Marianne was quick to make an assumption of the two having feelings for each other. Thus, Marianne fall into the category of low consensus i.e. attributed to internal factor.

"But these objections had all, with that happy ardor of youth which Marianne and her mother equally shared, been overcome or overlooked; and Elinor, in spite of every occasional doubt of Willoughby's constancy, could not witness the rapture of delightful expectation which filled the whole soul and beamed in the eyes of Marianne, without feeling how blank was her own prospect, how cheerless her own state of mind in the comparison, and how gladly she would engage in the solicitude of Marianne's situation to have the same animating object in view, the same possibility of hope." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.213)

Elinor in the paragraph above, shows her doubt while Marianne and her mother share equal emotion regarding Marianne's situation and Willoughby. Her disagreement with Marianne and her mother's sentiment showed that she is in low consensus, thus belonging to an internal factor.

"Forgive me, forgive me," throwing her arms around her sister's neck; "I know you feel for me; I know what a heart you have; but yet you are—you must be happy; Edward loves you—what, oh what, can you do away such happiness as that?"

"Many, many circumstances," said Elinor solemnly." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.247-248)

Elinor shows a hint of her own sadness, however, Marianne fails to notice. She thinks Elinor is happy with her relationship with Edward as there are no rumor about the two. In this case, Marianne attributed to internal factor. From the narration above, Marianne is described as someone who thinks that everyone shares the same opinion as her. Thus, she is attributed to internal factor.

“Elinor was much more hurt by Marianne’s warmth than she had been by what produced it; but Colonel Brandon’s eyes, as they were fixed on Marianne, declared that he noticed only what was amiable in it, the affectionate heart which could not bear to see a sister slighted in the smallest point.” (Jane Austen, 1811, p.315)

When Elinor is hurt by Mrs. Ferrars blunt word of comparing her art style and Miss Morton’s, Marianne speak in defense of her sister and that infuriates Mrs. Ferrars. She has done that out of good will and Colonel Brandon has also seen how Marianne cares for her sister. However, Elinor does not feel Marianne’s affection to be a good gesture and bad favor as she wants to be in Mrs. Ferrars good side. Elinor in this situation is attributed to internal factor.

“Colonel Brandon’s character,” said Elinor, “as an excellent man, is well established.”

“I know it is,”—replied her mother seriously, “or after such warning, I should be the last to encourage such affection, or even to be pleased by it. But his coming for me as he did, with such active, such ready friendship, is enough to prove him one of the worthiest of men.” (Jane Austen, 1811, p.446)

In the conversation between Elinor and her mother, they are talking about Colonel Brandon, who holds a feeling toward Marianne, as he is quick to act whenever he is needed and especially when Marianne is involved. They are both in agreement on how Colonel Brandon is such a good gentleman and has an excellent characteristic. Therefore, Elinor is attributed to external factor because her mother also agrees to her sentiment.

2. Consistency

Consistency refers to the extent to which the individual’s behavior in a given situation is similar across time.

“Elinor started at this declaration and was sorry for the warmth she had been betrayed into, in speaking of him. She felt that Edward stood very high in her opinion. She believed the regard to be mutual; but she required greater certainty of it to make Marianne’s conviction of their attachment agreeable to her.” (Jane Austen, 1811, p.29-30)

Marianne suspects that there is love between Elinor and Edward, however, Elinor needs prove of the mutual regard between her and Edward. Although she believes Edward has affection for her, she still feels sorry as she cannot bring herself to say so to Marianne. Another piece of evidence also shows that Elinor is consistent.

“With such knowledge as this, it was impossible for Elinor to feel easy on the subject. She was far from depending on that result of his preference of her which her mother and sister still considered as certain.” (Jane Austen, 1811, p.32)

Elinor from the description above is uncertain with Edward's affection toward her, however, her mother and her sister insist on acknowledging Edward's affection. Elinor does not admit nor deny as she has not yet confirmed his regard toward her. This shows that her attitude to the situation is attributed to internal factor.

"I want no proof of their affection," said Elinor; "but of their engagement I do."

"I am perfectly satisfied of both."

"Yet not a syllable has been said to you on the subject, by either of them..."

"...I confess," replied Elinor, "that every circumstance except ONE is in favour of their engagement, but that ONE is the total silence of both on the subject, and with me it almost outweighs every other..."

"...You must remember, my dear mother, that I have never considered this matter as certain. I have my doubts, I confess, but they are fainter than they were, and they may soon be entirely done away. If we find they correspond, every fear of mine will be removed." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.111-112)

Another evidence of Elinor being rational toward the matter concerning her sister Marianne which she doubts there has been an engagement made between Marianne and Willoughby. However, her mother is convinced that the two has shown enough for people to see there is an engagement between them. Elinor, instead of saying she does not believe her mother, she says that she will have no doubt if she sees them correspond with each other.

"Elinor sat down to her drawing table as soon as he was out of the house, busily employed herself the whole day, neither sought nor avoided the mention of his name, appear to interest herself almost as much as ever in the general concerns of the family, and if, by this conduct, she did not lessen her own grief, it was at least prevented from unnecessary increase, and her mother and sisters were spared much solicitude on her account." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.143)

After Edward's announcement to depart from Barton, Elinor does not get any confirmation of his feelings. She then carries on her day without being bothered to ask and the mention of Edward's name by her mother and sister. She shows the same attitude whenever Edward is mentioned thus, she is attributed to internal factors.

"Good heavens!" cried Elinor, "what do you mean? Are you acquainted with Mr. Robert Ferrars? Can you be?" And she did not feel at much delighted with the idea of such a sister-in-law.

"No," replied Lucy, "not to Mr. ROBERT Ferrars— I never saw him in my life; but," fixing her eyes upon Elinor, "to his eldest brother."

What did Elinor at that moment? Astonishment that would have been as painful as it was intense had not an immediate disbelief of the assertion attended to it. She turned towards Lucy in silent amazement, unable to divine the reason or object of such a declaration, and though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity and felt no danger of hysterical fit, or a swoon." (Jane Austen, 1811, 176)

Upon hearing the mention of Edward by Lucy Steel, Elinor asks in a manner that does not raise suspicion despite the shock she received. She remains calm after the conversation with Lucy.

"In a firm, though cautious tone, Elinor thus began. "I should be undeserving of the confidence you have honoured me with, if I felt no desire for

its continuance or no further curiosity on its subject. I will not apologize, therefore, for bringing it forward again." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.195)

Elinor also received the shocking news of Edward and Lucy's engagement, which has been going on for four years.

"Lucy here looked up; but Elinor was careful in guarding her countenance from every expression that could give her words a suspicious tendency.

Although Elinor knows that Lucy is trying to get a reaction from Elinor, she keeps her demeanor in front on Lucy and keeps her feelings and emotions to herself.

"Edward's love for me," said Lucy, "has been absent since we were first engaged, and it has stood the trial so well, that I should be unpardonable to doubt it now. I can safely say that he has never given me one moment's alarm on that account from the first."

Elinor hardly knew whether to smile or sigh at this assertion." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.197)

Until the end of the conversation with Lucy, Elinor keeps her composure without lacking anything in her way of speaking to get more information. Therefore she is attributed to the internal factor

"Elinor had often wished for an opportunity of attempting to weaken her mother's dependence on the attachment of Edward and herself, that the shock might be less when the whole truth were revealed, and now on this attack, though almost hopeless of success, she forced herself to begin her design by saying, as calmly as she could, "I like Edward Ferrars very much, and shall always be glad to see him; but as to the rest of the family, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, whether I am ever known to them or not." (Jane Austen, 1811, pp. 209-210)

After she learns about Edward's engagement, she often wishes to tell her mother of the matter between herself and Edward are no more than a friendship. She still holds feelings toward Edward, although that feeling is not confirmed to be reciprocated. This shows that she is attributed to internal factors.

"Elinor tried very seriously to convince him that there was no likelihood of her marrying Colonel Brandon, but it was an expectation of too much pleasure to himself to be relinquished, and he was really resolved on seeking an intimacy with that gentleman and promoting the marriage by every possible attention." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.302)

John Dashwood, Elinor's brother, is pushing herself to marry Colonel Brandon which. Elinor tries profusely to convince him that Colonel Brand has no romantic regard toward her although she has a great deal of respect for Colonel Brandon as she knows that he likes her sister Marianne.

"By feeling that I was doing my duty.—My promise to Lucy, obliged me to be secret. I owed it to her, therefore, to avoid giving any hint of the truth; and I owed it to my family and friends not to create in them a solicitude about me, which it could not be in my power to satisfy."

Marianne seemed much struck

"I have very often wished to undeceive yourself and my mother," added Elinor; "and once or twice I have attempted it;—but without betraying my trust, I could never have convinced you." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.346)

From the conversation above, after Miss Steel has made the engagement of Edward and Lucy public accidentally, the news reaches Marianne and Elinor has to explain the reason why she keeps secret about the secret engagement between Edward and Lucy. She finally can tell Marianne what has been occupying her mind before she finds out about the engagement.

"Elinor, though never less disposed to speak than at the moment, obliged herself to answer such an attack as this, and, therefore trying to smile, replied, "And have you really, Ma'am, talked yourself into a persuasion of my sister's being engaged to Mr. Willoughby? I thought it had been only a joke, but so serious a question seems to imply more, and I must beg, therefore, that you will not deceive yourself any longer. I do assure you that nothing will surprise me more than to hear of their being going to be married."

After the shocking news of the engagement between Willoughby and Miss Grey which breaks the heart of Marianne, all acquaintances feel empathy toward her. Mrs. Jennings then talks to Elinor and wonder why Willoughby marries Miss Grey when the talk of marriage in society has been about Marianne and Willoughby to which Elinor answers with the utmost emphasis that it has been only the assumption of others that Marianne and Willoughby will end up marrying each other. However, she does not believe the two have confirmed their engagement.

"Elinor's heart, which had undergone many changes in the course of this extraordinary conversation, was now softened again;—yet she felt it her duty to check such ideas in her companion as the last." (Jane Austen, 1811, p.431)

The narration above is a snippet of Elinor's emotion during her conversation with Willoughby when he comes to ask about Marianne and if he can see her to make amends for his past behavior. She always shows that she cares to know more about information before passing judgment and replying to the person she talks to. This proves that she is rational and is not easily affected by baseless rumor, also she seek information before she speak of this matter.

3. Distinctiveness

Distinctiveness refers to how differently a person behaves in one situation compared to another.

Elinor could not help smiling at this display of indifference towards the manners of a person, to whom she had often had difficulty in persuading Marianne to behave with tolerable politeness; and resolved within herself that if her sister persisted in going, she would go likewise, as she did not think it proper that Marianne should be left to the sole guidance of her own judgment, or that Mrs. Jennings should be abandoned to the mercy of Marianne for all the

comfort of her domestic hours. To this determination she was the more easily reconciled, by recollecting that Edward Ferrars, by Lucy's account, was not to be in town before February; and that their visit, without any unreasonable abridgement, might be previously finished" (Jane Austen, 1811, p.209)

Discussion

Harold Kelley's Attribution Theory is based upon the perspective that people make interpretations about behavior based on three keys: Consistency, Distinctiveness, and Consensus. When applied to characters Elinor and Marianne in Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility," it provides a deeper understanding of their actions and motivations.

1. Consensus

In terms of consensus, we could look at how their behavior compares to others in similar situations in the society they inhabit. Elinor's guarded and controlled demeanor aligns closely with societal expectations of her time. Hence a consensus is observed. Marianne, in contrast, goes against the consensus. Her emotional outbursts and disregard for societal conventions are often seen as inappropriate, showing a lack of consensus between her behavior and societal norms.

2. Consistency

Elinor is a person of consistent character. Regardless of the situation she finds herself in, she remains logical and grounded. Throughout the novel, her rational approach is consistent, especially in her careful handling of her feelings for Edward Ferrars, despite his engagement to Lucy Steele. This consistency in her behavior could be interpreted as evidence of her internal attributes - her strong sense of propriety and respect for societal rules. On the contrary, Marianne's behavior tends to be less consistent. She fluctuates between emotional extremes, from blissful happiness during her courtship with Willoughby to deep despair after his rejection. This inconsistency could be attributed to her external circumstances or societal pressures.

3. Distinctiveness

Each sister displays a distinct approach to life. Elinor's behavior is distinctive in that she is rational and measured in different situations, effectively masking her internal turmoil for the sake of societal decorum. Marianne, however, reacts strongly and emotionally to her experiences, making her behavior distinctive in its own way. Her response to situations is highly unique, as she typically reacts with effusive displays of emotion - whether it be joy, love, or grief. This characteristic is attributable to Marianne's tendency to be guided by her sensibilities.

Thus, Harold Kelley's Attribution Theory can be used to analyze and understand the characters of Elinor and Marianne. It provides a framework within which their behaviors may be dissected and the causes behind them understood more clearly. This examination can lead to greater appreciation of Austen's character development and narrative techniques.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the novel "Sense and Sensibility" by Jane Austen, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood have different attributions for their behavior. Elinor is portrayed as a rational thinker who restrains her emotions and prioritizes responsibility and duty. She believes in adhering to societal expectations and maintaining proper decorum. Elinor's behavior can be attributed to her strong sense of duty and her desire to protect her family's reputation.

On the other hand, Marianne is depicted as highly emotional, impulsive, and passionate. She follows her heart and is guided by her intense feelings. Marianne's behavior can be attributed to her sensitivity and belief in expressing her emotions freely. She is not concerned with conforming to societal norms and often acts based on her own desires and emotions.

These attributions shape the way Elinor and Marianne respond to various situations in the novel. Elinor's rationality and self-control enable her to navigate difficult circumstances with composure. She puts her family's welfare above her own desires and makes decisions based on practicality rather than immediate gratification.

In contrast, Marianne's Sensibility leads her to prioritize her own happiness and fulfillment. She is uninhibited in expressing her emotions and follows her heart without considering the potential consequences. Marianne's behavior is driven by her desire for intense romantic experiences and her belief in living authentically.

It is important to note that while Elinor and Marianne have different attributions for their behavior, they both undergo personal growth throughout the novel. Elinor learns to balance her sense with a greater understanding and acceptance of her own emotions. Marianne, on the other hand, realizes the importance of tempering her Sensibility with a dose of rationality and self-restraint.

Overall, Elinor and Marianne's attributions for their behavior in the novel "Sense and Sensibility" are rooted in their contrasting temperaments and beliefs. Elinor's sense and responsibility guide her actions, while Marianne's Sensibility and passion shape her behavior. Both characters experience personal growth as they learn to find a balance between sense and Sensibility.

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