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Strong Female Characters: Jane Austen's vs. The Mashups'

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STRONG FEMALE CHARACTERS:
JANE AUSTEN'S VS. THE MASHUPS'

A Capstone Experience/ Thesis Project
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Bachelor of English Literature with
Honors College Graduate Distinction at Western Kentucky University

By

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ABSTRACT

The comparison of Strong Female Characters in Jane Austen's novels *Pride & Prejudice* and *Sense & Sensibility*, with the altered characters in the monster mashups by Seth Grahame-Smith and Ben Winters, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, respectively, reveals differences between the two society's understanding and portrayal of strength and femininity. Because these texts are so closely connected – Austen is listed as a co-author of both mashups – the differences evident in the representations of women more clearly reveal the differing cultural values. Close textual analysis of the development of three primary female characters – Marianne Dashwood, Elinor Dashwood, and Elizabeth Bennet – through their respective novels and their parallel journeys in the mashups demonstrates that the mashups have weakened the characters. Though the mashups are advertised as making Austen's characters into Strong Female Characters, Austen's women are already strong.

Keywords: Jane Austen, Mashups, Strong Female Characters, Popular Literature, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all of my family and friends who experienced my obsession with Jane Austen and still encouraged me to keep going – especially anyone who has played “Marrying Mr. Darcy” with me. I love you all. Thank you so much.

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FOREWORD

Jane Austen – a beloved, never-out-of-print author – is today often sadly confined to the genre of chick lit and therefore dismissed by some contemporary readers. As a result, a few writers have felt the need to update her Regency novels to reflect the current fascination with the supernatural as depicted in such television series as *The Walking Dead*. A specific complaint about *Pride & Prejudice* (1813) and *Sense & Sensibility* (1811) is that they present marriage as the ideal ending. With the intention of mocking and capitalizing upon these works, Seth Graham-Smith and Ben Winters have modified the novels by adding zombies and sea monsters to create *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009) and *Sense, Sensibility, and Sea Monsters* (2009).

These novels are *mashups*, which is one of three distinct categories that authors utilize when adapting texts. The other two are *parodies* and *modernizations*. Parodies model or imitate another work in order to create a comic effect by keeping the style and changing the content. They change the intent of the piece, which is reflected in this genre's occasional use as a political tool, despite the inherent humor such changes bring. Having a long history, parody is used alongside satire by exaggerating a point to highlight its ridiculousness. Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" is an example of how pointed the combination of satire and parody can be, but a more straightforward parody is *Don Quixote*, by Miguel de Cervantes, which parodies the then current chivalric genre. Modernizations involve the original content, such as dialogue, while updating the setting without changing

the intent of the work. This form of adaptation has been applied to many Shakespeare plays, where the dialogue is intact, but the setting has been greatly altered. Mashups, however, combine two or more significant elements or plots, which invariably change the story. In the cases of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, an existing story is combined with monsters to create a sort of “franken-story” that retains elements of the original. This is different from a modernization because a modernization keeps the meaning of the story the same, while the different elements in a mashup invariably pollute, change, or dilute the original meaning. A mashup is also different from a parody because while it does often highlight an element of ridiculousness, it is not making an overall joke nor a political point as a parody does.

The mashup genre has done well in recent years, as evidenced by the sales of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*. A year after being published, there were over a million copies of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* in print in addition to 375,000 copies of *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* (Deahl). This does not mark the end of the popularity of this sort of work either; in 2016, a movie adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* was released after much anticipation. On the other hand, Austen’s novels have not only continued to survive but have thrived, with over 20 million copies of *Pride & Prejudice* alone sold to date (Frost et al).

The benefit of looking at *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, which are the result of modern cultural trends, alongside such time-honored works as *Pride & Prejudice* and *Sense & Sensibility*, is that the surprising similarities and differences between the two cultures become ripe for analysis. Scholars have begun the task of using mashups, modernizations, and parodies as lenses

through which to analyze contemporary culture and traditional literature. There are over a dozen published articles on *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* as well as several masters' theses. Katherine Koballa's thesis claims that *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* is a novel that has inaugurated "a new era in popular literature, namely one obsessed with reviving classic literature with monstrous new additions. This trend represents a convergence of other, more enduring trends" (1). Koballa goes on to analyze the different genres present in the text and their contribution to the work's meaning before concluding that this fad is a demonstration of many trends in modern culture. In another master's thesis, Colby Fitzgerald looks at different adaptations of Austen, concluding that Austen has become a pop-culture icon partially because of the adaptations of her work (121). About *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* specifically, Colby states that "While the zombie plotline might appeal to a new audience, it necessarily and radically shifts the focus of Austen's original novel" (84). These theses take very different approaches to analyzing Austen's works and their adaptations, but both make conclusions about what the mashups say about modern culture.

One aspect that is supposed to improve upon the original works is that the protagonists are now Strong Female Characters. By killing monsters and accomplishing the same violent tasks as men, women are only now able to be considered strong. The issue is that these obvious and external displays of strength pave over the subtle feminine strength of Austen's original characters. In fact, the phrase "Strong Female Character" has become a buzzword in today's media and almost exclusively refers to masculinized female characters, hence "strong" females. This then implies that femininity is equal to weakness, which is both insulting and inaccurate, as many characters in Austen's novels demonstrate.

For the purpose of this paper a Strong Female Character is a well-developed individual who struggles with her weaknesses, overcomes them at least partially, demonstrates growth, participates in her culture, and is not ashamed to be feminine. Many of Austen's original female characters certainly do fulfill these criteria.

Grahame-Smith and Winters have altered the focus of specific sections in the "updates" while keeping the style the same in order to make the stories more accessible and popular. Adding the monsters dramatically changes the focus, but both authors attempt to maintain the style and tone of the original novels. These challenging attempts to stay true to the originals demonstrate something about modern culture, because while people today may not be content with longstanding, traditional stories, they are also unwilling to dispose of them. This nostalgia makes room for people like Grahame-Smith and Winters to attempt to change these classic works and make them more palatable without completely losing the essence of the originals. These authors achieve their goals by citing Austen as a co-author and lifting entire passages from the original novels; indeed, more than half of each original novel is unchanged (Miller 438).

The contemporary reader is made to feel comfortable within the Regency period through the addition of monsters, which are emblematic of blood, death, and violence. Brought into the twenty-first century, Austen's novels are dragged along an avenue of violence. For these coarse values to be embedded within Austen's world emphasizes a different cultural milieu. Austen's original works emphasize society and family, which are underscored by the importance of trust and practical love in relationships. Modern audiences presumably tend to find any quiet interplay between characters to be boring because the emotion and the subtext of conversations and actions require deeper reading

and understanding to appreciate. In today's world subtlety is often dead while instant gratification is the norm. Good or bad, the addition of crude elements, ones that may help to emphasize previously subtle meanings or to eliminate them, has become popular. Because these changes in meanings often integrate within the form so well, detail-oriented readers can also appreciate the effect of the changes Graham-Smith and Winters imitate.

In the case of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Graham-Smith leaves the setting alone but alters the characters rather dramatically through slight changes to the existing text alongside additional chunks of text containing zombies. These additions typically involve the un-dead who interrupt or expand upon existing scenes. In *Sense, Sensibility, and Sea Monsters*, Winters changes the setting due to the nature of sea monsters, while leaving the characters relatively unchanged. Winters takes existing dialogue and sets it in a new, water-based setting, but like Graham-Smith, interrupts the scenes with monster attacks. The overall effect of the changes is similar, but the roots are very different because Austen's Elizabeth Bennet seems to be an entirely different person than Grahame-Smith's, although both exist in the same physical location, while Winters' Elinor and Marianne are extremely similar to Austen's characters but exist in a very different location.

Modern culture is also being mocked for its love of violence and obsession with money. Often criticized and looked upon as antiquated, Austen's presentation of Regency society's monetary and status-centered marriages is used in the mashups to turn the criticism back onto contemporary society. There is a parallel between the Regency's marital focus and the materialistic nature of today's society, and the mashups put the two in such close comparison that the connection is hard to avoid.

Marianne Dashwood, Elinor Dashwood, and Elizabeth Bennet – all three protagonists desire *loving* marriages, contradicting the traditional desire for practical and advantageous ones. Austen presents this as a morally sound option because it goes beyond superficial social values. These young women grow as human beings before they enter into loving relationships, which are not always what they had envisioned but are actually best for them. This is especially the case for Marianne in *Sense & Sensibility* when she marries Colonel Brandon instead of Willoughby as she had long imagined she would. The remakes degrade these marriages and the growth the women go through by implying that getting married will cut them off from their passions and their identities. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* this issue is explicit because once Elizabeth gets married, she will no longer be able to serve the crown as a warrior and zombie killer. Elizabeth's struggle between fighting zombies and getting married is exemplary of contemporary media's portrayal of Strong Female Characters. There is a sharp divide between what is masculine and what is feminine; for a woman to be portrayed as strong, she cannot be feminine, and romantic interests make her weak.

Masculinity and femininity are encompassing social dynamics, making their definitions extraordinarily and, often uselessly, broad, but by using the descriptions of these terms given in "Talking about Books: Strong Female Characters in Recent Children's Literature," it is possible to understand the stereotypes as they will be discussed within this paper. A modern conception of a Strong Female Character is that to be strong she must be masculine, i.e., "active, strong, brave, rough, competitive, logical, unemotional, messy, decisive, [have an] innate need for adventure, [and use] aggressive language and behavior" (Heine et al. 429). Masculinity can holistically be discussed, therefore, as a physical and

outward attempt to appear masterful and in control. This is not meant to be a negative portrayal, but this concept should not be totally synonymous with strength in today's culture; it has led to toxic masculinity and the derision of women's strength. Part of the reason for this 'shortcut' to the appearance of strength for characters is that the stereotypes associated with femininity are that women are "passive, frightened, weak, gentle, ... unoriginal, silly, confused, inept, dependent, follower[s], conformer[s], emotional, concerned about appearance[s], [have an] innate need for marriage and motherhood, [and use] passive language and behavior" (Heine et al. 429). A recurring pattern within these characteristics, passivity is why most modern writers do not attempt to infuse strength into feminine characters. But many of these characteristics, such as the ability to follow and to care about others, are necessary for a functional society. Most people do not embody all of these characteristics, and a realistic character will be a blending of all of these traits. The ability to act in the face of fear is true strength.

The mashups of Austen's novels attempt to 'fix' the stories for contemporary tastes. Judging from the care with which the details have been changed to keep each work cohesive, one can conclude that modern culture still values love and romance but finds it boring unless set amidst violence and gore. The mashups' attempts to more concretely deal with secondary characters reflects contemporary society's obsession with detail and total satisfaction. Grahame-Smith and Winters both reinvent the female protagonists as violent and manly to convey their strength. Because of how they define a Strong Female Character, the mashups gloss over the real feminine strength of Austen's original characters. The different portrayals of Strong Female Characters in these works serve as a case study to understanding each society's perception and expectation of women.

CHAPTER ONE: MARIANNE DASHWOOD

Marianne Dashwood is one of two protagonists in *Sense & Sensibility*, the other being her sister Elinor. At the beginning of the novel, the pair, alongside their mother and younger sister – Margaret – have just lost their home, Norland, due to the death of Mr. Dashwood. They are displaced by their half-brother, John Dashwood, and his insensitive wife, Fanny. Before Fanny can hurriedly drive them out, they are all visited by Fanny's brother, Edward Ferrars, who seems to have feelings for Elinor, which are reciprocated. Upon leaving for lowly Barton Cottage, Mrs. Dashwood insists that Edward come and visit.

At Barton, they quickly meet their neighbors and landlords, Sir John and Lady Middleton, who are being visited by Lady Middleton's mother, Mrs. Jennings, and Sir John's friend, Colonel Brandon. Colonel Brandon is immediately taken with Marianne, but she rebuffs him, largely due to his age. A few days later, Marianne and Margaret go for a walk and are caught in the rain. Falling and hurting herself, Marianne is carried to safety by an occasional resident of the neighborhood, John Willoughby. He is visiting the aunt upon whom he is financially dependent. Marianne and Willoughby's relationship quickly progresses, and they seem destined for marriage. But he leaves for London before this has definitively occurred, leaving Marianne disappointed and her family confused. So, when Mrs. Jennings asks Elinor and Marianne to accompany her to London, Marianne jumps at the chance.

Once there, Marianne attempts to gain Willoughby's attention again, but he continues to ignore her. This culminates at a party when Willoughby ignores Marianne and instead spends his time with the wealthy Miss Grey. Mrs. Jennings then leaves London to be with her other daughter, Mrs. Palmer – who has just given birth – and Marianne falls ill while they are there. Colonel Brandon has been respectfully attempting to gain Marianne's attentions and affections up to this point and proves his worth by leaving to notify Mrs. Dashwood of her daughter's illness. Willoughby comes to see Marianne during this time, but she is too sick for visitors. Now married to Miss Grey, Willoughby ruefully tells Elinor that he felt compelled to wed because his aunt cut him off after learning of his relationship with the impoverished Marianne. Elinor is convinced that Willoughby still loves Marianne but chose to forgo marital satisfaction in favor of financial security. Meanwhile, Marianne recovers both from the illness and her infatuation with Willoughby and ultimately marries Colonel Brandon.

Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters radically changes some elements of this story, such as the place and history, while leaving others intact. Colonel Brandon now has a face full of tentacles – the image on the cover of the book – which are supposed to add to his repulsiveness. Mrs. Jennings and her daughters are no longer well-to-do society women but have been kidnapped from their tribe by Sir John. This change is particularly evident in the actions of Lady Middleton but is almost completely forgotten in Mrs. Jennings' case. Virtually every location is also changed to take place either at sea, on the coast, or most ridiculously, in the underwater city of Sub Station Beta that has replaced London. These changes interfere with the original plot to varying and illogical degrees throughout the novel.

In Austen's novel, Marianne is a character who begins as a more typical Regency female. That is, Marianne is first presented as shallow, unfortunately idealistic, and self-centered yet still likeable. She is not a bad character but one who is not to be taken too seriously. Quite simply, she is what today would be called a romantic schoolgirl. Marianne's youthful and unbendingly idealistic approach to love and life is first evident when it is suggested that she marry Colonel Brandon. Upon learning of this idea, Marianne tells her mother that

you cannot deny the absurdity of the accusation, though you may not think it intentionally ill-natured. Colonel Brandon is certainly younger than Mrs. Jennings, but he is old enough to be MY father; and if he were ever animated enough to be in love, must have long outlived every sensation of the kind. It is too ridiculous! (48)

Marianne's own behavior is part of what makes Mrs. Jennings' suggestion so ridiculous; she is outrageous in the very structure of her speech. Most of the sentences are long conglomerations of clauses that appear to be spontaneous, unplanned additions to the previous clause. Other sentences, like the final one above, are short interjections of pure emotionalism. These sentences actually do more damage to Marianne's logic than her longer ones, because while such sentences do ramble, they are still focused; for example, the last long sentence focuses upon the unacceptability of Colonel Brandon's age. This is a valid argument, but her method of presentation makes it seem much sillier than it is, especially in conjunction with her belief that love will one day sweep her off her feet. The age difference of almost twenty years between these two characters creates a power difference, similar to the pedagogical differences Patrick Fessenbecker analyzes in his article entitled "Jane Austen on Love and Pedagogical Power." He concludes that "the

existence of a power differential in a relationship is not a sufficient reason to say it is not a loving relationship: one would have to investigate the power dynamics and determine whether it was a relationship of mutual recognition” (761). The age difference between Marianne and Colonel Brandon initially presents itself as an insurmountable obstacle, but it is ultimately just another factor that must be taken into consideration. The fact that she is speaking openly about her desires is a mark of impetuosity but also a sign of her self-confidence, which is an important trait for becoming a Strong Female Character. But her extreme exaggeration to the mere suggestion of being wed to Brandon demonstrates that she has a lot of growing to do before this is possible.

In *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, Marianne’s reason for not wanting to marry Colonel Brandon is even more exaggerated. The original quote contains the interjection “It is too ridiculous!” but in the mashup this sentence is replaced, and the rest of the quote is changed to the following: “In addition, he has to clothes-pin his tentacle to his ears in order to eat; it is perfectly nauseating. When is a man to be safe from such wit, if age and infirmity and the chance of him strangling his accuser with his rage-stiffened face-appendages, will not protect him?” (41). Fantastic and ridiculous, the image with the clothespins sets the tone for the rest of the mashup elements Winters adds to the novel. Now Marianne is attempting to argue Colonel Brandon’s unsuitability on two points rather than the one which she rationally struggled to follow through on. The awkwardness of this addition is evident in the double “and” in the final sentence, which exists because Winters has just added his words to the end of the sentence rather than modifying it. The effect of using two “ands” in one list typically conveys that a list is exhaustive and overly-thorough. In this case, Marianne’s argument comes across as even more extreme and ridiculous than

it does in the original. The actual contents of the additional text are also slightly confusing because of the four masculine pronouns it contains, yet that does not stop the image from being absolutely ridiculous and funny. It is perfectly in character for Marianne to say something like this, highlighting just how much she will have to grow through the course of the novel, but it also foreshadows how little time Winters will dedicate to this emotional growth in favor of more entertaining elements.

Mrs. Jennings is the one who originally suggests that Marianne marry Colonel Brandon, and this action is in line with her characterization as a traditional female character for a Regency Era work. She is described as such by the narrator, who states that as a widow who has lived to see her own daughters married, she “had now therefore nothing to do but to marry all the rest of the world. In the promotion of this object she was zealously active, as far as her ability reached; and missed no opportunity of projecting weddings among all the young people of her acquaintance” (47). Mrs. Jennings’ absolute focus on marriage appears to demean her, and she is certainly not handled as a completely serious character, but she is still treated with a degree of respect. Characters like Elinor respect her because she is a practical woman in the sense that she married well and, upon the death of her husband, is now independently wealthy. After all, in Regency England marriage was one of the few ways to guarantee financial security for a woman. In “Mrs. Jennings and Mrs. Palmer: The Path to Female Self-Determination in Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*,” Kathleen Anderson and Jordan Kidd discuss how Mrs. Jennings’ character represents a balance between sense and sensibility despite the view that she has “a narrow scope of understanding” (142). One of the key ways that they support this claim is through the idea that her fulfillment is “only through a personal commitment to be happy with [herself],

without any apprehension about outside variables” (142). The authors take a generous view of Mrs. Jennings’s motives, but they do highlight that she is a self-supporting woman in an incredibly patriarchal and hierarchal society. In considering this, however, it is important to remember that Mrs. Jennings is self-sufficient as a widow; she is only in her current situation because she has followed social conventions. Her positive experience working within the system makes it more understandable for her to push others into this system and gives this plot-point more support than just that it is humorous to read about. An excellent example of a character who has lived and conventionally found happiness, Mrs. Jennings has not seized the opportunity to grow in such a way as to make her a Strong Female Character.

The mashup attempts to give readers more background about Mrs. Jennings’ life while also incorporating more ‘monster-esque’ elements to the story. Mrs. Jennings is again described as a widow, but now Winters states that it is because

her husband and male children [were] ruthlessly slaughtered in the same raid during which she and her daughters were carried off in a sack by Sir John and his men. She had now, therefore, nothing to do but to marry all the rest of the world. In her promotion of this object she was zealously active, as far as her ability reached; and missed no opportunity of projecting weddings among all the young people of her acquaintance. (40)

As Mrs. Jennings’ daughter, Lady Middleton is also subjected to this adjustment, but in her Winters expands the plot to illustrate her attempts to escape her life in England and be free, yet Mrs. Jennings is practically identical between the two novels. The issue is that Winters has monumentally changed these characters but handles the change inconsistently. In Lady

Middleton, Winters has created a reason for her apathy that was brushed off in the original novel by making her disposition a byproduct of her obsession with escape. Her attention is now focused elsewhere and is used as an interesting and realistic subplot to the novel. However, he handles Mrs. Jennings very differently, likely because her original character is actually solid, interesting, and important to the plot. There are many ways Winters could have explored or at least acknowledged this change with Mrs. Jennings. One such possibility would have been to have portrayed Mrs. Jennings as suffering from Stockholm Syndrome towards her captors. This development would not have altered her behavior very much but would have legitimized her changed history. Using a monologue to touch on her thought processes or emotions regarding her daughter's desire to escape would have also been quite plausible and added another layer both to her character and the novel as a whole. It seems very wasteful to change a character so significantly and then to allow readers to forget about such a change when it has the potential to add so much to the novel.

Upon arriving in London, Marianne is desperate to see Willoughby, but he continues to avoid her, even going so far as to snub her in public. He then sends a letter explaining that he did not mean to lead her on and that he is soon to be married. Upon reading the explanation, Marianne is devastated. Elinor observes Marianne "stretched on the bed, almost choked by grief, one letter in her hand, and two or three others [lying] by her" (159). After giving Elinor the letters, Marianne "cover[s] her face with her handkerchief, [and] almost scream[s] with agony" (159). Her reaction is a very stereotypical reaction to being rejected by a man she cares about, but it is the timing that demonstrates her growth. Because she has waited until she has a letter – proof of Willoughby's actions – to react emotionally, Marianne has already grown from the

beginning of the novel when the very suggestion of marrying Colonel Brandon sent her spiraling. The still very dramatic image of Marianne's covering her face with a handkerchief and almost screaming demonstrates that although Marianne has grown enough to wait to react, she still cannot moderate her reactions. Shawn Maurer explores why Marianne is so emotional, centering her argument around Marianne as an adolescent. Regency England did not recognize teenagers as transitioning from childhood to adulthood, existing in a distinct stage of development with its own behavioral patterns, but Maurer argues that "Austen understands, but cannot sanction, the emotional need that drives Marianne's psychological abandon" (739). This outlook highlights the way that Marianne's characterization in this scene is startlingly similar to that of a rebellious and moody teenager throwing a tantrum. Marianne's growth to become a strong female character is dependent on her ability to mature.

In Austen's novel, Willoughby's deceit of Marianne is only clear after she reads his letter, but in *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* the scene plays out very differently because instead of publicly ignoring her, Willoughby chooses not to save Marianne from giant, rampaging lobsters. Both Marianne and a woman who turns out to be Ms. Grey have cried out for his aid, but Willoughby goes to the other woman: "he contemplated the two ladies, both desperate for his protection and the affection it would imply. At last he turned on his heel and ran to the unknown young lady" (168). One effect of such a dramatic change is that Winters has made it possible for modern readers to understand the significance of Willoughby's snub at the party. But in the process of doing so, the narrator's attitude toward such social interactions has been lost. In "The Narrator's Voice and the Sense of *Sense and Sensibility*," Marcia Folsom argues that because the "narrative voice expresses

a hostility to the social world ...[it] makes this novel anything but ‘safe’” (39). Winters’ removal of the societal aspect of both this scene and others demonstrates that he does not fully understand and appreciate the skill Austen is displaying. She gives the narrator enough of a personality to influence readers but does so subtly enough that readers never even perceive the bias they are exhibiting. Winters exercises this bias in his edits, thereby supporting his appreciation for the text; however, his choice to compromise this element of the original text implies that he does not fully understand what he is manipulating. Winters’ abandonment of social graces has also cast Willoughby as a potential knight-in-shining-armor, one who ultimately dashes the hopes of Marianne, now a damsel in literal and life-threatening distress. Upon this rejection, but too preoccupied with trying not to die, Marianne remains fairly level-headed. Receiving the letter now has little significance.

Elinor is the one who ultimately tells Marianne the details of Willoughby’s story, and despite Elinor’s desire to protect her sister, Marianne is struck with several harsh truths during this event, and it is her ability to deal with these that demonstrates how she has grown to be a Strong Female Character. Marianne’s response to Willoughby’s tale is to say, “I am now perfectly satisfied, I wish for no change. I never could have been happy with him, after knowing, as sooner or later I must have known, all this.—I should have had no confidence, no esteem. Nothing could have done it away to my feelings” (291). While this speech does still contain longer sentences with ‘tacked on’ clauses, they are not nearly so extreme as at the beginning of the novel. This parallels Marianne’s personal growth, because while she has not completely matured and moved beyond her selfish emotionalism, she has made great strides and is now able to apply logic alongside her emotions. This reasoning is particularly evident in the second sentence when she is able to consider how

inevitable learning this knowledge is and how it would also certainly end any potential relationship, or at least her happiness within their relationship. Marianne's ability to apply logic to her emotions within the situation also identifies the type of growth she has undergone; she is still emotional because her fundamental character has not changed, but she is no longer self-centered about it or irrational about the power of love. Alyssa Clark makes an interesting point about the quality of the relationship between Marianne and Willoughby, stating that the

intimacy between these two like-minded souls is quickly compromised as Austen reminds readers of the ever-present social influences which are capable of destroying even the most like-minded pairing; this suggests the unstable nature of love based out of purely romantic sensibilities, and the inevitability of social corruption. (21)

Both of these characters subscribe to the belief that love is all powerful and the end-all, be-all of marital happiness, but both are disillusioned and do not follow through on this idea. Love does ultimately play a role in Marianne's marriage, but that is because she is able to grow from her relationship with Willoughby, and her growth is due to more than just societal pressures. Social influences and the desire for wealth – what causes Willoughby to turn away from Marianne – also explain why he is never able to recover from their relationship and be happy with his wife. Marianne's ability to cope and to grow after being hurt by Willoughby is a mark of her strength, particularly in comparison with Willoughby's stagnant character.

Marianne reacts the exact same way to the news of Willoughby's marriage in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Sea Monsters*, but now the focus is split between her emotional

revelation and a mysterious sound. Marianne's speech is identical to the one above, except that it ends with her asking if the others can also hear an unidentified noise. After textually acknowledging that both Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood can hear it, Winters identifies the sound as "the distinct sound of voices chanting together, but very lightly as though far off in the distance" (313). This sound also prompts Winters to remind readers that Margaret is out on the island somewhere, thus creating a plot for the third Dashwood sister, who in the original work is not only unmentioned for over a hundred pages but is treated a bit like a pet who needs a home while the family is on vacation. But Winters takes Margaret's story several steps further. She joins a cult that the characters eventually find out live on the 'island' with them, and Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood's acute fear for her safety is what takes over this scene. Winters has changed a huge emotional scene, and now Marianne appears shallow for continuing to focus on her own emotions when everyone else has instead focused on the nearby sea-monster debacle. Originally, in this scene, Marianne is maturely explaining her lack of reaction to Elinor's recollection of the tale Willoughby told her. Now she is not oblivious to her situation, but still self-centered enough to offhandedly continue with her explanation and to miss the significance of her surroundings that her mother and sister have acknowledged. While this scene does demonstrate how Winters has more fully used Margaret's character, he has done so at the expense of Marianne's maturity.

The description of Marianne's fate at the end of the original novel explicitly describes her growth and also creates a parallel with Marianne's first description of Colonel Brandon to further emphasize this idea. The narrator tells the reader that

Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most

favourite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another!—and THAT other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married,—and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat! (314)

The syntax of this paragraph is very similar to Marianne's speech at the beginning of the novel, particularly with the use of dashes and the extreme length of the last sentence. Austen does this to highlight the contrast with the depiction of Marianne's actual life given versus what she professed at the beginning of the novel. Another prominent element of this passage is the grandiose language used, such as "born to overcome," and the multiple exclamation points. Such language creates a sense of sarcasm, which is also particularly evident in calling seventeen "so late in life," leading to the idea that growth and development are not extraordinary but typical and expected. The parallels and the irony work together to convey the conclusion of Marianne's story in a humorous and satisfying manner because the outcome is the expected 'happy ending.' Conveyed flatly, it would have made for a rather dull ending. Mickey Harrison claims that Marianne's choice of Colonel Brandon "provides her with the nourishment and freedom to continue to grow into an independent married woman" (19). His claim is certainly valid, but it downplays that this is the predictable ending for Marianne. This is the healthy and happy option, though, so her ability to choose it and to utilize it as Harrison predicts demonstrates the conclusion of her growth into a decent Strong Female Character.

Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters does not discount Marianne's growth as a character, but because of the physical disfigurement of Colonel Brandon, the reader's perception of her change is also altered. Colonel Brandon's tentacles make Marianne's marriage to him an even more profound demonstration of her growth in some ways, but with the addition of one line Winters destroys this significance to make a bawdy joke. In this sentence, which ends the paragraph describing Marianne's new duties, she now finds "that his face was not the only region of his physiognomy that could be described as multi-appendage, and she found that fact to carry with it certain marital satisfactions" (339). Visual and crudely obvious, this joke is in line with many of the changes Winters makes to the novel, but it also stands out because, due to its location in the text, it cannot further the plot, nor does it create a more satisfying ending. The overt sexuality of this change is another reason it stands out. Austen is far subtler with her sexual allusions, but they most certainly exist. For Winters to plop this down, and with no prior mention, makes it extremely obvious. Juliet McMaster discusses "Clandestine Classics," a type of mashup which adds 'absent' sex scenes to classic novels, arguing that authors like Winters are missing the point because "for Austen it is never merely physical sensation: the unfolding narrative of little motions and observations here is informed by a dawning understanding of motive and principle and action and emotion" ("Sex and the Senses" 55). Similar to the way Winters' removal of several social interactions removes the narrator's dislike of such situations, his addition of overt sexuality here implies that there are not other sexual moments in the novel. Reading closely easily reveals several sexually-coded scenes, such as when Marianne goes with Willoughby alone to Allenham or when she gives Willoughby

a lock of her hair. Winters' bawdy joke takes away not only from the depiction of the results of Marianne's growth but also from the subtleties Austen has placed within the novel.

CHAPTER TWO: ELINOR DASHWOOD

Elinor Dashwood, elder sister of Marianne, is the other protagonist of *Sense & Sensibility* and the most sensible member of the family. She reins in both her mother and her sister, advising Mrs. Dashwood to choose the more modest Barton Cottage and warning Marianne to avoid falling too hard or too quickly for Willoughby. When Edward Ferrars visits the family at Norland, he and Elinor are clearly attracted to each other, but despite her family's teasing, Elinor is unwilling to say anything definite on the matter. Her family continues to tease her about this, and even Mrs. Jennings and Sir John join in, asking about the "Mr. F" that Margaret has mentioned. Edward does finally visit the family at Barton, as Mrs. Dashwood requested, and both continue to act interested but reserved. Edward leaves quickly, much to the disappointment of all.

It is Lucy Steele, a young woman with a distant connection to Mrs. Jennings, who explains his behavior to Elinor: Lucy and Edward have been engaged secretly for several years. They have kept their relationship hidden out of fear of repercussions, particularly from Edward's mother, who would object to Lucy's being from a lower social class. Elinor is at first skeptical, but Lucy goes on to give details about how it was her uncle who tutored Edward and how the sweethearts met as youths. Convinced, Elinor agrees to keep the engagement secret. No one is the wiser, but this knowledge deeply affects Elinor, so when Mrs. Jennings asks Marianne to accompany her to London, Elinor refuses. She cannot bear the thought of constantly risking running into Edward.

However, Mrs. Dashwood sides with Marianne, so the two go with Mrs. Jennings to London, where Willoughby ignores Marianne and Colonel Brandon seeks her out. Elinor comforts Marianne through all of these events, even as she attempts to deal with her own feelings. These feelings are continuously re-engaged whenever they see Lucy and her sister, Anne. Lucy acts as if she and Elinor are the best of friends and continues to confide in Elinor her feelings about Edward. This occurs once when both are the guests of the Dashwoods, and Mrs. Ferrars is present. Lucy is extremely excited that she is treated with more civility than Elinor and talks endlessly about how fortunate her marriage to Edward will be because of this.

When Anne tells Fanny Dashwood and Mrs. Ferrars that Edward and Lucy are engaged, the women are enraged, and Edward is disowned, left essentially penniless. Out of honor he attempts to release Lucy from her engagement, but she refuses. When Colonel Brandon hears of this, he tells Elinor to offer Edward the living on Colonel Brandon's estate, should he take holy orders. It is around this time that Mrs. Jennings, Elinor, and Marianne leave London to visit the Palmers, where Marianne falls ill. Once again, Elinor must play messenger, this time between Willoughby and Marianne. Marianne recovers, and the family is able to return to Barton Cottage.

Upon reaching home, Elinor is relieved that her family knows about her burden and her feelings, even though she has somewhat adapted to the situation. Learning from a servant that Mr. Ferrars has married Lucy, Elinor is visibly distraught. Before she can descend too far into her depression, though, Edward arrives to propose to Elinor. It is Edward's brother, Robert, who has married Lucy, now that he is scheduled to inherit the

Ferrars estate. Elinor accepts, and after Edward takes orders, the two live together happily in Delaford, quite close to Marianne and Colonel Brandon.

In *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, Elinor's relationship with Edward is affected by Lucy's identity as a sea witch. Elinor has painful visions when she encounters Lucy, and these visions foreshadow a dramatic change in identity, but they do not alter her individual encounters with Lucy. These encounters are instead changed by being interrupted by sea monsters, which take away from the emotional drama of the women's relationship. This departure is extremely important because in the original novel, Elinor Dashwood's strength is best perceived through her relationships with Lucy Steele and Edward Ferrars and the conflicts that arise from the emotional entanglements of the three. Elinor is strong in other encounters in the novel, but because her emotions – emotions that are a complete secret – are involved in her interactions with Lucy and Edward, these situations make her ability to keep her composure most impressive.

Elinor better fulfills the definition of a Strong Female Character than does Marianne. At the beginning of the novel, Marianne is a traditional young woman who idealizes love, romance, and marriage to the exclusion of all things practical; Elinor – and as we will later see, Elizabeth – desires to marry for love, but because she understands that marrying for love is unrealistic and idealistic, her approach to marriage is much more reasonable. Elinor is willing to work and wait for love, while Marianne believes that it will all happen like a fairytale. Both want love in marriage, but it is Elinor's practicality and readiness to put forth effort that initially marks her strength because by preparing for opposition she is less likely to fall in the face of it.

Marianne's outgoing nature does benefit Elinor, however, because Elinor often avoids conflict by remaining quiet, and this is something Marianne attempts to stop her from doing. Such attempts by Marianne are also examples of how Elinor could benefit from greater sensibility. Matt Fisher comments on how evident this is when Marianne vehemently insists that Mrs. Ferrars appreciate Elinor's drawings. He claims that the reader "should admire Marianne's affection for her sister, even while recognizing her response as inappropriate" (Fisher 218). Her response is inappropriate in that it lacks sense; Marianne is so full of sensibility that she cannot moderate expressions to be acceptable, but Elinor lacks the sensibility to speak up and defend herself. When Marianne is insisting upon Elinor's craftsmanship, she is speaking to Mrs. Ferrars as her sister's mother-in-law rather than as Fanny's mother, but Elinor's avoidance ignores any relationship between the two. Marianne's idealistic outlook on love – both for her and her sister – is indeed admirable but is also ultimately impractical and painful. Elinor's more level-headed approach to love allows her to care for others without losing herself in the process; this is evident when she learns that Lucy is engaged to Edward but is able to appear unaffected and keep it a secret. Marianne does ultimately learn to perceive, accept, and thrive in the imperfect world, and it is through this growth that she is a Strong Female Character. Elinor, conversely, holds honor in extreme regard and presents herself as rational and controlled throughout the novel by continually assisting and guiding her family despite her emotional state. This is part of what makes her a Strong Female Character, but it is crucial that the reader is able to see her thought process, her struggle to set aside her own desires in order to work toward the good of those around her without losing her own feelings. It is ultimately her acknowledgement of her own emotions and their power that gives her strength. Elinor's

continual work to set aside her own feelings to help others is in contrast to the way that Marianne's focus on her own emotions imposes upon Elinor's ability to handle hers. Overall, Elinor makes a better Strong Female Character because while Marianne does grow to be a decent Strong Female Character, she is still a little too self-centered and focused on marriage. In contrast, Elinor embodies many of the ideals of a Strong Female Character from the beginning of the novel and grows to more fully encompass this role as she becomes more in touch with her emotions.

Early in the novel, Elinor is in sensible love with Edward Ferrars, but then Lucy Steele reveals her secret engagement to him. Elinor struggles with this but is ultimately able to handle the situation, thus demonstrating her strength. In the scene in which Elinor learns of Edward and Lucy's engagement, Lucy tells her, "No, not to Mr. ROBERT Ferrars—I never saw him in my life; but,' fixing her eyes upon Elinor, 'to his eldest brother'" (119). Lucy emphasizes only Robert's first name, thereby acknowledging that she is engaged to someone else in the family. By adding that she has never even seen Robert, Lucy is attempting to support her claim, but it comes across as far-fetched and overly dramatic. The interjection of Lucy "fix[ing] her eyes upon Elinor" – her attempt to be theatrical – creates drama in the form of mounting horror at the drawn-out, build-up of the revelation. Elinor's reaction parallels the audience's shock and disbelief, but she ultimately demonstrates her strength: "though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity, and felt in no danger of a hysterical fit, or a swoon" (119). Austen is acknowledging the archetypal fainting females in moments of shock with the end of this quote, but she is also differentiating Elinor from such women without totally separating her from her emotions. Evidence of such control appears not only in the way that Elinor is

“in no danger” of fainting, but also in the diction of Elinor’s “[standing] firm in incredulity” (119). Elinor is unwavering in her position because she has chosen not to let Lucy’s revelation cripple or convince her. Linda Hall comments on the differences between these two characters, stating that

Austen works to distinguish these two women, showing the intrinsic value of each and exposing the danger of placing too much emphasis on perception within the marriage market. She breaks down Lucy’s value by exposing her faulty education and behavior, ultimately revealing Elinor’s superior intrinsic value. (167)

Dramatic and fanciful, Lucy’s over-the-top disclosure of her engagement to a virtual stranger directly opposes Austen’s characterization of Elinor as composed and rational. Elinor’s choice to wait for more information before reacting demonstrates her rationality but also her lack of sensibility. Acting accordingly by regulating her emotions demonstrates Elinor’s strength of character but not her connection to her emotions.

In *Sense, Sensibility, and Sea Monsters* the words Elinor and Lucy speak are very similar, but because the setting has changed, the significance of the words has also changed. In Austen’s novel the two have their conversation while walking in front of Barton Cottage, but in the mashup they do so while on a boat ride that is interrupted by the Devonshire Fang-Beast, a notorious sea monster. Lucy’s declaration remains the same, but Elinor’s reaction has been radically altered. She is now focused on the sea monster that has just emerged rather than on Lucy. As Lucy continues to reveal her secret engagement, “Elinor turn[s] towards Lucy in silent amazement, and it [is] in that moment that a *second* great head rear[s] out of the surface of the water, compounding Elinor’s shock” (125). Lucy’s original portrayal as self-centered due to her decision to share her secret with Elinor has

become exaggerated because Winters has not altered her actions, making them extremely out of place for the situation. Lucy now appears to be completely self-obsessed and negligent, while Elinor's reaction to Lucy's secret has been reduced to three words – “compounding Elinor's shock” – that deal with both the sea monster and the engagement (125). Elinor also expresses “silent amazement” in this scene, but that is because Lucy is continuing to speak despite the appearance of the sea monster (125). Sydney Miller posits that one of Austen's goals in her original novels was to demonstrate that “the key is to make enhancements while preserving and honoring the integrity of the object's intrinsic nature” (434). Miller uses this idea in her analysis of the mashups, and concludes, as is evident in this scene, that the mashups do not follow this principle. The mashups may preserve the original text, like Lucy's confession, but the integrity is lost due the extreme change in circumstance. The same can be said for Elinor's internal strength, but not even the surface of that has been preserved, so her strength, as demonstrated by her internal struggle and decision-making process, has been completely lost.

Lucy Steele is in many ways the antagonist to Elinor's protagonist, and as such she embodies many of the characteristics of a Strong Female Character herself. Lucy Steele's last name is the first hint of her personality, which will be revealed to be as firm and effective as the metal in Lucy's steely-eyed quest to gain social and economic wealth. However, because she serves as a foil for Elinor, Lucy does not grow or develop through the use of her strength; instead, she uses it pettily and selfishly to manipulate those around her for her own personal gain, as evidenced in the scene in which she asks Elinor for advice. Lucy first mentions the idea of breaking her engagement to Elinor before giving up on the idea entirely as she is speaking:

I cannot bear the thoughts of making him so miserable, as I know the very mention of such a thing would do. And on my own account too—so dear as he is to me—I don't think I could be equal to it. What would you advise me to do in such a case, Miss Dashwood? What would you do yourself? (122)

Lucy first speaks about her concern for Edward's feelings, which is noble, but she speaks of his emotions in terms of her own feelings, revealing her inherent selfishness. Beginning with the implication of the depth of Edward's emotions, Lucy is manipulating Elinor. Lucy might not be aware that Elinor is in love with Edward, but she knows that Elinor cares for him and that Elinor would not do anything to hurt him, such as vie for his affections when he is committed to someone else. Elinor and Edward both value honor too highly to do such a thing. Lucy then presents herself as equally invested because she is not strong enough to cut herself off from Edward. Framing her strength in terms of an ability to harm herself rather than an offer of compassion to spare others, she reveals her inherent selfishness. In one way, it is noble to be true to the feelings that she maintains she and Edward have for each other. But it is also devious since Lucy began this debate because she thought it might be better for Edward to break off the engagement. She is prioritizing her feelings above his well-being. Lucy has apparently already made her decision, but now she chooses to ask for Elinor's opinion, thereby forcing Elinor to give an unsatisfactory answer. Juliet McMaster claims that this exchange is "ringing with this kind of conscious irony" because Lucy and Elinor are both purposefully deceiving the other about the depth of their feelings and because she "can't help feeling Elinor is tainted by entering into a war of words with Lucy" ("Genres of Talk" 182). McMaster's argument has weight because Elinor continues the conversation even though she does not answer Lucy, but she has taken

her analysis too far with the implication that Elinor is less because of her interactions with Lucy. Evading Lucy without ending the conversation is a mark of Elinor's diplomatic and honorable strength. Of course, Lucy is strong, too, but in a devious sort of way. Her taking advantage of the honorable Edward can understandably be off-putting but is nonetheless a depiction of strength. Likewise, Elinor's ability to interact with her displays her own very different strength.

In *Sense, Sensibility, and Sea Monsters*, there are, shockingly, no sea monsters present to distract the reader from the conversation, but the text still has been simplified. This time, Lucy does not discuss her perception of Edward's and her emotions; she simply says, "Sometimes, ... I think whether it would not be better for us both to break off the matter entirely. What would you advise me to do in such a case, Miss Dashwood? What would you do yourself?" (130). This quote leaves out a large portion of the original information. Because Lucy does not describe her perceptions of Edward's emotional state, she does not manipulate Elinor nor present herself in a caring light. She also does not attempt to portray herself as too emotional, and in a sense weak, by describing her own emotions. Instead, she essentially ignores both of their emotions to focus on Edward's and her collective well-being, and there is a certain irony in this considering that she is debating breaking off the relationship that connects them. Lucy again asks Elinor for her thoughts, and it is still a weighted question, but because she has not prefaced it the same way, it is not as obvious. The lack of articulation of Lucy's thought process and emotions creates a disconnect between the natural weight of the question and the reader's understanding, thus making it difficult to determine why Winters has simplified this section. The comparison Sydney Miller makes in her article between the ratio of prose to monster mashups in *Pride*

and Prejudice and Zombies and *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters* helps to illuminate this issue because “the ratio of Austen prose to monster madness jumps from 4:1 to 3:2” (438). Grahame-Smith leaves entire sections of Austen’s prose either entirely or virtually untouched, making the smallest possible changes to incorporate zombies into the plot without taking it over. This is not what Winters does, partially because he has made a more radical change to the premise of the novel by changing the setting. Since Grahame-Smith paved the way for this genre, Winters is relatively secure because he is adding to the genre rather than striking new ground. He makes significant changes, but as a result he is forced to change the original text more and for less reason, tremendously altering the aesthetic of the original novel.

When Marianne learns about Lucy and Edward’s engagement, she is so distressed that Elinor must comfort her. Elinor’s ability to do so despite her own emotional hardship demonstrates her strength through her compassion for others and her ability to compartmentalize. Elinor presents herself as having moved past her feelings, telling Marianne that

Now, I can think and speak of it with little emotion. I would not have you suffer on my account; for I assure you I no longer suffer materially myself. I have many things to support me. I am not conscious of having provoked the disappointment by any imprudence of my own, I have borne it as much as possible without spreading it farther. I acquit Edward of essential misconduct. (222)

The need for Elinor to offer this kind of emotional support is why she is a fuller Strong Female Character than Marianne. Eric Lindstrom notes that even as “hypersensitive as [Marianne] is toward her own plight regarding Willoughby, right at this moment

Marianne's apprehension of reality (one might call it her touch on reality) is distressingly thick" (1077). Marianne is not able to sympathize and assist her sister in dealing with a situation that Marianne herself has endured, pushing her away from the definition of Strong Female Character. In this scene, not only is Elinor providing comfort, but she is doing so when she is the one who should be being comforted. Because she prefaces her statement by saying, "Now, I can," Elinor is implying that she was at one time affected by their engagement and wants to convey that she has since moved past it; in reality she has simply repressed it (222). Her claim that she is supported by other things also validates her belief that she has moved on because it demonstrates her understanding that romantic love is not the only part of life that she values. Her ability not to blame herself for Edward's engagement to someone else is also extremely important because it demonstrates that she has the maturity and intelligence to understand this concept as well as the mental fortitude to continue to believe it and not turn the blame inward despite her isolation. Additionally, she does not turn the blame unnecessarily outward nor onto Edward due to his unwitting involvement in causing her pain. What is left unsaid by her acquittal of Edward is equally important because she has not exonerated Lucy; this is partially because her sister Marianne has been concerned about Edward and not Lucy, but it is still a deliberate exclusion on Elinor's part that demonstrates that while she might be strong and be more in touch with her emotions, she is still not infallible.

Elinor expresses the same sort of emotional growth and development in *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, but her detailed, verbal explanation is omitted in order to focus more on the tapping swordfish, removing the significance and evidence of her growth. In this version, Elinor responds to Marianne's exclamation that she loved Edward

by saying, “Yes. But I did not love only him; and while the comfort of others was dear to me, I was glad to spare them from knowing how much I felt. I would not have you suffer on my account” (225). By comparing the length of this quote, which is the complete paragraph, to the previous quote, which is only a portion of the entire paragraph in the original novel, a disparity is clear. Winters has again removed the thought process and left only the conclusion behind in order to dedicate more space to sea monsters. Within the novel Winters attempts to use the emotional content of the scene to distract from the significance of the sea monsters, telling us that “Had Elinor not been distracted by the emotional intensity of the subject matter at hand, she might have reflected that the presence of the two swordfish, side by side, confirmed a certain sense of grim and unholy purpose about their labours” (225). Winters may be claiming that Elinor is distracted by her emotions from the swordfish, but the opposite is happening to the reader because now, instead of the focus being on the textually presented emotional conclusions of Elinor, the reader is left yearning for more information about the swordfish’s actions. Another possible reason that Winters has shortened these significant emotional pieces is because, as Patricia Howell-Michaelson describes it, “The ancient stereotype is that women talk too much and say too little” (54). Howell-Michaelson is referring to Austen’s tendency to have women like Mrs. Jennings repeat conversations in order to “poke fun at a negative stereotype of her time” (54). But Winters seems to be defining any emotional language as “woman’s language” and doing his best to cut the text of the ‘excess’ emotional language (53-61). His unwillingness to allow the women time to speak emotionally demonstrates that as much as these mashups might want to portray themselves as having Strong Female Characters, they are not interested in taking the time to develop them.

The ending of the original novel is realistic yet satisfying, because Elinor is married to the man she loves while Lucy has married the favored son. Elinor is ultimately the happier of the pair. Although Austen appears to give Lucy everything she desires, her life is not as fulfilling because her desires have been socioeconomic while Elinor's have been personal. Austen uses sarcasm to convey Lucy's fate: "setting aside the jealousies and ill-will continually subsisting between Fanny and Lucy, in which their husbands of course took a part, as well as the frequent domestic disagreements between Robert and Lucy themselves, nothing could exceed the harmony in which they all lived together" (*Sense & Sensibility* 313). The idea of living in harmony should bode very well for these couples, but because it only comes after Austen has excluded jealousy, ill-will, and frequent domestic disagreements – all of which today could easily end a marriage – it rings quite hollow. Elinor's married life, however, is discussed in very different terms; Austen describes it as having "divided her as little from her family as could well be contrived" (313). Austen also implies repeatedly in the last chapter that Elinor and Edward are both very happy and very much in love, but because Austen has placed this information amidst sections focusing on other characters, it is easy to miss unlike the blatant sarcasm Austen applies to Lucy's marriage. The effect of describing these two relationships so differently is that, without careful reading, it is possible to perceive Lucy as happier and more fulfilled at the end of the novel, but it only appears this way because Lucy's character is so flamboyant that a superfluous explanation of her fate is merely fitting. Elinor and Edward are much more modest characters, so the depiction of their ending is as well. These endings are appropriate and actually quite fitting for each character, but a reader cannot help but crave a perfect ending, because as James O'Rourke writes, the novel "masks a subtle but

persistent narrative bias that favors its central character, Elinor” (774). The truth is that readers may also want to see her adversary punished with far more than a single, sarcastic sentence.

Winters fulfills the audience’s desire for Lucy to pay for her actions, but in doing so he removes the sense of balance Austen brings to the original novel, which is partly why Elinor’s ending is so satisfying. At the end of *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, it is revealed that Lucy is actually a sea witch and, upon her marriage to Robert, she kills him. The loss of Robert leads Mrs. Ferrars to accept Elinor and Edward much more warmly, for when she found that, though, perfectly admitting the truth of her representation, he was by no means inclined to be guided by it, she judged it wisest, from the experience of the past, to submit – and therefore, after such an ungracious delay as she owed to her own dignity, she issued her decree of consent to the marriage of Edward and Elinor. (336)

Attempting to fix the novel, Winters has created an ending for Lucy (and Robert) that is more overtly satisfying and apparently just, but it is unrealistic in more than simply the fact that it contains sea monsters. Life is neither fair nor perfect, and the original novel captures this real-life fact beautifully while still giving readers a satisfying ending without going outside the bounds of realities. Linda Hall calls attention to the way that Austen uses Lucy’s fate to depict how

‘Unceasing attention to self-interest’ is necessary for survival, and moral values might need to be sacrificed in the process. Through her characterization of this ‘monstrous pretty’ speculator, Jane Austen reveals an unsavory truth: speculative

behavior, however unscrupulous it might be, is rewarded in a consumer-driven society. (171)

It is important to note that Austen does reward Lucy materially in the original novel. Given Lucy's "speculative behavior," she breaks a longstanding engagement with Edward to marry his brother immediately after their fortunes shift. This is in sharp contrast to the emotional bliss Elinor is rewarded with. Elinor and Edward are both rewarded by their marriage because they have acted honorably in their dealings with Lucy: Edward remained faithful and Elinor kept Lucy's secret. It is this difference that is key to the ending of *Sense & Sensibility*, which Winters has deprived readers of in his attempt to make Lucy suffer. The loss of this comparison and the resulting improvement to Elinor's situation demonstrates a lack of understanding of the difference between material and emotional fulfillment.

CHAPTER THREE: ELIZABETH BENNET

Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride & Prejudice* is the most complete Strong Female Character Jane Austen presents, and one of the first Strong Female Characters in a novel. She demonstrates her strength through her concern for her family and her decision only to marry a man she loves.

The second of five daughters, Elizabeth is the cleverest, but her elder sister, Jane, is the prettiest and the kindest. Their differences do not stop the two from being extremely close; they may argue in private, but each is always supportive of the other. This alliance is made clear during the assembly that takes place at the beginning of the novel. There are two new wealthy gentlemen in town – the friendly Mr. Bingley and the cold Mr. Darcy. While Elizabeth might be frustrated by Mr. Darcy's slight of her, she certainly does not begrudge her sister Mr. Bingley's attention. Instead, she chooses to entertain her close friend, Charlotte Lucas, with the story of Mr. Darcy's behavior.

Elizabeth's opinion of Mr. Darcy is set by this event. On the other hand, his opinion of her quickly becomes more favorable. When Elizabeth walks to Netherfield Estate, where Darcy and Bingley are staying, to care for Jane, who has fallen ill after riding there in the rain. Mr. Darcy is struck by her dedication to her sister, but Elizabeth assumes that he, like Bingley's sisters, is horrified that she has walked through the country alone and arrived muddy. While Jane is recovering at Netherfield, Mr. Darcy grows even fonder of Elizabeth

as she continually stands up to him in verbal sparring matches. More certain of her dislike for the wealthy gentleman, she eagerly returns home to Longbourn.

Elizabeth's joy at returning home once Jane is well is quickly destroyed by the arrival of their distant cousin, Mr. Collins, who is set to inherit the estate upon Mr. Bennet's death. A simpering fool, Mr. Collins talks endlessly about everything, particularly his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. He has come to Longbourn to find a wife, and after Mrs. Bennet makes it clear that Jane is unavailable, he sets his sights on Elizabeth. This would be a reasonable and appropriate match except for one problem: Elizabeth cannot stand Mr. Collins. She wants to marry for love, so with her father's support she rejects Collins' proposal. Within a few days, Mr. Collins has asked Charlotte Lucas to marry him, and she accepts.

Another man who appears interested in Elizabeth is Mr. Wickham, a member of the local militia. Upon meeting, he quickly perceives her dislike of Darcy and tells her how Darcy was a childhood friend who cheated him out of his inheritance. It is not until after Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy have left for London that Wickham makes this information common knowledge. Their departure also greatly upsets Jane, who travels to London to escape the gossip and to visit her aunt and uncle in hopes of seeing Mr. Bingley.

Come spring Elizabeth also leaves Longbourn to visit Charlotte at her new home. While here she again sees Mr. Darcy, who is visiting his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Their relationship continues much as it did before, but Elizabeth's dislike of Mr. Darcy is far outstripped by her dislike of Lady Catherine, who is extremely overbearing and proud. Near the end of Elizabeth's visit Mr. Darcy makes a disastrous and insulting proposal that Elizabeth violently rejects by detailing for him every aspect of his character that she finds

disagreeable. She brings up his treatment of Wickham during this, and Mr. Darcy then writes a letter explaining the truth of that encounter and the depravity of Wickham.

Elizabeth leaves Rosings convinced that she will never see Mr. Darcy again to tell him how his letter affected her. Fortuitously, she does see him again, though, when she tours his grand manor, Pemberley, in Derbyshire, with her aunt and uncle, all of whom believe that Mr. Darcy would not be at home. She begins to fantasize that this magnificent estate could have been hers but does not express regret for her decision. When Elizabeth does discover that Mr. Darcy is in residence, she is surprised to find that despite her earlier rejection of him, he is intent upon treating her relatives and her with extraordinary courtesy and kindness. An even greater sign of his affection for Elizabeth is that he wants her to meet his beloved sister, Georgiana. Additionally, his staff is profuse with their praises of him. Elizabeth's opinion, which began to change with the letter, has now been thoroughly revised. Yet, before anything can happen, Elizabeth receives a letter about her sister Lydia's elopement with Wickham.

Elizabeth returns home to comfort her mother while her male family members search for Lydia. Eventually she is found, and Wickham is bribed to marry her; it is later revealed that Darcy was financially instrumental in these events. During this time, Lady Catherine also visits Longbourn to dissuade Elizabeth from ever trying to marry Mr. Darcy because she wants him to marry her daughter, Anne. Although Elizabeth is convinced that this will never happen, she refuses to oblige. When Mr. Darcy learns of this encounter, he also comes to Longbourn, and this time makes a much more successful proposal.

Grahame-Smith does not alter the plot of *Pride & Prejudice* nearly as dramatically as Winters does with *Sense & Sensibility*; instead, he makes small, strategic changes that

maximize the effectiveness of the zombie plot without compromising the original story. One such example involves how the sisters are now warriors trained to kill zombies. Elizabeth's hesitancy to marry stems from the fact that in doing so she would have to relinquish her martial activity. Jane's illness is now feared to be the zombie virus, so Elizabeth must hurry and protect her from Mr. Darcy, a fellow zombie slayer. A notable exception to these strategic plot changes is the slow zombification of Charlotte, which is spread across many months and used to explain her desire to marry Mr. Collins. Overall, Grahame-Smith's changes add violence to the existing plot rather than alter it.

The first scene in which Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy meet establishes the tension in their relationship. Darcy says to Mr. Bingley, "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt *me*" (12). This statement offends Elizabeth, but she does not let Mr. Darcy's opinion of her stop her from enjoying the rest of the ball. According to the narrator, "Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings toward him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous" (12). The phrase "no very cordial" uses litotes both to undermine and emphasize the degree of feeling she has towards Mr. Darcy. "Very cordial" implies warm yet distant respect and friendliness, but adding "no" can either negate the "very" and leave her feelings largely neutral, or it can completely negate the phrase, leaving her feelings cold and unfriendly. The use of litotes creates a gray area and suspense for the reader about Elizabeth's feelings, and the reader's uncertainty reflects the tone of the quote. This part of the quote demonstrates the tension – to the degree that societal bounds repeatedly struggle to constrain – that will characterize Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship for most of the novel. Elizabeth's initial unwillingness to let go of this is one of her

weaknesses, but she is still able to use it to entertain her friends and family. She does not obsess over why the rich and handsome man does not like her. She attempts not to let it hurt her, only her opinion of him, and this shift is described by Elaine Bander as Darcy's being "almost immediately recast not as the noble gentleman who will educate and rescue the heroine but as a tall, upright, bad-mannered, rich young man with 'a noble mien' whose manners please no one" (29). Elizabeth then goes on to use the story for entertainment – implying that it is not forgotten but also that she is willing to use her own pain and embarrassment to amuse her friends. This is a shallow example of what Elizabeth will do with those close to her but is an important step in establishing her character in the novel. Ultimately, Elizabeth is offended by Darcy's comment; otherwise, she would not have told her friends about it. But the way she tells the story demonstrates her strength of character.

The insult goes very differently in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*; instead of moving on to joke about Darcy's rudeness, Elizabeth is extremely offended, and only a zombie invasion saves Darcy's life. The narrator informs us that "Elizabeth felt her blood turn cold. She had never been so insulted. The warrior code demanded she avenge her honour" (13). She then goes for her hidden dagger so that she can "follow this Mr. Darcy outside and open his throat"; the only reason she does not do so is because zombies invade the party and bring it to an early end (13). This scene focuses on Elizabeth's identity as a warrior and follows the traditional masculine belief that an assault on honor is worthy of death, supporting this mashup's attempt to portray female characters as strong because they are masculine and follow the warrior code. In "Dishonorable Behavior: The Scourge of Military Sexual Assault and The Warrior's Masculine Code," Elizabeth Samet discusses

the presence of masculinity in the American military, which helps to explain Graham-Smith's portrayal of the Bennet sisters as warriors:

the military has long demanded the performance of masculinity. It is a subculture that finds strength in traditions that celebrate the superiority of men and a masculine ideal rooted in physical dominance, an ideal sustained by feminizing all those, in uniform and out, who fail to live up to it." (32)

The obvious focus on the concept of honor takes away from the subtle tension Austen sets up in this scene between Elizabeth and Darcy that makes the progression of their relationship so believable and interesting in the original novel. Additionally, it implies that Elizabeth's ability to move on and laugh about an insult is a weakness rather than a strength. One of the elements of the original quote that Graham-Smith has changed is how the narrator informs the reader of Elizabeth's feelings. Graham-Smith has replaced this with Elizabeth's direct and violent response to the insult to her honor. Elizabeth's brute-force approach to this problem causes the scene to lose the essence of manners and poise that the original novel possesses. Elizabeth is no longer demonstrating her strength and maturity, imperfect though it may be, but instead her unrealistic adherence to the warrior code and its obstinate point of view.

A more concrete example of Elizabeth's dedication to her family occurs when she walks to Netherfield to care for her ill sister. Elizabeth is given agency as she "continue[s] her walk alone, crossing field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity, and finding herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise" (37). The parallel structure of the present participles "crossing," "jumping," "springing," and

“finding” demonstrates Elizabeth’s agency. The words themselves contribute to this idea because they are in the present tense, seeming to occur as the reader comes across them, leaving no distance between the events of the novel and the reader’s perception of the story. This immediacy is important because it implies Elizabeth’s determination to reach her destination as quickly as possible and is also enforced through the connotations of the words themselves: they are all enthusiastic and energetic. The effect of paralleling these words is that they seem to compress time – furthering the sense of urgency. Implied is that Elizabeth does not even think about propriety on her journey. After all, what is her reputation next to her sister’s health? Elizabeth’s actions are not gendered in any way; the sense of haste is all-consuming, confirming Mickey Harrison’s statement that “Austen was not necessarily out to redefine women’s roles in society, nor to suggest that the patriarchal imbalance should be changed. Rather, she attempted to give women a voice” (31). Elizabeth’s focus on her sister’s wellbeing circumvents expectations of propriety for women and instead concentrates on the importance of family. Placing family over convention contributes to Elizabeth’s characterization as a Strong Female Character because she is taking control of her situation and acting to achieve her goals rather than submitting to society’s notion of propriety.

In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Jane is feared to be ill because she has been infected by the zombie virus, nominally leading to more urgency on the part of Elizabeth. Elizabeth again separates from her sisters, but this time encounters three zombies, which she dispatches fairly easily before continuing her journey:

She retrieved her dagger and beheaded the last of her opponents, lifting its head by the hair and letting her battle cry be known for a mile in every direction.

Elizabeth found herself at last within view of the house, with weary ankles, dirty stockings, and a face glowing with the warmth of exercise. (28)

Again, Elizabeth's warrior nature is central, this time through the brutal imagery of wielding the head of her opponent and uttering a battle cry. This violent image is intended to evoke Elizabeth's power and prowess but comes across as slightly silly for several reasons. The first is that zombies are not intelligent creatures and would not respect such a cry. A more compelling reason is that this battle replaces the section in Elizabeth's original journey where her agency is repeatedly emphasized and her strength and control over her situation are subtly conveyed. Aside from the silliness of the battle cry, Graham-Smith is attempting to convey why Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst are so horrified that Elizabeth has walked alone to Netherfield; the fear of zombies is representative of the fear of a lady being assaulted and losing her virtue and reputation. By relating a fear of men – something women still live with – to zombies, which are not people but a completely separate entity, Grahame-Smith has shifted the fault from people, particularly men, to a thing that is other. This shift not only follows current “not all men trends” but dehumanizes the victims of zombies, who are representative of rape victims. Grahame-Smith has updated a fear from the Regency era that still exists not by changing the terminology but by changing the perpetrator. Originally this scene is primarily about Elizabeth's concern for her sister, while Caroline and Mrs. Hurst's opinions are tertiary. But in the mashup, the focus is on inhuman violence. This is one example of Graham-Smith's attempt to ‘update’ the novel and make certain aspects more understandable, but in the process he eliminates Elizabeth's agency and replaces it with brash, superficial, masculine power.

Charlotte Lucas is Elizabeth's best non-familial friend and a foil to her idealistic outlook on love. Their different perspectives strain their friendship after Charlotte chooses to marry Mr. Collins to gain the security of marriage. Charlotte is perfectly content with her choice given that she is nearing the end of marriageable age with no prospective suitors, but Elizabeth does not believe in marrying for convenience. Highly practical, Charlotte often argues with Elizabeth about some of her more exaggerated opinions, but they are clearly good friends. Up until Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins, the women have never behaved as if the other was competition. But upon Charlotte's marriage, Elizabeth thinks, "And to the pang of a friend disgracing herself and sunk in her esteem, was added the distressing conviction that it was impossible for that friend to be tolerably happy in the lot she had chosen" (153). Elizabeth is conflicted here because she wants to remain loyal to her friend, but she also cannot support what she perceives as a doomed path for Charlotte. Charlotte embodies the typical perspective towards marriage – that it is a practical choice, while love is chancey. Elizabeth perceives Charlotte's marriage as her giving in to societal pressures and expectations, while Charlotte sees her choice as a move of strength within society. After all, marriage is her way of gaining power over her life, and she is just choosing to do so within the system. Melinda Moe comments on the women's conflict by saying that "The disagreement between the two friends encapsulates a highly conflicted moral drama about the relationship between marriage and individual fulfillment" (1076). Charlotte's choice is the traditional one in gentry life, but despite remaining within the system, Charlotte has indicated her strength by possibly being willing to sacrifice herself in order to achieve power and security within the system. Elizabeth's ability to support her friend without trying to force her opinion onto Charlotte, despite disagreeing with her

choice, demonstrates Elizabeth's dedication to her friends and family. Both of these women evince strength in different ways, but their friendship proves that it is possible to support one another without agreeing with the other.

Charlotte's choice to marry Mr. Collins is explained very differently in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*; she does so to be comfortable in the final months of her life as she slowly turns into a zombie. After Charlotte explains her reasoning, Elizabeth is understandably shocked: "Elizabeth gasped. Her closest friend, stricken by the plague! condemned to serve Satan! Her instincts demanded she back away" (99). Elizabeth's loss of composure here confirms how much she cares for Charlotte and how repulsed she is by her friend's fate. Charlotte then goes on to offer an account of exactly how she was stricken, which becomes the focus of the paragraph rather than Elizabeth's reaction to Charlotte's news. Grahame-Smith's decision to infect Charlotte so early in the novel provides a narrative hurdle because Elizabeth's visit to Charlotte at Rosings is key to furthering the plot and putting Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy in contact again. He approaches this hurdle by having Charlotte change extremely slowly – over a period of months – before finally being found out and killed near the end of the novel. The slow decline in Charlotte's mental faculties creates a separation between Elizabeth and Charlotte that is far more defined than the separation in the original novel. Ilona Dobosiewicz describes the original separation, caused by distance, stating that "Elizabeth profoundly experiences the loss of Charlotte's friendship" (202). Yet in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* their separation is more severe and permanent, making their original divide appear easily repairable. Once again, Grahame-Smith has trivialized an important emotional conflict in the novel. There is also very little payoff because of the aforementioned narrative hurdles and, while providing

comedic relief, Charlotte's slow change strains the believability of accepted zombie fiction. The significance of their friendship and Elizabeth's related character development have been replaced with Elizabeth's pity for Charlotte and forced comedy.

Elizabeth's interactions with Lady Catherine de Bourgh substantiate her strength through her adherence to her principles in the face of Lady Catherine's insults, which are based on their difference in social standing. In "In Defense of Flat Characters," Henry Clay focuses on the benefit of flat and static characters, and one of his examples is Lady Catherine's unchanging behavior, because had she "not [been] consistently awful but able to change her outlook and behavior for the better, [it] would have taken something away from Darcy and Elizabeth" (276). Lady Catherine's growth would, specifically, take from Elizabeth some of the best demonstrations of her strength. When Elizabeth is at Rosings and the gentlemen request that she play the piano, Lady Catherine comments, "Miss Bennet would not play at all amiss if she practised more, and could have the advantage of a London master. She has a very good notion of fingering, though her taste is not equal to Anne's" (211-12). Here Lady Catherine insults Elizabeth and her family while also promoting her own daughter; Lady Catherine must compare the two women's tastes because her daughter is too ill to play. By using "not equal," Lady Catherine is able to avoid quantifying her daughter's tastes while still insulting Elizabeth's tastes alongside her family's ability to educate her. Lady Catherine proceeds to state that Elizabeth "would not play at all amiss," which is particularly negative and implies that Lady Catherine is knowledgeable enough to hear Elizabeth's potential in her playing but that she is superior enough to degrade the lack of fulfillment rather than encourage the potential. Elizabeth receives this with "all the forbearance of civility, and, at the request of the gentlemen, remain[s] at the instrument till

her ladyship's carriage [is] ready to take them all home” (212). Elizabeth is keeping the peace but also establishing that Lady Catherine’s words do not bother her, because, despite the insults, she continues to play, which is not an easy thing to do. This sense of continuation exists at a grammatical level as well; this quote is one sentence and does not employ any harsh punctuation. The alternating pattern of long and short words creates variety within the sentence without interrupting the flow, adding another layer of continuity to the construction. Elizabeth is evincing her own strength by not allowing Lady Catherine either to goad her into an argument or to force her away from the instrument.

This scene goes very differently in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*; in this version the reference to Elizabeth’s fingering involves her ability to do both a handstand and a finger-stand. Lady Catherine is, of course, still not satisfied, stating that “Miss Bennet would make a fine showing of Leopard's Claw if she practised more, and could have the advantage of a Japanese master. She has a very good notion of fingering” (138). The language here is very similar to that in the previous passage, but with a very different meaning. No longer is musical talent a valuable skill; instead, the emphasis is on the Deadly Arts and the ability to kill zombies. The presence of characters that express their unhappiness with women being trained in the Deadly Arts, such as Caroline Bingley, is Graham-Smith’s attempt to prove that the Bennet sisters are Strong Female Characters, since they are capable of taking on this acceptable but not ladylike role. The shift from the subtleties in the original novel to the blatant declarations of strength is reflected in the simplification of the grammar in the mashup. One such change is the exclusion of the negation in the phrase “would make a fine showing”; the idea that Elizabeth needs to practice more still stands, but now it is more straightforward, allowing for the addition of

the more specific “Leopard’s Claw,” designed to emphasize the focus on violence through the skills of a warrior. Another change is the exclusion at the end of the statement, the clause referencing Anne’s skill. Acknowledging Anne’s insight on the subject is no longer appropriate because of the shift in focus from music to violence; one cannot be an observer of violence and still understand and appreciate it the way one might do so with music. Elizabeth responds the same way she does in the original novel, achieving the same effects, but her response is only there in an attempt to remain ‘true’ to the original novel instead of being an important display of Elizabeth’s character.

Elizabeth once again exhibits her strength in a confrontation with Lady Catherine when Lady Catherine comes to Longbourn to dissuade Elizabeth from marrying Darcy. Elizabeth never believes that she will have this opportunity, but still refuses to acquiesce to Lady Catherine’s demand that she promise never to do so. In response to Lady Catherine’s question whether Elizabeth is determined to have Darcy, she says, “I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me” (434). The first sentence is concise and sharp, portraying Elizabeth as vexed and harsh. But by following it up with a long sentence made up primarily of qualifying phrases, Austen softens this portrayal and makes Elizabeth’s position empathetic and understandable without losing her strength. The first way Elizabeth qualifies her statement is through the use of the word “only” in reference to how she is “resolved to act”; this seems to be a way to pacify Lady Catherine. On one level, Elizabeth is minimizing her role through the connotation of “only” – merely or no more than – yet she is simultaneously asserting her determination to continue to act as she sees fit because it is her sole resolution.

Elizabeth also qualifies her statement by saying “in my own opinion,” and this is a phrase in which the meaning is dependent upon the person because it hinges on a person’s perception of Elizabeth. To Lady Catherine this phrase diminishes Elizabeth’s declaration because Lady Catherine does not feel that Elizabeth’s opinions are significant. For Elizabeth, her opinion and beliefs are the most important things, so this statement adds emotional weight and pride to her declaration. Amy Baker notes that “Elizabeth’s voice is structurally complicated, heavy on prepositions, and more varied [than Darcy’s]” (171). Austen emphasizes Elizabeth’s anger with Lady Catherine by pushing the limits of Elizabeth’s oral skill in this response, which is passionate yet still allows Lady Catherine’s inflated ego to take it the way she wishes. The finesse of this response combined with its boldness demonstrates Elizabeth’s strength both through her dedication to herself and her stubbornness in the face of Lady Catherine’s attempted domination.

The Elizabeth-Lady Catherine scene presents one of the greatest differences between *Pride & Prejudice* and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*; instead of a verbal fight between the women, they engage in a duel. At the end of the duel, Lady Catherine tells Elizabeth to cut her head off and end the match. Elizabeth, however, shows Lady Catherine mercy and says to her

To what end, your ladyship? That I might procure the condemnation of a man for whom I care so much? No. No, your ladyship – whether you shall live to see him married to your daughter, or married to me, I know not. But you shall live. And for the rest of your days, you shall know that you have been bested by a girl for whom you have no regard, and whose family and master you have insulted in the harshest possible manner. Now, I beg you take your leave. (292)

The difference between this sequence of events and the scene in the original work is one of the greatest superficial changes in the novel, but the meanings of Elizabeth's words are extraordinarily similar. This passage is characterized by Elizabeth's blatant declaration that Lady Catherine will live; in the process she clearly states that she might not marry Mr. Darcy, but that she could. In the original, Elizabeth more tactfully refuses to agree never to marry him. Grammatically the mashup is also more explicit by favoring short, declarative sentences over Elizabeth's complex statement in the original. The most significant grammatical shift is that Elizabeth is asking questions now as a demonstration of her power over Lady Catherine. In the original, Lady Catherine is interrogating Elizabeth in an attempt to determine her motives, while Elizabeth maintains her power through refutation. In the latter half of the quote Elizabeth's pointed reminder to Lady Catherine that she lost to a warrior who has 'inferior' Chinese training verbally enforces what she has grammatically been doing – lauding her control over the situation. Elizabeth's explicit exhibition of her power over the scene has been magnified from the original novel because despite Lady Catherine's blustering, Elizabeth bests her in the original as well. By still referring to Lady Catherine as "your ladyship," Grahame-Smith is parodying the language of Austen's novel in an extremely sardonic and ironic manner. In the words of Katherine Koballa, "[these] social graces and proprieties, remain largely intact in Grahame-Smith's adaptation and remain important aspects of the plot by helping to shape the world from Austen's novel into one more befitting a zombie uprising" (49). Elizabeth's quote, although appearing to be radically different from the one in the original novel, actually proffers a very similar message and once again demonstrates Elizabeth's strength in the face of adversity.

AFTERWORD

Jane Austen uses the subtle effects of grammar and structure to convey the strength of her characters. This strength is not immediately evident, and a reader must be attentive to perceive her characters' true mettle. Such subtlety is quite different from modern culture's tendency towards instant gratification and overt advertising, both of which are reflected in the mashups' simpler grammar and more blatant characterizations. *Sense & Sensibility*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* all depict very different types of female characters, but Marianne's, Elinor's, and Elizabeth's respective characterizations in the original novels demonstrate Austen's ability to write different types of women, even when they are in fairly similar situations.

Marianne Dashwood is a strong female character who exists completely within the cultural expectations for her gender and social status. Her romantic ideas about marriage at the beginning of the novel offer an example of how this can be a deficit to a strong female character, not because she wants something untraditional from life but because she does not accept and understand the possible consequences of her desires. In short, she is lacking sense. By the end of the novel, after Marianne's traumatic experience with Willoughby and her own illness, she marries Colonel Brandon. Marianne's ability to accept a proposal that

will bring her contentment and security rather than passionate love demonstrates her growth and maturation as a person.

Elinor is a strong female character who exists partially within her culture's expectations. Her dedication to keeping Lucy's secret stems from her sense of personal honor, which has very masculine connotations. A woman's honor is traditionally dependent on her chastity or husband. Another more masculine trait Elinor exhibits is her emotional silence; at the beginning of the novel, all of Elinor and Edward's conversations are facilitated either by her mother or sister. As the novel progresses, this issue grows temporarily worse because of how intertwined Lucy's secret is with Elinor's emotions. Elinor does give in to her emotions after Lucy's secret has been revealed to Marianne, who is once again lamenting her own love life. This outburst marks a turning point that is assisted by the change in Lucy and Edward's relationship, a change which allows Elinor's improved emotional expression to be rewarded by her marriage to Edward, who also values honor. More sensible and emotionally expressive, Elinor is now able to connect to Edward and build a life out of their shared values.

Elizabeth strikes a balance between Marianne and Elinor from the beginning. Like Marianne, she is unhappy to be courted by less than ideal suitors, but Elizabeth has made this judgment based on personality rather than age. Like Elinor, Elizabeth is inclined to keep the secrets asked of her and to spare others from her own feelings. However, Elizabeth confides her most pressing and strongest concerns in Jane while concealing her emotions from society at large. By having a confidante, Elizabeth repeatedly releases her emotions,

allowing her to cope with the few things she cannot share. Elizabeth does struggle with how to balance her expectations, her emotions, and her secrets throughout the novel, especially as her feelings for Mr. Darcy change. It is her ability to admit that she was wrong about Mr. Darcy and Wickham along with her desire to right said wrong that ultimately demonstrates her growth into a more mature strong female character who better participates in her culture.

These three characters together establish that acting feminine is not a weakness; it can be a strength, while masculinity can be a weakness. The contrast between Elinor and Marianne demonstrates that finding a balance between the two extremes of sense and sensibility maximizes one's strength. These are three very different women, each of whom uses her femininity differently, but they grow as human beings to embrace their emotional feminine side in a sensible manner. The fact that Austen was able to write this sort of character 200 years ago implies that despite the strict gender divide in society, there was considerable understanding of the value of femininity. This is in contrast with the way the mashups portray it.

In *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, the changes made to the novel cause previously meaningful emotional conversations and confessions to seem absurd. Along with changes in setting, these conversations have also been refocused and/or cut short, further highlighting the now ridiculous nature of such emotional exchanges. Elinor and Marianne have not changed, but the changes in their circumstances make them seem far

more ridiculous and petty because they are concerned with their emotions and with love and romance despite sea monsters raging around them.

Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters is a mashup but with distinct elements of a parody because the change in setting exaggerates every element of the plot rather than merely adjusting the scale of one event to another as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* does. As a result, domestic concerns seem far more amusing than serious, and the skewed scale allows Winters to create a more vindictive and harshly satisfying ending because everything is magnified. It is not a full-on parody, because there is no point to the heightening. Some of it is not even funny, and Winters misses several opportunities to create humor – such as with the character of Mrs. Jennings – but the novel is exaggerated.

In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, the setting has been adjusted by the addition of zombies, but the characters largely attempt to continue to live normal lives, with the exception of the Bennet sisters. Elizabeth and her siblings have been transformed into zombie-killing warriors whose marriages will end their careers. Elizabeth's hesitancy to marry now makes much more sense from a contemporary standpoint, but it loses the risks associated with it in Austen's novel. The deep-rooted strength that Elizabeth originally demonstrated and refined throughout the novel has now been uprooted and displayed in a glass jar as a show of strength.

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies is a mashup with several elements of modernization in it because Grahame-Smith uses the zombies as analogies for some of the fears of Regency society, such as a loss of reputation, that are no longer directly relevant.

But in doing so, the subtler and deeper strength of the original characters has been changed into flashy-violent strength that matches the more obvious circumstances. This is not a true modernization because the change in setting has also changed the significance of certain events and, in fact, the meaning of the work as a whole.

The mashup genre was at first hugely successful but has since largely died off. *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* spent time on the *New York Times* best seller list in 2009 and inspired a slew of similar novels, such as *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, which was published later in 2009. Within a year, over a million copies of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* had been sold and 375,000 of *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, but by 2016 when *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* the movie was released, it was met with a very different reaction (Deahl). The film was much anticipated but ultimately grossed under \$11 million, compared to its budget of \$28 million (“Pride and Prejudice and Zombies”).

Much of the initial scholarship on these works also overestimated the significance of these novels. Veera Kenttälä’s thesis is an example, concluding that “Mashup literature is a fun way of gently poking fun of classic work[s] of literature while also being true to its core message” (40). While it is certainly true that mashup literature pokes fun at certain elements of the original novels, it is at the expense of the original’s core message. The mashups are using the foundational values from the original novels as comic relief, which might leave these values in the novel but not in the same manner. Thus, the core message has changed. Elisabeth Chretien’s thesis is also subject to such overreaching because she

claims that “*Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* [is] a form of vital and original popular postmodern interaction with and appropriation of the existing literary canon” (2). Chretien’s focus on how modern culture interacts with enduring classic literature is interesting, but her claim that appropriation is a vital form of interaction is a stretch. Modern culture’s tendency towards remakes and adaptations may be worthy of analysis, but to call such adaptations “original” seems counterintuitive and unrealistic. Both of these theses were swept up in the fad that *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* created, but they take their claims too far to be truly enduring pieces of scholarship.

The mashups of Austen’s works rarely succeed in commenting on the Regency era. They best serve as comic reflections upon contemporary culture. Their quickly fading popularity in comparison to the endurance of Austen’s original novels does seem to indicate that although people enjoy adaptations and remakes, the substance of the classics fills a more enduring need.

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