



Dağoğlu, T. (2023). "The Concept of Double Audience for Irony Based on the Theory of Binary Opposition in *Sense and Sensibility* By Jane Austen", *Pamukkale Social Sciences Institute Journal*, Issue 56, Denizli, pp. 411-420.

THE CONCEPT OF DOUBLE AUDIENCE FOR IRONY BASED ON THE THEORY OF BINARY OPPOSITION IN *SENSE AND SENSIBILITY* BY JANE AUSTEN

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Abstract

Irony is defined as a figure of speech that allows authors to use words in a way that their intended meaning deviates from their actual meaning, simply put a difference between appearance and reality. The organization of these differences is established in the form of binary oppositions, which is the base where irony arises. This study will focus on Jane Austen's different technique, which is to juxtapose the two polar opposites with the use of irony in her novel *Sense and Sensibility*. By highlighting social hypocrisy and human relations, Jane Austen's major technique in this novel is to center all her phenomena such as the characters, their personality, feelings, and even the settings on oppositions with her ironic attitude. In the context of Austen's novels, the predominant technique is irony, which riddles with social conventions and incongruities more often than not with the presence of cultivated and educated characters. The reason is that the female writers of Austen's time intentionally created didactic heroines not only to meet the expectations but also to challenge the moral indoctrination of their societies operated by the established norms. It is suggested that Austen's dominant technique is not subtly the use of irony; furthermore, it also operates in the form of binaries that juxtaposes the polar opposites. From a structuralist perspective, it is observed that the novelist predicated the technique of irony on the form of binaries with the implications of the doubling of certain elements in her novel.

Keywords: *Irony, Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility, Binary opposition.*

JANE AUSTEN'İN SAĞDUYU VE DUYARLIK ROMANINDA İKİLİ KARŞITLIK TEORİSİNE DAYALI İRONİ İÇİN ÇİFT İZLEYİCİ/DİNLEYİCİ KAVRAMI

Öz

İroni, yazarların sözcükleri, amaçlanan anlamı gerçek anlamlarından farklı olacak şekilde kullanmalarının, ya da basitçe ifade edersek, görünüş ile gerçek arasında bir fark koymasının önünü açan bir söz sanatıdır. Bu farklılıkların kurgulanması, ironinin ortaya çıktığı temel olan ikili karşıtlıklar biçiminde oluşturulur. Bu çalışma, Jane Austen'in *Sağduyu ve Duyarlık* adlı romanındaki ironi kullanımıyla ikili karşıtlığı yan yana getirme tekniğine odaklanacaktır. Jane Austen'in bu romandaki başlıca tekniği, toplumsal ikiyüzlülüğü ve insan ilişkilerini öne çıkararak, karakterler, kişilikleri, duyguları ve hatta hikâyenin geçtiği yerler gibi tüm olgularını ironik tavrıyla karşıtlıklar üzerine odaklamasıdır. Austen'in romanlarına bakıldığında, baskın olan teknik, kültürlü ve eğitilmiş karakterlerin varlığından daha sık olarak sosyal gelenekler ve tutarsızlıklarla ilgili bilmeceler oluşturan ironidir. Bunun nedeni, Austen'in zamanının kadın yazarlarının, yalnızca beklentileri karşılamak için değil, aynı zamanda da yerleşik normlar tarafından yönetilen toplumların ahlaki dayatmalarına meydan okumak için kasıtlı olarak ders verici kahramanları yaratmalarıdır. Austen'in yaygın tekniğinin yalnızca ustaca ironi kullanımı olmadığı; ayrıca, zıt kutupları yan yana getiren ikili karşıtlıklar biçiminde çalıştığı ileri sürülmektedir. Yapısalci bir bakış açısıyla, romancının romanındaki bazı unsurların ikileme içermesi ile birlikte ironi tekniğini de ikilik biçimine dayandırdığı görülmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *İroni, Jane Austen, Sağduyu ve Duyarlık, İkili karşıtlık.*

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INTRODUCTION

“Irony is a form of utterance that postulates a double audience, consisting of one party that hearing shall hear & shall not understand, & another party that, when more is meant than meets the ear, is aware both of that more & of the outsiders’ incomprehension”.¹

Having a distinctive literary style in English Literature and cultural history, the novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) was written in an important period of time when the transition between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century was taking place. Operated by new ideological and social formations, the moral judgments of the nineteenth century were superseding the eighteenth century dominated by romantic ideas. Since Austen herself witnessed that transition, it can be interpreted as a great inspiration for and impact on her and her creative mill. In her novel, the novelist Jane Austen portrayed the two Dashwood sisters, Elinor and Marianne who embody the relational and romantic personalities established upon the binary oppositions, which is a pair of related terms or concepts but are opposite in meaning. Makaryk noted that *“in a binary opposition the two poles must not only be opposed to each other but must also be in exclusive opposition, which means they are bound in polar opposition like the positive and negative charge of an electric current”* (1993:511). The idea of binary opposition was developed in the late twentieth century by scholars Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, and Jacques Derrida. These thinkers, having invented and developed the Structuralist approach, proposed that meaning is developed within mental structures, and it requires ‘opposites’ create/achieve itself. According to Saussure, the Swiss linguist, the binary opposition is the *“means by which the units of language have value or meaning; each unit is defined against what it is not”*, and *“meaning is generated through a system of structured differences in language”* (Baker, 1982:15). Barthes expounds on it in a different text proposing that the paradigm, defined as the opposition of two virtual terms, namely binarism, is a source for the meaning: *“where there is meaning, there is paradigm, and where there is paradigm (opposition), there is meaning ... meaning rests on conflict (the choice of one term against another), and all conflict is generative of meaning ...”* (2005:7-31). According to Hawkes, our fundamental concepts of ‘meaning’ are presented through the opposition we see to exist between the basic *“semes”* (the smallest unit in meaning) or semantic units. Therefore, we basically define ‘dark’ by our sense of its opposition to ‘light’, and ‘up’ by our sense of its opposition to ‘down’. The same binary patterning exhibits itself in some other concepts; to illustrate, male: female, human: animal, day: night, etc. Lévi-Strauss termed this sort of contrastive ordering as the ‘socio-logic’ of the human mind, which designs nature in its own image and forms the basis of how we picture the world. Thus, the opposition plays a very predominant role in the revelation of meaning in a text (Hawkes, 2003:69). Based on this opposition, Greimas writes *“We perceive differences, and thanks to that perception, the world ‘takes shape’ in front of us, and for our purposes”* (1989:541)

When it comes to the use of irony and its paramount effect in the formation of the plot, adding its definition is requisite. Irony has been defined as an act of saying something, whereas the meaning is just the opposite. It is without a doubt that irony is pivotal for all literature; even one may boldly claim that all finest literature is ironic. What is an essential gesture is to think that reading ironic literature is looking beyond a word and what it really means rather than only taking the word as it is. Irony, in its simplest definition, is *“saying what is contrary to what is meant”* (Quintilian, 1995-98:401); however, literary irony shelters many unwieldy complexities. What or who attributes meaning to it is the audience, precisely the reader and hearer, and this meaning is truly dependent on its social context, without it, it is merely meaningless. This argument leads to the fact that language does not only consist of a logical system but operates also on social norms and values; thus, the act of encoding and decoding irony in a text surfaces the social, political, and conventional elements of language. Here, it is deemed appropriate to consider it in the way Austen herself did. One can comprehend and interpret her works effectively only if s/he keeps the author’s view of irony in mind. Within this context, it would be appropriate to claim that the organization of differences in the form of binaries is at the heart of Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*, along with semantically defined themes that both carry Austen’s use of irony and characterize the conventions of England’s society in the nineteenth century, and the novel’s characters are generated from related dualities.

1 H. W. Fowler. (1965). *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 305-6.

Austen constructed her use of irony on a matrix of moral and social satire. Within a system of simple and direct sentences, a web of contradictions, surrounding characters, and theme, is hidden with profound insights. As Mudrick points out that Austen used irony as an instrument “of her temperament, to sharpen and expose all the incongruities between form and fact, all the delusions intrinsic to the conventional art and conventional society” (1968:1). Those who have had the chance of reading her letters through which she addressed her sister will discover how Austen was extremely attentive and perceptive to such incongruities, particularly those involving social behavior. She was clever at spotting them and then connecting them to those around her, in which she found pleasure: “Charles Powlett gave a dance on Thursday, to the great disturbance of all his neighbors, of course, who, you know, take a most lively interest in the state of his finances, and live in hopes of his being soon ruined” (qtd. Mudrick, 1968:2). The novelist’s purpose in her ironic statement is to make her audience laugh. Given that her audience are both her sister and readers of the novels, she amuses both herself and them with her observations on the differences between what people pretend to be and what they really are.

On a surface level, Austen’s novels may simply fall into the category of a humorous portrayal of gentry society in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. However, her only intention was not to amuse her audience by satirizing social mores. On a deeper level, what is explored is that an ironic style was magnificently utilized for an implicit criticism of, particularly, political, economic, and sociological entities of her period. This is achieved by the employment of binary oppositions in ironic perception. It is the implications of the doubling of certain elements in her texts which help us investigate our thesis- irony emerging out of contrast- in her novel, rendering it an appropriate landscape for a structuralist perspective.

The core of Jane Austen’s work *Sense and Sensibility* is the organization of differences in the form of binaries. As the title suggests, *Sense and Sensibility* can be defined as a study of opposites. This study will focus on Austen’s technique which is to juxtapose the two polar opposites with her ironic attitude, seen in characters, their characteristics, feelings, and even settings where the events take place. Binary oppositions are constructed in an attempt of presenting social hypocrisy and human relations, which offers the suggestion that irony and binary oppositions are hand in hand and interwoven. As Finlay discussed, in Clausier’s *Rhetorique* (1728) irony or “*plaisanterie*” is akin to a binary opposition (Finlay, 1988:21). Thus, the argument is framed within the assumption that contrast is the base from which irony arises. It is generally a difference between appearance and reality such as what a character thinks him/herself to be and what s/he is in reality. Furthermore, what a character articulates, and what s/he really means to convey. Given that the combination of irony and binary oppositions presents the theory of meaning, the specific purpose of this study is to investigate the author’s use of irony as an interpretive tool by focusing on the fundamental role of binary oppositions in ironic perception in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*.

“Birony”: Irony Constructed Through Binary Opposition in *Sense and Sensibility*

Irony is Austen’s earliest, and always characteristic defense. As Klingel Ray states, Austen is “*first and foremost a satirist. And for a satirist, irony is the major tool of language*” (2001:2). Putting aside moral and emotional engagement, she observed and defined the incongruities between pretense and essence. Irony is adopted as a favorite company and made benefited as the single possible interpreter of life. Her major purpose is to provoke the reader to ponder upon different meanings and attitudes, in other words, she aimed for her reader to be a double audience and multitasker. Having a closer look into her novel confirms the novelist’s attitude as Marsh stated, “*Jane Austen does not tell us a single view: she gives us several different views, which often seem contradictory; and she makes us think about them without resolving them*” (1998:204).

It is known that Jane Austen looked at the society she lived in with humor even if she seems to have conformed to the traditions of her age, which is oft-used in the form of irony in her works. Whilst reading Austen’s novels, it is not far-fetched to assert that several types of irony may be distinguished. In her texts and their plots, her characters may turn out to be evil or deceitful when they seem positive, testifying to Austen’s talent in using twists and turns. To illustrate, her male and female characters such as Willoughby and Lucy Steel in *Sense and Sensibility*; Mr. Crawford in *Mansfield Park*; Frank in *Emma*; Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice* help us better understand that Austen seems to have used situational irony. Situational irony is when a result differs from

what was anticipated in advance. Another type of irony Austen referred to in her texts is dramatic irony. It is the reader who understands this but not the character (s). The last type of irony is called verbal in which the reader is presented with cynical dialogues among/between other characters, and what is said is just the opposite of what is meant. However, irony can also be hidden in other modes of expression than narrative or dialogue. Through the interactions between the characters, Jane Austen achieves the success of revealing their true identity (Práce, 2011:21).

When analyzed from a structuralist perspective, Austen's use of irony encompassing her characters, their personalities, and feelings, and even settings are embedded in a series of binary oppositions. Her narrative develops on this polarity as Blake states, "*Without contraries is no progression*" (Swinburne, 1868:210). Based upon the aforementioned argument regarding Austen's use of contrast in her texts, it is argued that the binary structure governs the novel at the very beginning with its title *Sense and Sensibility* (Castillo, 2015:89-90). Other examples which may be arrayed in this way are gentry/non-gentry, rich/poor, male/female, older/younger, and attractive/unattractive. In *Sense and Sensibility*, a binary structure is established on the leading characters Elinor and Marianne. Elinor is the one who embodies the term 'duty' and Marianne runs after her 'individualistic pursuit of happiness'. Therefore, it can be stated that opposition is structured around the duty towards the community versus the individual right to happiness. Both sisters illustrate this category of opposition; it is obvious in Marianne's case, but it is not explicit in the elder sister's. Even though Elinor represents the term 'duty', she does not literally comply with her community. She suppresses her true feelings and ideas when it comes to the matter of social norms. However, Marianne does totally ignore them and adopts unguarded conduct. Other characters' personalities and their parts in the story are presented below with examples. Addressing the argument, Jane Austen and her novel demonstrate an insightful use of irony within the greater scheme of binary oppositions.

As mentioned above, Austen's major technique in this novel is to center all her phenomena on oppositions, as the title offers, with her use of irony as a tool and attitude. The characters, their personality, attitudes, feelings, and even settings of the novel, Norland and Barton, compose a mixture of polar oppositions, which emerge from the transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The former period brings to the fore the issues of property, patronage, and gender that were salient in the aftermath of the French Revolution. The eighteenth century is also known as Romanticism, one of whose facets is a deep belief in the power of nature. The poets of the age such as Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth sought out inspiration in the natural world and wrote about its beauty. The lines in their poems revealed the mystical relationship they had with nature; and the speakers through these stanzas were regarded as its embodiment in real life. Industrialization was beginning to govern the cities, and the French Revolution reached England and left its devastating consequences. Thus, poets escaped into nature with the thought of releasing conflicts and sorrow through the belief that nature serves as a kind of superior power working through all difficulties. Nature was a sanctuary where they found freedom from an oppressive regime and rationality (Brown, 2010:1). Overturning the previous social conventions, such as the position of the aristocracy, this era marks strong emotion, imagination, and freedom within the notions of the arts. By contrast, in the nineteenth century, intellect and realism played an important role in ideological and cultural formations. The struggles between Religion and Science were deeply felt which was also expressed in literary forms. The concept of nature underwent a metamorphosis from a sublime force into an indifferent, arbitrary, and autonomous agent; it was treated in a more realistic way. In this sense, Victorian writers and poets, such as Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, paid little attention to the inspiring nature popularized by the Romantics; thus, they instead portrayed a dark and disturbing world. They had a strict set of moral standards that caused feelings and ideas to stifle. Being the tenant of and witnessing these two ages, Jane Austen mirrors these two centuries in her novel in the form of two different characters, the Dashwood sisters, one of whom, Marianne, represents the Romantics, whereas Elinor symbolizes the Victorian era. Reflecting the purest values of romanticism, Marianne impersonates the Romantics who are associated with love, emotions, and imagination as Wordsworth phrased: "*the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings*" (1989:57). Characterized as practical and ideal, Elinor embodies the cultural mores of the era operating on an axis of morality. She is tactful and prudent in every situation. Austen's use of irony in presenting the conventions of the Victorian age is structured in regard to an opposition between the aforementioned centuries, embodying the two sisters, whose personalities are elucidated further.

The following opposition is the title itself, *Sense and Sensibility*. Sense is construed as ‘common sense’ which coalesces tact and readiness in handling or coping with everyday matters or problems of life through the intellect. Sensibility is the quality of being easily and intensely influenced by emotional factors, and it is defined as an acute perception of or response toward something, such as the feelings of another. The novel is based on two sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, and their love stories, tragic at the outset, and happy in the end. Austen’s style offers the suggestion that she (un)wittingly set the elements of the novel on binary opposites. She created two major characters who are different from each other in the aspect of their personalities. The opposition arises here from the contrast between the sisters’ character traits. Elinor’s common sense is pitted against Marianne’s emotional sensitivity. Both are devoted to each other, their mother and younger sister but represent different characteristics. Elinor is serene and reasonable, whereas Marianne is impetuous and emotional. Even when Elinor’s heart is broken, she never loses her courtesy and tact, reasoning that it is unnecessary to be desperate about what cannot be helped, or agony is not displayed. However, Marianne cannot help revealing her sufferings due to emotional anguish to the other characters and also to the reader. First, the author’s account of how the sisters are different from each other is revealed by their ways of coping with grief after being bereaved of their father. It is acknowledged that Elinor feels the same sorrow as the rest of the family, but she can govern her feelings and occupy herself with daily affairs. Marianne, on the other hand, is portrayed as being helpless and refusing offers of consolation, much like their mother: “*Marianne’s abilities were, in many respects, quite equal to Elinor’s. She was...clever; but eager in everything: her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation. She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent. The resemblance between her and her mother was strikingly great*” (Austen, 2004:5).

Elinor was troubled by her sister’s overabundance of sensitivity, but Mrs. Dashwood respected and cherished it. Marianne and her mother supported one another in their vehement affliction. Their initial state of overwhelming anguish was actively renewed, sought after, and repeatedly created. They decided against ever accepting comfort in the future and completely surrendered to their grief, seeking an intensification of wretchedness in every reflection that could allow it (Austen, 2004:5). Even though they are depicted as polar opposites at the beginning of the novel, through the end, they meet at a moderate point in the spectrum. Marianne chooses to marry Colonel Brandon, who would be a better spouse than Willoughby, whilst Elinor, who has been building up tears throughout the book because of her reasonable manners, cannot help shedding her tears at the end. Austen intended to demonstrate the idea that the extreme of the spectrum might result in unhappiness, instead, it should be balanced.

The novel, besides its title and the sisters, revolves around the opposition of one type or another, especially the characters. Austen employed this method in her book, as Galloway pointed out, to remove the corpus callosum, which juxtaposes the two parts into a binary opposition (1996). In other words, it can be defined as a split between the heart, which feels the joy and the pain, and the mind which masters and evaluates. The ‘heart’ of the novel is Marianne, the ‘mind’ is Elinor. The remaining characters also represent these oppositions:

SENSE	SENSIBILITY
Elinor	Marianne
Edward	Mrs. Dashwood
Lucy	Colonel Brandon
Willoughby	Sir John
John Dashwood	Mrs. Jennings
Mr. Palmer	Miss. Steele
Mrs. Ferrars	Mrs. Palmer
Fanny Dashwood	
Lady Middleton (Galloway, 1996)	

All the characters given above belong to opposite teams. At the outset of the events, the disclosure of the characters’ true natures contrasts with our early impressions of them onward in the narrative. There are two basic features of irony; they are the contradiction between false impression and truth and the unknowing of the contradiction. Integrating the features of irony and the binary opposition, we can exemplify our first impression

upon Colonel Brandon and Willoughby. Brandon reveals the impression of a lifeless, aloof, and a sense of superiority. However, as events progress, he turns out to be a true romantic, which is made clear by revelations about Eliza and his profound and undying admiration and devotion to Marianne. Willoughby, on the other hand, seems a loyal, keen lover at first, but turns out to be an acquisitive and opportunistic schemer. We can uncover their depth and hidden aspects by taking Jane Austen's artistic talent in the use of irony in line with the binary oppositions that exist beyond the surface (Rallo, 2003:87). In the absence of one of these techniques, which are mutually complementary, it may hamper savoring the deep meaning the novel implicates. Because the general formula of irony leaves no place for doubt, the major convention of articulation is that of opposition.

The picture of characters, predominantly the Dashwood sisters', different characteristics, descriptions, and dialogues, reflected through the means of opposition are also observed in the novelist's ironic tone. Austen's irony cannot only be defined as gentle or severe, but it also varies. Her goal is to provoke readers' thought processes and engage them. John Preston refers to Kuwahara's article saying:

Austen's art calls on irony to render the narrative intelligence as a kind of third dimension to the action or as a color filter not visible itself but affecting all the tones in the scene. Thus, the reader is more conscious of the play of mind rather as an enlargement of mind, as an enlargement of his own sensibility than as the mechanism of a narration. Nevertheless, though the story seems to be impersonal and freestanding as an object, it is, in reality, a transaction between author and reader (Kuwahara, 1998:18).

When she presents Marianne's part in the novel, she says, "*She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent*" (Austen, 2004:5). Austen attributes the pleasing commentary to Marianne in the first half and gently undercuts it in the second. This can be compared with the biting description of Mrs. Ferrars; she says, "*She was not a woman of many words; for, unlike people in general, she proportioned them to the number of her ideas, and of the few syllables that did escape her, not one fell to the share of Miss Dashwood, whom she eyed with the spirited determination of disliking her at all events*" (Austen, 2004:162). The first part evokes positive commentary, naturally, the reader expects to find the same in the rest of the same statement. However, she ends it in a negative tone which marks her intention of inflicting the aimed impression, perhaps a sudden surprise. Her meticulous construction of sentences containing the opposite ideas, stances, or notions undoubtedly is more effective than a plain and direct statement, which is a token of her genius. The reader's reflection is doubled; s/he is fashioned as a double audience.

One of the most conspicuous examples of irony occurs when Lucy's hostility to Elinor is expressed in false pretenses of friendship. Watt describes this as a polite variation on the same theme of ruthless social competitiveness (Watt, 1981:<https://jasna.org/persuasions/printed/number3/watt.htm?>). When Lucy meets the Dashwood sisters in London, she says:

I should have been quite disappointed if I had not found you here still,' said she repeatedly, with a strong emphasis on the word. 'But I always thought I should. I was almost sure you would not leave London yet awhile, though you told me, you know, at Barton that you should not stay above a month. But I thought, at the time, that you would most likely change your mind when it came to the point. It would have been such a great pity to have went away before your brother and sister came. And now to be sure you will be in no hurry to be gone. I am amazingly glad you did not keep to your word (Austen, 2004:151).

Her unsatisfactory use of grammar and fatal garrulity reveals her sarcasm, in a narrow sense a *verbal irony or rhetorical irony*. It means a narrator expresses a literal meaning to display her ideas and attitudes, but in fact to indicate the underlying meanings with implied ideas and attitudes. As Finlay suggested according to Quintilian, there is a conflict between a word's evident meaning and its underlying meaning (2011, p. 21). Mrs. and Mr. John Dashwood can be taken under scope with their language use and dialogues of description. John Dashwood does not keep his promise to care about his stepmother and sisters in his power. After his father's death, there is no time to grieve but to consider "...*how much there might prudently be in his power to do for them*" (Austen, 2004:3). The ambiguous word is 'prudently', which may be construed as Mr. John Dashwood is a prudent man

and willingly takes care of his intimate relatives as well as he can. It is the literal meaning understood by the reader. The context in which the word is given conveys the opposite meaning; Mr. Dashwood is working only for his own benefit and considering ways of taking care of them without spending much money. Mrs. John Dashwood also complains about the annuity that her husband is planning to pay and dissuades him from doing this by saying “*people always live forever when there is any annuity to be paid them*” (Austen, 2004:7). Austen liked to carve her characters by attributing lively and complicated characteristics to them. The verbal irony offers a partnership between the reader and the novelist. The reader is expected to decode the underlying meaning signaling the opposition.

Another type of irony is *dramatic irony*, as viewed by Ruiz, it means the awareness by the audience of the fate of a character but unknown to the character herself (2009:38). Dramatic irony arises from the event in which Mrs. Jennings overhears part of a conversation between Brandon and Elinor and thinks that he is proposing marriage to her. In reality, he is sharing his decision in offering the Delaford to Edward Ferrars. This can be defined as the most amusing scene in the novel. The concluding sentence was overheard by Mrs. Jennings “*--at least, I am afraid it cannot take place very soon.--*” (Austen, 2004:201) and completely misunderstood by her. Upon Colonel Brandon’s departure, Mrs. Jennings congratulates Elinor on what is said to her by that gentleman. Elinor thinks that this congratulation refers to Brandon’s generous offer to Edward through her, and then a double misunderstanding occurs. It is the reader who knows the real situation. Then, irony and opposition surface out of the contrast between reality and its wrong notion, which is formed between Mrs. Jennings and Elinor. When they learn the truth, their misunderstanding is resolved, and both enjoy it.

Ruiz remarks that scholars also bring to the forefront the *situational irony*:

... in which players and events appear together in improbable or impossible situations in such a way that this opposition prompts the creation of some tension. This is often the case of events that turn out to be the opposite of what is expected or what should be (2009:39).

Prior to Ruiz’s definition of situational irony as an interpretive tool, it would be illuminating to refer to Kaufer’s elucidations on “*The Aesthetics of Binary Oppositions*” that would furnish a more compatible way to comprehend Austen’s use of situational irony. According to Kaufer, the primary basis of ironic effect is logical negation; however, in situational irony, it is beyond that. He suggests that the oppositions in ironic form should be interpreted as a configuration of aesthetic opposition, *viz.* aesthetic incompatibility, rather than logical negation (1983:456). He maintains that the binary oppositions of situational ironies are established upon analogic oppositions (1983:458).

Marianne, the protagonist, is a genuinely romantic and vulnerable figure who could fall for any regular man; however, when she is told jokingly that Colonel Brandon has romantic feelings about her, she gets angry and says “*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*” (Austen, 2004:25). It is understood that Colonel cannot be her romantic partner, based on her initial view; however, it is completely the opposite in the end. Her path crosses with Willoughby and she is immediately drawn to him because of his appearance. They both think, especially Marianne, that they are a perfect match and sure to be married soon. This happy ending is also expected by the reader. Having arranged a heartbreaking separation, Austen does not satisfy both the characters and the reader’s expectations. Willoughby abandons her for monetary reasons, leaving a lingering pain in her heart. All she can do is wake up from the dream and struggle to continue her life with a better understanding of love. Marianne’s ending changes with her happy marriage to Colonel Brandon making the reader surprised. Thus, the case of the event turns out to be the opposite of what is expected by the reader. However, it’s likely that Marianne’s approval of this union in the end would be deemed immoral because she initially rejects Colonel Brandon’s emotions for her. It is the novelist’s thorough portrait of the themes prevalent in the nineteenth century, such as marriage, class, greed, and comfortable life, all of which are observed in Marianne’s ending up with Brandon. Culture-specific is that Marianne’s rejection of Colonel Brandon, due to the fact that he is far older than her, is not ironic, but becomes so when it has a reverse situation, Marianne’s acceptance of his proposal. This, in the words of Kaufer, provides a site for the reader to “*take a perspective*” (1983:459) on the situation under scope *vis-a-vis* opposing situational perspective.

In the aspect of situational irony, another example can be observed in Robert's marriage to Lucy Steele. Mrs. Ferrars is portrayed as someone who is strongly opposed to receiving Lucy as a daughter-in-law. Because of his anxious concern about his family prestige, Edwards's brother Robert tries to convince Lucy to withdraw her claim to marry Edward. Robert has several meetings with Lucy as a result of Lucy's long-standing demand for this marriage in which he tries to persuade Lucy to drop her insistence on this marriage. In these meetings, the impression she gives to Robert is that she accepts his request, but her real aim is to trap him. The reader's surprise reaches its height when they learn that the two elope to get married as they do not want Mrs. Ferrars to know it. The irony is foregrounded by the attention-grabbing contrast between what the reader expects and what actually happens. In the end, Mrs. Ferrars accepts Robert's choice of wife due to Lucy's cunningness and assiduous attentions. As a reader, we know that Austen does not present Lucy as a favorable character, whatever she does reveals her selfishness. Austen wrote:

The whole of Lucy's behavior in the affair, and the prosperity which crowned it, therefore, may be held forth as a most encouraging instance of what an earnest, an unceasing attention to self – interest, however its progress may be apparently obstructed, will do in securing every advantage of fortune, with no other sacrifice than that of time and conscience (Austen, 2004:339).

When we read this part in the book, we get the sense of positive tone like in 'crowned it', and 'encouraging instant'; however, we do not get the same sense in Lucy's behavior.

The use of binary oppositions foregrounding the ironic attitude is not limited to the characters. Jane Austen suggests that readers should be sensitive and question social status by harshly satirizing characters who are obsessed with social distinctions. Austen was cognizant of all the ways in which individuals of her own society tried to assert their status and distinguish themselves from those below them. The description of the houses, specifically named such as Norland Park and Barton Cottage, conspicuously mirror her society's major preoccupation with status and class. They served as chief markers to reflect and highlight social rank and Austen was fully aware of their ironic potential, which is insinuated at the very beginning of the novel:

The family of Dashwood had long been settled in Sussex. Their estate was large, and their residence was at Norland Park, in the centre of their property, where, for many generations, they had lived in so respectable a manner as to engage the general good opinion of their surrounding acquaintance (Austen, 2004:2).

Did they have a good opinion about surrounding acquaintances because of their respectable manner of life or is the novelist satirizing the importance of social status apropos of their property, Norland Park? The latter supports our argument in Austen's use of irony in the novel's settings. The expression of 'good opinion' reveals the irony here; after the Dashwood women have been forced to leave Norland Park for Barton Cottage, they may have damaged the general perception of their respectable manner of life. Because, based on the excerpt above, highlighting the respectable manner of the Dashwoods, what the Dashwood women experience happens in a way that seems to be the opposite of what you expect. Austen depicts a society that closely reflects the wealth and privileges such as pleasant houses that individuals of high status cherish, or the abasement those, who have low rank, are exposed to. Set on a frame of contrast, Barton Cottage stands as the opposite of Norland Park implicating the different status, also serving the purpose of the author's achievement of use of binary oppositions in ironic perception.

The furniture she depicts is equally as important as that of the house itself. John Dashwood considers furniture to be symbols of possessions and wealth, not items to be cherished in their home:

Mr. John Dashwood told his mother again and again how exceedingly sorry he was that she had taken a house at such a distance from Norland as to prevent his being of any service to her in removing her furniture. He really felt conscientiously vexed on the occasion; for the very exertion to which he had limited the performance of his promise to his father was by this arrangement rendered impracticable.– The furniture was all sent around by water. It chiefly consisted of household linen, plate, china, and books, with a handsome pianoforte of Marianne's. Mrs. John Dashwood saw the packages depart

with a sigh: she could not help feeling it hard that as Mrs. Dashwood's income would be so trifling in comparison with their own, she should have any handsome article of furniture (Austen, 2004:17).

In the nineteenth century, the way of thinking about a house was that good stylish furniture mirrored signs of a good life. However, more importantly, home furnishing served as a symbol of social status. In comparison to the handsomely furnished Norland Park, the Dashwood women have been reduced to start a new life in a lower-ranking house decorated with modest furniture, but the pianoforte remains as a chief signifier of middle-class status. After they are evicted from Norland Park by their older brother after their father's death, Barton Cottage, a much smaller and humbler house, reads as:

As a house, Barton Cottage, though small, was comfortable and compact; but as a cottage, it was defective, for the building was regular, the roof was tiled, the window shutters were not painted green, nor were the walls covered with honeysuckles. A narrow passage led directly through the house into the garden behind. On each side of the entrance was a sitting room, about sixteen feet square; and beyond them were the offices and the stairs. Four bedrooms and two garrets formed the rest of the house. It had not been built for many years and was in good repair. In a comparison of Norland, it was poor and small indeed!— (Austen, 2004:20).

Based on the detailed comparative description of Barton Cottage and Norland Park, Austen places her Dashwood women in a humble cottage so as to comfortably make her own satirical jabs at rich and highly elegant characters of great social standing, who are wealthy in material but lack prosperous mind. Her ironic attitude is constructed on the contrast between these places highlighted by divergent furnishing.

CONCLUSION

Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* presents a landscape that encompasses the romantic ideas of the second half of the eighteenth century and part of the transition to nineteenth-century realism. Her storyline essentially depicts how women rely on marriage to maintain their social status and financial welfare. Irony is one of Austen's most discussed literary techniques; she has mastery in contrasting the plain meaning of a statement with the comic and undermining the meaning of the original to draw ironic sketches. It should be noted that scholars like Cicero and Quintilian consider irony to be a case of binary opposition. Finlay stated that opposition, contraries, and contradictions are the rules of transposition of irony that rely upon the counterparts according to Aristotelian logic (Finlay, 2011:21). Thus, this study has discussed that Austen's use of irony also depends upon the binary oppositions constructed as contradictions and as Kaufer defined analogic oppositions in what is narrated and what can be seen, and what is hidden and invisible. These oppositions served as tools to enable her to depict the contrasting elements in ironic perception, which ranges from the gentle to the severe. Her use of irony is well decoded through the interpretation of the aligned opposing perspectives in her novel *Sense and Sensibility*.

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Beyan ve Açıklamalar (Disclosure Statements)

1. Bu çalışmanın yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedirler (The authors of this article confirm that their work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics).
2. Yazarlar tarafından herhangi bir çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir (No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors).
3. Bu çalışma, intihal tarama programı kullanılarak intihal taramasından geçirilmiştir (This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program).