

# Sense and sensibility

Literature



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The terms sense and sensibility are often used in literature with reference to emotional and rational behaviors. Sense literally refers to the ability of the senses to perceive. It is a feeling that results from the different stimulus captured by the five senses, the sense of sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste. It is also used in such a way as to pertain to the ability to guess or approximate things. Sometimes it is also used in referring to the ability to think, understand or to reason out soundly.

Sensibility on the other hand, refers to the receptiveness of the person with the aid of mental faculties and/or with emotional appreciation of the things that one perceives. It can also be appropriately be defined as the quality by which a person becomes highly affected by the different changes in the surrounding. Sensibility could also be associated with the term sensitivity, while sense is also associated with sensation, common sense and good sense. The opposite of sensibility is insensitivity while the closest opposite associated with sense is irrationality or defying reason.

Sensibility is commonly used to describe a character that displays so much emotion. Sense, on the other hand, is referred to someone who thinks straight and use his/her brains more than his/her heart. Sensibility and sense are generally two distinct words that have different meanings and usage. The only similar thing between the two lies upon their being used as a description of how one thinks and/or responds. In a novel written by Jane Austen in the year 1811, entitled *Sense and Sensibility*, one can more than ever recognized the similarity and differences between the two terms.

In the novel, the word sense designates the character of Elinor Dashwood, the eldest of the two siblings, who is admired for her common sense behavior and diplomatic talents. The meaning of sense, associated with common sense is typified in the story as a rational and practical type of thinking. It concludes by looking for the best thing offered. It adheres to conformity and rejects defiance. Elinor is presented as respectable and admirable people who understand marriage as the best way a woman can be secured and comfortable.

Although Elinor has her heart broken, it is not displayed through her actions. She is also portrayed as someone who is concern of others interests above her own benefits. The other character, Marianne Dashwood, the younger sister, is a very passionate and emotional person who characterizes the term sensibility. She do what she feel is correct and/or appropriate. She believes that a person shall only fall in love once in her/his entire lifetime. That person in the novel is Willoughby, who has later on been engaged to a miss grey, a very wealthy and educated woman, as described in the novel.

Such as the case can be seen when she somehow regrets and feels sad about marrying Brandon. She is a romantic who cannot or has only little control of her emotions. She is easily hurt and moved by rage, anger and other emotions. In the novel, Austen portrays Elinor as someone who is a stereotypical female in an age where woman are usually labeled and behaviors are coded by their societal status. Marianne on the other hand exemplifies the inert behavior or the hidden desires of women during those years.

While Elinor is a socialite, Marianne stays with her self mourning about romantic ideals that can never come to reality. She is self absorbed and she does not care about others impression of her. Elinor and Marianne as sisters were both part of the upper class society. A class in which, labor and “ work” does not define, increase their status. These cannot even advance them or gain them further distinction and praise. What determines their future lies exclusively on their marriages. Marriage is then seen as a commodity rather than a passionate union of two lovers.

Marianne has become sick because of grief and excessive sensibility. The realization of this and the pain that Marianne experience is the reason why she decides, against her passion, to marry Brandon, a man who could give her the comforts of life. Such ending defines that in the author’s point of view, common sense stands higher than sensibility. With sensibility displayed more of a burden than help and with common sense displaying practical effects and reasonable outcomes, it is worthy of thought to figure out when sense and sensibility shall be use for one’s own sake.

Today woman has more liberty and can enter a profession. Women are not seen as dependents, rather there are instances where women are the sole breadwinner in the family. The women of today can earn as much as man although some gender biases can still be seen in most societies. In my opinion, in the current system and society, it is better to have good sense than to become drown in sensibility. It is through good sense that one can utilize sensibility more effectively.