

Jane austen's use of irony in pride and prejudice. assignment

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Irony is the art of expressing two meanings simultaneously; the obvious surface meaning the majority will regard as the only meaning and on a deeper profounder meaning which lies behind the obvious. The tension created by this ambivalence can be and has been put to a variety of uses. Ironies abound in Shakespeare, so do they in Dryden and Poe-Shakespeare employs them to underscore the tragic plight of a man, while Dryden and Pope use them to mock at human follies and foibles. Among the forty eight writings, Fanny runner's ' Cecilia', Camilla' and other novels are based on quiet but incisive irony.

Thomas Love Peacocks " Headlong Hall", " Nightmare Marina" and so on are the vehicles of attacks on the cranks and the fads of his day. But very few writers have exploited all possible resources of irony as Jane Austin. It may not be an exaggeration to say that Jane Austin is nothing if not Ironical. Elroy is her very forte; It is in fact the very soul of her art. Pride and Prejudice, for instance, is steeped in Irony. To put it in other words, it is an artistic blend of ironic and dramatic design. Almost everything in this novel, be it related to the context or to the style, points to an ironic contrast between ' appearance' and ' reality'. It is the complex handling of " First Impressions" that lends to Student's Irony. Perhaps the opening sentence of the book offers the aptest illustration of Irony. It states that " a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" and claims that " it is truth universally acknowledged. " But as the story unfolds itself we learn that " universal truth lies" in the opposite direction. Mrs. Bonnet's concern for getting her daughters gainfully husbanded constitutes the basic theme of Pride and Prejudice.

In an essay Reuben Brower writes: In analyzing the Ironies and assumptions, we shall see how Intensely the dialogue is, dramatic In the sense of defining the characters through the way they speak and are spoken about. " apparent and the inherent is initially drawn towards Hickman mainly because of his external graces and Dairy's first reaction to Elizabeth is that of repulsion simply because to quote Dairy, she is " not handsome enough to tempt" him. Ere situations - at least a good number of them Pride and Prejudice. Are also ' ere ironical.

Dairy's first proposal to Elizabeth is made exactly at the moment when Elizabeth hates him cost. When Dairy proposes to her she simply rejects him and blames him for separating Jane from Bentley; She further accuses him of his abominable treatment of Nickname. She tells harshly—".. My opinion of you was decided. Your character is unfolded in the recital which I received from Mr.. Hickman... Can you defend yourself? ' Later on Dairy changes, and happily, the changes are mostly for the better. The changed Dairy does not feel shy of confessing : " I have been a selfish being all my life, in practice, though not in principle. Once Dairy has been humbled, Austin turns ere irony on Elizabeth. She shows that Elizabeth in resentment of Dairy's conscious superiority, has exaggerated his faults and failed to see that there is much goodness in him. Then again. Lydia elopement with Hickman, which Elizabeth fears shall spoil her prospects of marriage with Derby, strangely enough brightens the same. Similarly, Lady Catering's attempts to prevent this marriage succeeds in only hastening it. All these clearly spells out Student's attitude towards life. She knows that human nature and human situations are often too incongruous and contradictory.

<https://assignbuster.com/jane-austens-use-of-irony-in-pride-and-prejudice-assignment/>

But she sees not deride this aberrations with the cruelty of a Dryden or a Pope, her irony is always gentle and sympathetic. She uses it mainly in order to raise a hearty laughter. This, however is not to suggest that her comic is not rooted in any sense of responsibility. She has very certainly a distinct moral purpose of her own. She will not only expose the antithesis between sense and nonsense, she will at the same time state her preferences in unmistakable terms. Needless to say she casts her vote in favor of sense. There is pride in life as also there is prejudice; but life, in order to be ideally lived needs to be a combination of both..

Darcy has to stoop to conquer his pride before he becomes worthy to be happy and Elizabeth has to get over her prejudice in order to enter into a life of bliss. It is this moral vision that spells itself out in course of the novel "Pride and Prejudice", though Austen's irony plays the all pervasive; yet it never allows this vision to attain the abominable portions of any kind of didactics. Indeed, it may be said that one of the greatest charms of this novel is derived from the gentle "tongue in the cheek" way of describing people and situations.