Chapter VIII

IRONY

In discussing the tone of Jane Austen's novels, one cannot overlook her ingenuity in employing irony. In all her novels, irony is the vital principle of her art of narration.[1] It comes in all forms.

Verbal irony applies to a figure of speech which says one thing but means something else. Characteristically, verbal irony employs words of praise to imply blame. Perhaps no other examples of Jane Austen's verbal irony are so brilliant as the discussion between John Dashwood and his wife of his father's dying wishes, and the conversation at the grand dinner to which the Dashwoods entertain the Middletons, both of which provide occasions where "no poverty of any kind; except of conversation, appeared." In view of their length, however, some other examples are given here instead.

The opening sentence of Pride and Prejudice is also a famous instance of verbal irony found in English fiction; it sets the tone for the entire novel and thus implicitly indicates that this work is to be a masterpiece of irony.

> It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.
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> However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood,

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[1] Marvin Mudrick, Jane Austen: Irony as Defense and Discovery (California, 1968), p. 71.

> this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter I, page 1)

The first sentence begins as though the novel is going to be a great philosophical discourse; "It is a truth universally acknowledged" implies that it will deal with great truths, but the second half of the sentence reveals that the "great universal truth" is no more than a consideration of a common social situation. Ironically, the concern of this novel is to be not with the universe but with a "neighbourhood", not with the totality of mankind, but with the "surrounding families".[2] The irony lies in the discrepancy between the formal manner of the statement and its intended meaning. Literally, the "truth" spoken of is that a man in possession of a fortune must need a wife, whereas in reality the sentence means that a woman without a fortune needs a man with a fortune for a husband. The fact that the viewpoint of the first sentence belongs to a woman -- for only a female would make this statement -- makes the reader aware that Jane Austen is going to present most of the characters' problems from the female viewpoint.[3] Ironically, the impersonal narrator at first seems to be standing outside the story, not yet observing the characters but making some reflections on life in general. However, as Mr. Bennet and his wife begin their dialogue, it becomes clear that the impersonal narrator

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[2]Ibid., p. 92.

[3]Robert Liddell, The Novels of Jane Austen (London, 1966), p. 110.

has them both in view in making the opening statement. It is an opinion that Mrs. Bennet, one finds, would greet with a clapping of hands and little cries of joy, but one that Mr. Bennet would reject and ridicule with some of his usual witty remarks.[4]

Jane Austen employs many methods to achieve verbal irony. Sometimes, certain diction may demand that the statement be read ironically; for example, Mrs. Bennet, the senseless parent, artlessly exclaims to Mr. Bennet that their daughters cannot be expected to have the "sense of their parents".

Another example is:

> The party then gathered round the fire
> to hear Lady Catherine determine what
> weather they were to have on the morrow.
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XXIX, page 125)

Here irony lies in the choice of words. The word determine has a force here that provides a good example of Jane Austen's effective use of a single well-placed word. It puts a demand on the reader that he read this passage ironically.

In Sense and Sensibility, Mrs. Jennings is described as

> ...a widow, with an ample jointure. She
> had only two daughters, both of whom she
> had lived to see respectably married, and
> she had now therefore nothing to do but
> to marry all the rest of the world.
>
> (Sense and Sensibility, chapter VIII, page 69)

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[4]Ibid., p. 111.

The sentence reads straight-forwardly until the last phrase, which brings the reader up short, making him ponder and transform the meaning of the word "nothing", and thus affording a glimpse of the triviality of Mrs. Jennings' existence.[5]

Nice and pleasant words are sometimes employed ironically; for example, they are used to point to the unpleasant qualities of Elizabeth Elliot, especially snobbery: Elizabeth Elliot "would have rejoiced to be certain of being properly solicited by baronet-blood within the next twelvemonth or two" (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XLVII, page 216).

Of Edward Ferrars, Jane Austen writes:

> He was not handsome, and his manners required intimacy to make them pleasing. He was too diffident to do justice to himself; but when his natural shyness was overcome, his behaviour gave every indication of an open affectionate heart. His understanding was good, and his education had given it solid improvement. But he was neither fitted by abilities nor disposition to answer the wishes of his mother and sister, who longed to see him distinguished - as - they hardly knew what. They wanted him to make a fine figure in the world in some manner or other. His mother wished to interest him in political concerns, to get him into parliament, or to see him connected with some of the great men of the day. Mrs. John Dashwood wished likewise; but in the meanwhile, till one of these superior blessings could be attained, it would have quieted her ambition to see him driving a barouche. But Edward had no turn for great men or barouches. All his wishes centered in domestic comfort and the quiet of private life. Fortunately he had a younger brother who was more promising.
>
> (Sense and Sensibility, chapter III, page 49)

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[5]Mudrick, op. cit., p. 103.

All the nice and pleasant words are employed here ironically. They suggest that the young man's failure to have gaudy ambitions is worthy, and that his mother's desire to see him distinguished in a very worldly way is regrettable. The word "promising", coming at the end of the long paragraph describing Edward, prepares the reader to see Robert Ferrars as the reverse of Edward, and indeed Robert turns out to be vain, selfish, snobbish and stupid.

The ironic intention is at times signalled by the appearance of either clichés or parodied conventions. In *Emma*, Miss Woodhouse is described as a person who "unites the best blessings of existence" (*Emma*, chapter I, page 15), but behind this sunny aspect lies "the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself" (*Emma*, chapter I, page 19). There are also delicate ironic reverberations around the phrase "had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world" (*Emma*, chapter I, page 19), signalizing her achievement. Such a girl, sheltered all her life in Highbury, can hardly be said to have lived "in the world at all".[6]

Another example of irony signalled by the repetition of clichés occurs when Catherine Morland asks Maria Thorpe for some particulars of the trip she had taken with her brother and sister the previous day. Catherine is told that "it had been altogether the most delightful scheme in the world; that nobody could imagine how charming it had been, and that it had been more delightful than anybody could conceive." (*Northanger Abbey*, chapter XV, page 130). However, when the details are unfolded, Catherine listens with "heartfelt satisfaction" for "there was

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[6] J.F. Burrows, *Jane Austen's Emma* (Sydney, 1968), p. 78.

nothing to regret for half an instant" (Northanger Abbey, chapter XV, page 130).

As to parodied conventions, a good example is found in Jane Austen's narrative comment on the attitude of the people of Highbury towards Mrs. Churchill's news of sickness and death:

> Goldsmith tells us, that when lovely woman stoops to fooly, she has nothing to do but to die; and when she stoops to be disagreeable, it is equally to be recommended as a clearer of ill-fame. Mrs. Churchill, after being disliked at least twenty-five years, was now spoken of with compassionate allowances. In one point she was fully justified. She had never been admitted before to be seriously ill. The event acquitted her of all the fancifulness, and all the selfishness of imaginary complaints.
>
> (Emma, chapter XLV, page 305)

And when Mrs. Churchill dies, the author comments:

> It was felt as such things must be felt. Everybody had a degree of gravity and sorrow; tenderness towards the departed, solicitude for the surviving friends; and, in a reasonable time, curiosity to know where she would be buried.
>
> (Emma, chapter XLV, page 305)

Both passages are deliberately anti-climactic; they are criticisms of the way people's minds work at such a time. In the first passage, irony lies in the merely conventional feelings, the automatic compassion. In the second passage, irony is caused by the ranging of the diction from sorrow to tenderness, thence to solicitude and finally to curiosity, signalizing a human descent from sorrow to curiosity and thereby indicating a human contradiction between sympathy and concern with

petty matters.[7]

Irony is also to be found in disparities between words and reality; for example, in the speech of Lady Russell when she forms and expresses her judgement on Mr. Elliot in these terms:

> Every thing united in him; good understanding, correct opinions, knowledge of the world, and a warm heart. He had strong feelings of family-attachment and family-honour, without pride or weakness; he lived with the liberality of a man of fortune, without display; he judged for himself in every thing essential, without defying public opinion in any point of worldly decorum. He was steady, observant, moderate, candid; never run away with by spirits or by selfishness, which fancied itself strong feeling; and yet, with a sensibility to what was amiable and lovely, and a value for all the felicities of domestic life, which characters of fancied enthusiasm and violent agitation seldom really possess.
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> (*Persuasion*, chapter XVI, page 159)

All the description here is just the opposite of what Mr. Elliot really is. The use of such exact and emphatic terms is intended to make the reader catch an inflexion of irony and thus realize the desparity.

A similar disparity between words and the actual situation occurs when, in the Upper Room, Catherine finds that:

> ...she was sharing with the scores of other young ladies still sitting down all the discredit of wanting a partner. To be disgraced in the eye of the world, to wear the appearance of infamy while her heart is all purity, her actions all innocence, and the misconduct of another the true source of her debasement, is one of those circumstances which peculiarly belong to the heroine's life, and her fortitude under it what particularly dignifies her character.
>
> (*Northanger Abbey*, chapter VIII, page 74)

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[7] Ibid., p. 84.

Catherine is miserable – but not on account of murder or seduction or adultery; ironically, all this display of high-powered diction is occasioned by a mere failure of John Thorpe to turn up promptly to dance with her! A criticism of Gothic orotundity is of course implicit.[8]

Sometimes negative statement is most effective in giving emphasis to the irony of a passage. In the introduction of Sir Walter Elliot's character, irony is presented in the form of double negation. The baronet is ironically perceived by the author as "a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage." (Persuasion, chapter I, page 35). The exaggeration implied by "never" and "but" reveals Jane Austen's intention to flay the conceit of Sir Walter.[9]

Or when Willoughby writes to Marianne, he states:

> I shall never reflect on my former acquaintance with your family in Devonshire without the most grateful pleasure, and flatter myself it will not be broken by any mistake or misapprehension of my actions.
>
> (Sense and Sensibility, chapter XXIX, page 195)

Willoughby realizes the cruelty underlying this passage; full of confusion, he admits as much to Elinor at the end of the book. The galaxy of negatives is employed here to give emphasis to the irony of the passage, which is a piece of deliberately nasty understatement.

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[8] Ronald Paulson, Satire and the Novel in the Eighteenth Century (New Heaven, 1967), p. 201.

[9] Mudrick, op. cit., p. 117.

As in drama, irony in a novel may proceed from the sense of contradiction felt by a reader who sees a character acting in ignorance of his condition. Thus it is ironic that Mrs. Bennet is often completely unaware that her husband is making fun of her; that John Dashwood is quite unaware that his first instinct of generosity is being whittled down bit by bit by his wife's persuasive speech, until virtually nothing is left; that Mrs. Ferrars and her daughter are gracious to Lucy Steels "whom, of all others, had they known as much as she did, they would have been most anxious to mortify." (Sense and Sensibility, chapter XXXIV, page 239).

One striking example of such dramatic irony is Emma's choice of Frank Churchill as confidant for her fancies about Jane and Mr. Dixon. Unaware that she is talking to the actual person who bought the pianoforte, she tells Frank of her suspicion that Mr. Dixon is the one who, out of his love for Jane, has given it to that young lady. Ironically, in speech after speech, Frank loads the party at large to suppose that he is politely admiring Colonel Campbell's gift; convinces Emma that he is talking about Dixon; and, all the while, is addressing Jane Fairfax on his own behalf; for example, he says:

> "I heard a good deal of Colonel Campbell's taste at Weymouth; and the softness of the upper notes. I am sure is exactly what he and all that party would particularly prize. I dare say, Miss Fairfax, that he either gave his friend very minute directions, or wrote to Broadway himself. Do not you think so?"
>
> (Emma, chapter XXVIII, page 195)

And:

> "What felicity it is to hear a tune again which *has* made one happy! – If I mistake not that was danced at Weymouth."
>
> (*Emma*, chapter XXVIII, page 196)

Again:

> "He knew Miss Fairfax could have no music here. I honour that part of the attention particularly; it shews it to have been so thoroughly from the heart. Nothing hastily done; nothing incomplete. True affection only could have prompted it."
>
> (*Emma*, chapter XXVIII, page 196)

Emma is so thoroughly deceived by his speech and gestures that ironically she whispers to him: "Miss Fairfax will understand you". Again Frank's reply is a *double entendre*: "I hope she does...I am not in the least ashamed of my meaning" (*Emma*, chapter XXXVI, page 243).

Or take for example the dialogue in which Sir William Lucas attempts to interest Darcy in dancing:

> ...Elizabeth at that instant moving towards them, he was struck with the notion of doing a very gallant thing, and called out to her.
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> "My dear Miss Eliza, why are you not dancing? – Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner. – You cannot refuse to dance. I am sure, when so much beauty is before you."...
>
> "Indeed, Sir, I have not the least intention of dancing. – I entreat you not to suppose that I moved this way in order to beg for a partner."
>
> Mr. Darcy with grave propriety requested to be allowed the honour of her hand; but in vain. Elizabeth was determined; nor did Sir William at all shake her purpose by his attempt at persuasion.

"You excel so much in the dance, Miss Eliza, that it is cruel to deny me the happiness of seeing you; and though this gentleman dislikes the amusement in general, he can have no objection, I am sure, to oblige us for one half hour."

"Mr. Darcy is all politeness," said Elizabeth, smiling.

"He is indeed - but considering the inducement, my dear Miss Elizabeth, we cannot wonder at his complaisance; for who would object to such a partner?

Elizabeth looked archly, and turned away.

(Pride and Prejudice, chapter VI, page 18-19)

Here irony lies in Sir William's ignorance. "Struck with the notion of doing a very gallant thing," he is unaware of what in fact he is doing and of what Elizabeth's remark may mean to herself and to Darcy. When Elizabeth remarks that "Mr. Darcy is all politeness", the statement implies a variety of meaning. Literally, it is a complement; Mr. Darcy is polite in the sense that he shows the courtesy appropriate to a gentleman. However, his earlier bahavior, his comment about Elizabeth - "She is tolerable but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (Pride and Prejudice, chapter III, page 7) - has a probable ironic twist. Her "archness" and her "smile" adds also an ironic value to the statement. But Sir William is ignorant of the double entendre and ironically thinks he is doing a favour to both Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth.[10]

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[10]Norman Page, Speech in the English Novel (London, 1973), p. 111.

Another example of such irony can be found in *Emma*. Emma, thinking only of her plans and Harriet's advantage, is slow to discover that her own behavior to Mr. Elton "is so complaisant and obliging" (*Emma*, chapter XVI, page 118), and that her own words and actions give him encouragement. For example, when she (actually seeking only to spare Harriet's blushes) tells Mr. Elton that she herself has copied out his charade, he becomes confident enough of her attachment to him to reply: "I have no hesitation in saying – at least if my friend [indeed, he himself is the writer of the charade] feels at all as *I* do – I have not the smallest doubt that, could he see his little effusion honoured as *I* see it, (looking at the book again, and replacing it on the table,) he would consider it as the proudest moment of his life." (*Emma*, chapter IX, page 78).

Given such encouragements, Mr. Elton naturally misinterprets certain other incidents. Thus when Emma steps back behind Harriet (just to give him a chance to be alone with her young friend), he mistakes this for coyness on Emma's part; when she praises the younger girl's beauty, he takes it as a gesture of becoming modesty; and when she gains entry into the vicarage only to take refuse in the bosom of his housekeeper (leaving him to make conversation with Harriet) he assumes this to be a pretty mixture of ardour and timidity.

It is only after the revelation of his love that Emma realizes the ambiguity of her exaggerated courtesies.

In the same work, dramatic irony occurs when the opinions of the characters contradict the facts which they are bound to learn. Irony of this sort can be found all the way through the novel, particularly

in Emma's own estimates of the people in her little world. Take for example her recommendation of Harriet as a suitable wife for Mr. Elton, a young clergyman, who proves to be attached to Emma herself. The reader knows that the match she plans for Harriet will come to nothing because the charming Miss Woodhouse is herself more eligible. Irony echoes all the way through the story of Harriet and Mr. Elton with little phrases like "Emma could not feel a doubt" (*Emma*, chapter VI, page 46), or "matters of which she was quite convinced" (*Emma*, chapter VI, page 46), or "plans and proceedings were more and more justified, and endeared to her by the general appearances of the next few days" (*Emma*, chapter IX, page 69), or "the state of his mind is as clear and decided, as my wishes on the subject have been ever since I knew you" (*Emma*, chapter X, page 79). The more she is confirmed in prosecuting her own plan, the more humiliated she will be when the truth is discovered. Ironically, her humiliating discovery of the real Mr. Elton comes right after her rejection of John Knightley's warning and her "amusing herself in the consideration of the blunders which often arise from a partial knowledge of circumstance, of the mistakes which people of high pretensions to judgment are forever facing into..." (*Emma*, chapter XIII, page 100).

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Such dramatic irony also occurs in *Pride and Prejudice* when Elizabeth Bennet, who has been assured by Charlotte Lucas that she "will find him (Mr. Darcy) very agreeable", exclaims: "Heaven forbid! – *That* would be the greatest misfortune of all! – To find a man agreeable whom one is determined to hate! Do not wish me such evil" (*Pride and Prejudice*, chapter XVIII, page 75), and later finds herself exactly in the condition

> "I do not mean to say that a woman may not be settled too near her family. The far and the near must be relative, and depend on many varying circumstances. Where there is fortune to make the expenses of travelling unimportant, distance becomes no evil."
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XXXII, page 133-4)

Elizabeth misinterprets Darcy's speech; actually, he is thinking of her and Pemberley, not of Jane and Netherfield as she supposes. Her reply, which is intended to defend Jane, but which he misinterprets in his turn, constitutes direct encouragement.

Another example occurs at the Netherfield ball where Mr. Darcy surprises Elizabeth into dancing with him. Reading his silence as the effect of disagreeable pride and thinking that "it would be the greater punishment to her partner to oblige him to talk" (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XXXVIII, page 68), she taunts him:

> "It is *your* turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy. - *I* talked about the dance, and *you* ought to make some kind of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples."
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XXXVIII, page 68)

But Darcy yields to her with perfect politeness:

> He smiled, and assured her that whatever she wished him to say should be said.
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter XXXVIII, page 68)

Here Elizabeth parodies decorum and conventional propriety to point

up Mr. Darcy's pride and thus put him in his place. Her speech carefully sets up the barrier of impersonal propriety. Yet what he understands is entirely different from what she intends. Her speech is to him so encouraging that his response is charged with personal appeal that reaches below her pretense of decorum to get at their private emotions.[11] However, Elizabeth, still misunderstanding his attitude, goes on:

> "...One must speak a little, you know. It would look odd to be entirely silent for half an hour together, and yet for the advantage of *some*, conversation ought to be so arranged as that they may have the trouble of saying as little as possible."
>
> (*Pride and Prejudice*, chapter XXXVIII, page 69)

Dramatic irony also occurs when characters in a story are "blind" to the facts known to the reader. This is evident in the novel *Pride and Prejudice*, particularly in Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy. Elizabeth's prejudice blinds her to Darcy's real character, and to his ardent love for her. His "politeness", his "repeated questions", his "gallantry", his "look of doubt", indicate his increasing warmth of feeling, but Elizabeth does not see them in that way; she sees them as indications of his pride and of his looking down upon her and her family. His concern thus seems to her scornful. His questions are interpreted as impolite. Even his love is looked upon as condescending. Therefore her response is aimed

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[11] Halperin, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

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to provoke him. However, her pert remarks and impertinent questions backfire; instead of provoking him, they amuse and encourage him. What is more, they increase his admiration for her. Her accusations bring out his most gallant replies, and her "mixture of sweetness and archness" leaves him more "bewitched" than ever. The fun in Pride and Prejudice largely depends on this, but it is fun that has a serious core to it and lies at the heart of the whole concept of a collision between pride and prejudice.

Dramatic irony is also provided by situations of mistaken identity. The most striking one probably arises out of the episode of "poor Richard" in Persuasion. The first mention of Captain Wentworth's name recalls "thick-headed, unfeeling, unprofitable Dick Musgrove" (Persuasion, chapter III, page 48.) to his family's recollection, for he had been six months in Captain Wentworth's frigate, the Laconia. The irony lies in the fact that the revived thought of Dick "grieves his mother more than she had known" (Persuasion, chapter, III, page 52.), whereas on first hearing of his death she had "scarcely at all regretted" (Persuasion, chapter III, page 50.). No less ironical is the cosiness of a grief that can be soothed by the harp, and talk, and cheerful company. The irony reaches its height with Mrs. Musgrove's remark:

> "Ah Miss Anne, if it had pleased Heaven to spare my poor son, I dare say he would have been just such another by this time ."
>
> (Persuasion, chapter VIII, page 89)

Norman Page, an expert on Jane Austen, points out that there are two modes of dramatic irony in Emma, namely irony of omission and irony of commission.[12] Irony of omission occurs when the omniscient narrator fails to tell the reader straight-forwardly of the character's errors of judgment, whereas irony of commission occurs when the narrator, despite her omniscient knowledge, slants the narrative through the mental life of the character whose validity of judgment is being questioned.[13] These two kinds of irony are present simultaneously in some sections of the novel.

Irony of omission occurs when the narrative voice does not condemn Emma forthrightly but merely presents her actions dramatically.[14] The reader knows Emma to be in error throughout most of the novel; there can be no doubt as to her folly, for she is clearly wrong in the Robert Martin affair; she is at fault in her dealings with Mr. Elton; she is obtuse in her relationship with Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill; she is rude to Miss Bates; she consistently fails to follow the advice of Mr. Knightley. In short, she is snobbish and nosy. Moreover, the conversation between Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston discussing Emma in an early chapter of the novel is designed to warn the reader not to believe Emma blindly. The reader has all this information about Emma and does not need to be told by the omniscient narrator that, despite

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[12] Page, op. cit., p. 132.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., p. 133.

her intelligence, she is behaving foolishly. The fact that the narrative voice does not condemn her forthrightly is the source of one level of dramatic irony — an irony of omission.

In speaking of irony of commission,[15] Page means that since the omniscient narrator as well as the reader knows very well that Emma has been acting foolishly, and since Emma's knowledge of her own actions and their meanings is — unlike the omniscient narrator's and the reader's — incomplete, the omniscient narrator's identification of her own view with Emma's by slanting the narrative and presenting it through the heroine's mental life is clearly an ironical pretence. Irony of this sort is found in many novels of Jane Austen, for example; in Pride and Prejudice, the omniscient narrator pretends to go along with the view of the anxious mothers, fathers and daughters at the ball in describing Mr. Darcy's first appearance there:

> Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter III, page 6)

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[15] Ibid., p. 135.

Darcy stands high in their esteem when his money and figure are seen, but he falls (and Mr. Bingley rises!) when it becomes evident that he is not offering himself as a marriage prospect, for he "danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party" (Pride and Prejudice, chapter III, page 6). It is decided then that:

> He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.
>
> (Pride and Prejudice, chapter III, page 7)

It is evident that here the omniscient narrator in replaced by the ironic narrator who expresses the view of all the anxious mothers, fathers, and daughters.

In conclusion, a study of Jane Austen's narrative demonstrates clearly that she favors an ironic tone; she often uses irony to suggest much more than she actually says. Dramatic irony abounds throughout the plots of her best works, being especially evident in Pride and Prejudice and Emma; whereas, verbal irony is a frequently recurring feature of many of her novels.

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> pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.