

Reflect on the Ironic Narrative in Emma.

A.C. Bradley made a very perceptive remark on the relationship between Jane Austen's irony and her narrative point of view. In all her novels, though in varying degrees, Austen regards the characters good and bad alike with ironical amusement because they never see the situation as it really is and as she sees it. We constantly share her point of view, and are aware of Emma's difference between the fact and its appearance to the actors.

Really irony is one of the most powerful instrument with which Austen has explored the dualism of appearance, reality, self-deception and the subsequent self-realization of the central protagonist in 'Emma'.

Jane Austen's employment of the irony can be just first perceived in the very conception of the character of the central figure in ~~this~~ this novel. Emma W. is young, rich, intelligent, charming, perceptive and gay but she is also in vain of her own perception, snobbish, domineering, rash & selfish. She is kind to her father, charitable to the poor, bound of Mr. Knightley and attached to poor Miss Taylor. But her misapprehensions of Harriet & of Mr. Elton, Jane Fairfax, Francis Churchill, Mr. Knightley and of herself leads her to develop and encourage a number of situations which clearly display the profound contradiction that for the essence of irony.

Emma is the victim of her own illusions. She launches out on the mission of match-making and makes a mess of the whole situation and yet does not readily realise the folly of her foolish enterprise. The use of ironical perception can be seen first in the case of Emma's handling of match-making enterprise in connection with Harriet

Her enterprise to get Harriet Smith married to Mr. Elton.

Smith and Mr. Elton. Harriet Smith is her prologue and she wants her to be married to Mr. Elton, the ^{priest of a parish} vicar of Highbury. She tells about her plan to Mr. Knightley and is duly warned against the danger of such ~~enterprise~~ ^{enterprise}. Mr. Knightley tries to make her see the reason but in vain. [Emma invites him to dinner, and helps him to the best of fish and chicken but leaves him to choose his own wife, depend upon it, and a man of six or seven and twenty can take care of himself.] ^{the episode - when she is out to visit Stepan and with it she meets Mr. Elton.}

Like Cook's fish dinner to Elton, she leaves her decision in his hands.

Makes Harriet reject marriage proposals Robert Martin & thrusts her upon Mr. Elton & viz photo episode

In the supreme self confidence of her own wisdom she makes Harriet Smith reject the offer of marriage by Robert Martin - Thus she starts explaining new ways and means by which she can arouse Elton's interest in Harriet Smith. She first draws a picture of Harriet and shows it to Mr. Elton. He praises the sketch extravagantly and even offers to take it to London to be framed. Both the praise and offer strike Emma as being evidence of his warming affection for Harriet. The fact, however, is that Mr. Elton has begun to like Emma herself and

sketch is virtually an expression of his latest love for the leading lady of the novel, once again she gets a specific warning from Mr. Knightley against such an enterprise. He tells her that if she is going to try matchmaking for Harriet, she had better not considered Mr. Elton.

"Depend upon it, Elton will not do".

Elton is a very good sort of man and a very respectable vicar of Highbury, but not at all likely to make an imprudent match. He knows the value of a good income as well as anybody. Elton may ~~talk~~ ^{talk} ~~talk~~ ^{talk} sentimentally, but he'll act rationally.

Yet Emma, despite her respect for Mr. Knightley's judgement refuses to believe in it now. She still could withdraw and persuade Harriet that Mr. Elton is not the man for her, instead she persuades herself that Mr. Knightley did not make due allowance for the influence of a story, passion at war with all interested motives.

Thus Mr. Knightley's advice by ~~being~~ ^{being} her deeply has the reverse of effect intended.

Emma proceeds all the more steadfastly in her scheme. She goes on becoming increasingly certain that Mr. Elton's yielding to her plan. Time and again she tries to arrange a meeting between Mr. Elton and Harriet and she fails in bringing out any proposal for marriage from her forever to the latter. One day she breaks shoe lace

and continues to go to Mr. Elton's housekeeper for assistance, thus leaving the couple alone for ten minutes but again, nothing happens. The ironical dig of the novelist at Emma's self-delusion is to be noticed in her comment:

"Though everything had not been accomplished by her ^{clever, skilful device} ~~take~~, she ^{could not} ~~would not~~ but flatter herself that it had been the occasion of much present enjoyment to both, and must be leading them forward to the great event".

Realisation of her follies begins

The first realization of her folly dawns as Emma at the fateful party of the Westons. While returning from the party he expresses his love for Emma. "Everything that I have said or done, for many weeks past, has been with the role of marking my adoration for yourself." ^{Harriet marries Robert Martin} The second shocked to the core, when

2nd situation

The use of irony as an essential tool of Austen's narrative act is again evident in the triangular situation involving Emma, Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill. Emma dislikes Fairfax and the primary psychological reason for ^{is that} Jane Fairfax presents a challenge to Emma, ^{of which Harriet has no success} of which Harriet is favoured because she doesn't come into the same class. She has a liking for Frank Churchill because of his apparent dislike for Jane Fairfax, Frank Churchill often keeps on ~~supping~~ bickering about Jane Fairfax's ^{to bewail, grieve over} *deplorable want of complexion as well as her repulsive reserve

She likes Frank because he criticises her

1 that Emma is completely wrong about him makes for one of the major ironies in the book.

2 that Emma is completely wrong about him makes for one of the major ironies in the book.

She starts to think that Churchill must love her. She reaches herself total in love.

The entire pattern of his behaviour while at Highbury is a camouflage to which Emma who provides on her own perception and judgement is completely taken in. At this juncture, she is again warned by Mr Knightley but she dismisses his protest.

The irony of the triangular situation is remarkable. Emma deep drawn in her heart has begun to have some weakness for Frank Churchill. She continues to take pleasure in Frank's company and enters spiritedly into the plan for a dance at the ^{or} Colontun. When Frank Churchill is recalled to his Yorkshire house before the dance that can take place, she reflects on the memories of his visit to Highbury: "to complete every other ^{to advise, to make acceptable to} recommendation, he had almost told her that he loves her ... and this persuasion made her think that she must be a little in love with him, inspite of every previous determination against it."

She realises his follies & tries to make make again.

But Emma, however, vain and blind is neither stupid nor inanalytical. She becomes conscious of his romantic folly and now shifts her attention to a plan of a possible marriage between Frank Churchill and Harriet Smith. The ironical expose of Emma is made when she becomes certain of being totally blind. Her first shock comes at the news of the betrothal of Frank Churchill to Jane Fairfax.

Shock realisation