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IRONY AND SARCASM IN ABDULLA QODIRIY'S MEHROBDAN CHAYON AND JANE AUSTEN'S PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

IKROMOVA SHAKHNOZA SOBIR KIZI
ALISHER NAVOI TASHKENT STATE
UNIVERSITY OF UZBEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
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Abstract: This article examines the forms and functions of irony and sarcasm in Abdulla Qodiriy's Mehrobdan chayon and Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice through comparative literary stylistics and contextual pragmatics. The analysis distinguishes indirect ironic evaluation from more explicitly disparaging sarcastic utterances and investigates their relationship to narrative voice, social hierarchy, moral judgement and character construction. Close readings of Solih maxdum's characterization, Safar bo'zchi's encounters with clerical authority, Austen's opening proposition, Mr Bennet's remarks and Elizabeth Bennet's exchanges demonstrate that irony is not reducible to linguistic reversal. In both novels, evaluative meaning emerges through discrepancies between expressed approval, narrated conduct and institutional expectations. Qodiriy more frequently foregrounds the contradiction between religious prestige and ethically compromised practice, whereas Austen exposes the conventions governing marriage, inheritance and genteel reputation. The comparison identifies shared pragmatic mechanisms while preserving the novels' distinct historical and cultural settings. The study is qualitative and does not claim statistically representative frequency results.

Keywords: irony; sarcasm; comparative literary stylistics; pragmatic inference; narrative voice; social satire; Abdulla Qodiriy; Jane Austen.

INTRODUCTION

Irony and sarcasm are significant forms of evaluative discourse because they allow literary texts to question the credibility of established values without always supplying an explicit authorial verdict. Yet their interpretive mechanisms should not be conflated. An ironic statement creates a perceptible distance between its surface formulation and the position the context invites readers to reconstruct; sarcasm ordinarily intensifies a negative or derisive evaluation of an identifiable target. Irony may be distributed across narration, plot and dialogue, whereas sarcasm most often has a recognizable interpersonal direction. Contemporary pragmatic research has challenged the assumption that irony necessarily means the simple opposite of what is said and has emphasized contextual inference, social action and differences between scholarly and everyday definitions. These distinctions are particularly useful in comparative literature, where the same surface feature may have different moral and rhetorical consequences under different cultural conditions.

The comparative objects are Qodiriy's Mehrobdan chayon, first published in 1929 and set within the political and clerical environment of the Kokand Khanate, and Austen's Pride and Prejudice, published in 1813 and concerned with marriage, rank, property and judgement in English provincial society. Their juxtaposition does not imply a direct historical influence or identical institutional structures. The analytical premise is narrower: both novels construct social criticism by making public norms and actual conduct answer to one another. In Qodiriy, clerical authority, courtly privilege and the commercialization of personal relationships become subjects of exposure; in Austen, claims to gentility, reasonableness and marital propriety are repeatedly tested against vanity, economic

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dependency and misrecognition. The contrast between ethical vocabulary and social practice supplies a productive field for examining irony as a mode of narrative knowledge.

The purpose of the article is to establish how ironic and sarcastic meanings are produced, who or what they target, and which narrative functions they perform in the two works. Four questions guide the inquiry: how is an ironic discrepancy signalled; when does ironic criticism become pointed interpersonal sarcasm; how do narrator and character voices distribute evaluation; and how do the novels' distinct social histories condition the effect of ostensibly similar devices? The scholarly contribution is a context-sensitive comparison rather than a catalogue of amusing expressions. It also avoids an interpretive error common in broad stylistic surveys: laughter, hyperbole, direct insult and moral condemnation are not automatically evidence of irony. Each proposed instance must be justified by a demonstrable conflict between verbal form, situation and evaluative intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Recent approaches to irony provide a framework for interpreting these texts without reducing literary meaning to an antonymic substitution. Dynel distinguishes technical and everyday uses of the terms irony and sarcasm, showing that their boundaries are neither stable nor universally agreed upon . Her discussion of mock politeness further demonstrates that apparently civil language can carry an impolite or critical force depending on the relationship between speakers and the communicative situation. Witek treats irony as a socially recognizable speech action involving conventions of pretence and echo, while Skalicky emphasizes the cognitive contribution of context to the recognition and processing of verbal irony . These accounts converge in treating interpretation as a contextual act, although they differ in their explanatory emphases. Accordingly, the present study uses irony as an interpretive category and reserves sarcasm for conspicuously cutting, target-directed evaluations; the two categories are allowed to overlap rather than being treated as mutually exclusive.

Scholarship on Austen has established the centrality of ironic narration and dialogic inference. Sun's speech-act reading relates ironic expression in Pride and Prejudice to characterization and the management of interpersonal relations. Żochowska's examination of Polish translations demonstrates how much the effect of Austen's irony depends upon the preservation of implication, cultural context and narrative nuance. A recent study by Ikromova links irony in Elizabeth Bennet's discourse to the negotiation of gendered authority and social decorum. Research on Qodiriy is differently distributed. Madirimov investigates aesthetic ideals and artistic synthesis in Mehrobdan chayon; G'ulomov explains the contribution of retrospective plotting to its narrative construction and Toshmatova addresses figurative language in the novel's English translation. These studies clarify the relevant poetics and cultural contexts, but they do not by themselves establish a systematic cross-novel distinction between ironic evaluation and sarcastic aggression. The present comparison addresses that analytical space without claiming that either novelist has been neglected by scholarship.

The material consists of selected passages from the Uzbek text of Mehrobdan chayon and the original English text of Pride and Prejudice. The former is examined in Uzbek to avoid treating a translator's wording as Qodiriy's own pragmatic choice; short English paraphrases are supplied solely for explanation. The 2019 editions provide identifiable bibliographic bases chapter indications, where available, are used rather than unstable page references across editions. A purposive, qualitative sampling strategy privileges episodes in which the tension between expressed assessment and depicted reality is textually demonstrable. Each passage is assessed along five dimensions: speaker or narrative source; literal formulation; contextual contradiction; target of evaluation; and probable narrative effect. Statements are classified as narrative irony, verbal irony, ironic mock praise or sarcasm only where these dimensions support that classification. This is interpretive close reading, not a coded corpus or a quantitative comparison; no frequency counts, inter-rater agreement scores or causal claims are

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offered. Findings should therefore be understood as defensible readings of representative scenes rather than exhaustive measurements of the two novels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first finding concerns the distinctive work performed by the narrator. In the opening chapter of Pride and Prejudice, the declaration that a wealthy unmarried man must need a wife is presented as a self-evident social truth. The subsequent movement of the sentence and paragraph reverses its apparent orientation: it is the surrounding families who immediately regard the newcomer as matrimonial property. Its irony lies not in a purely false proposition about every unmarried man but in the exposure of a communal presumption disguised as universal knowledge. The narrator temporarily adopts the authoritative syntax of a maxim while allowing the social interests behind that maxim to become visible. The effect is double: the marriage market is introduced as both the narrative's central institution and an object of skepticism. The reader is consequently positioned to question characters who speak with excessive confidence about propriety, eligibility and status.

Qodiriy achieves a comparable gap between verbal evaluation and narrated conduct through a markedly different idiom. In the chapter devoted to Solih maxdum's personal traits, the narrator identifies his shortcomings by cautious and almost apologetic phrases, referring to conduct resembling miserliness and insisting that the task is not to defame or exaggerate the character. The restraint is itself significant. It is followed by detailed descriptions of the teacher's patched clothing, excessive economies and household practices, making the tentative diagnosis appear increasingly inadequate. The discrepancy produces ironic understatement: the narrator's ceremonious fairness offers readers the evidence needed to reach a firmer judgment. Elsewhere, Solih maxdum's purported generosity is measured against the extraordinarily small amount of meat he customarily buys for the family. The humor operates through the clash of an approving evaluative label with an unflattering practical detail, not through an explicit denunciation. Importantly, Qodiriy also represents the schoolmaster as an effective teacher; the irony criticizes compromised habits without denying the character's more constructive social role.

The second finding is that sarcasm becomes particularly visible when the evaluative incongruity is voiced to, or deliberately about, a person whose conduct is being challenged. In Qodiriy's scene involving Safar bo'zchi and Mulla Abdurahmon, Safar ostentatiously praises the cleric's learning and professional suitability while making the latter's dependence upon Anvar's patronage painfully apparent. The deferential form and the humiliating implication do not coincide. Later, Safar recalls the cleric's own teaching about how quickly a Muslim should abandon resentment, thereby exposing the inconsistency between a professed moral maxim and Abdurahmon's continuing anger This passage is stronger evidence of situationally grounded sarcastic irony than an isolated insult would be: the criticism succeeds because the rebuke is made in the target's own ethical vocabulary. The character's speech also redistributes conversational authority. A socially less prestigious speaker tests a cleric against principles the cleric claims to represent, and a hierarchy of rank briefly yields to a hierarchy of moral consistency.

Austen similarly deploys pointed speech, but the allocation of its authority is deliberately unstable. Mr Bennet's sarcastic responses to his wife and daughters expose an obsession with advantageous marriage, yet their cleverness does not guarantee his moral superiority. For example, after Jane's disappointment, he congratulates his daughter on being disappointed in love and converts personal pain into a matter of social amusement. The surface form of congratulation conflicts with the distressing event and therefore functions as negative or unsettling evaluation. The joke is directed at the conventions of fashionable romantic experience, but it also reveals the speaker's emotional withdrawal. Readers can recognize the social target without accepting his response as ethically

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adequate. This ambivalence distinguishes narrative irony from merely reproducing the character's sarcasm as the novel's final judgment.

Elizabeth Bennet provides a more dialogically responsive instance. During a dance conversation with Darcy she facetiously proposes that they share an unsociable and taciturn disposition, despite her evident verbal liveliness. Her statement is intelligible as ironic self-description, simultaneously testing Darcy's reserve and inviting a reply. It is not simply hostility: its playful structure leaves space for reciprocity and for subsequent revision of judgment. By contrast, Elizabeth's firm refusals of Mr Collins's proposal are not sarcastic merely because they frustrate male presumption. The principal satire of that scene arises from the gap between Collins's declared rationality and his refusal to believe that a woman's repeated rejection means rejection. The scene juxtaposes the social rhetoric of propriety with the failure to recognize female agency. It is therefore necessary to distinguish Elizabeth's largely direct act of refusal from the situational irony generated by Collins's interpretation of it. Such discrimination prevents an indiscriminate attribution of sarcasm to every critical female utterance and makes the gendered implications of Austen's method clearer .

Table 1. Contextual functions of irony and sarcasm in the two novels

Analytical focus	***Mehrobdan chayon***	***Pride and Prejudice***
Narrative irony	Apparently restrained appraisal of Solih maxdum is contradicted by detailed household conduct.	The universal-sounding opening maxim reveals the interests of marriage-seeking families.
Mock praise	Respectful labels and exaggerated praise expose discrepancies between clerical prestige and behavior.	Mr Bennet's praise or congratulation can reveal conventional absurdity and his own detachment.
Targeted sarcasm	Safar bo'zchi invokes a cleric's professed morality to challenge resentment and pretension.	Cutting remarks in family dialogue make the hearer or an absent target an object of ridicule.
Social function	Critique of hypocrisy, institutional privilege and exploitation under a khanate setting.	Critique of marriage economics, inherited rank, gender expectations and superficial judgment.

The third finding relates to the scale and direction of literary evaluation. Qodiriy's title itself juxtaposes the sacred connotations of the mehrob (prayer niche) with the destructive image of the scorpion, and the later chapter entitled "Chayonning namoyishi" ("The Scorpion's Appearance") places intrigue in a religiously marked setting. This symbolic opposition is better described as sustained satirical or structural irony than as sarcasm, since no single utterance necessarily addresses an immediate interlocutor. Its target is not religious belief as such but the distance between an institution's ethical claims and the acts of particular representatives. The author's treatment of Solih maxdum is comparatively humorous and ambivalent, whereas the alliance of clerical manipulation and courtly coercion is presented with much graver consequences. This tonal gradation prevents a single category of "mockery" from erasing important distinctions within the novel's social criticism. It also accords with scholarship that locates the meaning of Qodiriy's representation in the relationship between individual portrayal, narrative organization and larger artistic evaluation.

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In Austen, the larger satirical system is produced less by one institution monopolizing moral authority than by the reciprocal scrutiny of social judgments. Property transmission through entail limits the Bennet daughters' choices, while the social prestige associated with Lady Catherine and Mr Collins encourages deference to inherited position. Their claims are repeatedly made vulnerable by a narrative architecture in which confidence can coexist with ignorance. Yet Austen's structure subjects intelligent characters to correction as well. Elizabeth's initial certainty regarding Darcy and Wickham does not survive new evidence; her growing recognition of mistaken judgment changes the interpretive value of her earlier wit. Irony therefore contributes not only to the exposure of others but also to the education of the person who has judged. Where Qodiriy foregrounds injustice sustained by concentrated political and religious power, Austen places sustained emphasis on the revision of personal evaluation within an unequal but differently organized social field. The distinction is one of emphasis, not an absolute opposition between institutional critique and psychological development.

Across the cases, a common pragmatic mechanism can be identified: expression and context jointly produce a second-order assessment that readers infer rather than merely decode. A benevolent formulation may reveal a defect, a congratulation may register misfortune, or a profession of virtue may be turned against a speaker who violates it. The targets and consequences nevertheless vary. A warning is required when moving between the Uzbek and English texts: the English explanations of Qodiriy's episodes are analytical paraphrases, not independent textual translations established through a controlled translation comparison. Sarcasm is especially vulnerable to distortion when a translator alters forms of address, degrees of deference or culture-specific patterns of mock praise. Żochowska's findings concerning Austen's translations and Toshmatova's observations concerning figurative language in Qodiriy point to the importance of retaining pragmatic effects, not simply lexical content. The present study cannot establish how a particular English translation of Mehrobdan chayon reproduces these effects; that would require separately identified parallel editions and explicit translation criteria.

CONCLUSION

A contextual comparison of Mehrobdan chayon and Pride and Prejudice demonstrates that irony and sarcasm operate at intersecting but distinguishable levels of literary communication. Narrative irony depends on discrepancies between verbal evaluation, narrated behavior and the reader's contextual knowledge; sarcasm is most readily identified when those discrepancies become pointed acts of ridicule or rebuke directed at a target. Qodiriy mobilizes cautious narration, mock honorifics, moral counter-quotation and symbolically charged settings to expose a contradiction between public virtue and the practices of privileged figures. Austen combines an ironically authoritative narrator with ambivalent domestic wit and dialogic encounters that expose marriage conventions, pretensions of rank and the unreliability of first impressions. Neither novel confines irony to comic ornament: it is integral to the distribution of knowledge and responsibility among characters and readers.

The comparison also reveals that the ethical force of ironic discourse cannot be inferred from its surface sharpness alone. The same technique may correct hypocrisy, ridicule vulnerability or initiate self-revision. Interpretive decisions therefore require attention to speaker, audience, institutional context and narrative development. The study's scope is restricted to selected, contextually documented passages; it does not establish comparative frequency or a comprehensive theory of cultural difference. Further research could use a systematically annotated bilingual corpus of the novels and their translations to examine whether indicators of irony, mock politeness and sarcasm remain pragmatically equivalent across linguistic versions. Such work would extend the present qualitative findings while keeping textual evidence distinct from interpretive inference.

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