


Irony in Mark Webb's 500 Days of Summer (2009)

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i4.1177>

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the use of irony in the film *500 Days of Summer* (2009), directed by Mark Webb. Unlike typical romance films, this movie presents a non-linear narrative and avoids the usual happy ending, making it a rich subject for irony analysis. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the study identifies and explains different types of irony found in the film, including dramatic, situational, verbal, etc. These ironic moments are key to understanding the development of the main character, Tom Hansen, whose expectations about love often clash with reality. Scenes such as "Expectations vs. Reality" and the unexpected meeting with Autumn illustrate how irony shapes the story and reflects Tom's emotional journey. The findings show that irony is a powerful narrative device that adds depth to the film, challenges traditional ideas about romance, and helps the audience connect more deeply with the character's experience. This study highlights how irony can be used in film to reveal personal growth and present a more realistic view of love.

Keywords: *Irony, Film analysis, 500 Days of Summer, Romance*

Article History:

Received: 29th June 2025

Accepted: 28th July 2025

Publish: 31st July 2025



INTRODUCTION

Irony has long served as a meaningful tool in storytelling, not just for style but also for helping audiences see deeper meanings and contradictions within a narrative. In both literature and film, irony allows for multiple interpretations, encouraging viewers or readers to go beyond what is seen or said on the surface. It often works by presenting outcomes that are unexpected or by reversing what the audience expects, which creates a stronger emotional and mental connection with the story (Milanowicz, 2019).

As one of literature's branch (Ramrao, 2016) stated that film can be analysed using similar methods as those applied to literary works. One important aspect shared by both films and literature is the use of literary devices, which enrich storytelling and convey deeper meanings. Irony, as one of these devices, plays a significant role in both forms of art. It can be studied in films to explore contrasts between what appears on the surface and underlying meanings, much like in literature.

Literature is a form of written communication, whether in the form of poetry, drama, or fiction. It conveys human experiences and uses storytelling techniques, as Sudarisman (2016) mentioned that literary works always reflect social and cultural phenomena, whether positive or negative. It is much like a mirror of real life (Afifha & Sumayah, 2025). Films, on the other hand, rely heavily on spoken communication, such as dialogue and sounds, to tell their stories. Even though both are unlike, both are on the same page, enhancing human imagination and understanding. Both work in making human civilization grow and develop more (Ramrao, 2016).

Films has been a common entertainment for many kinds of people. However, not all films are suitable for different kinds of people in this world. Therefore, films are made for various kinds of people, ranging from age, gender, interests, personal preferences, even

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cultural background in order to make films suitable and enjoyable for different kinds of people in the world. Filmmakers even made their films with certain themes, making it more relatable to us as a mere individual human.

Some people foresaw films as a form of communication. According to (Mikos, 2014), this happened in two ways, either the audience watched the film or they use it. Using a film as a sort of communication happened when the audience engage with the film itself. This engagement between film and the audience, bridged by visual storytelling, symbolism (semiotics), cultural reflection and critique in the film. The audience also can engage with the film differently by their own interpretation. These aspects made film as a form of communication to some people, by using it for conveying messages, emotions, and cultural values.

One of the film genres that carried many emotions is romance. Romance films are full of emotions, which is why they can be so touching and relatable. These films often follow the journey of two main characters as they grow closer to each other. The story usually centers on whether they will meet, fall in love, and build a strong, lasting relationship (Dowd et al., 2023). However, not all love stories have a happy ending. Sometimes, the relationship does not last or things do not turn out as expected. This twist, where love does not go as planned, is known as irony.

Irony is often explained as contrasting a "surface meaning" with a deeper, hidden meaning. It has the same concept as sarcasm or satire, which usually has a different meaning with its intended words. According to Macdowell's (2018) example, in verbal irony (sometimes called communicative irony), such as sarcasm or satire – the daily use of irony, the speaker says something but actually intends for it to be understood differently, often the opposite of the literal words. Dramatic irony works the same, in storytelling, it happens when there is a strong contrast between what a character's words or actions seem to mean on the surface and another event or reality within the story that the character is unaware of. Structural irony, similarly, challenges the apparent meaning or structure of an entire work, often inviting deeper questions about its true message. Since the three forms of irony depend on contrasts between surface meanings and deeper, implied meanings, understanding irony in films often requires thoughtful interpretation to uncover these layers of meaning.

On the other hand, (Petrie & Boggs, 2018) believed that there are more types of irony. They explained that irony in films goes beyond just dramatic irony, which occurs when the audience knows something the characters do not. They also highlighted situational irony, where events unfold in unexpected ways, surprising both characters and the audience. Another form is verbal irony, where a character says one thing but means the opposite, often to create humor or express sarcasm.

Other types of irony they discussed include cosmic irony, where fate or the universe seems to conspire against characters, showing how little control they have over their lives. Tragic irony, a subset of dramatic irony, is common in tragedies, where the audience sees that a character's actions will lead to a sad or unavoidable outcome. Structural irony involves stories designed to reveal deeper truths, often through unreliable narrators who misunderstand their own situations. Together, these forms of irony add depth and complexity to narratives, encouraging audiences to think critically about what they see.

In modern film studies, irony has become even more relevant as a way to comment on culture and to add layers of meaning through intertextual references. For example, films like *Clueless* (Heckerling, 1995) and *The Immigrant* (Gray, 2013) use irony to highlight the gap between what appears to be happening and the deeper messages hidden underneath (Francescato, 2021; Macdowell, 2018). As Hutcheon (1995) explains, irony in postmodern works often depends on shared knowledge and the audience's ability to read between the lines, making it both powerful and sometimes unclear.

One of the many films that has irony in its story is *500 Days of Summer* (Webb, 2009). *500 Days of Summer* is a film about a hopeless romantic man named Tom who works at a greeting card company. He loves the idea of true love and believes that one day he will meet "the one." One day, he meets Summer, a fun and free-spirited woman who becomes his co-

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worker. Tom falls in love with her, but Summer does not believe in true love or want a serious relationship.

The story jumps back and forth between the happy times when Tom and Summer were together and the sad moments after they broke up. At first, their relationship seems perfect to Tom – they laugh, share good times, and grow close. Although Summer is clear from the start that she does not want a boyfriend, and Tom ignores this because he is so deep in love with her. This film was filled with a lot of irony forms in its story. By using a non-linear storytelling, it depicted a perfect example of the up and downs of a relationship.

One of the examples of irony itself that has been previously researched by Edman (2024), "Tragic Optimism in *500 Days of Summer* and *Her*: A Comparative Analysis". This paper elaborates the concept of tragic optimism by Victor Frankl both in *500 Days of Summer* and *Her*. This concept can be considered as irony, as it rooted in existential psychology, suggests that individuals can maintain hope and derive meaning even during hardship. However, the researcher will only highlight the *500 Days of Summer* analysis in the paper. In *500 Days of Summer*, Tom's painful breakup becomes a journey of growth. He learns to find meaning in his heartbreak, realizing that love doesn't always match our hopes but can still help us grow. By questioning typical ideas of romance, the film shows a modern view on love, resilience, and the chance to find oneself through hard times. This message aligns with Frankl's idea that challenges and suffering can bring important personal insights and maturity.

Another research that analysed irony in film is "The Irony in *Enola Holmes* Film (2020): A Study of Figurative Language" by Damayanti et al. (2024). The paper analysed how irony is used in the *Enola Holmes* film in order to add depth, develop characters, and emphasize the themes in the film. The study identifies seventeen examples of irony, including verbal irony (where characters say the opposite of what they mean), situational irony (where events unfold unexpectedly), and dramatic irony (where the audience knows more than the characters). Most of these ironies come from the main character, Enola, who uses them to show her intelligence and independence, often challenging societal expectations for women. This use of irony makes the film's dialogue more interesting, giving audience subtle messages about empowerment and helping them understand deeper meanings in the story.

Although previous studies have looked at irony, there is still a gap in the research. The first study talked about irony but focused specifically on "tragic optimism" concept, which is just one example of irony rather than irony as a whole. This study did use the same film as this research, *500 Days of Summer*, but it didn't fully explore all the different kinds of irony in the film. As a result, there is still room to look deeper into how irony is used throughout the entire story. The second study explored irony in films, but it used a different film, *Enola Holmes*, as its main focus. This means it did not look at *500 Days of Summer* specifically. Since the two films tell very different types of stories, they use irony in different ways. By focusing on *500 Days of Summer*, this research can fill the gap by studying how irony shapes the story and characters in this particular film, giving us new insights into the role irony plays in Tom Hansen's journey.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to deepen our understanding of how irony shapes character development and storytelling in romantic films. By examining *500 Days of Summer*, this study offers insights into how irony influences the audience's perception of the main character, Tom Hansen, and how it challenges typical romantic narratives.

Additionally, this research addresses a gap in existing studies, as previous research has either focused on a specific type of irony (such as tragic optimism) or analysed irony in different films altogether. By exploring irony as a whole in *500 Days of Summer*, this study not only broadens the scope of irony analysis in film but also contributes to film studies by highlighting how irony can reveal character flaws, shape emotional experiences, and provide a more realistic perspective on modern relationships. This analysis can be valuable for scholars, film enthusiasts, and anyone interested in the complexities of storytelling in romance films.

What makes this film interesting to be researched and discussed is the contrast of the irony of the film itself with other films that contains irony in it, one of them are the usage of

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non-linear storytelling, which shows the difference between what Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) thinks love is and what it really turns out to be. By jumping back and forth in time, the audience sees happy moments in his relationship that later feel different after the breakup. One of the most famous uses of irony in *500 Days of Summer* is the "Expectations vs. Reality" sequence. By splitting the screen to contrast Tom's optimistic expectations with the painful reality of his reunion with Summer. *500 Days of Summer* is self-aware in its critique of traditional romantic storytelling. The film opens by stating that it is "not a love story," which the statement itself is irony.

The purpose of the research itself is to provide a comprehensive analysis of how irony is portrayed in *500 Days of Summer* and how it impacts the story's main character, Tom Hansen.

METHOD

This research will use qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative methods in film analysis focus on exploring the deeper meanings in films, such as cultural, emotional, and social aspects. Researchers use methods like identifying themes, studying stories, and analyzing how audiences react to understand how films share ideas, reflect societal values, and impact audiences (Susanto et al., 2024). In this research, however, irony will be the main focus.

This method is well-suited for the study because irony, both in literature and film, needs more than just a surface-level reading. It often shows a difference between what seems to be and what actually is, between what characters expect and what really happens, or between what is said and what is meant. These kinds of differences cannot be measured using numbers or statistics. Instead, they require close observation and thoughtful interpretation. By using a qualitative descriptive method, the researcher can carefully explain each moment of irony and how it helps develop the character, add meaning to the story, and affect how the audience understands the film.

Data Collection

The research begins by collecting and categorizing examples of irony from the film, focusing on situational irony, dramatic irony, and other forms of irony. Each example is analyzed to understand its purpose in the narrative and its influence on the audience's perception of Tom Hansen. The study also examines how these instances reflect the film's themes, such as the gap between expectation and reality and the subversion of traditional romantic ideals. By structuring the analysis around key moments in the film, this research will provide a clear and systematic interpretation of irony's role in shaping the story.

To collect data on the forms of irony in a film, the researcher carefully watches the film and identifies where irony is present. Watching the film multiple times is important to ensure no examples of irony are missed. This allows the researcher to take detailed notes and mark every instance of irony shown in the story.

The final step is organizing and presenting the data in a clear and structured way. This makes it easier for the researcher to study the information and analyze the different forms of irony used in the film. By following these steps, the researcher can better understand how irony contributes to the story and its overall meaning.

Data Analysis

The process of analyzing the collected data will begin by organizing it into different forms of irony. To do this, the researcher will identify and take screenshots of scenes that demonstrate instances of irony. These scenes will then be sorted into specific categories based on the type of irony they represent, such as verbal irony, situational irony, or other forms of irony. Grouping the scenes in this way will make it easier to study and understand how irony is portrayed in each instance. By breaking the data into clear categories, the analysis becomes more focused and systematic, ensuring that each example is properly examined.

Once the scenes are grouped, each form of irony will be explained using relevant theories that have been studied as part of the research. The theories will help clarify how and why irony is used in each scene, providing a deeper understanding of its purpose and effect. After completing the analysis, the researcher will summarize the findings in a conclusion. This

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final step will tie everything together, highlighting key patterns, insights, or themes that emerged from the study of irony. The conclusion will also reflect on the significance of the findings, offering a comprehensive overview of how irony contributes to the overall narrative or message.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion in this study will be divided into several different sections. Each section will focus on a specific form of irony, as irony plays an important role in the story of the film. There are three main types of irony that are used throughout the film. These are dramatic irony, situational irony, and verbal irony. Because these three forms appear most often and have a strong impact on the story, each one will be discussed in its own section.

Other forms of irony do appear in the film, but they are not used as much or do not play as big of a role in the storyline. Even so, they will still be discussed in its own section as well.

Dramatic Irony

Trisnawati & Rahmi (2016) mentioned that dramatic irony helps the reader see that what the character does or expects is wrong or does not match what is really happening in the story. This statement goes along well with Macdowell's concept of dramatic irony, which is what this film contains.

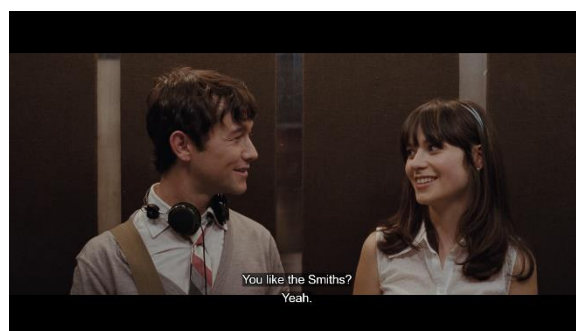


Figure 1. Tom and Summer's encounter in the elevator (0.10.32)

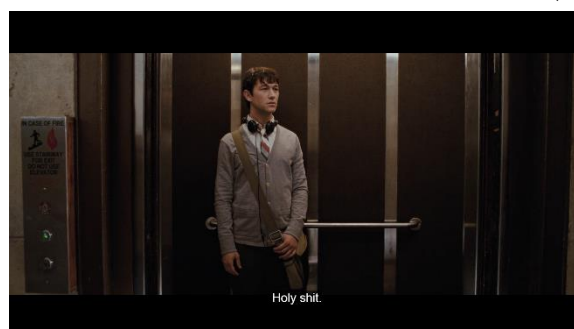


Figure 2. Tom realizing he fell in love with Summer (0.10.44)

The famous elevator scene displays an example of dramatic irony. Summer who likes the same band as Tom does, makes him feel a connection—where he said “Holy shit.”—between himself and Summer. However, as the story unfolds, the audience comes to realize



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that Summer does not feel the same emotional connection that Tom does. This contrast between what Tom believes and what the audience later discovers creates a powerful example of dramatic irony.

Figure 3. Tom and Summer at IKEA (0.27.10)

Figure 3 shows the growing gap between Tom and Summer, clear for the audience but hidden from Tom himself. Tom keeps joking and acting playfully, trying to hold on to the fun energy they once shared. Summer, however, stays quiet and distant, giving only short replies or none at all. Because Tom focuses on keeping things light, he misses these signals and does not realize how far apart they have drifted emotionally.

This misunderstanding creates dramatic irony. Audiences can plainly see that Summer's silence signals her withdrawal, while Tom continues to believe the relationship is fine. The tension we feel comes from knowing what Tom does not: their connection is fading even as he tries to keep it alive.



Figure 4. Tom visits Summer's party (1.07.58)

In Figure 4, the audience are presented with a split screen scene. As the line "He believed that his expectations would align with reality." is delivered by the narrator, the audiences already knew that it would not happen as what Tom expected since the split screen appeared with the left side being an 'expectations' side and the right side being a 'reality' side. The audience are more informed about what is going to happen to Tom, rather than what had Tom expected.

This scene is a clear example of dramatic irony because the audience understands the state of Tom and Summer's relationship better than Tom does. Throughout the film, there are signs of Summer's emotional distance – especially their breakup on Day 290 and other earlier scenes. Therefore, when Tom arrives at the party hoping to reconnect, audiences already sense that things likely will not go the way he imagines. What makes the scene so powerful is watching Tom's idealized vision fall apart – something the audience is prepared for, even if he isn't.

Situational Irony

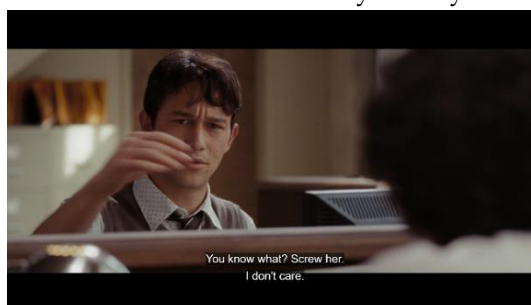


Figure 5. Tom and Summer walking together (0.05.07)



Figure 6. Summer breaking up with Tom (0.05.23)

As shown in the figures, Tom believes that his relationship with Summer is going well. He feels happy and hopeful about their future together. However, things do not turn out the way he expects—Summer actually wants to break up with him. This is an example of situational irony, as described by James MacDowell and Petrie & Boggs. Situational irony happens when there is a difference between what a character expects to happen and what really happens. In this case, Tom expects love and happiness while he feels that his relationship with Summer is doing fine, but instead, he faces heartbreak. Khamdamovna & Khalimovna (2020) mentioned that situational irony always occurs suddenly or without



warning, which is what Tom feels at this scene.

Figure 7. Tom Talking with His Friend, Saying He Does Not Care About Summer (0.09.48)

On the third day, Tom has a conversation with his friend McKenzie about Summer. During their talk, Tom says that he does not care about her and shows no interest in getting to know her better. He even acts as if she is just another coworker without any special meaning to him. However, on the very next day, Tom suddenly finds himself falling in love with her (Figure 2). This change in feelings happens very quickly and catches him by surprise. This moment is a good example of situational irony, because what happens is the opposite of what Tom expects.



Figure 8. Tom Talking About His Career (0.11.54)

Tom's career path is another good example of situational irony in the film. Although he studied to be an architect, he ends up working as a greeting card writer. This is ironic because instead of designing real buildings, he writes romantic messages that often do not match with real life. His job reflects how he sees love in an idealistic and unrealistic way.



Figure 9. Tom's expectation and reality at Summer's party (1.09.26)

Both Figure 4 and Figure 9 in *500 Days of Summer* show a clear example of situational irony. These scenes take place on a rooftop at night, surrounded by glowing city lights and a peaceful, warm atmosphere. The setting feels romantic and full of hope, making it seem like something good is about to happen—maybe even a new beginning for Tom and Summer. It gives the impression that the two might reconnect or fall back in love. The mood, music, and visuals all build up that expectation. However, the reality turns out to be the complete opposite. Instead of a sweet or emotional reunion, Summer casually tells Tom that she is engaged to someone else. This moment is surprising and painful, both for Tom and the audience. It breaks the mood completely and goes against everything the setting seemed to promise. That is what makes it situational irony—what actually happens is the exact opposite of what we or the characters are led to believe. The cozy, romantic rooftop does not lead to love but to heartbreak. This sharp contrast between appearance and outcome adds emotional weight to the scene and shows how real life can be unexpected, even when everything seems perfect.

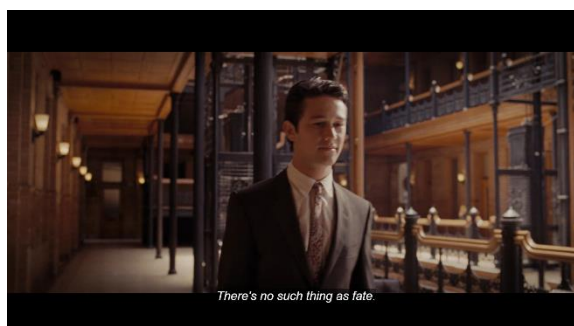
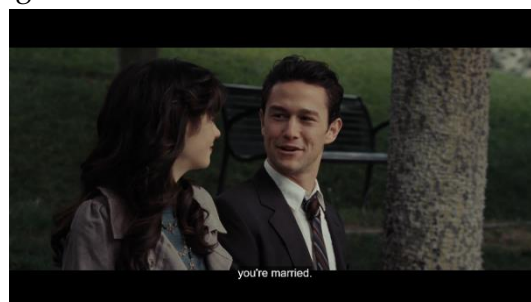


Figure 10. The narrator stating that Tom does not believe in fate (1.29.25)

Tom once believed that “There’s no such thing as fate,” as mentioned by the narrator in the film. He thought that everything in life happened randomly, and that love was just a matter of choice, not destiny. However, by the end of the story, something unexpected happens—he meets a new woman named Autumn, right after his relationship with Summer ends. This surprising coincidence, with their names following the seasons, feels like the universe is gently playing a trick on him. It shows that, even though Tom didn’t believe in



fate, life still brought him someone new at the right time. This unexpected turn of events goes against what Tom believed and what he expected, which makes it a clear example of situational irony.

Figure 11. Tom and Summer's re-encounter (0.19.54)

Figure 12. Summer stating that she does not believe in relationships (1.23.05)

Another strong example of situational irony comes from Summer's belief about relationships. At one point, she tells Tom, "Relationships are messy, and people's feelings get hurt." clearly expressing that she does not believe in commitment or long term love. Her words make Tom think she will never settle down or get married. However, later in the film, Summer surprises everyone by marrying someone else – not Tom – and seems happy in that new relationship. This outcome is unexpected because it goes against everything she said earlier. Her marriage does not just shock Tom, but it also confuses the audience, since she had strongly rejected the



idea of lasting love. This sudden change makes the situation ironic, because the result is completely opposite from what was expected. Summer, who once avoided commitment, ends up finding love and building a future with someone else. Meanwhile, Tom, who believed he was the one for her, is left heartbroken. The contrast between Summer's past statements and her future actions creates a powerful moment of situational irony that highlights how unpredictable love can be – and how people sometimes change in ways we don't expect. It shows that in life, words and actions don't always match.

Verbal irony



Figure 13. The narrator saying "...this is not a love story." (0.02.09)

The line "...this is not a love story." as shown in Figure 13, is a clear example of verbal irony in *500 Days of Summer*. The film is classified as a romance, but this statement directly contradicts that idea. While the movie does revolve around love and relationships, it does not follow the typical structure of a traditional romance film. Unlike most love stories, where the main characters fall in love and stay together, *500 Days of Summer* takes a different approach. The relationship between Tom and Summer does not end in the way that the audience might expect, making the statement ironic because it challenges audiences' assumptions about how romance films usually shown.

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In addition, the narrator delivers this line directly to the audience, making it feel self-aware and slightly sarcastic. The film acknowledges that it appears to be a love story, yet it deliberately refuses to follow the usual happy-ending formula. This use of irony connects to James MacDowell's idea of irony in modern American cinema, where irony is not just a way to create emotional distance, but also a tool for questioning and redefining traditional storytelling. By using this ironic statement, the film signals to the audience that it will not be the typical romance movie, making it more of a realistic and complex portrayal of love and



heartbreak.

Figure 14. Tom criticizing his co-worker (1.13.52)

Many researches stated that verbal irony revolves around sarcasm (Tyshakova & Khairulina, 2024), including this scene where Tom sarcastically says, "That sweet? Ain't love grand?". At first glance, the line may seem like a sincere comment about love. However, when looking at the tone and context, it becomes clear that Tom is not being genuine. Instead, he is using sarcasm to express frustration or disappointment with how love is being written in his co-worker's card, as he just experienced heart break.

This line can also be recognized as an antiphrasis – a part of verbal irony, which means saying the opposite of what you actually mean (Kreuz, 2020).

Cosmic Irony

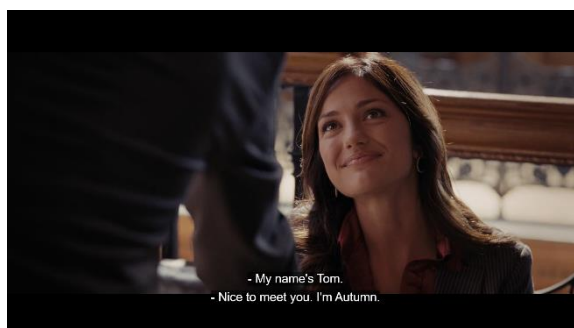


Figure 15. Tom meeting Autumn (1.30.22)

Tom's encounter with Autumn is a good example of cosmic irony. Petrie & Boggs (2018) explained that cosmic irony occurs when fate or luck gives a character hope, but then suddenly takes it away in an unfair or surprising way. It also can be a gap existing between what a character hopes and what fate or universe gave them (Tyshakova & Khairulina, 2024), making it seem it seem like the universe is teasing or playing a cruel trick on the character.

After going through a painful and disappointing love experience with Summer, it seems like the universe had a plan all along. Just like how seasons change in nature, Tom's life also goes through a change. Once Summer is over, Autumn comes in – both as a season and as a person. It is a surprising and meaningful coincidence that their names are also names of seasons.

This is ironic because Tom had to stop believing in love at first sight before someone new could come into his life. He had to go through heartbreak, let go of his old ideas about love, and grow as a person. Only then did the universe seem to reward him with a second chance.

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Autumn's arrival feels like a sign from the universe, showing that love can come again when we least expect it. It is as if, after the sadness of "Summer," Tom is now entering a new season—one that could be filled with hope and new beginnings. Even though it does not take Tom's hope or twisted his life in a bad way, it is still considered cosmic irony since it is Autumn's appearance is out of Tom's control.

Romantic Irony

In addition to cosmic irony, *500 Days of Summer* also presents elements of romantic irony. Petrie & Boggs (2018) stated that romantic irony occurs when the creator becomes self-aware and deliberately breaks the illusion of the story. One clear example is the presence of the narrator, which adds a layer of self-awareness to the film. The narrator's line, "This is not a love story," as shown in Figure 10, is a direct example of romantic irony. This statement tells the audience from the beginning that the film will not follow the usual romantic storyline. It breaks the illusion of a typical love story by reminding the viewers that what they are watching is just a story—one that may appear romantic on the surface, but does not end in the way traditional love stories do.

Figure 4 and 9 also shows an example of romantic irony through the use of a split-screen scene that contrasts Tom's expectations with reality. This scene breaks the typical flow of a romantic narrative by visually highlighting the difference between what Tom hopes for and what actually happens. By doing this, the filmmakers interrupt the audience's illusion of a happy ending and invite them to reflect on Tom's unrealistic and idealized view of love. Instead of allowing the viewers to get lost in romantic hope, the scene presents the painful truth about emotional disappointment and the dangers of believing too strongly in "movie love." In doing so, the film becomes self-aware—it recognizes that it is a constructed story and uses this awareness to challenge common romance tropes. This kind of narrative self-reflection is one of the key features of romantic irony, where the story comments on itself and encourages the audience to question what they usually expect from love stories.

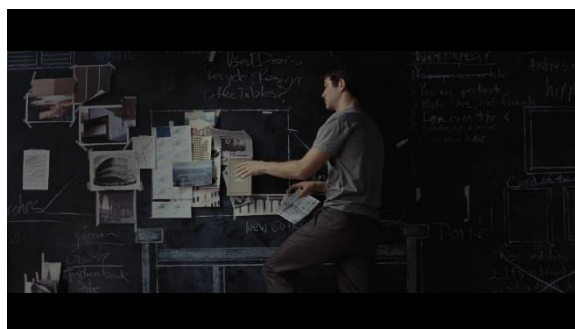
The Aftermath

Different types of irony—especially dramatic and situational irony—play a key role in showing how Tom changes as a person. These ironic moments show the gap between what Tom expects from his relationship and what actually happens, which helps move his character forward and forces him to rethink his ideas about love.

Palacio (2020) notes that ironic situations often act as "turning points" for characters, helping them face reality and change their behavior whether it is harsh, subtle, or subtle. For Tom, irony helps him move from dreaming about perfect love to building a more realistic and healthy understanding of relationships.

Moreover, the ironic moments in the film help Tom grow and change as a person. At the start, he sees love in a very idealistic way. He believes in fate and the idea that there is only one perfect person out there for him. But as things go wrong in his relationship with Summer, Tom starts to see that real life does not match his dreams. The scenes that parody foreign films, the dance sequence, and the clever split-screen showing Tom's expectations versus reality at Summer's engagement party are all used to help Tom clear his own concept of love (Ross, 2016).

As Tom begins to understand this, he also starts to change. He lets go of his belief in perfect love and becomes more focused on himself. This is clear when he decides to return to architecture, which he studied before but did not follow as a career. Choosing to focus on his



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goals instead of chasing love shows that Tom is growing. The irony he faces helps him see the truth and become a more mature and independent person.

Figure 16. Tom breaking down his wall of greeting card ideas (1.19.26)

Figure 17. Tom relearning architecture (1.19.44)

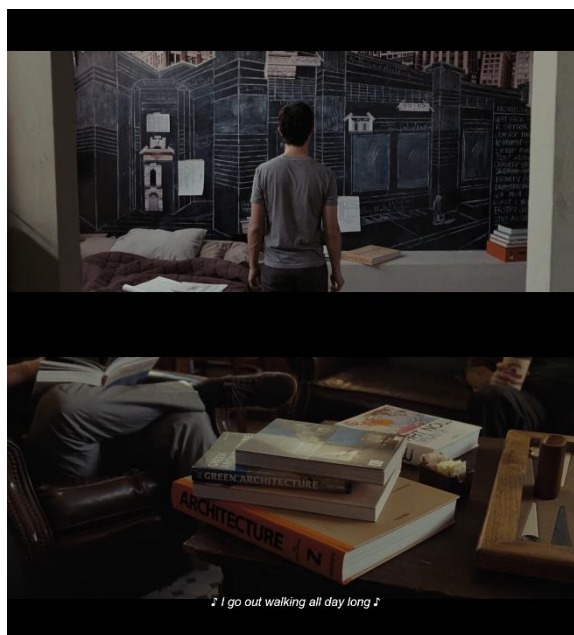


Figure 18. Tom staring at his design (1.20.58)

One of the clear signs of Tom's character development can be seen when he takes down all the greeting card ideas he had pinned on his wall (Figure 16). These cards represent his old job and the life he used to have. After removing them, he replaces them with a new drawing of a building (Figure 18), which shows that he is starting to focus on a new dream. Later on, he begins to study architecture (Figure 17), the career he had once wanted but never followed. This change shows that Tom is moving forward, leaving behind the past, and beginning to take control of his life in a more positive and meaningful way.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of irony in *500 Days of Summer* changes the usual pattern often seen in romantic films. Instead of following the common storyline where two people fall in love and live happily ever after, this film presents love in a more honest and realistic way. Unlike traditional love stories that often end in happiness and success, *500 Days of Summer* portrayed irony to show that love can be painful, unpredictable, and full of surprises. However, it is exactly this honest and ironic view of love that makes the story more meaningful and touching.

Through the use of various types of irony – such as dramatic, situational, verbal, cosmic, and romantic – the film offers a deeper understanding of Tom's personal growth and emotional transformation. Each ironic moment not only reveals the gap between Tom's expectations and reality but also highlights the film's critique of idealized love and traditional romantic narratives. The findings show that irony is not just a stylistic device but a powerful storytelling tool that helps shape the character's development and delivers a more honest reflection on modern relationships. Thus, irony plays a central role in guiding both Tom and the audience toward a more realistic view of love and self-discovery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to sincerely thank everyone who has given their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the process of writing this paper. Every kind word, helpful suggestion, and act of kindness – whether big or small – has meant a lot and played an important role in helping the author complete this work. Without the support of these individuals, it would have been much more difficult to reach this point. The author is truly grateful for all the help and motivation received during this journey.

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