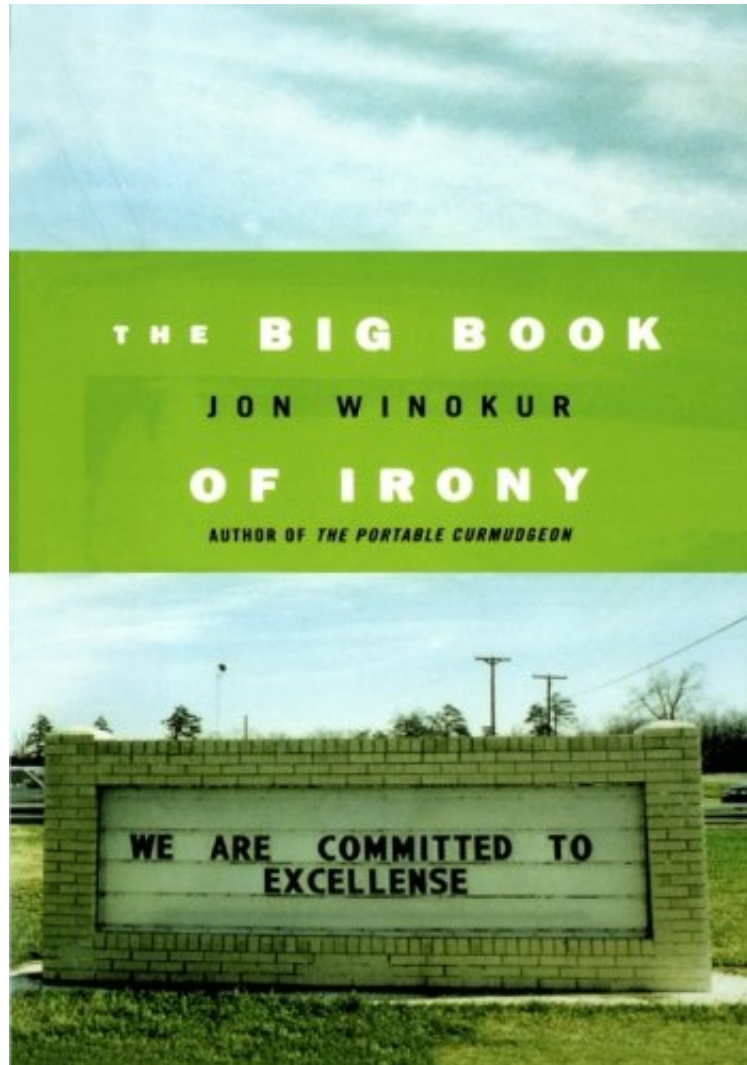


# The Big Book of Irony

*Jon Winokur*

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**Jon Winokur : The Big Book of Irony** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Big Book of Irony:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. nice compilation of writersBy Small Wondervery thoughtful book, much more than a simple book of quotations, this is full anecdotes, various definitions, and plenty of quotes.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy M. StrongRather boring and rambling account. The authors idea of irony lacked the humor I associate with the word10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Don't read this book!By Arnold V. LoveridgeJon Winokur's "The Big Book of Irony" is one of those books that is just exploding with tidbits that make you want to interrupt your reading and share what you've just read with a friend, a

neighbor, or well, anybody. Ostensibly the book is about Irony - what it is, what it is not, how to recognize it, and how to use it properly. But the problem with irony is that it is the statement of one thing while being understood to mean the opposite, that opposite meaning being the intent all along. Thus, the title of this book implies it is a "big" book when, in fact, it is quite small, which was the intent in calling it, ironically, a big book. One easily ends up in verbal or visual loops and stands a good chance of mistaking coincidence for irony or irony for sarcasm. One of my favorite quotes in the book is from Bronislaw Malinowski: "I once talked to an old cannibal who, hearing of the Great War raging in Europe, was most curious to know how we Europeans managed to eat such huge quantities of human flesh. When I told him the Europeans did not eat their slain foes, he looked at me with shocked horror and asked what sort of barbarians we were, to kill without any real object." The book includes examples of visual irony such as flame decals on a mini-van or Michael Jackson's multiply-defaced face. It has a section of ironic events reported in the media such as the executive at the Salt Lake Tribune in charge of implementing cost-cutting measures who was himself fired, reportedly as a "cost cutting measure." It even includes a self-test to help you measure your own irony potential but it, of course, is also ironic in that both the highest and lowest scores indicate the same thing. Definitely a fun book to have on your bookshelf or to give to an English major.

Jon Winokur defines and classifies irony and contrasts it with coincidence and cynicism, and other oft-confused concepts that many think are ironic. He looks at the different forms irony can take, from an irony deficiency to visual irony to an understatement, using photographs and relate-able examples from pop culture. \* "Irony in Action" looks at irony in language, both verbal and visual, while "Bastions of Irony" and "Masters of Irony" look at institutions and individuals steeped in irony, though not always intentionally. PLUS: \* The Annals of Irony looks at irony, and its lack thereof, throughout history. A delight for anyone with a smart, dark sense of humor.

"This gleefully witty treatise, a playful exploration of irony by someone who has mastered it himself, opens with definitions of irony and explanations of its many forms. Winokur (The Portable Curmudgeon ) then progresses through the "Annals of Irony," dating from 423 B.C.E. to the present, and he bolsters his chapters with generous helpings of quotes from public personages notable for their senses of irony. While he explores the historical aspects of irony, he also cites examples from current masters of the form, e.g., comedians Ali G and Sarah Silverman. Readers who do not appreciate cultural phenomena like Seinfeld or Curb Your Enthusiasm may not care to digest the text fully, but those who enjoy The Onion or The Simpsons should find much entertaining here." --"Library Journal" "" "About the Author Jon Winokur is the author of various reference books and anthologies, including Encyclopedia Neurotica, The Portable Curmudgeon, The Rich Are Different, Ennui to Go and The War Between the State. He lives in Pacific Palisades, California.