
CATEGORY OF IRONY IN DIFFERENT ERAS

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the review of the irony as aesthetic category in different era. A review of the history of studying irony from antiquity is carried out to modernity in order to identify ideas underlying various theories of irony. Due to the ironic attitude of the author, in some cases the object appears in comic coverage, in others, the irony questions and checks the true significance of the object, its correspondence to what the ironic person seems to be morally valuable.

KEYWORDS: *Literary and artistic discourse, historic excursion, irony, bitter irony, ironic detail, wit, romantic irony, reduced irony, epic irony.*

INTRODUCTION

A review of the history of the study of irony from antiquity to modern times aims to identify the ideas underlying various theories of irony. Such a historical excursion is necessary to understand the existing definitions covering the manifestations of irony in literary and artistic discourse. Irony as an aesthetic category in different epochs was understood in different ways, having undergone significant and significant changes. In addition, the category of irony is polysemantic, since it designates both a linguistic trope, and a special type of cultural situation (what is commonly called the irony of fate or "irony of history", according to Hegel), and a philosophical way of relating to being (the irony of Socrates, romantic, postmodern irony). In modern science, irony is also constituted as a modus of artistry (V.I. Tyup), in the field of action of which all emotional and value orientations are capable of falling, since irony is absolutely antidogmatic and mobile. The difficulty of defining irony is due to the formal and semantic diversity of its manifestations in a literary text. Prototypical irony is an antiphrasis - a way of saying one thing, meaning the opposite, in order to express a critical assessment of a phenomenon, situation or object. [1]

However, this interpretation does not cover all manifestations of irony: for example, it does not correspond to absurd and believable irony, as well as those cases when irony is created using rhetorical questions, comments or intertextual references. From the time of antiquity to the present day, the category of irony has been comprehensively considered in philosophy, cultural studies, aesthetics, rhetoric, linguistics and literary criticism. In the corresponding dictionaries, it is defined in different ways. As the artistic practice of antiquity has shown, irony can be directed at an object in which initially there is no comic, but, on the contrary, there is tragedy. Due to the ironic attitude of the author, in some cases the object appears in comic coverage, in others, the irony questions and checks the true significance of the object, its correspondence to what the ironic person seems to be morally valuable. In the post-antique period, the concept of irony almost disappears from aesthetic works. It acts as a skeptical, anti-dogmatic category that does not need any authority, freely plays with opposites, therefore it turns out to be destructive and immoral for the dogmatic and didactic way of thinking of the Christian Middle Ages. [2]

The characteristic of the Middle Ages attitude towards irony is manifested, for example, in the aesthetics of the Church Fathers. Clement of Alexandria strongly condemns laughter and its varieties: "How can one be or seem ridiculous, without mocking words and reason, these noblest

benefits of man? It would be a pitiful undertaking to imitate fools, which are not worth listening to, for they speak of an unworthy deed in such expressions that they weaken their aversion to it." Clement of Alexandria believed that laughter, by its very nature, is an immoral phenomenon. Particularly harmful to morality, in his opinion, are those methods of speech that pursue the goal of "arousing surprise, bringing the listeners to open mouth and numbness ... Truth is not taught through them anywhere." In fact, there is a direct polemic here with Socratic irony, the purpose of which was precisely to awaken dialectical doubt in the interlocutor. During the Renaissance, irony was used in the traditions of laughter, carnival folk culture, first of all, by jesters with crowned heads, as well as in everyday speech. So, J. Burckhardt wrote about irony, wit and ridicule in the Italian culture of the Renaissance, emphasizing that "an independent element of life, ridicule could become only when a developed individual appeared, its constant victim, with its own claims." F. Petrarca talked about how the jester laughs at his master: "how many times, marveling at the spectator's recklessness, he invented something supposedly for him, but in fact for his own amusement." For Shakespeare, the problem of irony arises as a problem of morality and history. In his opinion, "a crime against humanistic morality is called the irony of history." This, according to some interpreters, is the finale of King Lear. Thus, irony plays an important role in the transitional periods of history as a tool and catalyst for the reevaluation of cultural values. [3]

This was embodied by Cervantes in his parody novel Don Quixote, which ironically describes the process of re-evaluating feudal-knightly values. The bourgeois era abandoned the ideals of chivalrous nobility and universal values, exchanging them for the "ideals" of free enterprise, practicality and trade. With his novel, written in an extremely ironic form, the Spanish novelist warned humanity against such an overestimation that could lead to danger. Therefore, the irony of Cervantes is tragic in nature. During the Renaissance, irony was actively used in satirical and folk-laughter spheres. As Voltaire aptly remarked about the Letters of Dark Men, thanks to laughter began "a process that threw off the yoke of Rome, and a great upheaval that split the church." An ironic wit played a significant role in the Baroque era, when the desire to compare various facts and phenomena and the unexpected identification of similarities with dissimilar ones also led to irony. In general, it was the Renaissance laughter, due to its ambivalence, that was a wonderful tool for cultural creativity and reevaluation of values. [4]

Laughing at himself, a person cleared himself of the hardened scales of outdated and bad habits, ridiculing others, he elevated himself above their shortcomings. Educational laughter often looked satirical, often its irony was directed against religion and the church. In the pamphlet of D. Swift "The Tale of the Cask" in an ironic form, three Christian churches are compared and the absurdities of fanaticism and superstition are exposed. In a figurative sense, a barrel is a "hodgepodge, chatter"; another meaning of the name is associated with the custom of throwing a barrel at an angry whale to divert its attention and save the ship from the devastating blows of its tail. Thus, in the era of the Enlightenment, irony ceased to be only a path and acquired the features of a worldview. In general, the literary work of the eighteenth century is characterized by an increased activity of irony. In the works of Voltaire and D. Diderot, A. Shaftesbury and L. Stern, D. Defoe and D. Swift, I. Kant and Goethe, it appears in a variety of functions: as a means of socio-political criticism, as a weapon against church dogmatism and, finally, as a way of self-control and self-restraint of the omnipotent mind. [5]

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century's, views on irony were radically revised by romantics. F. Schlegel became the theorist of romantic irony, who presented his understanding of the genius subjectivity of the artist-creator, paying great attention to irony. The ways of manifesting romantic irony, according to the German philosopher, are different. First, it can serve as the conventional irony of the creative elite, a way to help isolate itself from other people's ideas. Secondly, it can manifest itself as a conscious or unconscious posture, which is based on the play of contradictions in life. Thirdly, irony can be perceived as an attempt to escape from cruel reality

into the fairy-tale world of ironic fantasy, which is typical, for example, of the works of Hoffmann. The reality of the situation is translated into a subjective plan and replayed. According to F. Schlegel, "in irony, everything should be a joke and everything should be serious, everything is ingenuously frank and everything is deeply serious." Thus, irony for romantics appears as a playful form of subjective freedom, removing the seriousness and responsibility of life, from which one must free oneself in order to fly away into the transcendental world of creative fantasy. Irony is a shield that hides the innermost and pure ideals of romantics from the thick and dirty paws of the inhabitants; it is a mask under which a sensitive and vulnerable soul is hiding. Irony hides the innermost transcendental values, dreams and ideals from the philistines. [6]

The era of romanticism is a time when, after several centuries of existence in the status of a rhetorical instrument, irony acquires a new categorical status. Romantic irony is no longer just a rhetorical trope or stylistic device, but a way of philosophical attitude to the world and manifestation of the artist's creative subjectivity. In the history of aesthetic thought, irony is usually viewed in connection with the comic. However, there is a tradition of studying irony outside the realm of the comic. So, Hegel saw in the subjectivity of irony an essential difference between the "ironic" and the "comic", believing that the "comic" has its object, while irony, in which negation comes entirely from the subject, can be directed to the object, in reality moral and true, who will show himself at the same time insignificant and pitiful. According to Hegel, "in this distinction between the ironic and the comic, the content of what is destroyed is essential." "Irony knows how to make any objective inner content insignificant and vain, and thus it itself turns out to be empty and vanity," wrote the German philosopher, referring this characterization to a greater extent to romantic irony. Hegel associated this attitude with the infinite freedom of the ironic "I".

In comic irony with its characteristic lightness, virtuosity, with its playful beginning, this possibility is realized as an aesthetic principle. In this form, irony characterizes the artist, for whom all his "actions and manifestations related to some kind of content remain only an appearance." Another German philosopher Karl Solger defined irony as "the state in which contradictions are mutually destroyed, and it is thanks to this that the essential is preserved for us, which we call irony or whim and humor. What will become of all dramatic poetry, or theatrical performance, if there is no irony or humor in them? [7]

How would we be shocked by the bitterness in the tragedies of Aeschylus or the cruelty in Shakespeare's plays, if everything focused on mournful seriousness and irony did not elevate us above everything? How could the naturalistic moments in the comedies of Aristophanes arouse in us disgust, if they were not presented as jokes and if the feeling, the pure feeling of innocence did not lead us through the most unbridled sensuality. K. Solger calls tragic irony the "mood in which the dialectic of the finite and the infinite is manifested". Tragic irony, in his opinion, is present both in the works of the tragic genre and the comic, therefore, there is no dramatic art without irony. It is believed that the creator of the special technique of wit among the romantics was G. Heine. His works are characterized by ironic and self-critical self-parodying ("White Elephant", "God Apollo") [8]. In "Atta Troll" the romantic exoticism of hunting in the Pyrenees ironically collides with a satirical fable, and in the poem "Germany" there is a contrast between satire and lyrics. The romantic irony in these works creates that artistic atmosphere in which, according to the German poet, "the reader is afraid to take the artist's words for an expression of a sincere feeling, is afraid to be carried away by this feeling, because the artist will immediately begin to laugh at what might seem like a sincere impulse, and then the reader, who has dismissed the nuns, falls into the category of sentimental fools who are incapable of understanding subtle irony. [9]

The artist, for his part, knows that the reader is wary of and foresees an ironic smile or a cynical trick, the artist is afraid of being more sentimental than the reader. Therefore, each feeling is deliberately expressed in such a way that there is no way to believe in its sincerity, not to say for sure that there is irony here." The successor of the theory of romantic irony is S. Kierkegaard. "In

contrast to Hegel, Kierkegaard sees the essence of 'Socratic irony' in the fact that Socrates knows about God as an absolute and an idea, that is, about God as the extraordinary basis of our being and our inalienable belonging to him, which permeates our entire existence. Moreover, - and this is especially emphasized by Kierkegaard, - the reliability of the knowledge of God, achieved with the help of "Socratic irony", as the basis of human existence, and the feeling of involvement in divine existence cannot be represented in any objective knowledge. In this case, this means that the subjectivity that reveals itself in the "Socratic irony" is separated from the existing being, becomes absolutely independent in relation to the world, or it has the intrinsic property of direct, independent of any "external" being and of any "objectivity" "Communication with God, divine being." F. Nietzsche became the heir of the romantic understanding of irony [10]. "How little joy it takes," he exclaims, "for most people to regard life as good! How humble a man is! " In such short lectures, the ironic wisdom of a discerning thinker is clearly manifested: "A criminal who knows all the circumstances of the case does not find his deed as incomprehensible and out of the ordinary as his judges and detractors, but the punishment is imposed in the form of an act that seems incomprehensible to him. If the defender of a criminal is well enough aware of both the circumstances of the crime and the entire life of his client up to this time, then the so-called extenuating circumstances, which he brings one after another, should ultimately mitigate the guilt until it disappears completely. Or, to put it more clearly, the defender will step by step soften the surprise that condemned and determined the punishment, and, finally, finally dispel it, forcing every sincere listener to admit to himself, "that the offender had to do as he did; by punishing him, we would punish eternal necessity. " [11]

The nihilistic irony of F. Nietzsche can be regarded as an example of extreme disappointment and objective destruction, when in the soul of an ironic nothing remains sacred and absolute, except for life itself. A new and original interpretation of irony belongs to the German thinker and writer T. Mann. Having connected irony with an objective, epic beginning in art, he contrasted his understanding of irony with romantic arbitrariness and romantic subjectivity: "... I am putting, - he writes, - into the concept of irony with a broader and higher content than that which romantic objectivism imparts to him. Thanks to its inherent equanimity, this content is almost limitless, because it is the content of art itself ...". T. Mann brought irony closer to a new understanding of modern man, to the problem of humanism [12]. Irony, in his opinion, is a means of recreating the humanistic integrity of a person, a means of excluding extremes in understanding his essence. In his article "Goethe and Tolstoy," he notes that "irony develops between contrasts and is in no hurry to take sides and make a decision: for it is full of foreboding that in big questions, when it comes to a person, any decision may turn out to be premature and untenable, and that it is not the decision that is the goal, but harmony, which, perhaps, lies somewhere in eternity and already carries a playful slip of the tongue called "irony". T. Mann believed that the intellectualism of irony does not exclude emotionality, it does not at all mean indifference, coldness, ridicule or mockery: "Epic irony is, rather, the irony of the heart, the irony of the fulfillment of love, it is greatness that nourishes tenderness for little."

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