Aesthetic and Psychological Features of Irony

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Abstract: The relevance of the study of irony is related to the need to develop comics, especially its value and psychological aspects. The irony is described as a kind of comic, and in this respect it serves as an emotional, valuable, aesthetic relationship. At the same time, the content of the irony is often overlooked as a form, with its specific features disappearing as an emotionally-valued relationship.

However, while much of the historical, philosophical, and functional aspects of irony have been studied, its expressive features, experimental value, and psychological aspects, which seem to be important for understanding the essence of irony, have not been sufficiently studied.

Keywords: irony, denial function, subjectivity, aesthetic modification, satire, ideal, paralinguistic means.

Introduction. The history of the practical use of irony usually begins with Socrates, who in his debate with the Sophists used irony as a way of defining the basic qualities of events in general concepts, their pride, and their claim to know everything. But while Socrates' denial function, which played an important role in satire, was subordinate to maieutics, later satire played a non-specific leading role of denial.

The absolutization of the denial function in irony and its reduction to analytical denial is characteristic of a limited subjective-idealistic approach that ignores the objective content of irony. Thus, Kierkegaard believed that "irony denies any positive principle, distorts any point of view by exposing its inner contradictions." [1; 2]. Representatives of Romanticism separated denial from the dialectical process, from all connections, and portrayed it as "naked," "wasted," and dubious denial, turning irony into a model of subjective freedom, a symbol of infinite arbitrariness, a means of artistic selfishness, and it did not correspond to reality [3; 4]. The irony that escapes the control of the mind is capable of igniting all positive values in nihilistic denial, making human existence destructive and meaningless.

The main part. Sh. Baudelaire well illustrated the inefficiency of ironic self-denial in “Sveti Zla” (“Flowers of Evil”), where irony acts as an "evil witch" who torments the "weak spirit" and inflicts infinite suffering on man [5].

Nevertheless, subjectivity in the approach to irony often leads modern bourgeois philosophers to antinomism and negativity, absolute denial [6; 7]. The misconception about irony is based on considering it in a narrow functional context. It suffices to consider this in a broader context, in relation to the dialectical removal and affirmation of values, and the groundlessness and futility of such a one-sided view of irony becomes clear.

In modern aesthetics, irony is considered as an aesthetic modification, a kind of comic [8]. The feature of irony as an aesthetic category given by the Bulgarian scientist I. Pasi is interesting [9]. Literary critics also deal with the problem of irony, but they mainly manage the tasks of functional and empirical analysis of works of art. They consider the aesthetic specificity of irony mainly in the context of artistic creation [10].

The most studied aspects of irony are historical (A.F. Losev, V.P. Shestakov, P.P. Gaidenko, T.T. Gaidukova, R.M. Gabitova), philosophical and worldview (P.P. Gaidenko, R.M. Gabitova), functional (the role of irony as a dominant artistic direction – N.Y. Berkovsky, V.V. Vanslov, I.
Slavov; the role of irony in the artistic method – N.Y. Berkovsky, MM Bakhtin; the problem of the role of irony in comics – V.Y. Propp, Y.B. Borev, M.S. Kagan, B. Dzemidok, I. Pasi). However, the expressive features, experimental value, and psychological aspects of irony, which seem important to understand the essence of irony, have not been sufficiently studied.

There are many definitions of irony, but the most common in the ordinary mind is irony usually understood as a mocking intonation of a sentence, expressed with playfulness under the guise of mockery, ridicule, or simply thoughtful seriousness.

Indeed, irony in the realm of everyday consciousness is used in a very abbreviated and wrapped form, so it should be considered as a process for a more complete and comprehensive study of satire.

The irony is described as a kind of comic, and in this respect it serves as an emotional, valuable, aesthetic relationship. At the same time, the content of the irony is often overlooked as a form, with its specific features disappearing as an emotionally-valued relationship.

In the comic structure, irony, as a form (device) among other forms of comic, for example, parody, grotesque, trusty, burlesque; on the other hand, irony, along with humor and satire, serves as a distinctive aesthetic attitude. It also has a unique value structure and experimental features.

The value structure of the comic is characterized by the dialectical opposition of the two planes – rejection and affirmation, as well as a general direction from subject to object. In irony, the issue is complicated by a three-dimensional expression of the principle of laughter: the value structure of irony includes external affirmation, internal denial, and final affirmation. The irony is also distinguished by its ability to focus on both the object and itself (the subject) at the same time.

Assessing an object's relationship with the environment is emotional. In irony emotional reflection is filled with logic by comparing the value potential of the subject and object of the irony. Reflecting the value of irony can play a positive role in a person’s self-determination and self-improvement.

Irony as a form of approach to the world is the exact opposite of looking at the world directly or “simply”. Thus, the positions of Socrates and his interlocutors in Plato's dialogue are often interrelated. On the other hand, if we consider the critical and degrading nature of irony, the category of “sad” (change of high) should be recognized as a category of opposite and paired irony.

A prerequisite for an ironic relationship is the belief in the existence of a subject of “ideal” satire formed on the basis of these value-oriented activities and in the universality of its idea of “ideal”. This is the case for all types of comics. However, it should be noted that the initial “ideal” that we assume in this regard is the potential of values or the basis for evaluation is not always clear and conscious enough.

Irony, like comics in general, aims to normally regulate events and processes. The subject of the irony, when evaluating reality, derives more or less a clear idea of the ideal, which serves as a model and basis for evaluation. From this ideal point of view, he criticizes an object that does not fit this model and has internal contradictions. The ironical critique is aimed at bringing the object to the ideal, to motivate the object to act on its own, to improve itself in the spirit of the ideal-model.

The peculiarity of irony is that the ideal, as a rule, exists in secret (even if it is done by the subject), but the broader context reveals it and, even if viewed with suspicion, rejection of irony by all can be determined in the ideal context on which the subject relies. The irony casts doubt on hope and confidence in the prospects for the realization of the ideal. But skepticism itself, unlike irony, has a minimal evaluation function; the purpose of the suspect is to go astray, ataraxia.
The process of forming an ironic relationship involves knowing and evaluating as a first stage of preparation. Based on it, an idea of the object emerges, subjectivity occurs, the satirical understanding of the object involves knowing the opposite of this value, the value (value potential) of the object of the relationship, comparing it with the original ideal, the internal contradictions of the object and determines the degree of non-conformity of the object to the ideal. In addition, the subject of irony should analyze the situation, the ratio of situations, and choose the proportional type and form of sarcastic expression, taking into account the context, the interlocutor’s mind, sense of humor, and ability to speak, suffering from sarcasm. Ironical understanding occurs as an undeveloped and usually non-verbal process.

The second stage is objectification, expression of sarcastic attitude, delivery of sarcastic information to the interlocutor-recipient. The irony is always directed against someone and takes others as witnesses to their own assessments. Even when a person uses irony to himself, he is always in touch with himself, and irony is meaningless outside the context of communication.

The subjective side is the leading moment of sarcasm, because the activity and social significance of satirical criticism depends on the normative-value potential of the subject, its aesthetic and moral beliefs, i.e. creative activity is one of the most important features of sarcasm.

By the subject of irony, we mean a person with aesthetic experience, a formed ideal, who believes in the universality of his ideal and its superiority over the world events around him, who knows the language of communication, including means of expression, humor and intelligence.

The essence of the ironic expression, according to A.F. Losev, "... when I say 'yes', I do not hide 'no', I mean it through context, I reveal it." The main means of expression of irony:

a) Paralinguistic means – gestures or kinesics (facial expressions, pantomime, and gestures), intonation (stress, pause, timbre, speech tones). In interpersonal communication, the expression of the allegory is mainly verbal-paralinguistic in nature, the oral channel transmits false information and coded information about the presumed meaning, the key to the main information is paralinguistic, which is understood from the meaning. With the development and improvement of vocal speech, paralinguistic means of interpersonal communication take a back seat as rational information exhibitors. They are almost completely excluded from formal forms of communication, but in oral and general speech they are used to express emotional and value relationships [11].

b) Interpersonal verbal communication usually uses linguistic, mostly stylistic, or lexical means, such as a mixture of constant epithets, neologisms, and archaisms, styles, and narrative forms of narration, but they are often supported by paralinguistic means (if not clear, if the recipient has relevant information about the interlocutor). Cartoon headlines play a similar role.

c) Works of art that mediate the author’s interpersonal communication with the public have their own unique means of expressing irony: the author’s instructions, comments, quotation marks, italics, parodies, and the use of funny words with similar but different meanings based humor.

Conclusion. Thus, the choice of forms and means of expression of irony is determined by several factors: the subjective and objective ratio of the value potential of the object and the subject of irony, the moral dimension and context, the nature of relationships and the social status of interlocutors, educational and polemical tasks. The irony can be based on a general context, as well as communication in a narrow context within groups, close people. The receiver’s awareness of the context is an important condition for making the ironical attitude.

References: