

Dušan R. Živković

*General Relations Between Irony and Sarcasm*

*Summary*

The paper presents an analysis of the nature, forms and functions of irony and sarcasm, from the process of creating and perceiving ironic and sarcastic statements, to their effects and interferences within the framework of the irony discourse, to the structuring and outcome of the irony of a situation in the speech act and in the literary and art works, considering the following aspects: 1. the general features of irony, 2. the classifications of forms of irony, 3. the intentions of irony, 4. the questions of autonomy of sarcasm, 5. the relations between irony and sarcasm in the context of satire and parody. We have studied the general relations of irony and sarcasm through an interdisciplinary approach: from the rhetorical, to pragmatic, to stylistic and philosophical domains. In this way, we combined the synchronic and diachronic perspectives, using the analytical-synthetic method.

“Conversion” is the basic feature of irony, the purpose of which is primarily the meaning opposite to the one apparently expressed. Contradiction is also at the core of irony, while the examples of relaxed expressions are much less frequent and therefore represent only exceptions to the rules, both in a speech act and in literary works. Still, the examples of politeness in ironic statements need to be precise, without disputing the theory of the «opposite meaning», but in order to gain awareness of the variations, layers, and nuances of irony.

Our scholarly contribution also consists in considering the relationship of superiority and subordination in ironic and sarcastic statements and situations, the degrees of suggestion, concealment and the discovery of the irony intent, as well as the issues where sarcasm represents a kind of irony, in relation to the cases which show a more autonomous position of sarcasm in relation to the immanent features of irony.

We noticed that there are instances of sarcasm which, however, in their basis have the fundamental characteristics of the ironic discourse (conversion, contradiction, contrast of meanings) and can be considered as types of irony, while the examples of sarcasm that do not have the expressions mentioned above already have a more open, more direct attitude - its more independent domain of action. Also, examples of irony turning into sarcasm are the most common in those cases where the sender has a sense of superiority over the recipient.

On the other hand, in a broader sense of the relation between irony and sarcasm, towards parody and irony, we conclude that ironic and sarcastic statements, in the general context of social criticism and situational irony, represent reactions to the existing social state, and they can also turn into a hidden revolt. Therefore, irony can have a wider application, from a witty saying, a humorous, hidden satire, a tragicomic vision of the world, to the transition to sarcastic indignation over social circumstances.

*Keywords:* irony, sarcasm, interdisciplinarity, ironic intention, opposites, satire, parody.