

FUNCTIONS OF IRONY RHETORICAL DEVICE AND STYLISTIC DEVICE

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Annotation: Language is an instrument of communication. It is a system of signs, tools and rules of speaking, common to all members of society. This article is devoted to the analysis of lingvo-stylistic features of irony

Key words: rhetorical device, stylistic device, irony, literary technique

“Irony” is a rhetorical device that many people confuse with “sarcasm.” We’ll go over the different types of irony and provide examples.

Chances are you’ve labeled something as ironic at some point or another. But did you use the word ironic correctly? It’s a word that is frequently misunderstood and therefore used incorrectly. After reading this blog post, you’ll understand exactly what is—or isn’t—ironic.

Irony is a rhetorical device and literary technique that is incredibly useful when used correctly. Simply put, irony is when something that is said or done is in contrast to reality or to what is expected. There are several different types of irony, the most prominent being verbal irony, situational irony, and dramatic irony. We’ll elaborate on what these mean and provide examples below.

Verbal irony is when the actual meaning of what someone says is opposite to what they actually mean. Examples of verbal irony can be found throughout literary works. One famous example would be from George Orwell’s book, “Animal Farm.”

All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.

This is a perfect example of verbal irony because although the first part of the statement reads that all animals are “equal,” the second part of the statement indicates that in actuality, some animals are more favored than others.

Overstatements and understatements are also types of verbal ironies. Overstatements dramatize something small, and understatements underplay something big. For example, if you get a paper cut, saying “there’s nothing that hurts more than a paper cut,” can be considered an overstatement. On the opposite side of the spectrum, if you’re on a safari and come across a lion, saying something like “that’s a cute kitty,” is an example of an understatement.

Verbal Irony vs. Sarcasm

At face value, verbal irony seems to be synonymous with sarcasm, but don’t be mistaken; it’s not. Although sarcasm is a form of verbal irony, not all verbally ironic statements are sarcastic. The biggest difference between the two? Sarcasm is usually directed toward a person with the intent to criticize or mock.



Situational irony (also known as irony of events) refers to an outcome that is different from what is expected. If a fire station burns down, that would be ironic because you would expect that they have all the necessary knowledge and equipment to stop that from happening.

An example of situational irony can be found in the short story “The Gift of Magi” by O. Henry. The story tells of a husband and wife who make sacrifices to buy each other Christmas gifts. The wife cuts and sells her long hair to buy her husband a chain for his watch, while the husband sells his watch to buy her ornamental combs for her hair. What’s ironic about that situation is that although big sacrifices were made, both unexpectedly end up with useless gifts.

Imagine watching a scary movie in which you know that the killer is hiding in the closet. Then the victim, trying to escape a horrific outcome, hides precisely in the same closet the killer is in. This is dramatic irony—when the audience knows something integral that the characters in the story, play, or movie do not.

Perhaps you’re familiar with the movie “The Truman Show.” In this movie, the audience (and everyone else in the film) knows that the main character (Jim Carrey) is part of a show. However, he is the only one unaware of this fact, and realizes it only at the end of the movie.

Irony is an incredibly useful literary device that can add different types of effects to your writing. It can bring comedic relief or unexpected tragedy, depending on how you use it. In any case, irony sheds light on the truth without explicitly stating it. Irony is when a statement or situation differs to what is the truth or expected. A proofreader turns in a text that is riddled with spelling and grammar mistakes.

Language is an instrument of communication. It is a system of signs, tools and rules of speaking, common to all members of society. This article is devoted to the analysis of lingvo-stylistic features of irony. Linguistics is the science that studies languages and human language in general. It gives information about what language stands out among other phenomena, what are its elements and units, how and what changes occur in the language. Linguistics has the following sections: lexicology, phraseology, phonetic, stylistic, grammar and so on. Our research is devoted to the lingvo-stylistic analysis, so before analyzing the works we’ll begin with stylistics, its origin, aim and meaning. The stylistics is called the science of the use of language, a branch of linguistics that investigates the principles and the effect of selection and use of lexical, grammatical, phonetic, and linguistic resources for the transmission of thoughts and emotions in different conditions of communication. There is a stylistics of language and stylistics of

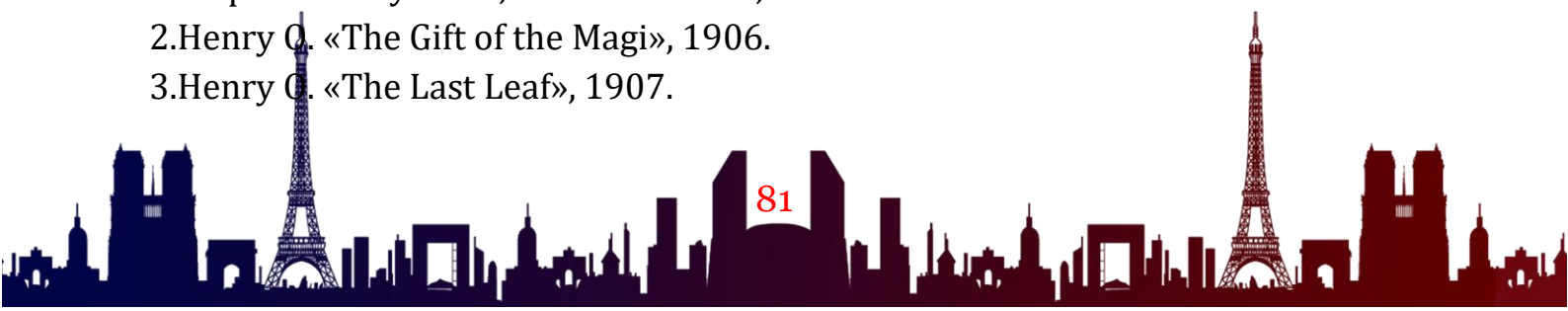


speech, linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics, stylistics of the author and stylistics of perception, decoding stylistics, etc. The tasks of stylistics are: a. An analysis of the selection of certain linguistic resources in the presence of synonymous forms of expression for the adequate and active transfer of information. b. Analysis of the fine expressive means of the language at all levels (phonetic — alliteration, semantic — an oxymoron, syntactic — inversion). c. Determination of functional tasks; identifying stylistic functions performed by linguistic means. The stylistic analysis of the text makes it possible to understand more clearly the meaning and evaluate a particular product. The main objective of the stage of the analysis is to determine the structure of the text material and its semantic meaning. What follows is the most thorough study of all the details. But stylistic analysis is done with the help of stylistic devices such as metaphor, epithets, allegory, metonymy, irony and so on. This article deals with the stylistic device — irony.

There is a type of irony that we're going to talk about. We don't like to call this irony because mainly it's sarcasm, it's a kind of irony that is when you say something that you don't really mean and some people argue that sarcasm is not the same as irony. Thus, verbal irony is when you say something and you mean the opposite. We see this most in sarcasm when you say something like: «I really love this long cold winter. I wish it would just go on through July» [5]. If you really don't mean that, then it would be an example of verbal irony. When we can't say something that we don't really mean would be an example of verbal irony and usually it is said in a sarcastic tone. - Thus, when an audience knows something and the characters don't know that is dramatic irony. - When the situation is reversed or it's the opposite of what you would expect to happen that would be situational irony. - when the speaker says something and they mean the opposite that is verbal irony We can conclude that irony does not only highlight the shortcomings, but also has the ability to make people laugh, expose unjust claims, giving themselves these claims ironic sense, as if forcing ridiculed phenomenon to mock over itself. Also irony as a stylistic device has the following functions: aesthetic, increase emotional tension and comic effect, and the author uses irony to mock at some actions that we don't have to do, or the cases that can occur in the life of any person.

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