Book Review

Leonor Ruiz Gurillo and M. Belén Alvarado Ortega, eds. 2013. *Irony and Humor: From Pragmatics to Discourse*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 270 pp. ISBN: 978-90-272-5636-2 (hardback); ISBN: 978-90-272-7159 4 (E-book); $ 155,61

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Throughout the history of literary criticism the relationship between humor and irony has been a recurrent topic of interest, rooted as much in classical works like Aristotle's *Art of rhetoric* or Cicero's *De oratore* as in the more recent contributions of scholars such as George Meredith 1956 (1877) and Henri Bergson 1956 (1900). Moreover throughout the twentieth century it was analyzed from a variety of literary and pragmatic perspectives. The book edited by Ruiz Gurillo and Alvarado Ortega sits therefore within a rich and longstanding tradition, while supplying substantial work that derives from the most influential areas of current linguistic research. Based on the investigations of irony and humor being made by the GRIALE group, it offers the reader interesting and updated contributions to trends of current research such as cognitive linguistics, neo-Gricean pragmatics, relevance theory, the script-based semantic theory of humor (SSTH) propounded by Raskin (1985), and the general theory of verbal humor (GTVH) developed by Attardo and Raskin (1991), intended as an improvement of the former and subsequently developed in works such as Attardo (2008, 2001a, 2001b, 1994).

As a starting point and embracing the material included in the volume, the editors identify what they see as the most important trait differentiating irony from humor: thus, whereas irony is seen as essentially pragmatic, humor shares both semantic and pragmatic features. The book is then structured in three main parts, each devoted to a concrete aspect of the pragmatic study of its subject. Part 1 casts light upon the relationship between irony and humor from the standpoint of the most outstanding and influential contemporary pragmatic perspectives. Parts 2 and 3 deal in turn with more practical or applied studies, part 2 addressing the relationship between irony and humor in mediated discourse, while part 3 focuses upon different aspects of the use of irony and humor in conversation and other forms of communicative interaction.

Accordingly the first part offers insights into some of the most representative trends within pragmatics. In the first place the chapter by Susana Rodríguez Rosique, entitled "The power of inversion: Irony, from utterance to discourse," sees irony from a neo-Gricean perspective as a violation of the maxim of quality,

showing how it can be used in different kinds of discourse and for multifarious purposes. In the second chapter, Salvatore Attardo addresses the connection between intentionality and verbal irony on the basis of the model presented in Attardo (2000). Yus's paper, "An inference-centered analysis of jokes: The intersecting circles model of humorous communication," integrates core notions within relevance theory into the analysis of humor, alongside other cognitive-oriented notions which have proved illuminating such as frames, schemas or scripts. The author also produces an elaborate typology of jokes.

The four papers in part 2 discuss different aspects of the manifestations of irony and humor in mediated discourse. Firstly Elena Méndez-Gª de Paredes examines some informative humor programs in Spanish media using a discourse approach, while secondly Leonor Ruiz-Gurillo analyzes the narrative strategies used in humorous monologues by applying Attardo and Raskin's GTVH which he proceeds to re-examine critically. The third paper in this section, by Xosé Padilla-García, then develops a pragmatic analysis of cartoons in the Spanish press, investigating in the process how humor is both produced and understood. Then in the final paper to this part Muñoz-Basols, Adrjan and David focus on how the phonological features of language create verbal humor.

Part 3 deals with different aspects of the use of irony and humor in conversation. First, Belén Alvarado Ortega suggests how humor can fail as a result of the participants being uninvolved in the humor process. The second contribution, by Amadeu Viana, analyzes the relationship between humor and argumentation in everyday talk from a pragmatic standpoint and from three different perspectives – theoretical, methodological and empirical. Then Kurt Feyaerts's paper that closes both this section and the volume is grounded on the Corpus of Interactional Humor (Corinth) and addresses spontaneous humorous interactions, showing how "perspectivization" needs to be considered when one is analysing both humor and irony, as the two usually occur at different levels of discourse.

All in all, the work comprises an indispensable resource for the study of irony and humor and from multiple perspectives, offering the humor scholar a wide outlook on the most influential areas of current research. The contributions not only offer interesting applications of the theories under consideration but also suggest how those theories might be improved and developed. Key merits of this excellent book are thus the wide range of perspectives, approaches and methods of analysis that its contributors apply to irony and humor, catering for such diverse areas as pragmatics, discourse analysis, corpus studies, argumentation or cognitive theories; secondly, the range of texts and registers they analyze which include humorous monologues, mass media, conversation and everyday speech, to name but a few; thirdly, their attention to different languages and hence different cultural environments; and fourthly, the variety of

different corpora and text types that they investigate. For all these reasons *Irony and humor* will form an indispensable reference tool for forthcoming and subsequent studies on irony and humor, encouraging a wide readership among researchers seeking to develop their work in different disciplines and languages, and from multiple perspectives and theoretical angles.

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