



FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, LETTERS, HISTORY AND ARTS

**THE RESEARCH CENTRE ON THE IMAGINARY. TEXT, DISCOURSE,
COMMUNICATION. *IMAGINES***

LE CENTRE DE RÉUSSITE UNIVERSITAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF PITEȘTI

in collaboration with

AGENCE UNIVERSITAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (AUF)

THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY FOR ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES (RSEAS)

and the

ALBANIAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH (ASSE)

organize, between **June 14-16, 2019**

The Annual International Conference

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE – EUROPEAN LANDMARKS OF IDENTITY

The theme suggested for this year:

Irony and Humour: Imaginary and Representation

As manifestations of the imaginary, both humour and irony are built by mobilizing a mechanism meant to destabilize the receiver's expectation horizon. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Henri Bergson made, in his work *Laughter*¹, a fair difference between humour and irony, taken over and continued by Gérard Genette, who emphasized the polemical character that irony, unlike humour, possesses². In turn, Oswald Ducrot clearly showed that humour is a kind of irony which is targeted at nobody³.

¹ Bergson, Henri, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, Dover Publications, 2005.

² Genette, Gérard, "Mots du rire" in *Figures V*, Seuil, Paris, 2002.

³ Ducrot, Oswald, *Le dire et le dit*, Minuit, Paris, 1984.

The polymorphous concepts of humour and irony may be equally claimed by rhetoric and stylistics, literature, linguistics, cultural studies, arts, the history of humanity in general.

In **Literature** and **Linguistics**, humour and irony cultivate all registers of language and almost all literary genres, presenting themselves as special forms of communication whose semiotic complexity is undeniable. Thus, humour and irony can arouse the reader's laughter, which does not amount to a mere entertainment, since it is a form of catharsis, actualized through the collaboration between the producer and the receiver of the message.

In the 17th century, Jean de Santeul would sum up, using aphorism, the function of laughter, which is purgatory: *ridendo castigat mores* (*morals can be corrected by ridicule*). This means that humour and irony, whose manifestation is laughter, have a double target: the abnormality of others, on the one hand, and one's own abjections and forms of madness, on the other⁴.

If Pierre Schoentjes⁵ defines irony through the criteria of meaning, purpose, way of manifestation in speech, or as a figure of style, these criteria can be extended and extrapolated, from our point of view, in the definition of humour as well. This is because, whatever the context in which humour and irony appear, and no matter how diverse these contexts may be, one can find a recurrence of the mechanism that generates them: a diversion of the projections of the receiver's world, a diversion that can embody various forms.

On the other hand, Jean-Marc Moura⁶ showed that, in essence, humour - to which we would add irony - can be associated with four great types of texts: the narrative text, the descriptive text, the argumentative text, and the poetic text. Thus, regardless of the type of text in which they appear, humour and irony mark a gap between essence and appearance, between what is said and what is thought, what affects the logical level, implying, especially in the case of irony, a "previous reference, either to a previous speech, or to a manner of thinking [...]"⁷.

In literature, the presence of humour and irony is evident in all ages and literary genres, from the "*soties*" of the Middle Ages to satire and pamphlet, present in every age, through the philosophical stories and through the epistolary novel of the Enlightenment. The dramatic genre, in turn, makes full use of irony and humour, beginning with Molière and Beaumarchais, to the absurd theatre.

In **Language teaching**, the decryption of the mode of functioning of humour and irony obviously mobilizes linguistic competence, but it requires especially sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence, we may even add a *literary* competence (we dare to use this term in the field of didactics!), skills necessary for the understanding of the "semio-linguistic universe"⁸ presupposed by the "aesthetical and ludic" component of daily communication or

⁴ Cf. Morel, Jacques, *Agréables mensonges*, Klincksieck, Paris, 1991, p. 258 and the following.

⁵ Schoentjes, PIERRE, *Poétique de l'ironie*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 2001, p. 26.

⁶ Moura, Jean-Marc, *Le sens littéraire de l'humour*, PUF, Paris, 2010.

⁷ Gardes-Tamine, Joëlle, *La stylistique*, Armand Colin, Paris, 1996, p. 131. (tr. N.)

⁸ Syntagm established by J. Peytard, quoted by Bouguerra, T., "Humour et didactique des langues: pour le développement d'une compétence esthétique-ludico-référentielle", in *ELA. Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, 2007/3, no 147, pp. 365-382. URL: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-ela-2007-3-page-365.htm> (date of consultation 15.01.2019) (tr.n.).

media communication, as Tayeb Bouguerra shows⁹; this if we speak only of the types of genuine documents that are most used today in foreign language teaching.

In the field of **Music and Performing Arts**, humour and irony can be framed in what George Balint calls “the aesthetics of the contrast”¹⁰, which in fact reveals the same mechanism already evoked, of destabilizing the waiting universe. Under such forms as the ludic, the carnival, or commedia dell'arte, humour and irony put into work the aesthetics of the oblique gaze over the world, over the others and over one's self.

Should we think of the broad field of **History**, be it the chronological and de-subjectivised one, as experienced by the historians, or the “slow history”, as perceived, subjectively, by people, defined by Fernand Braudel¹¹, humour and irony have often been employed as means of personal reaction, as forms of rebellion or exorcism when forced to confront with the absurd challenges of history, in a world where the relationship between what is real and what is unthinkable has been reversed (the irony of history!).

Without claiming to be exhaustive, the theme proposed for this year's conference calls for a plural reflection on the various aspects of humour and irony in the areas already mentioned.

The debates are organized into several sections, managed as follows:

- 1. Romanian Language; Romanian Literature; Comparative Literature; The Didactics of the Romanian Language; Communication and Cultural Studies** – Lavinia GEAMBEI (geambeilavinia@yahoo.com).
- 2. French Language; French Literature; Francophone Literatures; French Cultural Studies; Canadian Cultural Studies; The Didactics of the French Language; Translation Studies (French)** – Liliana VOICULESCU (lilgoilan@gmail.com).
- 3. Spanish Language; Spanish Literature; Hispano-American Literature; Spanish and Hispano-American Cultural Studies; The Didactics of the Spanish Language; Translation Studies (Spanish)** – Diana LEFTER (diana.lefter@hotmail.com).
- 4. English Language; English Literature; Anglophone Literatures; British and American Cultural Studies; The Didactics of the English Language; Translation Studies (English)** – Cristina MIRON (cristinamironn@gmail.com).
- 5. German Language; German Literature; Didactics of the German Language** – Cristina MIRON (cristinamironn@gmail.com).
- 6. Civilisation, Society, Culture** – Liliana SOARE (lilianasoare2006@yahoo.com).
- 7. Language for Specific Purposes (French, English, German)** - Marina TOMESCU (ana_marina_tomescu@hotmail.com).
- 8. Performing Arts** – Diana LEFTER (diana.lefter@hotmail.com).

⁹ Bouguerra, Tayeb, “Humour et didactique des langues: pour le développement d'une compétence esthético-ludico-référentielle”, in *ELA. Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, 2007/3, no. 147, pp. 365-382. URL: <https://www.cairn.info/revue-ela-2007-3-page-365.htm> (date of consultation 15.01.2019)

¹⁰ Balint, George, *Privirea estetică. Încercare în contemplarea muzicii*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2018, pp. 97-163.

¹¹ Braudel, Fernand, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, A. Colin, Paris, 1949, pp. XII-XIV.

THE CALENDAR OF THE CONFERENCE

- **April 3, 2019** - submission of the registration form;
- **April 16, 2019** - confirmation of the acceptance of the paper;
- **May 30, 2019** – payment of the registration fee;
- **June 14-16, 2019** - proceedings of the conference;
- **July 30, 2019** - sending the paper in extenso

NOTE: The papers will be drafted in **English, French, Spanish, German, Italian or Portuguese.** Only the papers that have been presented and accepted by the peer review committee will be published in the journal (*Language and Literature – European Landmarks of Identity*, IDB-indexed - ErihPlus, EBSCO, CEEOL, IndexCopernicus, DOAJ etc. - and CNCS-classified). The other papers will be published in a collective volume, with ISBN, at a recognized publishing house. The time allotted to the presentation of a paper is **15 minutes.**

After the papers are accepted, the authors will receive accommodation-related information, as well as the bank coordinates for tax payment purposes (**50 €** for the foreign participants, respectively **200 LEI** for the Romanian participants).

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