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WAYS OF EXPRESSING IRONY IN THE HEROIC DRAMAS OF JOHN DRYDEN

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John Dryden's heroic dramas occupy a deliberately unstable position between celebration and criticism. Their kings, conquerors, lovers, martyrs, and rebels speak in the elevated idiom of honour and extraordinary passion; yet their words frequently reveal vanity, contradiction, dependence, or political blindness. Dryden himself defines the heroic play as "an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem" and identifies love and valour as its proper subjects[1]. This definition establishes the genre's aspirational scale, but it also creates the conditions for irony. Once characters are raised "far above the ordinary proportion of the stage," every mismatch between their language and their conduct becomes especially visible[2]. The heroic mode therefore generates not only admiration but also critical distance.

Irony in these plays should not be reduced to isolated sarcasm. It emerges from a relationship among utterance, situation, audience, and ideology. Linda Hutcheon emphasizes that irony is an interpretive event: it occurs when the said and the unsaid are held together and when an audience recognizes the evaluative attitude produced by their interaction[3]. Such a definition is particularly useful for Restoration heroic drama. A sentence can be sincerely intended by the speaker and still become ironic for spectators who perceive the speaker's self-deception. Likewise, an apparently noble action may acquire an ironic meaning when its political consequences contradict the vocabulary used to justify it.

Dryden's treatment of love is central to this doubleness. Scott C. Osborn notes that love is not a secondary ornament in the heroic plays but a force that structures their moral conflicts and repeatedly competes with honour, filial duty, and public responsibility[4]. Heroic characters imagine passion as proof of greatness; at the same time, passion makes rulers irrational, warriors vulnerable, and moral absolutists inconsistent. Irony arises because the very emotion that authenticates heroic identity also threatens to dissolve it.

The present article analyzes five interconnected forms of irony: verbal irony and epigrammatic reversal; dramatic irony and self-betrayal; situational and structural irony; grotesque or mock-heroic exaggeration; and political and gendered irony. These forms are examined in four representative dramas – The Conquest of Granada, Aureng-Zebe, Tyrannick Love, and The Indian Emperour. The central argument is that Dryden neither simply mocks heroism nor accepts its claims without qualification. Instead, he makes the audience alternate between attraction and suspicion. Heroic grandeur remains theatrically powerful, but irony reveals the cost, instability, and ideological limits of that grandeur.

The formal features of heroic drama intensify its ironic potential. Rhymed couplets encourage balance, antithesis, parallelism, and memorable closure. Characters formulate experience as if every conflict could be contained in a polished opposition: love versus honour, freedom versus obedience, reason versus passion, or private desire versus public duty. The couplet therefore gives an impression of intellectual mastery. Irony begins when the plot demonstrates that this mastery is verbal rather than real. A ruler may define sovereignty perfectly but fail to govern himself; a lover may praise constancy while changing objects; a warrior may proclaim independence while becoming emotionally dependent on one person.

The heroic couplet is especially suitable for epigrammatic reversal. One speaker establishes a grand proposition; another repeats its vocabulary but alters its moral direction. The second line or reply can expose an assumption concealed in the first. In this sense, irony is built into the dialogic rhythm

[1] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.10.
[2] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.10.
[3] Hutcheon Linda. Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony. – London: Routledge, 1994. – P.1–4.
[4] Osborn Scott C. Heroical Love in Dryden's Heroic Drama // PMLA, vol. 73, no. 5, 1958, – P. 482–484.

of the plays. The audience hears not only what a character says but also how easily the sentence can be turned against its author. Dryden's women often master this technique more effectively than his warriors and kings, because they must negotiate power through language rather than through armies or hereditary office.

Michael Graham Blyth argues that Dryden's heroic drama contains flashes of self-parody and sustains a productive tension between heroic elevation and satiric imbalance[1]. The point is not that every noble speech is secretly comic. Rather, Dryden repeatedly moves close enough to excess for the audience to evaluate the speech from two positions at once. A declaration may be magnificent as performance and absurd as practical reasoning. The heroic personage thus becomes both an ideal and a problem. Blyth calls attention to an "ironic focus" in which spectators are required to discriminate between authentic greatness and inflated self-presentation[2].

This double focus explains why irony in Dryden is often structural rather than merely lexical. The speaker may not intend an opposite meaning. Nevertheless, the arrangement of scenes, the knowledge available to spectators, or the later consequences of an action generate an ironic judgment. Irony can therefore coexist with pathos. Aureng-Zebe's temptation, Almanzor's emotional confusion, or Montezuma's political defeat can be moving even when their language is exposed as incomplete. Dryden's irony is strongest when it does not cancel heroic feeling but complicates it.

Verbal irony in Dryden frequently takes the form of controlled praise that communicates blame. A character repeats the opponent's moral vocabulary and makes it condemn the person who first employed it. In The Conquest of Granada, Lyndaraxa is a particularly skillful practitioner of such speech. Her conversations with Abdalla and Abdelmelech appear to concern love, but their real subject is political value. When Abdalla offers devotion without secure power, she reduces romance to a test of sovereignty. She tells him that when he is king he may become her slave, and his willingness to accept the paradox reveals how completely erotic ambition governs his political judgment[3]. The phrase is flattering on the surface – she imagines him as king –but humiliating in implication, because kingship is presented merely as the qualification for serving her.

Lyndaraxa's irony works through calculated ambiguity. She rarely rejects a suitor in direct language; instead, she grants a conditional hope whose condition exposes his inadequacy. Her wit transforms the heroic lover's vocabulary of service into literal political servitude. Abdalla interprets her smile as evidence of affection, whereas the audience recognizes it as an instrument of control. The discrepancy between his reading and hers produces dramatic irony, but the immediate mechanism is verbal: the same signs carry incompatible meanings for speaker, hearer, and spectator.

A similarly sharp exchange occurs when Abdelmelech praises Lyndaraxa's apparent compassion. His statement, "This Godlike pity in you I extoll; / And more, because, like heav'n, 'tis general," sounds complimentary but insinuates that her favours are indiscriminate[4]. The word "general" shifts from universal benevolence to sexual and political inconstancy. Lyndaraxa answers by questioning the disinterestedness of male judgment. The scene becomes a contest in which praise, accusation, defence, and counteraccusation occupy the same rhetorical form. Irony here is not the opposite of seriousness; it is the means by which characters struggle for interpretive control.

Aureng-Zebe offers an even clearer example of ironic reversal between sovereign and subject. The Emperor attacks Indamora's attachment to his son by comparing the rival lover to a "crawling insect" and describing love as an encroachment on royal prerogative. He imagines affection as coinage bearing the sovereign's stamp[5]. Indamora does not merely deny the accusation. She turns the language of authority into an ethical test: the Emperor should praise in his son what she, for reasons of duty, must refuse. Her response exposes the contradiction between paternal pride and erotic jealousy. He wishes Aureng-Zebe to be heroic until the son's excellence becomes personally inconvenient.

Nourmahal's dialogue with the Emperor is more openly sarcastic. When he praises a more compliant woman and attacks his wife's virtue, Nourmahal replies that since virtue provokes his anger, it is a pity he did not marry the woman he praises[6]. She then

[1] Blyth Michael Graham. Studies in the Heroic Drama of John Dryden. – Durham University, 1978. –P.2–3.
[2] Blyth Michael Graham. Studies in the Heroic Drama of John Dryden. – Durham University, 1978. –P.9–10.
[3] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.41.
[4] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.49–50.
[5] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P. 78.
[6] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.83.

identifies the mechanism of his accusation: his own appetites wander, but he attributes changeability to women. Her irony is diagnostic. It does not simply insult him; it names projection as the psychological basis of patriarchal judgment. A few lines later, when he claims a "God-like liberty in love," she answers by reminding him that youthful beauty will not be gathered by "withered hands"[1]. The elevated analogy between royal appetite and divine freedom collapses into an image of age and physical limitation.

These examples show three recurrent features of Dryden's verbal irony. First, it depends on semantic redirection: a word such as "general," "virtue," "liberty," or "service" is returned with a changed value. Second, it is socially situated: the ironic speaker responds to an imbalance of gender or rank. Third, it produces judgment without abandoning dramatic pleasure. The polished couplet allows aggression to be aesthetically contained, so that criticism appears as wit.

Dramatic irony arises when spectators understand more than the speaking character, especially when a character's declaration unintentionally reveals the weakness it is meant to deny. Almanzor's famous assertion of autonomy in The Conquest of Granada provides the clearest example. He refuses to recognize any human authority and declares:

"Obey'd as Sovereign by thy subjects be, / But know, that I alone am king of me. / I am as free as Nature first made man."[2].

The speech is theatrically compelling because its rhythm converts rebellion into personal majesty. Yet the claim "I alone am king of me" becomes ironic across the action. Almanzor may resist political command, but he cannot command his attachment to Almahide, his anger, or his need for recognition. His ideal of natural freedom is therefore contradicted not primarily by external law but by inward passion. The audience admires the energy of the declaration while anticipating the forms of dependence that the speaker cannot yet see.

The irony is intensified by Almanzor's mobility between factions. Dryden defends the character in the preface by arguing that his changes of side follow a consistent private code rather than mere instability[3]. Even so, the play makes that code difficult to separate from pride. Almanzor treats allegiance as the expression of individual judgment, but political communities experience his freedom as unpredictability. The heroic self is coherent from within and disruptive from without. This difference of perspective is itself ironic: what Almanzor names honour may appear to others as self-authorized violence.

Blyth observes that Dryden's handling of Lyndaraxa and Almanzor often exposes inflated heroic self-images through puns, disproportion, and comic analogy[4]. The result is not a simple parody of Almanzor. His courage remains real, but the language through which he mythologizes that courage sometimes exceeds the moral clarity of his actions. Spectators are invited to distinguish bravery from the fantasy of absolute independence.

Aureng-Zebe undergoes a related moment of self-betrayal when he is offered power at the price of filial loyalty. Under pressure, he briefly concludes that virtue is vain and that the world belongs to the bold impious man[5]. The speech is dramatically ironic because it contradicts the identity the play has established for him. His despair imitates the cynical logic of his enemies, and the audience recognizes the imitation before he fully does. The moment tests whether virtue is a stable disposition or merely a language sustained by favourable circumstances.

The Mughal Emperor also betrays himself through language. He repeatedly treats kingship as exemption from ordinary restraint, yet his jealousy makes him dependent on Indamora's response. His political superiority is undercut by emotional competition with his son. He can command armies and succession, but he cannot command love. The more intensely he asserts prerogative, the more visibly he becomes the servant of appetite. Dramatic irony thus converts the sovereign's vocabulary of control into evidence of inner disorder.

Maximin in Tyrannick Love represents the most extreme version of this pattern. He claims that free will belongs only to him and that all other people are puppets "danc'd upon a wire"[6]. He imagines the monarch as the spirit moving every mind. Yet this fantasy of universal control is spoken by a man controlled by erotic obsession, rage, and fear of refusal. The audience hears tyranny describing itself as freedom. Maximin's words are logically self-defeating: a will that must destroy resistance in order to feel free is

[1] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.85.
[2] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.30.
[3] Dryden John. The Works of John Dryden. Vol. XI: Plays – The Conquest of Granada, Marriage A-la-Mode, The Assignation. Ed. John Loftis and Vinton A. Dearing. – Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978. – P.16–17.
[4] Blyth Michael Graham. Studies in the Heroic Drama of John Dryden. – Durham University, 1978. –P. 191–192.
[5] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.94.
[6] Dryden John. Tyrannick Love or The Royal Martyr. – London: Henry Herringman, 1670. – 37-38.

dependent on the resistance it claims to transcend.

Situational irony occurs when actions produce consequences opposed to the intentions or moral categories of the agents. In Dryden's heroic drama, the most recurrent reversal is the conversion of mastery into servitude. Kings who demand obedience become subjects of passion; conquerors who seek glory become dependent on captives; lovers who promise constancy use love to justify change. Because this pattern recurs across different plays, it becomes a structural irony of the genre.

The Conquest of Granada organizes its conflicts around the unstable relation between public allegiance and private honour. Almanzor's extraordinary military power makes him indispensable to rulers, but his refusal of institutional obedience prevents that power from producing durable order. He can save a city or a faction; he cannot belong securely to either. His freedom therefore creates the need for repeated heroic intervention. The plot ironically depends on the disorder that the hero's victories are supposed to resolve.

In Aureng-Zebe, the Emperor's treatment of his loyal son finally returns upon him. After distrusting and threatening Aureng-Zebe, he discovers that the logic of ingratitude has spread through the family and court. His late recognition that he is punished "in the self-same kind" gives the action a moral symmetry[1]. The reversal is not mechanical poetic justice; it reveals how sovereign behaviour creates the political culture in which sovereignty must operate. A ruler who treats loyalty as expendable cannot expect loyalty to remain sacred in others.

Love generates another structural reversal. Heroic lovers often speak of voluntary devotion as the highest form of freedom, but their language repeatedly resembles bondage. Indamora insists that force can never win a generous heart and that love is sweet only when it comes willingly[2]. Her principle is ethically coherent, yet the surrounding men attempt to turn desire into jurisdiction. The irony lies in the collision between love's requirement of freedom and absolutism's need for command. The more the Emperor treats Indamora as an object of prerogative, the less possible genuine love becomes.

Maximin's attempt to command Catharine's will produces the same contradiction in more violent form. He defines resistance as an offence against sovereignty, but the value of Catharine's submission would disappear if it were merely forced. He desires a free consent that he refuses to leave free. Consequently, tyranny cannot obtain the recognition it seeks. It may conquer the body, but its success confirms its moral failure. This is one of Dryden's deepest situational ironies: absolute power proves incapable precisely where it most wishes to be absolute.

Such reversals also affect the audience's relation to heroic spectacle. Victories are visually impressive but morally unstable; defeats may reveal a form of integrity unavailable to conquerors. Catharine's martyrdom, Indamora's refusal, and Montezuma's defence of political independence reposition apparent weakness as ethical authority. Dryden repeatedly asks spectators to revise the meaning of power after they have witnessed its theatrical display.

The heroic style naturally employs hyperbole, but Dryden often pushes amplification to the point at which it becomes self-exposing. This is the domain of grotesque or mock-heroic irony. The language retains grandeur, yet the object or motive cannot sustain the scale of comparison. The effect is not always laughter; it may be unease produced by the disproportion between rhetorical magnitude and moral reality.

Maximin is Dryden's most sustained example. In Tyrannick Love, he compares his erotic ambition with the transformations of Jupiter and imagines that even the god would need new forms to rival his desire:

"Even Jove would try more shapes her love to win, / And in new birds, and unknown beasts would sin"[3].

The classical allusion initially elevates the passion, but the final verb, "sin," reverses the compliment. Divine metamorphosis becomes a catalogue of appetite, and heroic love becomes competitive transgression. Maximin does not recognize the degradation contained in his comparison. His attempt to make desire godlike instead makes his god bestial. The irony is therefore dramatic, verbal, and grotesque at once.

Blyth describes Maximin's imagery as conscious gigantism and argues that the character's megalomania turns heroic elevation into satiric overstatement[4]. This observation is confirmed by the later speech in which Maximin claims that a monarch may match "wolves to lambs" and make the union kind[5] . The image is meant to prove creative sovereignty, but it reveals predation. The wolf-lamb relation cannot become mutual simply because power renames it. The metaphor unintentionally supplies the moral

[1] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.143.
[2] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.80.
[3] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.19.
[4] Blyth Michael Graham. Studies in the Heroic Drama of John Dryden. PhD thesis, Durham University, 1978. – P. 196-197.
[5] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.37–38.

interpretation of Maximin's love: he calls coercion harmony because he controls the vocabulary.

The grotesque is especially effective because Dryden does not abandon rhetorical skill. Maximin's speeches are forceful, rhythmically controlled, and conceptually daring. Their brilliance makes the character dangerous and theatrically fascinating. At the same time, the audience is invited to detect the madness organized by the verse. Blyth notes that Maximin's sexual and political megalomania confounds love, sin, divinity, and animality[1]. The heroic couplet becomes a polished container for moral chaos.

A milder mock-heroic effect appears in the language of lovers who treat small gestures as cosmic signs. Abdalla reads Lyndaraxa's smile as if it altered political reality. Courtship becomes divination; personal uncertainty is translated into the idiom of fate. Dryden exploits the disproportion without wholly dismissing the emotional experience. Restoration spectators could enjoy the elegance of such interpretations while recognizing their self-serving nature.

Grotesque hyperbole thus performs a critical function. It tests whether elevated language corresponds to elevated motive. When the correspondence fails, the style becomes evidence against the speaker. Dryden's irony is not anti-rhetorical; rather, it demonstrates that rhetorical mastery cannot guarantee ethical truth.

The Indian Emperour extends Dryden's irony from private passion to imperial ideology. The Spanish representatives demand that Montezuma hold his sceptre from a distant king, surrender gold, abandon native gods, and accept a foreign religious authority. The demands are presented as the extension of heavenly order. Montezuma answers that the prince described as mighty is also "proud, and poor": proud because he claims a free-born sceptre, poor because he begs for metal that Mexico does not value in the same way[2]. The reply exposes the contradiction between universal sovereignty and material appetite.

The sharpest irony concerns religion. Pizarro claims that the Spanish have come to extend true religion, but Montezuma answers that religion must extend "in men, not lands"[3]. The distinction undermines conquest by separating inward faith from territorial possession. A mission justified as spiritual becomes visibly political when it requires tribute, jurisdiction, and institutional control. Montezuma further questions a priest who gives another man an empire he does not own. The colonized ruler becomes the clearer theologian, while the self-proclaimed agents of truth reveal conceptual confusion.

This reversal is politically significant. Christiane Hansen observes that recent readings of Restoration heroic drama emphasize the genre's inquiry into governance, obedience, and the conflict between private autonomy and public structures[4]. In The Indian Emperour, imperial rhetoric repeatedly claims moral universality, yet its practical signs are gold, military pressure, and delegated sovereignty. Dryden does not present indigenous rule as morally perfect – Montezuma is capable of cruelty and mistaken sacrifice – but he denies the Spaniards an uncomplicated monopoly on civilization.

A brief exchange later condenses the economic irony of conquest. When the Spanish captives are offered an opportunity, Pizarro's motive is reduced to the blunt declaration, "I the Gold"[5]. The line strips away the elaborate language of religion and honour that preceded it. Because the audience has heard the official justification, the nakedness of the motive becomes especially powerful. The heroic project is punctured by a comic monosyllabic object.

The play's colonial irony is therefore dialogic rather than doctrinal. Competing characters expose the contradictions of one another's systems. Montezuma defends independence but can rationalize violence; the Spaniards preach salvation while seeking possession; Cortez exhibits personal honour but participates in imperial coercion. No single political vocabulary remains pure. The audience must judge the distance between professed ends and material means.

Female characters are central to Dryden's ironic method because they frequently lack direct access to military and institutional power. Their authority is interpretive. They identify inconsistencies, redirect compliments, delay consent, and make male self-description visible as performance. This does not mean that every woman speaks from an uncomplicated moral position. Lyndaraxa is ambitious and manipulative, Nourmahal is destructive, and Indamora sometimes manages competing loyalties strategical-

[1] Dryden John. Aureng-Zebe: A Tragedy. Ed. Kenneth Deighton. – London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1892. – P.211–212.

[2] Dryden John. The Indian Emperour; or, The Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. London: J. M. for Henry Herringman, 1667. – P.19.

[3] Dryden John. The Indian Emperour; or, The Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. London: J. M. for Henry Herringman, 1667. – P.19–20.

[4] Hansen, Christiane. Heroic Drama between Passions and Politics // helden. heroes. héros. – 2016. – Vol. 4. – No. 1. – P. 50.

[5] Dryden John. The Indian Emperour; or, The Conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards. London: J. M. for Henry Herringman, 1667. – P.47.

ly. Their importance lies in their ability to reveal that heroic masculinity depends on being believed.

Lyndaraxa treats love as a market of political possibilities. Her irony exposes the exchange concealed beneath the language of devotion, but she also participates in that exchange. She wants to "live without control" and therefore measures suitors by their capacity to provide sovereignty. The phrase mirrors the heroic male desire for independence. Dryden gives a woman the same absolutist aspiration voiced by warriors, and the parallel is ironic: male ambition is conventionally named honour, whereas female ambition is more quickly recognized as calculation.

Nourmahal's sarcasm performs a different function. She attacks the double standard that permits royal male appetite to describe itself as liberty while condemning female resistance as pride or changeability. Her verbal victories do not make her morally stable, but they make the Emperor's self-exemption impossible to ignore. She turns age, desire, and hypocrisy into counterarguments against prerogative.

Indamora's irony is more restrained and ethical. She repeatedly distinguishes love from force and praise from possession. By accepting the Emperor's vocabulary temporarily and then redirecting it toward Aureng-Zebe's merit, she forces the ruler to confront the contradiction between paternal and erotic roles. Her wit protects moral boundaries without relying on open insult. In this respect, Dryden presents irony as a form of agency available within constraint.

Gendered irony therefore complicates the heroic drama's apparent concentration on male action. Battles and successions shape the plot, but interpretive power shapes the audience's judgment. Women often decide whether the language of heroism will be received as noble, ridiculous, coercive, or false.

Irony is one of the principal means by which John Dryden gives intellectual complexity to heroic drama. The genre's elevated style does not merely proclaim ideals; it creates a standard against which conduct can be measured. Verbal irony redirects the language of praise, virtue, liberty, and service. Dramatic irony reveals that characters who claim mastery are often governed by passions they cannot acknowledge. Situational irony transforms conquest into dependence, authority into ingratitude, and forced love into the proof that love has failed. Grotesque hyperbole exposes the moral disproportion of tyrannical desire, while political irony separates the universal claims of empire from its material motives.

Across The Conquest of Granada, Aureng-Zebe, Tyrannick Love, and The Indian Emperour, Dryden constructs heroic identity and subjects it to continuous testing. Almanzor's natural freedom is magnificent but socially disruptive and emotionally incomplete. The Emperor's prerogative is weakened by jealousy. Maximin's absolute will becomes the most visible form of slavery to appetite. Spanish religious authority is challenged by its association with land, gold, and coercion. In each case, irony emerges from the distance between self-description and dramatic reality.

The role of female wit is especially significant. Lyndaraxa, Nourmahal, and Indamora demonstrate that those excluded from formal sovereignty may possess superior control over interpretation. Their replies expose the assumptions on which male heroic authority depends. As a result, Dryden's heroic drama cannot be understood as simple praise of extraordinary rulers and lovers. It is a theatre of double vision: spectators are encouraged to feel the attraction of grandeur and, at the same moment, to recognize its instability. Irony preserves heroic energy while preventing heroic ideology from becoming unquestioned truth.

Resume: This article examines the principal ways in which irony is created in John Dryden's heroic dramas. Although heroic drama publicly celebrates extraordinary love, valour, honour, and sovereign power, Dryden repeatedly places these ideals under pressure through verbal reversals, dramatic discrepancies, situational defeats, grotesque hyperbole, political contradiction, and female wit. The analysis focuses on The Conquest of Granada, Aureng-Zebe, Tyrannick Love, and The Indian Emperour. It argues that irony is not a decorative addition to the heroic mode but one of its main organizing principles: the elevated couplet announces grandeur, while plot, dialogue, and theatrical context expose the instability of heroic self-images.

Keywords: John Dryden, heroic drama, irony, verbal irony, dramatic irony, heroic couplet, political authority, gendered wit.

Резюме: В данной статье рассматриваются основные способы создания иронии в героических драмах Джона Драйдена. Хотя героическая драма публично воспевает необычайную любовь, доблесть, честь и суверенную власть, Драйден неоднократно подвергает эти идеалы давлению с помощью вербальных переворотов, драматических несоответствий, ситуационных поражений, гротескной гиперболы, политических противоречий и женского остроумия. Анализ сосредоточен на "Завоевании Гранады", "Ауренг-Зебе", "Тиранической любви" и "Индийском императоре" В ней утверждается,

что ирония является не декоративным дополнением к героическому ладу, а одним из его основных организующих принципов: возвышенный куплет возвещает о величии, в то время как сюжет, диалог и театральный контекст разоблачают нестабильность героических самообразов.

Ключевые слова: Джон Драйден, героическая драма, ирония, вербальная ирония, драматическая ирония, героический стих, политический авторитет, гендерный остроумие.

Rezyume: Ushbu maqolada Jon Draydenning qahramonlik dramalarida kinoya yaratilishining asosiy usullari ko‘rib chiqiladi. Garchi qahramonlik dramasi g‘ayrioddiy sevgi, jasorat, sharaf va suveren kuchni omma oldida ulug‘lasa-da, Jon Drayden bu ideallarni og‘zaki o‘zgarishlar, dramatik nomuvofiqliklar, turli vaziyatdagi mag‘lubiyatlar, grotesk mubolag‘alar, siyosiy ziddiyatlar va ayollar zukkoligi orqali qayta-qayta tasvirlaydi. Tahlil “Granadaning zabt etilishi”, “Aureng-Zebe”, “Zulmkor muhabbat” va “Hind imperatori” asarlariga qaratilgan. Asarlardagi kinoya qahramonlik usuliga dekorativ qo‘shimcha emas, balki uning asosiy tashkiliy tamoyillaridan biridir. Ko‘tarinki bayt ulug‘vorlikdan darak bersa, syujet, dialog va teatrlashtirilgan kontekst qahramonlarning o‘z-o‘zini tasvirlashidagi beqarorlikni fosh etadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Jon Drayden, qahramonlik dramasi, kinoya, og‘zaki kinoya, dramatik kinoya, qahramonlik bayti, siyosiy hokimiyat, genderli hazil.