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IRONY AS A PROBLEM OF LITERARY TRANSLATION IN JULIAN BARNES'S WORKS

*Sarcasm is irony which has lost its soul
Julian Barnes*

It is known that term “irony” originates from the ancient Greek and since that time it has embedded into English as a linguistic device which describes a contrast between expectation and reality in the certain situation. Due to the specific cultural environment nationally coloured irony is a problematic device in the translation.

It is hard to reveal the hidden content presented through the irony. This device has a specific interpretation depending on the author’s style and the peculiarities of the translator.

Umberto Eco who was interested in the intertextual irony, sometimes called as an allusive one, thought it to be a quality of postmodern literature. It predicts author to make consciously a concept which is not equivalent to the basic one. Such image helps to provide a mockery and intellectually highlight the disadvantages in the stable materials.

Linda Hutcheon discusses the functions and effects of irony in *Irony’s Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* [2]. According to Hutcheon, who identifies the ironic as the predominant postmodern attitude in her earlier works about postmodernism, irony may have “destructive” as well as “corrective” functions.

The translation of postmodern literature gives an opportunity for new researchers in the field of humor and irony analysis. Julian Barnes as the presenter of British literature transmits his ideas through the ironic context which is hard to interpret. In the novel “A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters” he changes some important historical events. Julian Barnes invents events that represent some of the omissions from history as he is to retell other well-known stories from the point of view of the victims and characters embedded into the narration.

The first and the most vivid example of irony is presented in the title of this novel. It was made as the mockery of the world history. All the chapters are separated by their ideas and have no connection neither in plot nor in time. Richard Locke argues that the title emphasizes the fragmented form of the novel: *The title suggests a book that will flaunt genres, categories of communication, numbers that don’t neatly conform to our devotion to the order of ten. This self-advertising title is a boast that mocks itself by calling attention to its literary and cognitive form.*

In Chapter 4 of the novel, “The Survivor” the Chornobyl catastrophe was presented in Kate’s reflections. She was worried about the long-term effects this had on the animals, particularly the reindeer, which became radioactive and were killed, for example: *It wasn’t a very serious accident, they said, not really, not like a bomb going off. And anyway, it was a long way away, in Russia, and they didn’t have proper*

modern power stations over there like we do, and even if they did their safety standards were obviously much lower so it couldn't happen here and there wasn't anything to worry about, was there?...The cloud had gone over where the reindeer grazed, poison had come down in the rain, the lichen became radioactive, the reindeer had eaten the lichen and got radioactive themselves. What did I tell you, she thought, everything is connected. The irony is hidden between the unconnected situations, where the reindeer become an ironic image. In the same time a translation of this chapter is very close to our Ukrainian mentality. That was an ironic situation of concealment the information about Chernobyl all around the world. The Ukrainian translation accurately conveys the details, so the irony is quite transparent and understandable to the average reader.

“A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters” includes an irony and its devices which are used to falsify and deconstruct some grand narratives in history. The interpretation of Biblical Noah's Ark contradicts to the original religious text. The postmodern irony represents the possible ideas which could have been possible broaden horizons in historical interpretations. *You've always been led to believe that Noah was sage, righteous and God-fearing, and I've already described him as a hysterical rogue with a drink problem? The two views aren't entirely incompatible. Put it this way: Noah was pretty bad, but you should have seen the others.* Noah as the founder and "guardian" of the human race is presented from the ironic and point of author's view. And the Ukrainian translation, made by Hanna Yanovska, keeps the main idea of this ironic message and makes it not so rude and offensive as the original text: *Вам весь час навіювали, що Ной був мудрецем, праведним і богобоязним, а я тут описав вам його як істеричного пияка і взагалі малосимпатичну особу? Ці два погляди не такі вже й непомітні. Висловлюся так: Ной був нехороший чоловік – але бачили б ви всіх решту!* The words “rogue” and “pretty bad” are translated with a little bit lighter equivalents, which still keep the ironic message.

Julian Barnes made his own literary style where every irony had a sense translation of which should be done with the appropriate equivalents.

REFERENCES

1. Barnes, J. A History Of The World In 10 ½ Chapters / J. Barnes. – L., 1990. – 312 p.
2. Hutcheson, L. Irony's edge: The theory and politics irony. New York: Routledge. – 1994.