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UDC 82.0:81'38:82-3(73)-311.6

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WAYS OF EXPRESSING IRONY IN LITERARY PROSE (BASED ON IRWIN SHAW'S NOVEL "NIGHTWORK")

The concept of irony has been in the focus of attention of numerous researches, where it has been analyzed from different perspectives for better understanding the phenomenon. Various aspects of this phenomenon have been discussed in such disciplines as linguistics, literary studies, sociology, psychology, and neuroscience, thus giving a multifaceted idea of irony [3: 193]. The concept of irony exists in various historical, philosophical and literary contexts (from Socrates and Aristotle to Postmodernism). Each era has introduced its own nuances to its meaning, but the prospects for its development and study remain open [5], which accounts for the topicality of the present research.

Inés Palacio [8] identified the following basic uses of irony: Socratic irony, rhetoric irony, satiric irony, dramatic irony, tragic irony and metafictional irony

Marcella Bertuccelli [2] lays emphasis on verbal irony and highlights the language means which it can incorporate, such as hyperbole, understatement, simile, metaphor, litotes, etc. However, some authors point out the predicaments in recognizing irony, especially if it overlaps with metaphor [6: 87]. Another taxonomy of irony, suggested by Salvatore Attardo [1] comprises Socratic irony aimed at pedagogical purposes; dramatic irony in which the reader knows something that the character ignores; irony of fate which equals situational irony; and verbal irony which the scholar finds to be context-based.

There are studies discussing the ways of using irony by specific authors. For example, Saakyan [9] discovers that irony is the dominant technique in the works of Theodor Dreiser. Another study analyzes the use of ironic expressions in O. Henry's short story, and reveals how irony is highlighted by fictional elements [7].

The objective of the current research is to analyze implicit ironic connotation created in literary context. The study is based on the novel "Nightwork" by Irwin Shaw [10]. The narration in the novel is presented from the first person. Douglas Grimes, "a personified narrator <...> with well-defined individual human characteristics, a 'teller' recognized by the reader as a distinct person" [4: 40], describes the events, in which he himself takes part and expresses his attitude to them. Because of his irreversible eye problem, he has to change his job from a pilot to nightwork at a hotel. This dramatic change in his life affects his worldview making it highly ironic.

When being a pilot, Douglas regularly took the Wales family to ski resorts. Mr. Wales was a rich man who threw his money around. Although he was generous to Douglas, he aroused controversial feelings in the narrator: "He was not an unpleasant man, I had decided. Just too successful" [10: 9]. Irony in this utterance consists in the contrast between the protagonist's positive attitude to Mr. Wales and his disapproval of the man's success, which provokes jealousy rather than respect and excitement. The use of the litotes "not an unpleasant man" amplifies the ironic effect. It is a combination of verbal and situational irony.

“Sometimes I couldn't help but speculate about what my life would have been like if I hadn't suffered from this small affliction <...>” [10: 10]. In this example the author resorts to verbal irony. Douglas had been stuttering since early childhood. It cast a shadow over his life, made communication with others more difficult, affected his self-esteem, which means that his defect was serious enough, although he bitterly refers to it as “small affliction”. Thus, the author highlights a deep emotional personal struggle that Doug faces.

One night, after a man in room 603 died during Douglas' shift, he called the ambulance. When it arrived, instead of an expected highly trained medical professional to deal with an emergency case, he saw paramedical personnel and thought: “They don't waste doctors on ambulances in Manhattan, but dress up an orderly who is something of a medical technician and good enough to give first aid and who can usually be depended upon not to kill a patient on the spot” [10: 25]. By means of using the metaphor “They don't waste doctors on ambulances” and the hyperbole “not to kill a patient on the spot”, the author mocks at American health care system, suggesting that it prioritizes cost-cutting by using less qualified medical staff.

In Washington DC Douglas Grimes meets with his old pal, Jeremy Hale, with whom he went to school together, and who works at the State Department. After a poker game visited by a lot of influential people, Jeremy shares his ideas about the entire state system which is rotten and corrupt. Saying, “We live in the age of the Bensons, the smooth poison-droppers, who know from birth that the way up is through the sewer” [10, 84], he means that only schemers and manipulators can succeed in that society. The ironic effect here is created with the help of the allusion “the Bensons” – a reference to Benson, one of the malicious visitors of the poker party; the oxymoron “smooth poison-dropper” which refers Benson who delivers harmful and deceitful remarks and spreads gossip in a deceptively pleasant manner; and the metaphor “the way up is through the sewer” implying that contrary to the general belief that climbing a career ladder is associated with hard work, now it is impossible to achieve success in a fair way,

without lies and manipulations. In this example irony is so bitter that it borders on sarcasm.

Another example of verbal irony is found in Jeremy Hale's tirade where he complains of his life in which he is trapped, trying to arouse his friend's sympathy and simultaneously save his face and justify his adultery and lies: "I put on a good act," Hale said lifelessly. "I have to. I'm a dandy little old liar. <...> Happy civil servant, happy husband, happy son-in-law, happy father of two ..." [10: 84]. The repetition of the word "happy" is aimed at emphasizing Jeremy's frustration and letting the reader understand how much the character is forced to pretend to be contented with his life when in fact he is not, feeling helpless to change the situation, or maybe unwilling to do it as he enjoys all the material benefits.

The analysis of the novel "Nightwork" by Irwin Shaw proves that it is abundant in ironic utterances, which makes it possible to assert that irony is a characteristic feature of the author's style. Concluding that most of the cases of irony are those of verbal irony, the study fully supports S. Attardo's contention that it is context-based. Moreover, various stylistic devices and expressive means, such as metaphor, allusion, hyperbole, oxymoron, repetition, etc., contribute to creating ironic effect. The results of the current research can be used in teaching Literary Studies, Stylistics, Text Analysis and are helpful in developing students' analytical and critical thinking.

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УДК 811.111'373'42:32

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ФУНКЦІЇ СОМАТИЗМІВ У СТАТТЯХ ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ТЕМАТИКИ