#### THE RECEPTION OF IRONY IN LITERARY TRANSLATION

# Oana Momiță (Babîi), PhD Student, "Al. Ioan Cuza" University of Iași

Abstract: This study aims to present a new approach to translation analysis through the effect that a concept such as irony has on the target readers. It focuses on the receiver of the translated literary works, for the purpose of conducting a comparison of the effect - considered as a direct result of the quality of the translation - of irony on several categories of readers. For this purpose, a survey was carried out which offered numerical findings leading to objective conclusions as regards the reception of irony in translation. In actualizing the translated literary texts, this study shows that an essential mission belongs to the translator who plays a double role: that of reader/interpreter of the original work and writer of the translated literary work.

Keywords: literature, translation, irony, reception, actualization

### **Introduction:**

In the past, it was believed that authors made deliberate use of irony in order to encode a message and interwove just the right amount of clues within the literary work to coordinate the readers on the right path towards assuming his intention. Aware of the literary context in which they were writing, as well as of the reading habits of the audience they were writing for, even the authors complied with the norms of the time and acted as the sole conveyors of meaning by creating liaisons that were clear indicators of their true intention in order to make interpretation possible. But times have changed and nowadays the modern theories have found a much more active use for the readers which has inevitably reduced the authority of the author in the interpretive process. The intentionalist position of the authoritarian ironist, followed by the antithetic position of the authoritarian reader, is now, according to irony theorist Linda Hutcheon (Hutcheon 2005: 114), completed by a third position of "shared responsibility for both in the use and attribution of meaning".

Irony has been studied in the context of reader-response theories before, but in original form, never in translation. My intention in what follows is, therefore, to discuss critically the impact of irony in the translation of literary works, on the basis of the main reader-response theories. The survey carried out for this purpose on two groups of students of different levels of studies, will offer numerical findings that will allow me to draw objective conclusions as regards the reception of irony in translation. I shall start from the hypothesis that if the texts are recognised as ironic and the subjects motivate their decision on the right grounds, the irony in translation has had the same effect as the original.

## The reception of irony in translation, a process of re-negotiation of meaning:

The reader-response theory is an integral part of the literary theory that focuses its attention on the reader and on the way in which s/he receives the literary work, unlike other more traditional theories that focus primarily on the author or on the structure of the literary work. In this context of reader-response theories, irony widens the scope of the process of interpretation because it inevitably offers the receiver more than one possible meaning in reconstructing the message in the act of reading. Irony is an indirect kind of communication, therefore its interpretation can be regarded as a continuous *negotiation* of meanings between ironist, text and receiver. In translation, however, a fourth actor is involved, namely the translator, who has a very important role in dictating the manner in which the translated ironic text is *re*-negotiated by the receiver. Nevertheless, there has not been carried out any study to date on the reception of irony in translation.

# **Survey:**

- 1. Aim The study below aims to verify to what extent irony is opaque or transparent in translation, and how the translation of ironic excerpts from the authors I have chosen are received by the target readers. Based on literary criticism on the authors chosen, I shall start from the presumption that if the texts are recognised as ironic and the subjects motivate their decision on the right grounds, the irony in translation has had the same effect as the original. Given the fact that the area of ironical interaction is "ill-explored, and even less understood as opposed to the traditional analyses of irony, which focus almost exclusively on the ironical utterance itself" (Eisterhold, Jodi 2006: 1240), I shall first describe the sociolinguistic variables of the subjects, i.e. gender, age, setting, education, etc., in order to have a better understanding of the results.
- **2. Methodology** This study will focus on the receiver of the translated literary works, for the purpose of conducting a comparison of the effect considered as a direct result of the quality of the translation produced by the translation of irony on several categories of readers: students in translation studies at undergraduate and master levels. For this purpose, I have applied a laboratory method of data collection in order to test the comprehension of irony in translation, namely creating a survey and observing the participants while completing it. The survey contains titles, short dialogues or ironic passages in translation from the corpus of texts chosen, in order to be analysed by the participants, the latter having full freedom in answering the question is(n't) it ironic? and motivating their responses without being conditioned by other criteria than irony. Their comments are written down in the column dedicated to their observations. The numerical results obtained will serve to objectively support the validity of the hypotheses, analyzes and conclusions through the qualitative method.
- **3. Material** The present survey is based on twenty one texts collected from the translation into Romanian of some of the literary works, originally written into English, the titles and authors of which shall be revealed in the analysis of results. Due to the space limitation imposed upon this

article, however, I shall quote only fifteen of the texts. The literary works belong to different authors from different periods of time, and convey different types of irony, in an attempt to study the reception of irony in translation in all its complexity, not particular or limited to one author or literary work.

- **4. Participants** Thirty students attending "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iaşi have kindly volunteered to take part in this survey. Fifteen of them were at the moment the survey was taken in their second year of LMA English-French studies, aged 20-21, and the other fifteen were in their first year of MA in Translation Studies and Terminology English-French, aged 23-37. Despite the fact that the audience is mixed-gendered, most of the participants are women, in number of 13 (86%) in the first group and 14 (93%) in the second one.
- **5. Setting -** The data was collected in classroom interaction in two separate sessions, one for each group of students. Both meetings, which took place on 16 and 26 May 2014 were, however, designed to take place under very similar conditions to ensure the same level of comfort, intimacy, silence, etc., in order to reproduce a natural reading environment.

# 6. Survey

No	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
1.	- Doar aşa, ca să vă dau	Group 1:	1. The irony is accomplished by using terms which
	o idee generală, le	100% yes	give a different connotation to the literal meaning as
	explică el.	0% no	well as subtleties.
	Firește că trebuia să	0% not sure	2. Being a happy member of the community doesn't
	capete o idee generală,		really imply knowing less than necessary. Or does it?
	de vreme ce urmau să-	Group 2:	1. The less you know, the happier you are; that's an
	și îndeplinească inteli-	100% yes	irony.
	gent munca - deși prea	0% no	2. They are supposed to do their job intelligently
	multe nu trebuia să	0% not sure	though they should not know too much.
	știe; mai bine zis era		3. Describing the "intelligent" way they should have
	convenabil să știe cât		worked, while knowing as less as possible, in order
	mai puţin, ca să poată		to be "true, happy members of the society".
	<u>ajunge</u> membri		4. I can envision what the original would sound like
	adevărați și fericiți ai		in English. The use of "firește" greatly contributes to
	colectivității.		preserving the irony.
2.	DOAMNA PEARCE	Group 1:	1. The antithesis between what he claims (that he
	(netulburată): Nu,	77.7% yes	doesn't swear) and what he in fact does; as well as
	domnule Higgins, nu	22.2% no	the stage directions between brackets ("outraged"
	sunteți deloc atent la ce	0% not sure	and "with emphasis")

No	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
	spuneți când nu găsiți		2. The irony is accomplished through the fact that
	un lucru sau când		Mr. Higgins contradicts his sayings through his
	sunteți cam nerăbdător.		deeds.
	În ce mă privește, nu	Group 2:	1. The man swears he doesn't swear, but in fact he
	are nici o importanță,	100% yes	does just that.
	m-am învățat. Dar în	0% no	2. She doesn't accept the fact that he talks the way he
	fața fetei nu trebuie să	0% not sure	does, so she cannot get used to that.
	vorbiți urât.		3. The construction conjonctive + exclamation mark.
	HIGGINS (indignat):		4. Irony enhanced by the addition between brackets.
	Eu să vorbesc urât! (Cu		5. The irony consists in the fact that the character
	<i>emfază:)</i> Eu nu înjur		affirms very convincingly that he does not swear by
	niciodată. Detest ob-		actually swearing.
	iceiul acesta! Ce dracu		
	vrei să spui?		
3.	În camera ei,	Group 1:	1. The fact that she was reading this book only be-
	domnișoara Fulkes luă	33.3% yes	cause its author is famous (and in order to "enhance
	loc și <u>începu să</u>	55.5% no	her knowledge"). "Must" from the last sentence may
	citească - pentru a-și	11.1% not sure	make one think of a half-learned person.
	îmbogăți cunoștiințele.		2. The author underlines Mrs. Fulkes' superficiality.
	Cartea se numea Avuția		3. Contrast between Mrs. Fulkes's status and her de-
	națiunilor. Știa că		sire to enrich her knowledge.
	Adam Smith e celebru.	Group 2:	1. It implies that one must do something if every-
	O carte pe care trebuia	50% yes	body else does it, without needing to analyse the
	s-o citești. O culme a	12.5% no	situation, and think for oneself.
	gândirii și a scrisului.	37.5% not sure	2. I think the author makes reference to the persons
	Familia domnișoarei		who think they are very intelligent and above every-
	Fulkes era săracă, dar		one just because they have read certain books.
	instruită. <u>Trebuie să</u>		3. The author is ironic with regard to the character's
	<u>iubim</u> <u>lucrurile</u>		choice of reading and the reasons why she is reading
	<u>înălțătoare când le</u>		that particular book.
	<u>întâlnim.</u>		
4.	ALGERNON:	Group 1:	1. Very widely spread behaviour, especially in Ro-
	Adevărul este rareori	100% yes	mania.
	pur, și niciodată sim-	0% no	2. Algernon is surely against the journalists and con-
	plu. Altminteri, viața	0% not sure	siders them very uneducated.
	modernă ar fi foarte		3. The sentence "better leave it" makes us realize
	plictisitoare, iar litera-		that the next sentence is ironic.
	tura modernă cu totul		4. The irony is achieved through the contrast be-

No	Texts from various authors	Is it ironic?(yes /no / not sure)	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	imposibilă.	/ not sure)	tween the two characters' opinions.
	JACK: N-ar fi nici o		5. Irony against the intelligence of students.
	pagubă.	Cassa 2:	
	ALGERNON: Dragul	Group 2:	1. It implies that the ones who always criticize are
		100% yes	usually not the right people to do so.
	meu, nu ești tare în	0% no	2. Jack doesn't seem to appreciate the modern litera-
	critică literară. Nu te	0% not sure	ture. Obviously they don't believe that the ones who
	hazarda. Mai bine las-o		didn't go to university could do better.
	pe seama celor care nu		3. Irony referring to modern life and literature ("so
	au dat pe la universi-		well").
	tate. Ei critică atît de		4. Algernon uses irony to criticize those who tend to
	bine prin gazete.		comment and pretend to know everything even
			though they are not accomplished enough to do that.
5.	- Oricum, de un lucru	Group 1:	1. The narrator's exaggeration; maybe it was a verbal
	putem fi siguri: oricine	88.8% yes	tic.
	o fi fost, cât a trăit a	11.1% no	2. The characters are pretending to be happy; they
	fost fericit. Acum toată	0% not sure	are part of the same ritual and they are sick of it
	lumea e fericită.		every single time they mention it.
	- Da, "acum toată lu-		3. The repetition of a said line in a text gives the im-
	mea e fericită", îl		pression of slight irony and low level of education at
	îngână Lenina.		the same time.
	Amândoi auziseră	Group 2:	1. He's obviously not happy anymore, as he's no
	aceste vorbe repetate	75% yes	longer alive. Both of them are being sarcastic.
	de o sută cincizeci de	25% no	2. The irony comes from the repetition, time related
	ori în fiecare noapte,	0% not sure	words.
	vreme de doisprezece		3. Insufficient data.
	ani.		
6.	JACK: Avocații fami-	Group 1:	1. The repetition of Markby's name. This shows their
	liei Cardew sînt domnii	87,5% yes	lack of personality and the fact that they don't stand
	Markby,	0% no	out through anything.
	Markby şi Markby.	12,5% not sure	2. The author could have abbreviate the name or
	LADY BRACKNELL:	,	make an allusion to this "treble alliance".
	Markby, Markby şi		3. The firm's prestige is judged according to its
	Markby? O firmă cu		members' presence at parties.
	prestigiu de prim rang	Group 2:	1. The text is funny, but it doesn't seem to be ironic.
	în această branșă. După	25% yes	2. One cannot identify the Markby from the three
	cum mi s-a spus, <u>unul</u>	25% yes 25% no	lawyers.
	din domnii Markby	50% not sure	3. It is either Lady Bracknell who is being ironic
	poate fi văzut din cînd	50% not suic	towards Jack's belief that there are three lawyers
	poate ii vazut uiii ciliu		lowards jack's belief that there are three lawyers

	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
	<u>în cînd la serate</u> .		called Markby of the author is emphasizing Lady
7	TO! 1! 1 1! .	G 1	Bracknell's gullibility.
	Ei bine, unul dintre	Group 1:	1. The fact that it is written with italics. In general,
	lucrurile pe care <u>nu le</u>	33.3% yes	this is a clue of irony in a text.
	<u>va face</u> pe timpul	33.3% no	2. The irony intended in the source text was probably
	șederii în Anglia este o	33.3% not sure	lost in translation.
	vizită la mormântul		3. He obviously knows the name of his grandmother.
	scriitoarei.		4. Mary Makepeace did not know that Jane Austen
	Probabil că a gândit cu		was a famous writer.
	voce tare, fiindcă Mary	Group 2:	1. The entire conversation seems ironic.
	Makepeace îl întreabă	30% yes	2. One usually knows the name of his/her grand-
	dacă Jane Austen e	30% no	mother.
	numele bunicii sale.	40% not sure	3. Perhaps the emphasis on his not visiting the writ-
	Răspunse că i se pare		er's grave is ironic because it seems rather over-
	extrem de improbabil.		reacted.
8.	Ce înseamnă să fii	Group 1:	1. Probably a rhetorical question.
	onest	44.4% yes	2. Depending on context, it could have conse-
		33.3% no	quences.
		22.2% not sure	3. It's a plain sentence.
			4. This statement makes me think the opposite.
		Group 2:	1. It depends on the context.
		12.5% yes	2. There should be an exclamation night as a sign of
		62.5% no	irony.
		25% not sure	3. Lack of context.
		1 - yes and no	
	Nizar a zîmbit ca să mă	Group 1:	1. The fact that he calls him names behind his back.
	liniştească. (Aşa îl	66.6% yes	But this is a milder, friendlier irony.
	cheamă pe consultantul	11.1% no	2. Using the nickname without Nizar's knowledge.
	meu ortoped, domnul	22.2% not sure	3. An ironic reference to a bone of a human body,
	Nizar. <u>Eu îi spun Ab-</u>		associated with the name Abdul, resulting in a funny
	dul Rotul. Nu cînd e de		construction.
9.	<u>față, normal.</u> E din		4. The nickname used could give the impression of
	Orientul Apropiat, din		irony, but I don't believe so.
	Liban, Siria, sau aşa	Group 2:	1. The nickname, his relationship with the one to
	ceva și, din cîte știu,	50% yes	which it is attributed and the assurance of the inter-
	nu-l bate gîndul să se	25% no	locutor of the fact that the doctor does not know
	întoarcă.)	25% not sure	about it.
			2. Situational irony / word pun: "ortoped" - "Rotul".

No	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
	- Tată! Tatăl	Group 1:	1. Maybe the line "Tată! Tatăl meu!" should be spo-
	meu!Cuvântul	22.2% yes	ken out loud in a play of some sort for it to be re-
	(căci tată nu era chiar	22.2 % no	garded as funny or ironic.
	atât de obscen- cu	55.5% not sure	
	conotațiile sale ceva	Group 2:	1. I think the narrator really means what he says.
	mai şterse decât	25% yes	2. An almost grim irony, resulted from the classifica-
	scârboșenia și imorali-	25% no	tion of some concepts and ideas - such as "father"
	tatea nașterii copiilor -	50% not sure	and the child birth - as pornographic and disgusting
	nu doar ordinar, mai		things - the opposite of what they really are.
10.	degrabă scatologic		3. The feelings that the word "father" gives birth to
	decât propriu-zis por-		are weird.
	nografic), cuvântul		4. Unclear from context.
	comic-porcos făcu să		
	se descarce ceea ce		
	devenise între timp o		
	încordare insuportabilă.		
	Izbucniră râsete, ho-		
	hote imense, aproape		
	isterice.		
11.	Cuvîntul pe care eu îl	Group 1:	1. Informative; the author is being honest which
	traduc prin "insulă	33.3% yes	makes him a bit funny.
	zburătoare" sau "pluti-	44.4% no	2. A shade of irony in the unsure origin of the word
	toare" în limba lor este	22.2% not sure	"Laputa".
	Laputa, a cărui etimo-		3. In the final lines, the game of words reveals the
	logie adevărată n-am		real intention of the author/speaker and his/her irony.
	putut s-o aflu. Într-o	Group 2:	1. Jonathan Swift is renowned for his fine irony, and
	limbă veche și de mult	87.5% yes	the irony consists in the fact that, during his time, the
	uitată <i>lap</i> înseamnă	12.5% no	so-called scientists were very narrow-minded.
	înalt, iar untuh, cîrmui-	0% not sure	2. He thinks that he knows the meaning of Laputa
	tor, deci Laputa – spun		better than those living there, although he has no
	ei – vine de la <i>Lapun</i> -		basis for what he says.
	<i>tuh</i> . Personal nu sînt de		3. He/she just expresses his/her opinion.
	acord cu această deri-		4. Explanation which the Lilliputians give to the
	vare, ce mi se pare cam		name "Laputa" is much more plausible than the one
	<u>trasă de păr</u> . Am		suggested by Gulliver. However, he seems the think
	îndrăznit să le		the contrary and this opposition attracts the irony.
	împărtășesc învățaților		The contradiction between what Gulliver says and
	o părere a mea și		does provokes humour and irony.

No	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
	anume că Laputa ar		5. The underlined words show the speaker's frustra-
	veni aproximativ de la		tion.
	Lap outed, lap însem-		6. What I find ironic is not necessarily the content of
	nînd, propriu-zis, jocul		the fragment, but the way in which the narrator sup-
	razelor de soare în		ports his point of view and in which he wants to in-
	apele mării, iar <i>outed</i> –		fluence the reader.
	aripă, părere pe care		7. Gulliver is being ironic when implying that he did
	totuși nu vreau s-o im-		not dare tell the scientists that they could be wrong
	pun neapărat, ci doar s-		even though he's sure they are.
ļ	o spun cititorului judi-		
	cios.		
12.	Grijuliu, m-am ridicat	Group 1:	1. Irony addressed at himself.
	în picioare. (Ar fi tre-	77.5% yes	2. Not sure, it's funny though.
ļ	buit să spun "în mod	0% no	3. Interruption of ideas by explaining some words in
	grijuliu"? Nu, m-am	22.2% not sure	order to emphasize the character's giddy character.
	uitat adineauri în		4. Mild forms of irony.
	dicționar, adjectivul și		5. I think that he actually knows [that the adjective
	adverbul au aceeași		and adverb have the same form] and means to satir-
	formă.) Grijuliu, m-am		ize [by claiming he doesn't].
	ridicat în picioare, mi-	Group 2:	1. The irony points to the etymology of the word
	am sprijinit greutatea	87.5% yes	"ginger" and its grammatical category, both adjective
	pe un genunchi și am	0% no	and adverb, which is not very common in English.
	făcut cîțiva pași în față	12.5% not sure	2. He keeps questioning what he's thinking.
	(ciudat cuvînt, dacă		3. The character doesn't seem to be noble or highly
	stau să mă gîndesc, n-		intelligent and he doesn't even mean to be like that.
	are nici o legătură cu		4. The reflection on metalanguage produces irony.
	ghimbirul1; întotdeau-		The pauses in discourse, the brackets, the observa-
	na mi-am zis că		tions of an unexpected nature.
	înseamnă felul cum		5. The questions addressed to himself. The construc-
	guști ghimbirul		tion "nu, cică ar veni".
	măcinat, foarte atent,		6. Irony triggered by the addition between brackets.
	cu un deget umezit și		7. The careful process through which the character
	încercîndu-l apoi pe		chooses his words.
	vîrful limbii, dar nu,		8. He is expressing irony towards himself with his
	cică ar veni din france-		care for correct speech and towards language itself.
	za veche, de la genson,		
	adica <u>finut</u> , <u>sau gent</u> ,		
	adică de viță nobilă,		

No	Texts from various	Is it ironic?(yes	Comments [what made you think it is(n't) ironic?]
	authors	/no / not sure)	
	dintre care nu mi se		
	potrivește nici unul).		
	1. În original "ginger",		
	care, ca substantive,		
	înseamnă ghimbir.		
13.	- Fie-mi iertată curiozi-	Group 1:	1. The writing in italic and the preconception accord-
	tatea, revine <u>blonda</u> cu	88.8% yes	ing to which blondes are not exactly intelligent.
	o întrebare. Ați plătit	0% no	2. I need more context to understand if it is or isn't
	tot tacâmul - călătoria	11.1% not sure	ironic.
	dus-întors, onorariul		3. The well-known line from the end used as a ques-
	chirurgului, cinci zile		tion is ironic.
	cu asistență medială la	Group 2:	1. Maybe the irony consists in the fact that the girl
	dispoziție și excursiile	100% yes	who asks the question is blonde. But the last line
	la Stratford-upon-	0% no	points to a very well known play by Shakespeare,
	Avon?	0% not sure	born in Stratford-upon-Avon.
	- Ce legătura are asta		2. Zapp asks if the play is "All's well that ends well"
	cu Stratford-upon-		but in fact he's speaking about the outcome of the
	Avon, pentru numele		surgery.
	lui Dumnezeu?		3. The blonde woman doesn't believe that a play
	- Se presupune că-ți		could do you well after a surgery. She doesn't be-
	reface moralul după		lieve that all that is worth the money.
	operație. Și mai vezi și		4. The last line, from one of Shakespeare's plays fits
	o piesă.		the dialogue perfectly. It is a hint that the situation
	- Totul e bine când se		hasn't ended too well for the blonde.
	termină cu bine? îi dă		5. Zapp is being ironic by not clarifying whether he
	Zapp, fulgerător, repli-		was referring to the play "All's well when it ends
	ca.		well" or whether he was serious about her idea that
			Stratford-upon-Avon is therapeutic after a surgery.

### **Results and discussions:**

I shall begin by naming the authors and the literary works from the translation of which I have extracted the excerpts analysed in the survey above: (1), (5) and (10) Aldous Huxley, <u>Brave New World</u>; (2) G.B. Shaw, <u>Pygmalion</u>; (3) Aldous Huxley, <u>Point Counter Point</u>; (4), (6) and (8) Oscar Wilde, <u>The Importance of Being Earnest</u>; (7) and (13) David Lodge, <u>Changing Places</u>; (9) and (12) David Lodge, <u>Therapy</u>; and finally (11) Jonathan Swift, <u>Gulliver's Travels</u>. The results stand thus: in 9.5% of the cases (texts 1 and 4), the irony in the translation of the literary texts chosen has had the same effect on the students at BA and MA level. In almost half of the cases, 42.8% to be exact, there has been a similarity of effect between the two groups. In 23.8%

of the cases the results show a different effect and in the remaining 23.8% there has been an incongruity of effect, or else situations in which the discrepancy of effect was much bigger than what I have already rated as "different".

Perfect agreement of effect, therefore, was unrelated to author or literary work, due to the fact that the texts included in this category of results belong to different authors and literary works, respectively, Huxley's Brave New World and Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest. The other excerpts from Huxley's novel were included in the category of "similarity of effect", while the other two texts from Wilde's very same play have been included in the last two categories of "different effect" and "incongruity of effect". In the case of the other novel written by Aldous Huxley, Point Counter Point, the effect of the irony in translation was equally divided within the last three categories of similarity, difference and incongruity of effect. Moreover, the other two excerpts from Oscar Wilde's second play, An Ideal Husband, which were not presented in this article but which did make part of the survey, were included in the category labeled "similarity of effect". The fact that four out of four texts by the same author have had a different effect of irony in translation proves that the author's style of writing does not influence the reception of irony in translation. The fact that three out of three texts from the same literary play (Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest) and three out of three texts from the same literary novel (Huxley, Point Counter Point) have had a different effect in translation proves, as well, that the literary work alone does not influence the reception of irony in translation.

Among the texts that received similar response as regards the translation of irony, three of them are from David Lodge's novels. Text number twelve from Lodge's novel <u>Therapy</u>, considered ironic by 77.7% of group one and 87.5% of group two, is in my opinion, an example of poor translation of irony. Let us have a comparative look at the original text, in English, and its translation into Romanian for a better understanding:

Therapy, David Lodge 1996, p.4	Terapia, David Lodge 2002, p.12
Gingerly I got to my feet. (Should that be	Grijuliu, m-am ridicat în picioare. (Ar fi trebuit
'gingerlyly'? No, I've just looked it up, ad-	să spun "în mod grijuliu"? Nu, m-am uitat adi-
jective and adverb both have the same form).	neauri în dicționar, adjectivul și adverbul au
[] funny word actually, nothing to do with	aceeași formă.) [] ciudat cuvînt, dacă stau să
ginger.	mă gîndesc, n-are nici o legătură cu ghimbirul <sup>1</sup> .
	1. În original "ginger", care, ca substantiv,
	înseamnă ghimbir.

The translation has diminished the ironic effect considerably: the addition of "-ly" to the adjective "gingerly", which already ends in "-ly", to obtain the adverb makes the sound and appearance of the word "gingerlyly" not only humorous, but also an instance of self-deprecating irony. The main character of the novel, Laurence "Tubby" Passmore, is a self-taught man who makes frequent use of the dictionary for complicated words. This particular word, however, shouldn't have caused him trouble, as it does not belong to the category of complicated words which require academic studies. Lodge is attempting, quite successfully, to mock the practice of his character who wants to be sure of the correctness of every word he uses, fact which is lost in the

Romanian translation: "în mod grijuliu" is not incorrect in Romanian. Moreover, the difference of sound and meaning between "grijuliu" and "ghimbir" is too extraordinary to allow comparison. Thus, whether or not the translator has made the best choice by going with a literal translation in this passage is, in my opinion, highly debatable.

# **Conclusions:**

All the literary texts in the survey to which I have subjected the two groups of subjects in section five of this article were ironic. The results show that the group of fifteen students of BA level considered 63% of the text as being ironic, while 18% were regarded as not ironic, and 19% were unclear. On the other hand, the second group of fifteen MA-level students recognised 69% of the texts as being ironic, while 15% were deemed not ironic, and 16%, again, ambiguous.

On average, in the process of re-negotiating ironic meaning in translation, the receivers recognised 66 percent of the literary texts as being ironic, in 17.5 percent of the cases they were unsure and in 16.5 percent they did not regard the texts as ironic. Moreover, in 9.5 percent of the cases, the irony in translation has had the same effect on the students at BA and MA level. In 42.8 percent of cases, there has been a similarity of effect between the two groups. In 23.8% of the cases there has been a different effect and in the remaining 23.8 percent there has been an incongruity of effect.

The results of the survey show the fact that irony is not always recognised in translation, but this does not necessarily imply that the translation is poor or that the receivers are the at fault; sometimes they misunderstand the ironical intent or interpreted it differently due to the fact that they are part of a different discursive community than the original author. Even if modern reception theories claim that the reader has full freedom of interpretation and actualization of the literary work, in the case of irony, the survey I have carried out proves that this is not always the case. There are examples of instances of language-based irony that only allow one interpretation, not more, therefore any other interpretation than the one intended by the author is not correct. There have also been cases which, on the contrary, allowed diversity of interpretation, therefore, even if the ironic meaning intended by the original author was misunderstood, the text was none-theless perceived as ironic, but for a different reason. The readers perceived the ironies on a different layer than those intended by the ironist in cases in which the ironies were strictly culture-related. In order to be understood universally, therefore, across discursive communities, across ages, irony requires background knowledge.

According to the results of the survey, the fact that all the texts written by the same author have had a different effect of irony in translation proves that the author's style of writing does not influence the reception of irony in translation and neither does the literary work, as perfect agreement of effect was caused by texts belonging to different authors and literary works. To conclude, in actualizing the translated literary texts, an essential mission belongs to the translator as well, who plays a double role: that of reader / interpreter of the original work and that of writer of the translated literary work. Irina Mavrodin (1982: 19) claimed that the reader is the author of the work created in the act of reading and that reading entails, by means of intertextual-

ity, ranging oneself in relation to all the text of which one has previous knowledge. I would like to adapt this claim to the area of translation and to add the fact that, in the context in which the literary work is translated, Irina Mavrodin's "reader" is, first of all, the translator. Thus, the translator becomes the author of the literary work created in the act of translation and the translation entails, by means of intertextuality, ranging oneself in relation to all the text of which one has previous knowledge. The responsibility of reconstruction in order to ensure successful ironic communication is, therefore, shared between all agents involved in the ironic act of creation of meaning: author as ironist, translator as the first receiver of the original literary work and writer of the translation, and receiver.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Huxley, Aldous. Minunata lume nouă. Trad. Suzana și Andrei Bantaș. Iași: Editura Polirom, Colectia TOP 10+, 2011.

Huxley, Aldous. Punct contrapunct. Trad. Const. Popescu. Iași: Editura Polirom, 2003.

Lodge, David. Schimb de dame. Trad. Virgil Stanciu. București: Editura Univers, 1999.

Lodge, David. Terapia. Trad. Radu Paraschivescu. Iași: Polirom, 2009.

Lodge, David. Therapy. London: Penguin Books, 1996.

Hutcheon, Linda. Irony's Edge. The Theory and Politics of Irony. London: Routledge, 2005.

Eisterhold, Jodi, Salvatore Attardo, Diana Boxer. "Reactions to Irony in Discourse: Evidence for the Least Disruption Principle" in Journal of Pragmatics 38, pp. 1239-1256, 2006.

Mavrodin, Irina. Poietica și poetica. București: Univers, 1982.

Shaw, George Bernard. Cezar și Cleopatra. Ucenicul diavolului. Pygmalion. Trad. Petru Comarnescu. BPT: Editura pentru literatură, 1963.

Swift, Jonathan. Călătoriile lui Gulliver, Povestea unui poloboc și alte satire. Trad. Leon Levițchi și Andrei Brezianu. București: Editura Univers, 1985.

Wilde, Oscar. Teatru. Lady Windermere și evantaiul ei, O femeie fără importanță, Un soț ideal, Ce înseamna sa fii onest, Salomeea. Trad. Andrei Bantaș. Bucuresti: Editura Pentru Literatura Universală,

1967.