CHAPTER –IV

ANALYSIS OF INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS-II
4.1 Preliminaries

Oral verbal actions i.e. Speech Acts are performed via Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. The present thesis is an attempt to analyze Indirect Speech Acts particularly in the selected novels. As it has been observed that the speaker makes skilful use of Indirect Speech Acts more than that of Direct Speech Acts, the major focus of the present research is to locate Indirect Speech Acts used in multiple ways to perform various functions to serve or fulfil the (concealed) intention of the speaker who uses them. In the previous chapter Rhetorical questions and the form and function of the utterance were analyzed in detail. The present chapter aims to analyze Indirect Speech Acts like Irony and Sarcasm that gives rise to satire and humour in the selected novels.

4.2 Irony and Sarcasm

Irony is a literary device which is employed by the speaker or writer to convey that the intended meaning is contrasting with the apparent meaning. Irony arises when there is incongruity between what is expected and what actually occurs. The reader or listener has to identify the concealed meaning of ironical statements. In Britannica Concise Encyclopaedia, Irony is defined as a language device in which the real intent is concealed or contradicted by the literal meaning of words or a situation. Verbal irony either spoken or written, arises
from an awareness of contrast between what is and what ought to be.

Helga Kotoff (2003) says that the ironic speaker relies on the hearer’s assumptions to communicate the opposition potential of irony. (Journal of Pragmatics, 35, 2003: 1390). For comprehending ironical remarks properly the reader or listener should be aware of its context. It is the shared knowledge of the writer / speaker and the reader / listener that leads to identify the irony in the statement or utterance. As whatever is stated is inferred as the opposite of it, irony can be considered as Indirect Speech Act. For example, if a teacher says to his student,

‘I admire your regularity and sincerity’

The teacher actually means to say that the student is not regular and sincere at all. Similarly irony lies in the following utterance,

‘If you are rich and powerful, you will definitely get the job’

It is the indirect assumption that the qualified and the poor do not get the job sans power and richness in the above utterance. Thus, the fact is exactly opposite than the actual expectation.

It seems that all the three novels under consideration are governed by Irony. In The White Tiger Balram Halwai, the driver is considered by his master as an honest and sincere driver. However, he turns to be a murderer of his master, Mr. Ashok Sharma who was very kind and considerate towards him.
In *The Inheritance of Loss* one can witness multiple ironies in various layers. Jemubhai Patel who is sent to England with great expectations, to elevate the dignity of his family with pride, brings humiliation to his family by forsaking his wife and living like a stranger in his own country. Biju, the son of the cook finds no solace either in America or in India. It is ironical that in his own country he was robbed more than in America. Gyan, the Nepalian who loves Sai, the granddaughter of the judge - Jemubhai Patel insinuates a robbery of their (Sai and the judge) house and humiliates them. The police at Kanchenjunga are terrified by the Nepalian gangsters and seek shelter in the house of Noni and Lola who are equally helpless.

In *Afterwards*, Maya, who escapes from her husband Govind and flees to England with Rahul for getting freedom and happiness, is killed in an accident and thus permanently escapes from this world. Her daughter is ultimately sent back to India with her biological father.

As all these selected novels are laden with irony, no wonder they are full of ironical and sarcastic speech acts. Let’s commence our analysis of these Indirect Speech Acts in the novels under consideration.
4.2.1 Irony, Sarcasm and Satire in *The White Tiger*

One of the conversational principles is the Irony Principle. Irony is revealed through various speech acts in the selected novels. Among the various types of irony such as verbal irony, structural irony, stable and unstable irony, sarcasm, Socratic irony, dramatic irony, cosmic irony and romantic irony, the present section of the chapter will deal with verbal irony and sarcasm in particular. Verbal irony either spoken or written is a way of implying the different or opposite meaning from what is literally said. Verbal irony is often intended to criticize or attack. According to Grice,

> I cannot say something ironically unless what I say is intended to reflect a hostile or derogatory judgement or feeling such as indignation or contempt. (1978:124)

As verbal irony is an indirect way to attack, the politeness principle is not flouted. However, the cooperative principle is flouted to some extent. The following verbal irony from *The White Tiger* illustrates the fact. Mr. Ashok tells his wife Pinky about his driver Balram Halwai who is half-learned in the following words,

> ‘The thing is, he probably has ... what, two three years of schooling in him? He can read and write, but he doesn’t get what he’s read. He’s half-baked. The country is full of people like him, I’ll tell you that. And we entrust our glorious parliamentary democracy’ – he pointed at me- ‘to characters like these. That’s the whole tragedy of this country.’ (2008: 10)
The context of the above utterance is that Mr. Ashok has asked his driver, Balram, a few questions to check his general knowledge. However, Balram is quite ignorant of the answers of these questions. Mr. Ashok satirizes India and Indian parliamentary democracy. His remarks imply that India is a country of half-learned people and being a democratic country, these people are entrusted our parliamentary democracy. Obviously half-learned people leading Indian parliament is indeed ironic. The word ‘glorious’ is a sarcastic remark used to convey the exactly opposite of it. How can the parliament proceed successfully if the people leading it are ignorant like Balram Halwai? Hence our Indian Parliament is certainly inglorious. Thus, the above remarks are an implied attack on Indian democracy and hence satiric.

The following conversation from the same novel between an elder Muslim and Balram is full of irony and sarcasm.

‘Why isn’t there a doctor here, uncle?’ I asked. ‘This is the only hospital on either side of the river’. ‘See, it’s like this,’ the older Muslim man said. There’s a government Medical superintendent who’s meant to check that doctors visit village hospitals like this. Now, each time this post falls vacant, the Great Socialist lets all the big doctors know that he’s having an open auction for that post. The going rate for this post is about four hundred thousand rupees these days.’ ‘That much!’ I said my mouth opened wide ‘Why not? There’s good money in public service! Now, imagine that I’m a doctor. I beg and borrow the money and give it to the Great Socialist, while
touching his feet. He gives me the job. I take an oath to God and the Constitution of India and then I put my boots up on my desk in the state capital.’ He raised his feet on to an imaginary table. ‘Next, I call all the junior government doctors, whom I’m supposed to supervise, in to my office. I take out my big government ledge I shout out, “Dr Ram Pandey.” He pointed a finger at me; I assumed my role in the play. I saluted him: ‘Yes sir!’ He held out his palm to me. ‘Now you- Dr Ram Pandey -will kindly put one –third of your salary in my palm. Good boy. In return, I do this.’ He made a tick on the imaginary ledger. ‘You can keep the rest of your government salary and go work in some private hospital for the rest of the week. Forget the village. Because according to this ledger you’ve been there. You’ve treated my wounded leg. You’ve healed that girls’ jaundice.’ (2008: 50)

The context of the above conversation is that Balram Halwai and his brother Kishan have come to the government hospital along with their father who is suffering from tuberculosis to consult a doctor. However, the doctor doesn’t turn up for a long time. Hence, he asks a genuine question to one of the two Muslims, who too are waiting for the doctor. One of them had an open wound on his leg. The answer of the older Muslim to Balram’s question gives rise to irony and sarcasm. It is indeed ironical that instead of selecting a true and honest doctor for the vacant post in Municipal hospital, the Great Socialist announces an open auction for the post. The rate of four hundred thousand rupees for the post is intensely shocking. The
older Muslim’s response to the surprise of Balram, ‘Why not?’ is a rhetorical question as he himself answers the question - ‘There’s good money in public service’. He further explains sarcastically how there is good money in this service. By creating an imaginary scene between a doctor and the great socialist he indirectly exposes what exactly might have happened between them. ‘Touching feet’ is considered as very holy and purely a selfless act in the Indian society but here, sarcastically, it is an act of full of selfishness. Even taking an oath to God and the constitution too is foul and insincere. The utterance, ‘Now, you- Dr. Ram Pandey – will kindly put one-third, of your salary in my palm.’ is declarative but the function of it is that of imperative. Hence, it is an Indirect Speech Act. The remarks Good Boy too is sarcastic because the so called Dr Ram Pandey must be a corrupted man to bribe his Senior Doctor so that he can relieve himself from his duty of checking the patients of the village. It is indeed ironical that these doctors escape from their duty just by giving bribe to their seniors without caring for the patients who die due to their absence. That’s why Balram remarks, Stories of rottenness and corruption are always the best stories, aren’t they? Here, instead of the word ‘the best’, he actually intends to use the word ‘the worst’. The word Great Socialist is sarcastically used for the local politician as he is actually not a socialist but a man in power who is absolutely corrupted and exploits people in the name of social work. Sarcasm is a form of irony. It is particularly applied for the purpose of taunting, jesting or insulting something or somebody. In the words of Nozar Niazi,

Sarcasm involves the opposite of the literal meaning and is particularly intended to mock or insult someone.

(2004:99)
On one occasion, when Balram begs to a truck driver to give him a job on some construction or digging job, he is insulted bitterly. The truck driver hits him and calls him too thin to do the job. At that time Balram utters,

‘White Tiger! There you are!’ (2008: 55)

It is a sarcastic remark of Balram who was once called by a school inspector as ‘White Tiger’. The tiger itself is a powerful and ferocious animal. The White Tiger is a very rare animal. By calling Balram the white tiger the inspector admires him to be a special genius and different student than the others. However, now when Balram is in search of a job he is humiliated in the above manner. Balram, unable to cope up with the situation, sarcastically taunts himself. Not only Balram but his life itself has mocked him by turning the white tiger in to a lamb. The White Tiger is the title of the novel. In the light of this fact the above utterance bear thematic significance. To regain his position Balram murders his own master Mr. Ashok.

The following ironical utterance is an indirect criticism on the rich for whom their pet animals are more important than the human beings. When Balram washes the two dogs of his master Cuddle and Puddle and takes them around the compound on a chain. The guard, the Nepali shouts at him,

‘Don’t pull the chain so hard!
They’re worth more than you are!”

(2008: 78)
It is indeed ironical that the rich treat their pet animals as humans and humans as animals. The same attitude can be seen in The Inheritance of Loss where the judge treats his pet dog ‘Mutt’ like a human being and to his wife he treats like an animal. The humanity in the judge is aroused when he thinks of Mutt and the wild in him roars when he thinks about his wife. Similarly, the poor treat those animals that give them good returns much better than the other family members; as is seen about water buffalo in Balram’s family.

The following utterance of Balram’s father is an indirect satire on Indian election system through the means of irony.

‘It’s the way it always is,’ my father told me that night.
‘I’ve seen twelve elections- five general, five state, two local- and some one else has voted for me twelve times. I’ve heard that people in the other India get to vote for themselves isn’t that something?’

(2008: 100)

The above question resembles to Socratic irony where Socrates the great philosopher used to show off his ignorance and ask the opinions of others on certain issues. It is stated in A Handbook of Literary Terms (2009),

Socratic irony takes its name from the fact that, as he is represented in Plato’s dialogues (fourth century BC), the philosopher Socrates usually dissembles by assuming a pose of ignorance, an eagerness to be instructed, and a modest readiness to entertain opinions proposed by others; although these, upon his
continued questioning, turn out to be ill grounded or to lead to absurd consequences. (P: 147-148)

Similarly in the above question, through the character of Balram’s father and his innocent question, the writer has achieved his goal of satirizing Indian election system where people in India (especially in villages) are not allowed to vote for themselves. Thus, the very definition of democracy is hollowed out here which goes like this in *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*

A system of government in which all the people of a country can vote to elect their representatives...

(P: 406)

However, the situation given in the above utterance is totally opposite to the definition of democracy and hence it is ironic. The narrator has used the tool of irony to satirize Indian democracy in *A Hand book of Literary Terms*; satire is described in the following words.

Satire can be described as the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation.

(2009:272)

Considering the above definition of satire Adiga has satirized Indian democracy by ridiculing and evoking contempt towards Indian rural election system. Satire has been further explained in the same book as,
Satire occurs as an incidental element within many works whose overall mode is not satiric – in a certain character or situation, or in an interpolated passage of ironic commentary on some aspect of the human condition or of contemporary society. (2009:273)

Thus, it is clear that irony is a tool using which the narrator has satirized the folly of Indian democracy. The following utterance of Mr. Ashok is equally ironic.

‘We’re driving past Gandhi, after just having given a bribe to a minister. It’s a fucking joke, isn’t it?’

(2008: 137)

Mahatma Gandhi, the great Indian freedom fighter, universally stands for truth, non-violence and equality. It is in his country these two brothers Mr. Ashok and Mukesh give bribe to a Minister to escape from income tax. Hence, the above words of Mr. Ashok who feels a sense of guilt are laden with irony. Is it for this kind of corruption Gandhiji starved himself most of the time? Freedom fighters like Gandhi would have felt regret had they been still alive to witness this ongoing corruption in India.

It is equally ironic that Mr. Mukesh after paying half a million rupees in a bribe accuses Balram for stealing one rupee coin in the following words,

‘What do you mean, it’s not there? Don’t think you can steal from us just because you’re in the city. I want that rupee’. ‘We’ve just paid half a million rupees in a bribe, Mukesh, and now we’re screwing
this man over for a single rupee Let’s go up and have a scotch.’

‘That’s how you corrupt servants. It starts with one rupee. Don’t bring your American ways here.’

(The White Tiger, 2008: 139)

It is highly ironic that the person (Mr. Mukesh) who himself is fully corrupted, blames Mr. Ashok for corrupting Balram. This is what the tragedy of corruption in India is!

The following remarks of Mr. Mukesh about Balram are ironical.

My man will do what he is to do, no worries about that. (1) He’s part of the family (2) He’s a good boy.’ (3) (2008: 167)

Here Mr. Mukesh is assuring the lawyer that Balram will do what he is told to. The additional unnecessary information about Balram is added cunningly here in (2) and (3). The context is that Pinky Madam has knocked down a beggar child and now they want Balram to confess this crime i.e. he should admit that he was driving the car when the accident took place. To achieve this end, Mr. Mukesh is praising Balram as a good boy and a part of the family. Ironically, along with Balram the reader too is aware that if Balram would be part of the family they would not have asked him to admit to a crime that he has not committed at all. Actually, for saving Pinky madam – his sister in law; of course his part of family, he wants Balram, their driver to devote his life. Mr. Mukesh has always treated Balram as their driver and far more inferior to them. It is in this context the
above utterance of Mr. Mukesh seems ironical. This irony is further extended when Pinky madam says,

‘Has no one told him? What a fucking joke!
He’s the one who was going to go to jail!’

(2008: 179)

When Balram unwillingly accepts to admit the crime he spends a sleepless night. However, the police inform that no one has witnessed the accident and hence Balram is saved from imprisonment. The irony is that no one cares to tell him this life saving news. Pinky madam is highly astonished to learn this and utters the above words in extreme indignation which have a sarcastic tone too. The exclamation marks heighten the irony. Thus, Mr. Mukesh who was very keen to push Balram in prison is careless about informing Balram about his relief. It is this irony that is forefronted in Pinky’s utterance.

On one occasion, Mr. Ashok bribes a Cabinet Minister in Delhi. After getting this task completed, Mr. Ashok comes out of the Minister’s residence with a fat man – supposed to be the minister’s assistant. This man tells Mr. Ashok when asked about elections,

Elections, my friend, can be managed in India. It’s not like in America.’ (2008: 213)

The above utterance of the assistant is clearly sarcastic. Through this Indirect Speech Act a comparison is made between the elections in America and the elections in India. It seems that the elections in America are systematic and that is why cannot be managed. In India,
on the other hand anything can be manipulated with power and money. The above utterance can be associated with the remarks of Balram’s father who had said that he had not voted even once in his life time; his voting was done by somebody else. The primary illocutionary force of the above utterance is sarcasm where as the secondary illocutionary force is that of an assertive (stating) in the form of a statement. The speech Act also bears, an under tone of irony bringing out the gulf between India and America. The fat man further ironically informs Mr. Ashok that,

‘Everyone has whisky in their car in Delhi, Ashok, didn’t you know this? (2008: 213)

The above question is insincere which is intended to inform and not to seek the answer. The combination of the insincere question and irony is highly significant here. It is considered to be a crime to drink and drive both at a time legally and morally. However, it is indeed ironical that in Delhi, the Capital of India people keep whisky in car and drink it. The form of the above utterance is interrogative but the function of it is assertive (Stating). The primary illocutionary force of the same is ironic. Then the man brings a pair of glasses and a bottle. When he keeps them inside the car he sarcastically says,

‘Now this car is fully equipped.’ (2008: 213)

This sarcastic remark bears the undertone of humour. The car is considered fully equipped when there is wine and glasses inside it, instead of water bottle or snacks which actually should be kept in it. No wonder that a famous actor Salman Khan has kicked a poor fellow by his car when he was drinking and on the top of it he is not still punished for this act! Further again the man sarcastically adds,
‘That’s the whole advantage of being in Delhi, dear boy!’ (P: 214)

Drinking wine in the car should be considered as a disadvantage these people (rich and powerful) are taking of in Delhi but paradoxically and hence sarcastically the man calls it as ‘the whole advantage of being in Delhi.’ Moreover, ironically, he compares the car with the palace (P: 214) The following conversation between the man and Mr. Ashok is highly ironical,

‘Tell me, Ashok, do you think there will be a civil war in this country?’ (1)
‘Why do you say that?’ (2)
‘Four days ago, I was in a court in Ghaziabad. (3) The judge gave an order that the lawyer’s didn’t like, and they simply refused to accept his order. (4) They \ went mad they dragged the judge down and beat him, in his own court. (5) The matter was not reported in the press (6). But I saw it with my own eyes. (7) If people start beating the judges- in their own courtrooms – then what is the future for our country? (8) (2008:215)

The question posed by the fat man in (1) is indirect because the intention of asking this question is not gathering any answer or information but rather to provide some relevant information to it. That is why, Mr. Ashok does not answer the question but reciprocates with another sincere question (direct) the illocutionary force of which is posing doubt. The very action of lawyers of not accepting the judge’s order, dragging him down and beating him in his own court is not only ironical but shameful and that is why it is
not reported in the press. The question posed in (8) is a fine combination of rhetorical question and irony through which the Indian judicial system has been satirized sharply. It seems that the narrator through this question appeals the reader to think about India’s future gravely. Irony reaches at its peak point in this rhetorical question. It seems that irony is an effective tool for satirizing the bitter aspects of individual, society or nation.

The following conversation that takes place between Mr. Mukesh and Ashok – the two brothers is a fine example of sarcasm and irony together. When Mukesh tells Ashok that he has to bribe the government people every now and then he gets irritated and says,

It seems like this is all I get to do in Delhi. (1) Take money out of banks and bribe people. Is this what I came back to India for?’ (3) ‘Don’t be sarcastic. (4) And remember, ask for the bag back each time. (5) It’s a good bag, Italian - made. (6) No need to give them any additional gifts...’ (7) (2008: 240)

Utterance (1, 2, &3) is loaded with sarcasm. Especially the rhetorical question in (3) is more effective. It displays the gulf between Ashok’s intention in coming to Delhi and the actual task he has to do there. Ashok hates bribing politicians and he wants to lead a good ethical life. However, he is told over and over again to bribe the political parties. Through the question in (3) Ashok’s frustration and unwillingness of doing this job is clearly apparent. However, Mukesh does not find anything wrong in it and ironically tells his brother to bring the bag back every time. Mukesh’s character is very complex. He bribes millions of rupees to the politicians and at the
same time scolds Balram for giving a rupee to a beggar (P: 241). Here too he wants his brother to bribe the government party again and again but is unwilling to give the bag. The character of Mukesh itself seems ironical- the mingling of the opposite thoughts – giving millions but trying to save a rupee i.e. thinking seriously of a bit and at the same time is careless of so much (money). He himself is corrupt but doesn’t want his driver, Balram to be corrupt. However, after witnessing his master’s corruption Balram’s brain too gets corrupted and he thinks about murdering Mr. Ashok and taking his red bag, full of money and running away. However, while thinking about this plan there is certainly guilt in his mind. Murdering Ashok indirectly means murdering his own family. For it was certain that Ashok’s family would take revenge over Balram’s family. Balram imagines that the buffalo that was pulling the cart on the road turns its face to him and asks following sarcastic questions to Balram.

‘Your brother Kishan was beaten to death. Happy?’

‘Your aunt Luttu was raped and then beaten to death. Happy? Your grandmother Kusum was kicked to death. Happy?’ (2008: 256)

As Balram cannot be certainly happy to see the dangerous consequence of his crime of murdering Mr. Ashok, he cannot be happy at all and hence the word ‘happy’ can be inferred exactly to its opposite meaning i.e. sad. It is due to this fact the above imaginary questions are sarcastic. In the form of interrogation they are functioning like assertive (declaring).
The following speech of the Great Socialist is full of ironical remarks.

‘The election shows that the poor will not be ignored. The Darkness will not be silent. There is no water in our taps, and what do you people in Delhi give us? You give us mobile phones. Can a man drink a phone when he is thirsty? Women walk for miles every morning to find a bucket of clean-
’
‘Do you want to become prime minister of India?’
‘Don’t ask me such questions. I have no ambitions for myself. I am simply the voice of the poor and the disenfranchised
‘But surely, sir-
‘Let me say one last word, if I may. All I have ever wanted was an India where any boy in any village could dream of becoming the prime minister. Now, as I was saying, women walk for...’ (2008: 269)

The situation in India is completely ironical. India is divided in two parts. One is full of light where you can find posh bungalows, cars, filtered water, computers, mobiles etc. and the other is full of darkness – no light, no water, no food, no education etc. Coincidentally at this time that is in the year 2013 India is facing the same problems. There is draught everywhere. No rains- no crops- no food - inflation and the chain of sequence goes on. A certain politician has a golden shirt in the urban part of the country and the people in the rural part don’t have sufficient ordinary clothes to cover them. India is surrounded by various scams like CWG scam, 2G scam, Helicopter scam-2013, Coalgate scam -2012 , 2G
spectrum scam, Adarsh scam 2010, Coffin scam 1999, Bofors scam etc. All this irony is appropriately stated in the speech of the Great Socialist. The greatest irony is that the Great Socialist who is showing his concern towards the poor in India, himself is a selfish man and speaking so much about the poor only to get their votes and to become richer and richer. Consequently, it is a fact that these politicians after winning elections forget all their promises and start acquiring black money as much as possible. It is proven by the fact that the Great Socialist party wins the election and one of the party members is Vijay – the same person who had trodden down a poor man who wanted to vote for himself long ago. (P: 102)

Thus, through irony one should not take the literal meaning but should read the meaning that lies between the lines that is hidden and most of the time incongruous to the superficial meaning.

When an unexpected result of election is announced, Mr. Ashok feels thunderstruck to learn this. It was the Congress party whom they had bribed and now this party has lost the election. Ashok’s following reaction which he is conveying to his father via mobile is full of ironical words.

‘I still can’t believe it. The people of this country had a chance to put an efficient ruling party back in power, and instead they have voted in the most outrageous bunch of thugs. We don’t deserve.’ He put the phone aside for a moment and said, ‘First to the city, Balram— I’ll tell you where’ — and then resumed the phone talk. The roads were greasy with mud and water. I drove slowly. ‘... parliamentary democracy,
It is irony that the people have voted for thugs and not for the efficient ruling party (as per Ashok’s opinion). By stating the irony in the election system Ashok is criticizing the Indian parliamentary democracy which according to him is not powerful. That’s why, he feels that China is far ahead than India and we cannot catch up with China due to our democracy. It is remarkable that views of Mr. Ashok who had been to America for a few years are far sighted than his other family members who have never left India.

### 4.2.2 Irony Sarcasm and Satire in *The Inheritance of Loss*

Kiran Desai’s novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* too is full of irony and sarcasm that gives rise to satire and humour. There are vivid examples of irony and sarcasm in this novel that can be discussed and analyzed in detail.

Biju cannot cope with American life style and feels very unfortunate there. He is tossing like a ball from one hotel to another doing a job of waiter where he is exploited by his masters. However, Biju’s father is unaware about this fact. Ironically, he is proud of his son and boasts of the same to other Indian people. In a letter that he sends to Biju, he writes,

“*Biju, beta,*” he wrote, “you have been fortunate enough to get there, please do something for others....” (P: 95)
It’s obvious that the above expression of Biju’s father is full of irony. The word fortunate implies exactly its opposite inference. Thus, it can be observed that Indian people generally feel that immigrants are luckier than them and they must be very rich and happy. It highlights their ignorance about the life abroad whereas, the immigrants strongly feel to return to their motherland. The cook, Biju’s father is a representative example of the fact. Thus, one can say that the grass is (always) greener on the other side (of the fence).”

Saeed, another immigrant like Biju is fed up with the tribes- the needy visitor from his home town who come to America and find out his address to seek the shelter with his help. Saeed calls them tribe because they come in groups. Saeed’s mother has proudly conveyed wrong impression about Saeed to be a very rich person who can help anybody. That is why; half of the people from his town come every now and then and ask Saeed for his help. It is ironical that Saeed himself is homeless and is quite incapable to offer shelter to others. These visitors annoy Saeed too much and he says,

“Hah! Why they give them a visa? How they buy the ticket!” (P: 97)

The above remarks of Saeed are loaded with irony. It is a fine combination of irony and rhetorical question (1). The utterance in (2) is insincere as the visitors have bought the visa in the same manner as Saeed had once bought for him. Yet, out of irritation he utters the above words which are ironically ridiculous. It bears the undertone of criticism over those officials who give visa and tickets to these people. The primary illocutionary force of the above utterance is that
of implied irony and secondary illocutionary force is of a directive (suggesting) in the form of a rhetorical question i.e. interrogative that these people should not be given visa and tickets.

The following conversation between the judge, Sai and Gyan, her tutor is full of Indirect Speech Acts that include irony, sarcasm and mismatch of form and function of the utterances.

“What made you come out in such weather, Charlie?” (1) he said.
“You might be adept at mathematics, but common sense appears to have eluded you.” (2) (2006: 109)

The question of the judge in (1) is an Indirect Speech Act. The judge does not expect any answer from Gyan but wants to assert that he should not have come in such weather. Utterance (2) is a sarcastic remark of the judge the illocutionary force of which is passing a taunt and thus to indicates that Gyan has no common sense. The paradox in this utterance i.e. ‘adept in mathematics but lack of common sense’ makes the sarcasm interesting and more effective.

Further, the judge continues,

“So,” he said, slicing the meat expertly off the bone,
“so, what poets are you reading these days, young man?” (1)

He felt a sinister urge to catch the boy off guard. “He is a science student,” (2) said Sai. “So what of that? (3) Scientists are not barred from poetry, or are they? (4) “Whatever happened to the well-rounded education?” (5) he said into the continuing silence. Gyan racked his brains. He never read any poets. “Tagore?” (6) he
answered uncertainly, sure that was safe and respectable. “Tagore!” (7) The judge speared a bit of meat with his fork, dunked it in the gravy, piled on a bit of potato and mashed on a few peas, put the whole thing in to his mouth with the fork held in his left hand. “Overrated” (8) he said after he had chewed well and swallowed, but despite this dismissal he gestured an order with his knife: “Recite us something, won’t you?” (9)  “Where the head is held high, Where knowledge is free, Where the world has not been broken up in to fragments by narrow domestic walls....Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let me and my country awake.” (10) (2006: 109)

The question of the judge in (1) is not an innocent one. It is asked to pin down Gyan and thus to expose his lack of knowledge. Sai’s utterance in (2) is an Indirect Speech Act as the form and function are not congruous with each other. By stating that Gyan is a science student she indirectly asks the judge not to ask him the questions of Arts. Again the questions of the judge in (3, 4& 5) are insincere. He is not asking but asserting that scientists should know about poetry as our education covers all the areas of knowledge. Gyan, who has been struggling to answer properly says, “Tagore?” The question mark here indicates the uncertainty in Gyan’s mind. He is doubtful whether ‘Tagore’ will be an appropriate answer to the judge’s question. The writer, Kiran Desai has made an intelligent use of punctuation marks. The use of question mark in Gyan’s utterance in place of full stop is highly suggestive to indicate Gyan’s confused state of mind. As a response the judge exclaims, “Tagore!” The
use of exclamation mark here indicates sarcasm in the judge’s tone as if the judge has got a chance to nab Gyan. The question tag in (9) is clearly an order in the form of a question tag. That is why; it is an Indirect Speech Act. Gyan’s recitation of the poem is equally ironical because of the words in the poem ‘Where the head is held high....’ It is ironical that Gyan’s respect is being humiliated by the judge and he is reciting the poem about self-respect, freedom of knowledge, equality etc. Thus, the above conversation that takes place between the judge, Sai and Gyan is loaded with irony and sarcasm as well as varieties of Indirect Speech Acts.

The following question of Noni is laden with irony.

“They’ve been here, most of them, several generations.
Why shouldn’t Nepali be taught in schools?”(2006: 128)

It is indeed irony that the Neps who have been living in that area for so many years, have not been taught in schools. Nobody cares for their education or progress. Similarly, the following remarks of Lola are equally ironical regarding the miserable condition of Lepchas.

“Lepchas are not multiplying, they are disappearing.
In fact, they have the first right to this land and nobody is even mentioning them.”(2006: 129-30)

Odessa, the owner of Brigitte’s in New York remarks ironically about the Indians eating manner in following words.

“You know, Biju,” she said, laughing, “isn’t it ironic, nobody eats beef in India, and just look at it- it’s the shape of a big T-bone.” (P: 135)
Indian people, especially the Hindus believe that the cow is a holy animal. They worship the cow as a goddess and call her *gomata* i.e. a mother cow. That is why; they do not eat beef as it is the meat of cow. However, the Indians who go abroad not only leave their country behind but also their sensitivity, especially in the matters of religion, customs and rituals. ‘A big T-bone’ refers to the bone of cow.

Sai, who considers herself as a grown up girl, comes late one day. Naturally the cook gets angry due to her late arrival. Instead of placating him, Sai uses the following Indirect Speech Act,

“Why don’t you leave me alone?” (P: 143)

This is in fact a suggestion and not a question. However, due to her ignorance towards the cook’s anxiety he even gets more hurt and shouts in the following words,

“From childhood I have brought you up! With so much love! (1) Is this any way to talk? (2) Soon I’ll die and then who will you turn to? (3). Yes, yes, soon I’ll be dead. (4) Maybe then you’ll be happy. (5) Here I am, so worried, and there you are, having fun, don’t care....” (6)

(P: 144)

Irony lies in the above utterance due to the incongruity between what is expected and what actually takes place. The cook expects Sai to behave properly and respectfully with him as he treats her like his own daughter. The question in (2 &3) is rhetorical as well as ironical. The utterance in (4) is emphatic which serves a special function. The cook by mentioning about his death intends to
blackmail Sai emotionally. Utterance (5 & 6) is completely ironical underlying sarcastic tone. If the cook dies, Sai will be alone and obviously be stricken with grief. However, the cook asserts that she will be happy after his death. His ironical words are merely the outcome of his indignation towards Sai’s indifference regarding him.

Malini, Harish-Harry’s wife suggests that the staff should live in the kitchen. It has been shown off that they are providing “free housing”, however, the real intention of giving accommodation to the staff has been cutting the pay to a quarter of the minimum wage, reclaiming the tips for the establishment, keeping an eye on the worker’s and forcing them to work for many hours. That is why; Malini’s expression regarding the relationship of master-servant appears completely ironical. She says,

“We are a happy family here,” (2006: 146)

Calling the staff as family members and exploiting them by using sugar-quoted words is quite ironical. Irony lies here in the contrast between the superficial meaning and the actual inference. Similarly in *The White Tiger* Balram is told, ‘You’re part of the family, Balram,’ (P: 166) by Mr. Mukesh very cunningly.

Harish-Harry and his wife do not like their daughter’s American life style at all. They scold and slap her. However, she remains unbudged. On the other hand, she says,

“I didn’t ask to be born,” she said. “You had me for your own selfish reasons, wanted a servant, didn’t you? But in this country, Dad, nobody’s going to wipe your ass for free.” (2006: 149)
The above remarks of the girl are sarcastic. The words such as, ass and dad are purposely used to humiliate her father. As a result of this, Harish- Harry gets drunk and blames the Americans in the following words.

“And they think we admire them!”(1) He began to laugh. “Every time one enters my shop I smile”(2) - he showed his skeleton grin - “‘Hi, how ya doin,’ but all I want is to break their necks.(3) I can’t, but may be my son will, and that is my great hope. One day Jayant-Jay will smile and get his hands about their sons’ necks and he will choke them dead.”(4) (2006: 149)

Utterance (1) is sarcastic as the apparent praise is meant to dispraise the Americans. Utterance (2& 3) is ironical. If we smile at somebody and ask their whereabouts, it indicates our warm feelings about them. But Harish- Harry in his mind wants to break their necks and even hopes that his son Jayant-Jay will choke their son’s necks. (4) Thus, irony lies between what is expected and what actually is or happen.

On the other occasion a member of GNLF stands on the bench and begins his revolting speech. He says,

“In our own country, the country we fight for, we are treated like slaves. (1) Every day the Lorries leave bearing away our forests, sold by foreigners to fill the pockets of foreigners. (2) Every day our stones are carried from the riverbed of the Teesta to build their houses and cities. (3) We are laborers working barefoot
in all weather, thin as sticks, as they sit fat in managers’ houses with their fat wives, with their fat bank accounts and their fat children going abroad. (4) Even their chairs are fat. (5) (P: 159)

His speech is full of irony. He uses the means of irony to express his rage against the discrimination between the Nepalis and other Indian people. Utterance (1) is an ironical statement and the following utterances are the explanation of this ironical statement. Humour is created by using ironical contrast that the Nepalis are thin whereas the other people are fat. The words thin and fat consist of extended meaning. Thin indicates poverty whereas fat indicates richness. The contrast between the Nepalis and those who rule them has been brought out effectively by the repetition of the word ‘fat’. Fat managers, Fat wives, Fat bank accounts, Fat children and even fat chairs give rise to humour via irony.

The crowd of Nepalis gets agitated and posters and leaflets are written with their blood by piercing their thumb. Even the message in the leaflet is ironical.

“Brave Gorkha soldiers protecting India – hear the call,” said the leaflets flooding the hill sides. “Please quit the army at once. For when you will be retired then you may be treated as a foreigner.” (2006: 160)

The leaflet inspires the soldiers to leave their army, as these soldiers will be treated ‘as a foreigner’ when they get retired. It is ironical that those Nepalis who fight for India are treated like outsiders after their retirement.
Once Biju pays Rs. 8000 to a fake office in Sinclair’s hotel where he is selected and promised to be sent for training camp at Kathmandu. Two weeks later, however, when Biju reaches to Kathmandu for training, he realises that he is cheated. At the fake address given to Biju, he finds that it is a butcher who is living at that place. The butcher laughs at Biju’s foolishness and sarcastically says,

“Ah, idiot. Who goes and gives money like that? (1)
Where do you come from? (2)
What do you think the world is made of? (3)
Criminals! Criminals! (4)
Go file a report at the police station. (5)
Not that they will do anything...” (6) (2006: 181)

The first three questions of the butcher are Indirect Speech Acts. The first is a rhetorical question that indirectly asserts that nobody gives money as Biju has given (foolishly). Questions (2 &3) are not asked in the expectation of any answer but to provide it. Utterance (5) seems to be a Direct Speech Act superficially. However, when the utterance (6) is read one immediately understands that utterance (5) is ironical & hence an Indirect Speech Act as the butcher ironically remarks that police won’t do anything. Thus, significance of the advice given in (5) loses its value as soon as the utterance (6) is uttered. An Indirect satire is made at the duty of the police in India.

After trying hard recurrently Biju finally gets visa just for two weeks. The other man in the line behind him asks him,

“Were you successful, Biju? Biju, were you successful? Biju? Biju!” (P: 186)
The repetition of certain question and words expresses indirectly the anxiety of the man regarding visa. Biju answers,

“Yes, I was successful”

“You are the luckiest boy in the whole world,” the man said.’ (P: 187)

The man’s utterance proves completely ironical because in the later part of the novel Biju becomes helpless and home sick and tragically proves to be a very unfortunate person. The kind of irony that is explicit in the utterance, “You are the luckiest boy in the whole world”, exhibits the features of structural irony. Structural irony is based on the author’s ironic intention that is shared by the reader but at the same time is not intended by the speaker or character who utters it. As per, *A Handbook of Literary Terms* by M.H. Abrams/ Geoffery Galt Harpham, (2009)

Some literary works exhibit structural irony; that is, the author, instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature that serves to sustain a duplex meaning and evaluation throughout the work. One common literary device of this sort is the invention of a naive hero or else a naive narrator or spokesman, whose invincible simplicity or obtuseness leads him to persist in putting an interpretation on affairs which the knowing reader-who penetrates to, and shares, the implied point of view of the authorial presence behind the naive persona- just as persistently is called on to alter and correct. (P: 147)
Thus, in the above conversation, only the reader and the author are aware about the irony concealed in the man’s remarks and neither the speaker nor the listener is aware about its significance.

The conversation that follows proves how unlucky Biju has been in America. The conversation that takes place between Harish- Harry and Biju is mostly full of Indirect Speech Acts containing insincere questions, rhetorical questions, irony and sarcasm. It so happens to Biju that in the Gandhi Cafe he slips in a slime green track and his knee is hurt badly. As a consequence the following conversation takes place between them.

   “Can you get a doctor?” (1) He said to Harish-Harry after Saran and Jeev had helped him to his mattress between the vegetables.
   “Doctor!! Do you know what medical expense in this country ?!” (2)
   “It happened here. Your responsibility” (3)
   “My responsibility!” (4) Harish- Harry stood over Biju, enraged. “You slip in the kitchen. (5) If you slip on the road, then who would you ask, hm?” (6) ------“I take you in. I hire you with no papers, treat you like my own son and now this is how you repay me! (7)
   Living here rent- free. (8) In India would they pay you? (9) What right do you have? (10) Is it my fault you don’t even clean the floor? (11) YOU should have to pay ME for not cleaning, living like a pig. (12) Am I telling YOU to live like a pig?” (13) (P: 187-88)
Biju’s question in (1) is an Indirect Speech Act as it is a request in the form of a question. The response of Harish-Harry in (2) is in the form of an indirect question. The word Doctor!! Written with two exclamation marks indicates the explosion of anger in Harrish-Harry’s mind. The question in (2) is in fact an indirect refusal to Biju’s request in (1). That is why Biju does not answer the question directly but states firmly (though indirectly) that Harish-Harry should call the Doctor as accident happened in his restaurant and hence it is his responsibility to call the doctor (3). Again in (4) we find one exclamation mark which denotes the indignation of the speaker. Question in (6) is again a rhetorical question through which Harrish-Harry indirectly asserts that Biju would ask no body if he slips on the road. Utterances (7& 8) are superficially Direct Speech Acts. However, at the deeper level they are ironical remarks of Harrish-Harry. He is showing off as if he is obliging Biju by providing him a rent-free housing and allowing him to work there though he is an illegal immigrant. The series of questions from (9) to (11) is a series of rhetorical questions. If combined with (12) and (13) they seem ironic. The Capital letters YOU and ME are emphatic which indicates the sharpness of Harish–Harry’s anger along with biting irony. This irony is further heightened by Biju’s response that exposes bitterly Harish–Harry’s selfishness.

“Without us living like pigs,” (1) said Biju, “what business would you have? (2) This is how you make your money, paying us nothing because you know we can’t do anything, making us work day and night because we are illegal. (3) Why don’t you sponsor us for our green cards?” (4) Volcanic explosion. “How can I sponsor you?! (5) If I sponsor you I have to
sponsoring Rishi. And if I sponsor Rishi, then I have to sponsor Saran, and if him then Jeev, and then. Mr. Lalkaka will come and say, but I have been here for longest I am the most distinguished, and I should be first in line. How can I make an exception? I have to go to the INS and say that no American citizen can do the job. I have to prove it. I have to prove I advertised it. They will look into my restaurant. They will study and ask questions. And the way they have it, it’s the owner who gets put in jail for hiring illegal staff. If you are not happy, then go right now. Go find someone to sponsor you. (6) Know how easily I can replace you? (7) Know how lucky you are!!! (8) You think there aren’t thousands of people in this city looking for a job? (9) I can replace you like this,” (10) he snapped his fingers, “I’ll snap my fingers and in one second hundreds of people will appear. (11) Get out of my face!” (12) (P: 188)

Again Harish-Harry’s ‘Volcanic explosion’ is full of rhetorical questions giving rise to irony and sarcasm. Utterance (5) is a rhetorical question stating the fact that he cannot sponsor him. Utterance (6) though superficially seems to be an advice, at a deeper level it functions like a statement stating the same inference as in (5). Utterance (7) is not just a question but it is a strong assertion that Harish Harry can replace Biju very easily. It is an indirect threat that he will fire Biju from job. Utterance (8) is indeed ironical. The three exclamation marks convey much more than what actually is stated. The word ‘lucky’ should be exactly taken as its antonym that is
unfortunate or unlucky. It is here that the irony of Biju’s life is implicit. When Biju was selected he was told that he was very lucky and now he is told that actually he is very unfortunate. The question in (9) is telling Biju that there are thousands of people in the need of job and he can get any one in the place of Biju quite easily. (11) ‘Get out of my face’ (12) is the final culmination of the irony which is outwardly a direct order given by Harish-Harry.

Biju’s condition in America is thus very miserable. On one side Harish-Harry advices him to go back to India and take good treatment and on other side his father unaware of his son’s misery advises him,

“Stay there as long as you can,” the cook had said.

“Stay there. Make money. Don’t come back here.”

(P: 191)

Thus, irony lies in the fact that the immigrants feel like going back to their mother land, however the people who live in their own country are always fascinated by foreign countries.

When Sai realizes about Gyan’s faithlessness towards her, she explodes with anger using following words while talking with his sister,

“Good you saw, good that you heard. Go and tell your parents what your brother has been up to, telling me he loves me, making all kinds of promises and then sending robbers to our house. I’ll go to the police and then let’s see what happens to your family. Gyan will
get his eyes pulled out, his head cut off, and then let’s see when you all come crying to beg.... *Hah!*”  (P: 262)

Sai’s words are bitter with irony. Gyan who assures his deep love to Sai sends robbers to their house which is incredible and completely ironical. Thus, irony is employed here to express anger. The consequence of the irony is the direct threat of Sai about the police complaint and Gyan’s punishment.

Sarcasm is employed out of irritation over some event, person or action. It is the bitter, sharp and cursing tone that differentiates irony from sarcasm. Sarcasm generally is identified in the tone of the speaker whereas irony is identified in the situation where the expected and the actual (happening or incident) stand in contrast with each other. Sarcasm is defined in a *Spectrum of Literary Criticism* as,

‘Sarcasm is restricted to crude and taunting use of seeming praise which is actually, meant to be dispraise’. (Thorat etal: 2001:283)

The following example will illustrate the point.

“Pathetic,” Lola told them. “You are the police?!”(1) Because now they were at her mercy and she wasn’t at theirs. “Didn’t help us all this time, and now see, need our help!”  (2) “Ma,” they called her, “Ma, please don’t kick us out; we will do anything for you. We are as your sons.”(3) “Hah! Now you’re calling me Ma!
Very fine and funny. This isn’t how you were behaving a week ago.....” (4) (P: 276-277)

It is ironical that the police who are supposed to protect the people have taken shelter at Lola and Noni’s residence. It is this ironical situation that has given rise to the sarcastic tone in Lola’s remarks about them. She is ridiculing the police by using a question in (1). The question is insincere as the speaker already knows the answer. The intention of asking this question is to satirize the police. This satire is further extended in (2). The police pleading Lola by calling her “Ma” and treating themselves as her sons is completely ironical. The use of exclamation marks and the words “very fine and funny” convey sarcasm in Lola’s tone. It is her annoyance that is expressed through sarcasm. Similarly, the following situation gives rise to irony.

The irony of situation occurs in the Air France airline policy where foreigners are given compensation by delivering their luggage immediately and Indians are kept on waiting for the arrival of their luggage. When Biju reaches at Calcutta’s Dum-Dum air port all the passengers begin to wait for their suitcases but they don’t arrive. Hence, the following conversation takes place at the Air France counter.

“They are only giving compensation to non resident Indians and foreigners, not to Indian nationals, WHY?” All the Indian nationals were screaming,

“Unfair unfair UNFAIR UNFAIR!” (1)
“This is Air France airline policy sir,” said the official, trying to calm them, “Foreigners need money for hotel/toothbrush—” (2)

“So, our family is in Jalpaiguri, we are travelling on” said one woman, (3)“and now we have to stay overnight and wait for our suitcases... What kind of argument are you giving us? (4) We are paying as much as the other fellow. (5) Foreigners get more and Indians get less. (6) Treating people from a rich country well and people from a poor country badly.(7) It’s a disgrace. (8) Why this lopsided policy against your own people??” (9) (P: 298)

Above verbal irony is also observed lies in the situation. Utterance (1) states how the situation is ironical. The emphatic interrogative ‘WHY’ is not a question at all. It is a kind of expression of protest against the unfair policy. That is why the emphatic expression and repetition of the words UNFAIR is employed. It serves the purpose of intensifying irony. The explanation of the official in (2) is not satisfactory. The question in (4) that is put by a woman too is a false question; she is in fact stating that the argument of the official is pointless. The false question has risen out of irony. Lexical irony is apparent in the words ‘more’ and less as well as ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ and ‘well’ and ‘badly’. The question in (9) is again an indication of strong protest against the injustice in one’s own country.

The following exchange between Jemubhai- the judge and his father is a combination of irony and sarcasm. The situation is that Jemubhai’s father had sent his son to America for achieving
success and becoming a rich man. However, his son has completely become a foreigner and that can be observed through his strange behaviour. He has forsaken his wife thinking that she is not suitable for him. Irony lies in the fact that whatever was expected from his father has not been achieved but in contrast whatever was not desired at all has taken place. It can be explained via following conversation.

“Our family honor is gone. We are lucky Bomanbhai is dead, thank God. It’s the scandal of the town.” (1) “Why are you talking like this?” (2) he said to his father. “You’re following the script of a village idiot. She is unsuitable to be my wife.” (3) “It was a mistake to send you away. (4) You have become like a stranger to us.” (5) “You are the one who sent me and now you come and say it was mistake! A fine thing.”(P: 306)

Jemubhai’s father’s desperation is quite apparent in (1). “We are lucky Bomanbhai is dead” is a sarcastic remark. Bomanbhai is the name of Nimi’s father who is dead. This remark of Jemubhai’s father extends the bitterness of his attitude towards his son. The question that the judge asks him in (2) is insincere. He in fact wants to suggest to his father that he should not talk in that fashion. Further he tells the reason of forsaking his wife. Utterance (4) is truly ironical as whatever was expected did not take place at all. The judge’s response is both ironical and sarcastic. Irony lies in (5) and sarcasm in (6). ‘A fine thing’ is indeed sarcastic intended to mock at his father’s idea of sending a son to abroad without expecting any change in his behaviour.
Two diverse types of consequence of migration and both ironical are extended through this novel. The first effect is a negative one. The judge who indirectly kills his wife thinking her to be unsuitable stands as the counter side of the same coin. Another side is that of Biju who craves a lot for going back to his homeland but by contrast has been treated as a stranger by his own people. When he manages some how to reach at Siliguri in India, he finds no vehicle for going to Kalimpong. Eventually, he hires a GNLF taxi, pays more and gets a seat into it. However, the intention of GNLF is quite different. They decide to rob Biju. They drive all the way and at late evening they reach at a few small huts. They direct Biju to go through the trees and reach to Kalimpong. When Biju asks,

“How will I take my things?”

“Leave them here. Safe keeping.” They laughed.

“We’ll send them to you later.” (P: 316)

Lexical irony is obvious in the word ‘safekeeping,’ where the luggage of Biju is being robbed by the GNLF members. Later on, not only his luggage but his wallet i.e. money, shoes, belt even clothes are taken away. Thus, it is completely ironical that whereas the judge makes himself a stranger in his own country, Biju is treated as a foreign returned stranger by his own people.

When Mutt disappears, the judge vents his anger on the cook. Nobody likes beating and scolding but ironically, the cook pleads to his master, the judge to beat him and confesses all his misdeeds so that the judge should beat him more.

Smacking him, beating him, beating him –
“I’ve been bad,” the cook said, “I’ve been drinking I ate the same rice as you not the servant’s rice but the Dehradun rice I ate the meat and lied I ate out of the same pot I stole liquor from the army I made chhang I did the accounts differently for years I have cheated you in the accounts each and every day my money was dirty it was false sometimes I kicked Mutt I didn’t take her for walks just sat by the side of the road smoked a bidi and came home I’m a bad man I watched out for nobody and nothing but myself- “Beat me!” The surge of anger was familiar to the judge. He said, “You filth, you hypocrite. If you want punishment I’ll give it to you!” “Yes,” wept the cook, “that is right. It’s your duty to discipline me. It’s as it should be” (P: 320)

When Sai interrupts and says,
“What is happening?? Stop. Stop it immediately. Stop it!” she screamed, “Stop it!”(P: 320)

The cook insists that the judge should beat him in the following words,
“Let him,” the cook said. “Let him. He wants to kill me. Let him kill me. What is my life? It’s nothing. Better that it’s gone. It’s useless to everyone. It’s useless to you and to me. Kill me! May be that will give you satisfaction. It will give me satisfaction. Go on!”
“I’ll kill you! I’ll kill you!”
“Kill me”.
“I’ll kill you.” (P: 320-321)

Sai’s question is obviously indirect as it is an insincere question. Sai’s utterance is a fine combination of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. The cook’s utterance too is a combination of Direct and Indirect Speech Acts. “What is my life?” is a rhetorical question asserting that the cook’s life is nothing. It is humorously ironical that by killing the cook, the judge and the cook will both get satisfaction. The series of Direct Speech Acts- “I will kill you” and “kill me” denotes the rapidity of action as it is an emphatic utterance. Similarly, the absence of full stop too denotes the rapidity of Speech Acts uttered by the cook.

4.2.3 Irony and Sarcasm in *Afterwards* (2004)

It is ironical that Maya’s parents perform her death rites even though she is alive at that time. However, Maya’s belief that her parents will forgive her and love her, stands ironical in such a background.

‘They’ll change,’ she had said, smiling, believing it.
‘They’ll see how, in the end, it’s we who are really important, you wait and see …’ (P: 3)

Contrary to her trust, her death rites are performed- indicating that she is dead for them.

Ironically enough, Indian people who go abroad can speak English much better than Hindi- our National language. This irony can be
clearly observed in the words of Rahul who has returned from England.

‘I grew up reading English books in Delhi, and have to struggle to read even a newspaper in Hindi. Pity, isn’t it?’ (P: 30)

Human relationship is quite complicated and ironical especially in the novel Afterwards. Maya dislikes her husband Govind because he is too possessive whereas Anne; the ex-girl friend of Rahul leaves him for he was not possessive. Rahul ironically says,

‘It’s not funny, I know, but my problem was the exact opposite. My ex-girl friend left after a huge row because she thought I wasn’t possessive enough. She thought I just wasn’t bothered about her. Arrogant, she called it, or rather, superior!’ (P: 55)

Maya’s grief cannot be identified by others because they believe in what they see. Superficially, she is a rich housewife, having a well settled, apparently good husband and a cute daughter. However, her husband is not only possessive but also overly suspicious. Maya ironically reveals the fact,

‘Do you know, people think I’m so lucky. They think I have everything a woman can want.’ (P: 55)

Thus, only richness does not offer complete happiness. Govind marries Maya because he wanted a beautiful and educated wife but after their marriage he made their home like a cage for her due to his possessive nature. That’s why Maya sarcastically tells Rahul,
‘Good-looking girl, good family, convent educated .... but once he got me, he didn’t know what on earth to do with me!’ (P: 56)

It is ironical enough that Govind who loves his wife doesn’t care for her freedom and Maya who has been given everything except freedom feels very miserable. She pleads to Rahul to help her in escaping from that cage. But Rahul, unable to understand her agony, tries to pursue her by telling that the world outside the cage too is not good as she expects it to be. This again encourages Maya to speak ironically,

‘You- who are so free yourself. How can you even begin to tell me how to enjoy my imprisonment.’(P: 57)

Irony takes place here due to the contrasting condition of Rahul and Maya. Rahul is as free as a bird that as per his wish can fly to England or to India. Maya however, is bound to be inside her home only. Irony lies in the fact that the free bird can never understand the predicament of the caged bird.

However, though Maya escapes from the so called cage with the help of Rahul and enjoys her life of freedom for almost three years with him, she suddenly dies in an accident. The problem of Maya’s daughter, Anjali arises consequently and foster care takes decision of sending Anjali to India with her biological father- Govind. Through all these circumstances Anjali proves to be most unfortunate as she could not live with both of her parents at a time. However, Rahul cannot think of separating himself from Anjali though he is not her
biological father. Anjali, who is unaware about all this unfortunate happenings enthusiastically tells Rahul,

‘Anjali’s going to Indya!’ she announced proudly.

‘Yes, I Know, I heard, you lucky girl!’ (P: 207)

Irony lies in the word ‘lucky’ here. Anjali, the unfortunate daughter of her mother Maya who is killed in an accident cannot be called as ‘lucky’. However, Rahul calls her lucky just to conceal his grief and to make Anjali cheerful. His utterance is a wonderful example of the combination of lexical irony and euphemism, where the reality has been concealed to save the situation.

It is ironical that when Maya thinks of herself to be a caged bird her parents feel that she is very happy and lucky but when Maya escapes from the cage in search of freedom that she enjoys for almost three years with Rahul, her parents are shocked and heartbroken. It is said that parents’ happiness lies in their children’s well being but Maya’s elopement after her marriage with a stranger brings a great shame to her parents and in her happiness their sorrow is concealed. This irony is expressed in the words of Maya’s mother when she talks with Rahul.

‘But she sent a picture of all three of you, looking like a happy family. It broke her father’s heart.’ (P: 261)

Without sharing the contextual background one cannot identify the reason of irony concealed in the above utterance. It is due to the disgrace that their daughter has brought upon their family, they cannot tolerate her happiness. The dire consequence of this
deception of their daughter brings death to her father. Maya’s mother is left alone. She tells Rahul in an ironical tone,

‘I blamed her. I blamed her for it all. I blamed her that I was now all alone while she had gone to have a happy life with you.’ (P: 262)

Thus, it is strikingly ironical that one’s happy life can turn another’s life in to hell.

4.3 Irony, Sarcasm and Humour

It has been observed that the speaker can satirize a person, an institution, a nation, an event etc. by employing irony and sarcasm in the previous part of the chapter. It is equally interesting to analyze whether irony and sarcasm can be also used for the purpose of creating humour and thereby rousing laughter. As per given in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary humour is,

‘The quality in sth. that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing.’ (P: 761)

In the present part of the chapter only verbal humour in utterance from the view point of irony and sarcasm due to their Indirect function will be considered, as the main focus of the study is to analyze the Indirect Speech Acts. Keeping this focus in mind situational humour without speech acts will be avoided to be analyzed. In the novel The White Tiger it seems that humour is created through lexical and syntactical level. When Mr. Ashok comes in to the room where Balram and one more driver (Ram Persad) were living, he finds the room very unpleasant, especially
the doorway, the ceiling, spider webs, hard bed of Ram Persad etc. Feeling guilty, he assures them that they will get better room to sleep in. However, Balram very politely says,

‘Please don’t do that Sir. This place is like a palace for us.’ (*The White Tiger*, 2008: 79)

Irony, simile and humour lies hand in hand in the word ‘palace’. Balram praises the room like a palace which is exactly opposite to it. Not only their room but even about Laxmangarh –his native place he says, ‘Like Paradise, Sir.’ (*The White Tiger* 2008: 79)

It is noteworthy that in the beginning of the novel while addressing the letter to Wen Jiabao and thereby indirectly to the reader Balram (the protagonist- first person narrator) remarks wittily,

If the Indian village is a paradise, then the school is a paradise within a paradise. (*The White Tiger*, 2008: 32)

Thus, Balram by using irony is not only arousing humour but also satirizing the aristocratic society like, Indian village and rural schools which are defective and corrupted most of the times. By uttering the lexeme ‘paradise’ Balram is observing the politeness principle – especially the maxim of Approbation which deals with maximizing the praise of other. However, for being polite he is breaching the cooperative principle particularly the maxim of quality which indicates, ‘saying truth only’. Here the word paradise is a false expression of the place and hence it can be concluded that in observing the politeness principle the speaker has to breach cooperative principle on certain occasions. The above example is a fine
instance of irony and metaphor that arouses not only humour but also satire.

On another occasion at Delhi, Balram finds it difficult to cope with other drivers as they make fun of him every now and then. Hence, Balram decides not to sleep with them in the dormitory but in one empty room on the other side of the quarters. The room where he sleeps is another paradise (ironically) full of mosquitoes, cockroaches and dirt. This gave the other drivers a chance to tease him. The next day they tease Balram by asking him the following question.

‘Had a good night among the roaches?’

(The White Tiger, 2008: 132)

It is quite obvious that the above question is insincere because everybody knows that one cannot sleep well among cockroaches. The lexeme ‘good’ extending its opposite meaning ‘bad’ arouses irony and humour simultaneously. Thus, it is noteworthy that irony is a device through which one can ridicule or mock others and enjoy the humour sticking out of it.

On one occasion, the fat man, the minister’s ‘side kick’ tries to tempt Mr. Ashok to enjoy the company of a whore. For that purpose he invites a Ukrainian girl resembling Kim Basinger- the actress. When she enters in the car the following conversation takes place.

‘How are you, Ashok?’ (1) She said it in perfect Hindi.
She put her hand out and took Mr. Ashok’s hand. The minister’s assistant chuckled. ‘There. India has
progressed, hasn’t it? (2) She’s speaking in Hindi.’ (3)

(The White Tiger, 2008: 218)

The direct question in (1) bears significance as a Ukrainian girl is asking it in perfect Hindi language. The utterance (2) of minister’s assistant that is –the fat man is ironically humorous. It is indeed ironical that he finds ‘progress’ of India in the speech of a whore who is a Ukrainian student. Rich Indian people seeking foreign whores for the sake of sexual enjoyment and cheer their talk in Hindi- our national language is shereely disgraceful. However, the fat man finds progress in it. He even clarifies the reason of this progress in (3). The ironical statement in (2) bears an implied sarcastic tone too as it is an indirect satire on Indian aristocratic people who are treading down India’s honour by behaving in such a shameless manner.

Balram, who turns to be an entrepreneur after murdering his master Mr. Ashok, founds his own company ‘White Tiger Drivers’, offering a taxi service to pick up and drop off their employees late at night. One of the drivers of Balram namely Mohammad Asif hits and kills a boy on bicycle and all of them go to the police station. The brother of the dead boy insists on filing FIR. However, the corrupt assistant commissioner suggests him to come back in the morning. Obviously the brother gets annoyed and says,

‘This is an outrage! I’ll call the papers! I’ll call the lawyers! I’ll call the police!’ The assistant commissioner, who was not a man given to humour, allowed himself a little smile. ‘Sure. Call the police’. The brother stormed out, shouting more threats. ‘The number plates will be changed tomorrow,’ the assistant
commissioner said. ‘We’ll say it was a hit-and-run. Another car will be substituted. We keep battered cars for this purpose here. You’re very lucky that your Qualis hit a man on a bicycle.

(The White Tiger, 2008: 309)

It is quite obvious that the above conversational piece contains irony, humour and satire in combination. The threat of the boy to the police is humoursly ironical. That is why the police commissioner openly challenges the boy to call the police. Changing of number plates and substituting battered car is equally humorous as the duty of the police commissioner is to punish or imprison the criminal and not to harbour him. The police commissioner’s statement, ‘You’re very lucky that your Qualis hit a man on a bicycle,’ is loaded with irony where the criminal is called as ‘lucky’ and the innocent and unlucky brother is mocked at. One can observe even implied satire in these remarks. It is the satire against Indian police and law that protect the rich and humiliate the poor generally. By appealing to the boy the inspector is superficially co-operative but equally impolite as he is shameless and fearless of the consequence that may ensue due to his ill behaviour.

When a gang of Nepali boys storm in to the judge’s house, in The Inheritance of Loss, the judge warns the boys

“I will call the police” (2006: 5)

This threat of the judge is ridiculous as there is no telephone. Due to this fact the threat turns as insincere and hence it is an Indirect Speech Act. Along with insincerity the threat is ironical as whatever
is said cannot happen in an actual situation. The boys know the fact very well so they laugh. Humour is aroused here due to the irony of the threat. Thus, Irony is giving way to humour here due to its ridiculous mode. It is a fine combination of irony, ridicule and humour. Obviously the above threat cannot achieve intended perlocutionary effect on the boys and they, on the other hand, threaten the judge mightily and directly that they will kill all of them. When the police arrive at the judge’s house to enquire about the robbery they ask,

“Any threats made, Sir?” “They asked him to set the table and bring the tea,” said the cook in complete seriousness. (2006: 11)

Irony is aroused in the above conversation due to the innocence of the cook. The words, ‘complete seriousness’ and the threat mentioned by the cook are paradoxical that bring out irony and laughter. The perlocutionary effect of the cook’s utterance is that the police laugh and the judge gets annoyed. The word ‘fat’ too brings out irony and humour in the following conversation,

“Are you growing fat, beta, like everyone in America?’ He had written to his son long ago, in a departure from their usual format. “Yes, growing fat,” Biju had written back, “when you see me next, I will be myself times ten.”

“Yes,” Biju had said, “I am growing fat –ten times myself,” and was shocked when he went to the ninety-nine-cent store and found he had to buy his shirts at the children’s rack. (2006: 233)
It is noteworthy that for the poor ‘growing fat’ is an indication of being rich. Biju tells his father that he is growing fat to convey that he is becoming rich. The irony lies in the fact that he is growing thinner and thinner- an indication of poverty. Thus, humour emerges out of irony that lies in the contrast of what is said and what actually the fact is.

Irony and humour is simultaneously aroused in *Afterwards* due to cultural difference between India and England. In India men are not supposed to work in the kitchen or help their wives in domestic chores. That is why Maya gets amused and impressed to see Rahul helping her in cleaning the kitchen. The following conversation takes place between them.

‘I believe you now when you say that you don’t have a girl friend. You’ve obviously been doing that for a very long time!’ ‘In England Maya, it’s when they *have* a girl friend or a wife that men become expert at this kind of thing. Cooking, cleaning, and clearing up after their women. The land of dragon –women, the whole of the western world,’ I said with mock weariness, wiping my brow. ‘To me, it sounds like heaven,’ she laughed. (2004: 44)

Thus, it’s ironical that Indian people need not work in kitchen if they have a wife. However, people in England have to work in kitchen if they have a wife or girl friend. The cross cultural situation gives a light touch of humour in this context. That is why; Maya laughs and thinks England to be a heaven where men help their life partner. As
the novel *Afterwards* is covered with a melancholic tone, humour has been scarcely found in various conversations.

### 4.4 Conclusion

In the present chapter, Irony and Sarcasm are analysed in detail. The analysis has revealed that irony and sarcasm are used as a means of satire and humour in the novels under consideration. As verbal irony is an indirect way to attack or satirise, the politeness principle is observed and the cooperative principle is flouted simultaneously. Irony and sarcasm have been applied to satirise Indian democracy, the politicians and political parties, Indian doctors, the aristocratic people and their peculiarities, Indian election system, corruption, the deficient laws and judicial system etc. Irony and sarcasm have been employed for performing various functions like mocking, ridiculing taunting, blaming, jesting, exposing anger, teasing etc. Irony and sarcasm are also used as a sugar coating device cunningly to conceal the real (deceptive) intention of the speaker. Similarly, irony is used when the speaker is deceived or cheated. Thus, irony is used both by the deceiver and the deceived. In the novel *The Inheritance of Loss* irony is used to express the miserable condition of the Nepalian and Lepchas in India. Irony and sarcasm expose the contrast of viewpoint between the Indian, American and immigrant people. Irony and sarcasm reveal the contrasting behaviour of the master and the servant. The paradox between the urban and rural part of India has been highlighted via irony and sarcasm. The difference between the Indian woman, American woman and the woman in England has also been displayed with the aid of irony. The narrator has attempted to explain the complexity of human relationship and existence by
using irony and sarcasm. Irony is used when the speaker finds contrast between the expectation and the actual happening. Irony is found in threats. Irony and sarcasm cannot be identified without comprehending contextual background. Irony and sarcasm has been immensely useful in characterisation and identifying various layers of meaning of the same utterance. Irony and sarcasm are extended via rhetorical and insincere questions mainly. Lexical irony has been employed to exhibit sharp contrast between things/events, people, society and nations. In *The White Tiger* the narrator has employed even Socratic irony to satirise Indian election system. Irony and sarcasm bear thematic significance in all the novels under consideration. It is noteworthy that humour has been scarcely found in *Afterwards* due to its tragic theme.