

Politics of Irony in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*

Abstract

This research paper examines Burgess's politics behind using radical irony in A Clockwork Orange. It explores the ways of subverting high values and reinforcing marginalized ones and also investigates the resistance of working class people against bourgeois discourse. The ultra-violence is presented ironically in order to bring stated brutality of Alex, the protagonist and unstated brutality of the state. This paper brings the theoretical concept from Linda Hutcheon and Claire Colebrook in order to investigate Burgess's politics of making radical use of irony. Hutcheon's transideological and subversive functions of irony are applicable in this research. By using Hutcheon's concept, it finds out the Burgess's politics of irony that helps him to subvert the high discourse, values, and hypocrisy and at the same time to reinforce the marginalized discourse and values. Thus, it is concluded that irony helps Burgess to make marginalized people aware by unmasking complexity and multiplicity of high culture.

Keywords: Irony, transideological, subversive, reinforcing, context, resistance

This research paper investigates politics of irony in Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Burgess in the novel makes radical use of irony in order to demonstrate post-war English society, political turmoil, effects of science and technology, and totalitarian governmental system. He does not adore the violence in the novel rather than he defends the individuality and free will. The irony helps him to bring the stated brutality of the Alex gang and the unstated brutality of the government. Moreover, it also helps him to demonstrate sociopolitical scenario of his time and resistance of marginalized people against domination of ruling class people.

Burgess raises common people's voice and deconstructs the boundary between high and low through irony.

This paper also concerns about the ironical situation of the characters, their dual identity, and helplessness which signify the politics of irony in Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex is a fourteen years old anti-hero who challenges the established values and fights against authority in order to survive in the post-war English society. He does not follow any rule and regulation of the authority and makes his own rule. He gets pleasure from his brutal activities such as: raping, killing, assaulting, and taking drugs. Burgess presents such brutality ironically in order to challenge the established norms and values.

Burgess presents the characters ironically in order to show their dual identity and ambivalent state of their life. The characters have various identities in the novel. As Alex points out, "we put our maskies on_ new jobs these were" (9). Their identity is changed frequently. Alex is the representative of marginalized people who fight against tyrannical government, political conflict, and bourgeois ideology in order to resist and challenge the established values, culture, and system. The government is unable to handle increasing problems in the society. The selfish politics of the contemporary time is criticized. The authority does not allow working class people to express their voice against discrimination, injustice, and domination freely.

Irony helps Burgess to subvert high culture, discourse, and hypocrisy and at the same time reinforce the marginalized ones. The inhumanity and ultra-violence of the protagonist and his gang are ironically represented in order to demonstrate the unsaid inhumanity of the system. The protagonist and his gang perform amoral, illegal, brutal, and challenging activities not for only getting pleasure but for resisting imposed power, values, and culture. The characters make their own language and

discourse because they think that bourgeois language and discourse do not allow them to use their freedom. They use anti-language _nadsat in order to attack on traditional system of language.

The novel is set in unspecified time in future and in unspecified metropolitan city. These are the references that provide the information about the context of the book. The indefinite setting emphasizes timelessness, a possibility that it could happen at any time and anywhere. Alex does not follow the bourgeois values and he goes against the system. Carefree person Alex is given tortured by the police and doctor in the name of reformation. Individual free will is captured and controlled. There is ultra-violence in the society; there is no rule and regulation and working-class people are revolting against tyrannical government.

This research project concentrates on the ways of subverting and reinforcing high and marginalized discourses respectively. Irony helps Burgess to present the inhumanity of hierarchical society. It also helps to present the complexities and multiplicities of post-war human conditions. The violent activity of the main character including his friends George, Pete, and Dim demonstrates the rejection of high culture, values, and discourse. The government does not maintain balance between ruling class and working class people. All modern mass Medias are only guided by money economy and there is not any proper responsibility of government and Medias in the society. These things are presented ironically in order to subvert high values and enforce marginalized ones.

Burgess is largely considered as the novelist with vigorous longing for sociopolitical realism. He always advocates for the progressive transformation of English society. Howard Goldblatt talks about personal experience of Burgess in the

novel. He judges how Burgess has injected his own anecdotal experience to portrayal his contemporary society. He Argues:

One cannot say that Burgess has not criticized America in his portrayal of the society. Rather than exploring the darker undercurrents of society or depths of the character, he seems to make it his goal to stay on the surface. Much of the energy of the novel is spent on long and sensuous descriptions of butchering, raping, thieving, and ultra-violence. There are too many episodes when the reader has to witness this or that urinating, and to endure long descriptions of the urine. (27)

Goldblatt examines the novel as a description of ultra-violence that took place in contemporary time. Burgess presents the violence and modern youth's activities directly in the novel. The common life incidents and characters are highlighted. He only looks the novel from the point of representation of common incidents. But this paper analyzes Burgess's politics of presenting violence in the novel.

The world of *A Clockwork Orange* is a tyrannously dull society where the state has regulated everyone's life. Ronald Carter presents the following idea:

A Clockwork Orange is a world where main character Alex and his teenage gang roam the streets committing the crimes from theft to burglary to murder. It is also a world where F. Alexander, Alex's foil and victim in the novel, is a liberal progressive intellectual writing a book also entitled *A Clockwork Orange*. Alex reads about F. Alexander's own definition of the collision of this dystopian society and free will while burglarizing. (33)

Carter presents the impact of science and technology upon human beings.

Surveillance on the innocent youths appears as the most callous and dreadful practice.

When youths in their adolescence are kept under forceful surveillance, they are like to

act and react in a mechanical way. F. Alexander's situation of anti-humanistic tyranny and the ability of language to be a violent reactionary force take the upper hand as the plot reaches climax. But the main aim of this research paper to finds out the reasons behind using radical use of irony.

Robert Morris states that the issue of free will and the act of rebellion are fused in *A Clockwork Orange*. Morris asserts:

The main character of Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* fifteen-year-old Alex is a murderer, a rapist, and sadist and he expresses Burgess's own ideas. His violence is both a matter of free choice and an act of rebellion, this freedom of choice and its moral consequences being the main themes of this novel. While reading the novel, the recurrent question, "What's it going to be then, eh?" becomes more difficult to answer since the dilemma posed by this book is a true one. (42)

Individual's right to freedom is undeniable fact. Youths are kept under strict surveillance in capitalistic society for maintaining the status quo. Alex becomes murderer and rapist because of the domination of bourgeoisie and modern technology. Alex uses his free will and acts accordingly in order to survive in chaotic society. This research paper is different in a sense that it finds out Burgess's intention to highlight the marginalized voices by deconstructing centralized ones.

David Ingle states that *A Clockwork Orange* "questions the ability of doctors to treat antisocial people effectively and ethically. It illustrates the ubiquity of violence, which pointedly includes that of doctors. The book reminds us as doctors that professional privilege can extend to condescension and inhumanity" (879). He looks the novel in the light of state's violence and brutality upon individuals. Doctor

treats Alex badly by using various equipments. He talks about the inhumanity created by science and technology and war.

Afore mentioned critics analyze the novel as an impact of science and technology, representation of contemporary society, inhumanity, and free will of individual. But, this research paper explores why Burgess makes radial use of irony in *A Clockwork Orange*. He uses irony intentionally in order to break down the hierarchy and hypocrisy in the society. Violence is used by working class people as a weapon to resist the imposed power and culture. Most of the characters are presented ironically in order to show the dual nature of human being, limitation, brutality, and resistance. This paper focuses upon the ways of challenging the established norm, value, and system and enforcing the marginalized value and culture in *A Clockwork Orange*. Burgess uses irony to present the chaotic and destructive condition of people. Burgess warns people about upcoming catastrophe due to their activities. The government is unable to handle the problem of country. Working-class people cannot get proper space and they revolt against tyrannical government.

Irony is characterized as the gap between saying and the actual meaning. It is a device to convey the message distancing oneself in a literal way. It creates the layers of meaning and complexities to problematize the established values, norms, beliefs, and meaning. Irony deals with a verbal play in which the stated and unstated come together in a certain way in order to make real meaning. It has long history that goes back to the time of Socrates. As Colebrooke opines, "the words eironeia was first used to refer to artful double meaning in the Socratic dialogues of Plato" (2). She again states, "Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian all defined irony in reference to Socrates, but they did not see irony as a radical transformative political position.... However, Socratic irony has come to mean more than just a figure of speech and refer to a

capacity to remain distant and different from what is said in general" (8). Colebrook presents the history of irony and points out the changes in its use. He also shows the changing definition of irony from Socrates to postmodern time.

Irony is used variously in different time. It does not have consistent definition as Colebrook states:

The history of irony's elitism goes back to its emergence in Greek thought. Not only was irony defined as an art in keeping with an urbane and elevated personality, it was also recognized as practiced primarily in sites of political power. Irony, as a trope, is a means of effective persuasion in speeches.... As a figure or extended mode of thought irony allows a speaker to remain above what he says. (20)

The origin of irony is Greek time where it is used as simply to persuade the people. But slowly its function and use gets changed as Colebrook argues, "because of its ambivalent political history, perceived both as a force of liberation and as a mode of elitism, there have been recent attempts to move beyond or definition irony. If irony means something other than what it says, then this will allow language to be liberated from a stable context" (20). Colebrook demonstrates the changing definition and use of irony from Socrates time to postmodern time.

The definition of irony gets changed over time. Irony's transgressive function makes it different from other figure of speeches. As postmodern critic Linda Hutcheon observes:

Unlike metaphor or metonymy, irony has an edge; unlike incongruity or juxtaposition, irony can put people on edge; unlike paradox, irony is decidedly edgy. While it may come into being through the semantic playing off of the stated against the unstated, irony is a "weighted" mode of

discourse in the sense that it is asymmetrical, unbalanced in favor of the silent and the unsaid. (35)

She points out that irony simply does not show the difference between said and unsaid meaning rather it challenges the hierarchy, instability, injustice, and bourgeois values at the same time it enforces marginalized values also by bringing the stated and unstated things together. She further states, "irony involves the attribution of an evaluative, even judgmental attitude, and this is where the emotive dimension also enters" (35). The writer's attitude also plays important role in postmodern irony. In the modern use of irony, all contexts, stated and unstated, mode of the writer, political scenario, and so on come together relationally not oppositely.

Irony is generally perceived as the rhetorical trope where one says something other than what he actually means as Booth regards irony as "says one thing and mean another" (21). Here, reader supposed to understand not only the literal meaning but at the same time he/she supposed to find out the hidden meaning of the text which is not given. In the modern time, irony becomes unavoidable part of the literary text. It unavoidably comprises exclusion and inclusion, intervention and evasion. Irony always is the matter of interpretation. Both irony and interpretation are inseparable as Hutcheon states, "irony is not irony until it is interpreted as such" (6). Interpreter may interpret the text as ironic through the eyes of ironist. Definition of irony is changeable as Muecke argues, "the word "irony" does not now mean only what is meant in earlier centuries, it does not mean one century all it may mean in another, nor in the street what it may mean in the study, nor to one scholar what it may mean to another" (8). Irony is not static and fixed rather it is changeable according to context, person, and situation.

There is no final meaning of irony. There is multiple meaning which differs from person to person and from one socio-political context to another. There is no necessary relationship between irony and radical politics. It is not used to question the established attitudes but also to reinforce it. But reinforcing does not mean giving the way to evil things to flourish forever but to subvert it ironically. Hutcheon argues, "irony can and does function tactically in the service of wide range of political positions, legitimizing or undercutting a wide varieties of interest" (10). The major players in game are the interpreters and the ironist.

Irony creates complexity and ambiguity. It is used in order to challenge the established notion and belief. At the same time it is used to support the marginalized values in modern time. Though it is widely used rhetorical device and it has long history, it is extremely uncomfortable for a critic to be dealing with the notion of irony because of its complexities. According to Colebrook, irony allows the speaker to remain above what he says. Colebrook points out:

Despite its widely complexity, irony has a frequent and common definition: saying what is contrary to what is meant, a definition that is usually attributed to the first-century Roman orator Quintilian who was already looking back to Socrates and Ancient Greek literature. But this definition is so simple that it covers everything from simple figures of speech to entire historical epochs. Irony mean as little as saying. It can also refer to the hugs problems of postmodernity; our very historical context is ironic because today nothing really means what it says. We live in a world of quotation, pastiche, simulation and cynicism; a general and all-encompassing irony. Irony then, by the very simplicity of its definition becomes curiously indefinable. (1)

Colebrook points out the historical development of irony and she also presents the changing definition of irony in certain time. Irony is developed in Socrates time and it is also used in postmodern time in order to present the complexity and duality of modern life. In the past, irony means simply difference between appearance and reality but this definition of irony outdated in postmodern time.

The nature of irony is that it contrasts between the outward indication and the real meaning of the text. Irony helps to examine the text from its explicit saying and actual meaning that is literary criticism as Colebrook observes:

Process of ironic re-reading, where we dare to imagine a text as somehow meaning something other than what it explicitly says, characterizes much of what counts as literary criticism. Indeed, one could argue_ as many twentieth-century critics were to do_ that literature is characterized by its potential for irony, its capacity to mean something other than a common-sense or everyday use of language. (5)

Ironic re-reading is necessary to understand the text hidden meaning that is not presented clearly in the text. Irony always gives the indirect meaning. The writer's mode and attitude is hidden in the text. Language of irony is different from the common or everyday use of language.

Ironic meaning is always hidden in the text and the readers are expected to explicate the meaning. Unlike, traditional definition of the irony, Said is not completely opposite to unsaid rather both said and unsaid meaning of the text are complimentary and relational. The unsaid meaning plays as significant role as said meaning in postmodern definition of irony. Irony cannot give exact meaning alone. It is always contextual and social. It is used in any text by the writer in order to

demonstrate the socio-political context of the time. Context plays important role to provide actual meaning in the text.

Irony has various functions such as: subversive, enforcing, corrective, and satiric. It is a discursive practice used in postmodern time. There are various discourses about irony. It demonstrates multiplicity in any discourse and at the same time it makes aware people about the situation, falsity of discourses made by ruling class people. Hutcheon further argues:

Irony's edge, then, would seem to ingratiate and to intimidate, to underline and to undermine; it brings people together and drives them apart. Yet, however plural these functions, we still seem to want to call the thing itself by a single name: irony. ... The complexities of irony's inferred motivations, though: an awareness of the range of the operations that irony can be interpreted as carrying out may help resist. (53)

She gives the example of various functions and give them single name irony. Irony has double edge that helps it to challenge the oppressive and high values and at the same time it enforces the low values too.

Hutcheon talks about the transideological nature of irony. As she argues, "irony can be provocative when its conservative or authoritarian as easily as when its politics are oppositional and subversive: it depends on who is using it and whose expense it is seen to be" (15). Irony is double edge device which subverts as well as enforces at the same time. Irony is also used in order to satire and mocks the unwanted socio-political scenarios and development. Irony is used as the medium of subverting high values as well as enforcing so called low values. It helps the ironist to demonstrate the brutality and hierarchy among different people and at the same time it also creates balance in the society.

This paper attempts to address the radical use of irony. Burgess presents the ultra-violence of youth, tyrannical government system, selfish politics, and post-war human situation through the use of irony. The government representatives like doctors and police men are corrupt, tyrannical, selfish, and create ultra-violence like Alex. As Rubin Rabinovitz asserts, "for Burgess, society's brutality is more threatening than the individual's; its power is inhuman, enormous, and unrestrained. Burgess, commenting on *A Clockwork Orange*, has indicated that he meant to encourage a comparison between Alex's brutality and society's: the violence in the book is really more to show what the State can do with it" (7). Rabinovitz presents the state's brutality and inhumanity upon marginalized. Burgess also wants to show the hypocrisy and inhumanity of the ruling class people by using radical irony. Alex and his gang is the representative of common people who fight against authority and injustice. By using political irony, Burgess unmasks the real corrupted discourse of the ruling-class people and at the same time he makes the people aware about socio-political situation of their society. He raises the marginalized people's agendas and supports them.

Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* challenges contemporary socio-political scenarios by using irony. The context of the novel plays significant role because it provides various information about post-war English society. It is set in future time and the writer warns the people about upcoming danger, and catastrophe. After the second world-war, human life is changed drastically because of scientific and technological development. All human values are counted in money. Working-class people are unable to fulfill their basic needs because they get low wages. All benefits are captured by ruling class people. There are various criminal activities in the society like raping, killing, and stealing. New culture is emerged and youths are more affected by new culture.

Burgess uses irony in order to break down the hierarchy in the society. Working class people revolt against the domination of the ruling class and their imposing discourse. As Roger Fowler examines *A Clockwork Orange* as a novel about the Alex struggles against norm society. Fowler examines the reasons of using anti-language. He argues:

The social situation of Alex and his associates is a paradigm case for the formation an anti-language. They constantly assert their opposition and contempt for all that is, in their own words bourgeois, middle-aged, middle-class. They attack their representatives of these values by violent assaults on property and people. Since their actions are illegal, they are also at war with the state and its law enforcement agencies. Their speech is an invented argot very much on the principles of classic criminal slang, and contrasted with the speech of members of the norm society. (268)

Fowler states that Alex challenges existing social norms, values of English society by using anti-language. Alex and his gang use nadsat, slang language of teenage group, in order to attack the speech of members of the norm society. Alex believes that the language that is used in bourgeois discourse cannot allow marginalized people to express their feelings. In order to raise his voice, Alex uses unique language that is known as nadsat and it helps him to make his own discourse and raises voice against brutality, injustice, and tyrannical system.

Alex and his gang torture those people who are the representative of government in order to take revenge. They get satisfaction by assaulting people is ironical. The scene of beating teacher like figure as describes by Alex, "out comes the blood, my brother real beautiful" (7). This statement is ironical because it brings the unstated violence of state upon working class people. By using irony, he presents the

ambiguity, multiplicity, and selfishness in high discourse as Hutcheon states, "irony is said to irritate because it denies us our certainties by unmasking the world as an ambiguity" (14). There is no certainty and final meaning. The stated things are not sufficient in order to make ironical meaning of the text. It is not opposite to unstated meaning rather than it is relational. The said brutality of the young protagonist Alex and unsaid brutality of the state come together. Alex only resists the ruling-class people and government's domination through the help of ultra-violence, and nadsat language that is used to make counter-discourse of marginalized group.

Alex and gang commit ultra- violence in order to satisfy their desires. All violence activities are took place in night time. Youths are attracted towards illegal activities such as taking drugs, torturing, and stealing instead of their study. In the society, there is no law and most of the mass media also promotes illegal things rather than showing its backdrops. In the evening time Alex like youth takes drugs and commits violence for money. Alex gang mostly assaults high-class people like teacher, women, and government representatives. Alex describes the scene of the modern English society. He states:

We sat in the Korova Milkbar making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening, a flip dark chill winter bastard through dry. The Korova Milkbar was a milk- plus mesto, and you may, O my brothers, have forgotten what these mestos were like, things changing so skorry these days and everybody quick to forget, newspapers not being read much neither. Well, what they sold there was milk plus something else. They have no license for selling liquor, but there was no law yet against prodding some of the new veshches. (3)

Alex presents the whole picture of post-war English society. All people are guided by money. They earn money by selling drugs and mass Medias also advertise these

things. Most of the school time youths are affected and they commit various ultras-violence in the society. There is no law and order maintained by government. Youths take violence as a medium of entertainment. They use drugs in order to forget their pain and unpleasant things. The police and government are unable to maintain peace in society. Instead of controlling illegal business and market, tyrannical government torture common people. It is ironic in a sense that, the duty of government is to control the crime and provide basic needs to the peoples such as education, food, and security but the system supports the crime and controls the rights of common people but Burgess presents just opposite to question ruling class culture.

Burgess subverts high values and selfish tendency of ruling class people and at the same time he valorizes the working class people's values. He does not take Alex's activities negatively. He thinks that Alex like freedom fighter is born because of the dominating and controlling nature of bourgeoisie. He warns by demonstrating near future society as the introduction of book present, "there is the vision of the near society, as frightening persuasive, however small the canvas... a youth culture is revolt, a corrupt police, a government unable to govern" (viii). Futuristic novel always threatens and makes aware about future condition. The language of the Alex gang is called nadsat which is used as weapon to resist. The discourse that is made by bourgeoisie is dominating and controlling. In order to challenge the high discourse, Alex gang fights for resistance. Irony thus helps Burgess to criticize the contemporary policy, culture, and ideology of the state.

Irony sets in the relationship between the ironist, reader, and context that may be political one. It depicts the hierarchical notion within different discourse. Irony has discursive power. Sometime it creates humor and at the same time it creates serious condition. Linda Hutcheon states, "the transideological nature of its politics means

that irony can be used either to undercut or to reinforce both conservative and radical positions" (26). The political use of irony is to advocate all the marginalized aspects and things. Irony can function as a deconstructive tool which brings the conscious upon marginalized people and at the same time it subverts the high aspects and creates balance between margin and center. Hutcheon insists that everything that is made up of language is discourse. Ruling class people always make any discourse that supports them. Every discourse is complex ambiguous, and gives multiple meaning. Uneducated and marginalized people do not understand the tricky and complex language of bourgeois discourse. The main function of irony is to unmask the multiplicity of discourse and at the same time it also makes aware marginalized people about their condition and context clearly.

Burgess's anti-hero, Alex does not follow the rules of the government. He makes his own rules and regulation by using nadsat because high discourse and their language do not allow his self to express his pain, suffering, and socio-political situation. As Alex argues:

Badness is one of the self, the you r me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self. And is not our modern history, my brothers, the story of brave malenky selves fighting these big machines? I am serious with you, brothers, over this. But what I do I do because I like to do. (31)

Burgess always supports and raises the marginalized issues, people, and at the same time he problematizes the high discourse and values that do not uplift the marginalized things. Here, he supports Alex and his gang through the help of radical

irony. Alex revolts against big machines that do not allow him to use his mind. He is the representative of working class people. The writer criticizes education system, authority, and justice system in the post-war society. Individual right is controlled by system that is governed by bourgeois. Working class people are everywhere marginalized and powerless such thing is presented through Alex. Burgess subverts the high values and system at the same time he reinforce Alex's voice through the political use of irony.

Most of the characters in novel have multiple identity and duality in their nature. They have no fixed and stable identity. As Alex describes the scene of their activities, " we put our maskies on _ new jobs these were, real horrorshow, wonderfully done really; they were like faces of historical personalities and I had Disraeli, Pete had Elvis Presley, Georgie had Henry VIII and poor old Dim a poet veck" (9). This is the example of dual identity and multiplicity in characters' behavior. The stated dualism of the character demonstrates the unstated dualism of the government, too. Ironic meaning always depends upon said, unsaid, and context. Through the help of irony Burgess combines these things together in order to present the dualism of capitalism, authority, and bourgeois discourse.

For Hutcheon, "the cutting edge of the irony is always social and political that gets heated at the evaluating edge provoking response from those who get it and in those who become victim of it" (2). Irony is a political issue that involves relation of power such as exclusion and inclusion. Context plays significant role in ironic interpretation because it provides the socio-political scenarios of contemporary time. The politics of irony is relational strategy in the sense that it operates not only between said and unsaid meaning, but also between ironist, reader, target, and context. As she points out:

The scene of irony involves relations of power based in relations of communication. It unavoidably involves touchy issues such as exclusion and inclusion, intervention and evasion. Because of training and temperament, no doubt, I have shield away from focusing on irony as a way to achieve any kind of truth, freedom, or a host of other ineffable that have been claimed for it over the centuries. (2)

Irony is not only rhetorical device rather it is discursive strategy that involve in power relation. It is the way of getting real information and truth. It also studies about center and margin and at the same time it helps to break the boundary and creates the balance.

Alex and his gang commit ultra-violence in their society. They always go against the rule of government and make their own rule. They are the representative of excluded groups. Excluded or marginalized people fight against system that does not provide equal rights like ruling class people. Alex compares himself with night because he is excluded from main stream system. As Alex argues, "the day was very different from night. The night belonged to me and my droogs and all the rest of the nadsats, and the starry bourgeois lurked indoors drinking in the gloopy worldcast, but the day was for the starry ones, and there always seems to be more rozzes or millicents about during the day, too" (33). Ironic interpretation of this extract demonstrates the power relationship between ruling class and working class people. Working class people like Alex and his droogs are excluded and marginalized in bourgeois society. They fight against the bourgeois system in order to subvert their values and reinforcing working class values. The day is related to bourgeois and night belongs to common men. This is very symbolic and ironical in a sense that all the pleasant things and system promote bourgeoisie and unpleasant things forcefully

provide to common people. Their life becomes darker and darker like the night. In this way irony helps to find out the hidden power relation such as exclusion and inclusion. It also helps to gain the sociopolitical condition of the contemporary society and uplift the excluded values by subverting the dominating ones.

In the name of making good citizens, the representative of government such as doctor, police, and so on torture and control the human rights. Prison Charlie is a person who criticizes the system and has sympathy towards victims. As he states:

Is it going to be in and out and in and out of institutions, like this, though more in than out for most of you, or are you going to attend to the divine world and realize the punishments that await the unrepentant sinner in the next world, as well as in this? A lot of blasted idiots you are, most of you, selling you birthright for a saucer of cold porridge. The thrill of theft, of violence, the urge to live easy-is it worth it when we have undeniable proof, yes yes, incontrovertible evidence that hell exists? (59)

Brutality of government institutions is described by Charlie to Alex. In the prison, all people are tortured and punished in order to make good people, but it is very much ironical in a sense that most of the common people are kept in the prison because they raise their voice against the system and government. Alex who goes against system is tortured by police. The prison is just like hell and there is no law and order for the common people. Burgess demonstrates these brutalities of the government through the help of radical use of irony in order to reinforce the marginalized people's voice at the same time it also unmask the cruel face of ruling class people. Irony, here function as the way of educating common people about their position and at the same time it also demonstrates complexity and multiplicity of bourgeois discourse.

Context plays vital role to find out the intention of the ironist. The writer presents the socio-political scenarios of the contemporary time and brutality, domination, and injustice of the government, too. As Booth states:

If in a play, a character comes in dripping and says "its raining", the author may well want us to think about it means to say something so obvious as all that. It may suggest literal-mindedness, or even stupidity. Or perhaps the author speaks it in an ironic tone, after the other character look at him standing there, dripping, for about thirty seconds. In literature as in life, "its raining" can mean an unlimited number of things, depending, on the context. (8-9)

Booth's idea here emphasizes on the role of context in which as individual speaks. The same statement may refer to multiple things in different situations. In a context, Booth writes, "irony is made evident to the understanding either by the delivery, the character of the speaker or the nature of the subject" (49). The intention of the ironist is found by the characters and context of the book. Context provides information to analyze ironically.

Burgess demonstrates the contemporary society as it is by using irony in order to mock and breaks down high values of aristocrats and to uplift the neglected ones. After the Second World War, England loses his status and money in war. There is the excessive development of the science and technology. There is the political fight between conservative and labor party. Conservative party governs the state and there is the election recently. There is the chaotic situation in England. Everywhere, there is the murder, rape, gang fight, and so on. The government is unable to control the violence. The opposition party makes this issue strong and raise for the sake of its benefit. The government also captures Alex and kept in prison. The government ironically cleans the streets and makes the society good. Alex is tortured in the prison

by the police and he is also selected for Lodovico Thecnique. All the birthrights of Alex are controlled and in the name of the reformation, the government tortures Alex psychologically. Alex becomes the scapegoat for both political parties. The context only gives the detail information about the book to analyze ironically. Both political parties have no sympathy towards Alex rather they make Alex as the weapon of winning election.

The government wants win the election in any cost. The mass Medias also valorize the government policy to reduce the crime in the state. It is very ironical because instead of reducing crime, the government itself commits crime. The news in the paper as Alex describes:

This gazetta I had seemed to be like a government gazetta, for the only news that was on the front page was about the need for every vack to make sure he put the Government back again on the next General Election, which seemed to be about two or three weeks off. There were very boastful slovos about what the government had done, brothers, in the last year or so, what with increased exports and a really horrorshow foreign policy.... But what the government was really boastful about was the way in which they reckoned the streets had been made safer for all peace-loving night-walking lewdies I the last six months. (98)

The Government is boastful about its work which signifies irony in a sense that the cruelty, inhumanity, and domination of the government towards marginalized groups is not boastful achievement. Self-centered tendency of ruling class people can be found in this extract. The government makes Alex conditioned by using Ludovico's Technique and becomes boastful. Burgess makes radical use of irony in order to subvert these types of governmental system and at the same time he reinforces the

common thing. He does not take Alex activities negatively rather he takes them as a resistance and fight against ruling class system.

Irony is used to unmask the hidden ideology of contemporary established discourse that is made by ruling class people. Claire Colebrook defines irony as:

Postmodern irony is argued to be inherently politically liberating; because no common ground is assumed, a life marked by irony remains open and undetermined. But the extension of irony from being a local trope within an otherwise literal language to characterize life and language in general has also served clearly conservative political tendencies, tendencies that have closed literature off from its political and cultural forces. At the very last, irony is elitist: to say one thing and mean another, or to say something contrary to what is understood, relies on the possibility that those who are not enlightened or privy to the context. (18-19)

Colebrook insists that irony is always political and cultural and it depends upon context. Irony creates two level of meaning: denotative and connotative and the job of the reader is to find out connotative meaning along with denotative. Ironic meaning is hidden and implicit in the text. By analyzing context and intention of the writer, the reader can find the ironic meaning.

F .Alexander explicitly supports Alex but his motive is to win the election by using Alex as a victim of system. He is beaten by his old enemy and police bitterly after that he meets Alexander who cares and supports him. Alex tells everything about the government brutality to Alexander. He also makes Alex as the weapon to win the election and writes the brutality of government in paper in order to make it weak. As Alexander states, "I have rung up various people who will be interested in your case. You can be a very potent weapon in ensuring that this parent evil and wicked

Government is not returned in the forthcoming election. The Government's big boast is the way it has dealt with crime these last months” (118). In this extract, Alexander ironically raises Alex issue. In the surface level, he is supporting Alex but at the same time his intention is not that. By bring Alex issue, he presents the brutality of system and at the same time he wants to win election, too. Denotative meaning cannot represent the intention of the speaker. In ironic or connotative level, the speaker's attitude can be found. Burgess wants to criticize the dirty politics of England by using political irony. He subverts the hypocrisy, self-centeredness, brutality, political instability, and at the same time he reinforces the marginalized people's voices through the help of radical irony.

Burgess maintains the novel is 'a human form' that depicts the human psychology, complexity, and human resistance as Charles Sumner talks in his article "Humanist Drama in *A Clockwork Orange*". He argues that Alex ultra-violence such as: assaults, rape, and murder are form of his resistance against tyrannical government. As Sumner states:

A Clockwork Orange overturns some of the Burgess's basic assumption about the novelistic genre. He believed that the novel could not represent social structures or impersonal institutions, and that if these completely overwhelm the, then this genre will cease to exist. However, *A Clockwork Orange* aptly demonstrates how political-economic structures objectify human beings, assuming an agency once exercised by the later. It may thus be that Burgess's failed intention leads to an inadvertent success, one pushing beyond formally recognized limits of representation. (63)

He also supports Alex's ultra-violence and argues that these are the form of resistance to political and economic authority. He again argues that, "Alex is, in fact, free from

the cultural and legal authorities" (51). Alex breaks the law and order in the society because the law is one sided that only supports ruling class people.

Alex believes in action rather than theory. He states that this world is corrupted and brutal and only powerful people can get success. In his view, ruling class does not provide the rights to working class people. He also insists the importance role of youth that can bring change in system. As he argues:

Yes yes yes, there it was. Youth must go, ah yes. But youth is only being in a way like it might be an animal. No, it is not just like being an animal so much as being like one of those malenky toys you vidy being sold in the streets, like little chellovecks made out of tin and with the spring inside and then a wind handle on the outside and you wind it up.... Being young is like being like one of these malenky machines. (140)

Here, Alex points out the importance and challenge of youth. At the end of the novel, Alex becomes mature and he realizes that all the ultra-violence is the products of youth age. Government does not realize his duty and responsibility of managing the youth and give them proper psycho-social education rather government treats them as a traitors and other. The government only concerns about how to win the election and earn more money by exploiting working class people. Burgess through the voice of Alex reinforces the marginalized people's thoughts and at the same time unmask the duality of the system, too.

Burgess dramatizes the socio-political context through the help of irony. He satires the totalitarian government system, scientific development and its negative impact upon human beings, false consciousness of bourgeois discourse, mechanical and showy morality, and dualism as well as domination of ruling class people, too. He makes radical use of irony in order to subvert this hypocrisy of ruling class people and

raises the marginalized voices. Yiyun Li also talks about the subversive voice in Burgess's novel. As Li states:

In Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*, personalizes the political and social changes in his country over the past few decades in this novella disguised as autobiography_ or vice-versa. Unlike most historical narratives from England, which are pegged to political events? *A Clockwork Orange* is representative of people's history, a bottom-up rather than top-down view of a country in flux. By moving back and forth in time and focusing on small events and everyday people, Burgess breathes life into history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizens. (12)

According to Li, the political and social issues are merged and modified in the novel, in a sense that Burgess tends to reflect upon the history of modern England. It still has to face countless number of challenges and troubles. Burgess insists in bottom-up history rather than top-down history. Li's idea about Burgess is right because he also valorizes the marginalized people's voices and their history by using irony.

Alex and his gang is the representative of marginalized group who fight against the totalitarian system. Alex mainly assaults high class people like teacher, police. When Alex gang assaults teacher and the teacher describe the scene as:

It's no world for any old man any longer, and that means that I am not one bit scared of you, my boyos, because I am too drunk to feel the pain if you hit me, and if you kill me I will be glad to be dead. We smacked and then grinned but said nothing, and then he said: 'what sort of a world is it at all? Men on the moon and men spinning round the earth like it might be midges round a lamp, and there is not no attention paid to earthly law nor order no more. (12-13)

This extract presents the down-top history of England by showing the ultra-violence of Alex gang. There is no any law and order in the society tells the teacher at the time of his assaults is very much ironic. The stated meaning of this extract is not completely opposite to the unstated meaning rather than it is relational because it brings the socio-political condition of English society and at the same time it also presents the brutality of ruling class people. Burgess demonstrates the post-war English people condition through the help of irony.

Hutcheon also talks about the power of irony and argues that irony can be used to destabilish hierarchical values and establishes marginalized values. She talks about various functions of irony. As she points out, "Irony not only works to point out the complexities of historical and social realities but also has the power to change that reality _ at least for a time: during the revolutionary struggle irony is made welcome for its thrusts at the...enemy" (28). In literature, irony is a powerful weapon to raise an issue of historical and social reality. Irony has indirect meaning in literature. The writer uses it to raise the common values. Hutcheon further argues:

The subversive function of irony is often connected to the view that it is a self-critical, self-knowing, self-reflexive mode that has the potential to offer a challenge to the hierarchy of the very site of discourse, a hierarchy based in social relations of dominance. Such a challenge, such a ability to undermine and overturn, is said to have politically transformative power. (28)

Here, Hutcheon describes the subversive power of irony that breaks down hierarchy. The ironist presents the self-critical characters in the novel in order to subvert the hierarchy in the society. Burgess presents Alex as a revolutionist and self-critical, self-reflexive, and self-mocking character in the novel.

Alex fights against domination of the government and system. The discourse that is made by ruling class people is also used by marginalized character Alex in order to combat and challenge economical and social hierarchies. Alex is unable to save himself from the torture of the doctors. He is forced to watch ultra-violence in order to clean his violent attitude. As Alex describes, "you have proved me that all this dratsing and ultra-violence and killing is wrong wrong and terribly wrong. I have learnt my lesson, sirs. I see now what I have never seen before. I am cured, praise God. And Dr Brodsky said: you are not cured yet. There is still a lot to be done" (87). Alex saying is very ironical in a sense that Alex is forcefully cured by showing violent film and the authority controls the free will of the Alex like individuals in the name of the cleaning crime from the streets. The government itself commits the crime that is not presented in the novel, but through the help of political irony Burgess presents the brutality and crime of the authority. Alex makes his own discourse that is different from the main discourse of the ruling class people functions as counter-discourse for the marginalized people. Alex uses the hierarchal tendency of ruling class people like he always dominates his friends, and he has multiple identity that is known as self-reflexive and self-critical discourse. Alex uses these things intentionally in order to mock, challenge, and break the hierarchy in society.

Helene A. Shugart also talks about the subversive function of irony in her article *Postmodern Irony As Subversive Rhetorical Strategy*". As she asserts, "subversive irony assumes distinctive and complex technical and theoretical characteristics, most relevant to its post modern nature; chief among these is the fact that the irony invites multiple reading on multiple level, thereby creating multiple potential audiences" (433). Shugart states that irony creates multiplicity among the readers. In the postmodern time most of the texts are ironical in a sense that they have

not single meaning and always depend upon context, writer's intention, and reader's mode. Burgess also presents the complexity and multiplicity in *A Clockwork Orange* in order to deconstruct the high values. As Alexander tells, "there are certain men who wanted to use you, yes, use you for political ends" (131). This extract carries radical irony in a sense that Alexander himself uses Alex for his selfish politics. By presenting Alex as a victim of government, he wants to win the election. Burgess, by using irony, subverts the selfish politics, and hypocrisy of bourgeois discourse.

To wrap up, Burgess has made political use of irony in order to break down the high values, discourse, and culture and at the same time, he has also highlighted and raised marginalized people's voice, too. *A Clockwork Orange* is a novel about post-war chaotic sociopolitical condition of English people. Marginalized group of people are revolting against bourgeois injustice and hypocrisy by rejecting their law, order, and discourse. By using irony, Burgess has portrayed political instability, multiplicity, duality and complexity of contemporary people. Alex's ultra-violence and brutality has combined with the violence, injustice, and domination of the government.

Secondly, Burgess has unmasked hidden multiplicity of high discourse and culture by making radical use of irony. The irony has helped Burgess to educate marginalized people about their condition and complexity of their society. Alex has used his own language _ nadsat that has made the novel complex. Burgess has used such complexity intentionally in order to demonstrate complex society and dualism in discourse and identity. Alex violence activities have functioned as weapon to resist imposed power and discourse.

Thirdly, irony has been used in order to demonstrate the selfish politics and excessive use of science and technology. The contemporary chaotic political scenario

has been mocked and has made people aware about upcoming disastrous conditions of the modern people due to their selfish nature. Alex like marginalized people has committed violence in order to resist imposing discourse and culture.

Lastly, Burgess has broken down hierarchical values and raised the voice of common people through the help of radical irony. He has tried his best to give the power and justice to those who have unable to understand the tricky discourse and culture of bourgeois by using irony's edge that has transgressed high things and reinforced common things.

Works Cited

- Booth, Wayne W. *A Rhetoric of Irony*. University of Chicago Press, 1974.
- Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange*. Penguin Books, 1962.
- Carter, Ronald. "Narrative of Aberrations in *Clockwork Orange*." *Reflection on Clockwork Orange*. Ed. Harry Blamiers. Basic Books, 2002, pp. 23-24.
- Colebrook, Claire. *Irony*. Routledge, 2004.
- Fowler, Roger. "Anti-language in Fiction." *Style*, vol.13, no. 3, 1997, pp. 259-278.
- Goldblatt, Howard. *Burgess and Baudrillard*. Vintage Books, 1991.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony*. Routledge, 1995.
- Ingle, David. "Reviewed Work(s): *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess." *British Medical Journal*, vol. 342, no. 7802, 2011, pp. 879.
- Li, Yiyun. *Burgess and Postmodern Distopia*. Norton, 2004.
- Morris, Robert. "Delinquency in *Clockwork Orange*." *Postmodern Fiction*. Ed. Andrew Gerardson. Harper Collins, 2003, pp. 31-32.
- Mueck, D.C. *Irony and the Ironic*. Methuen, 1982.
- Rabinovitz, Rubin. "Ethical Values in Burgess's *Clockwork Orange*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol.11, no. 1, 1979, pp. 43-50.
- Shugart, Helene A. "Postmodern Irony As Subversive Rhetorical Strategy." *Western Journal of Communication*, vol. 63, no. 4, Fall99, pp. 433-523.
- Sumner, Charles. "Humanist Drama in *A Clockwork Orange*." *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 42, Literature of the 1950s and 1960s, 2012, pp. 49-63.

