CHAPTER IV

INDIRECT SPEECH ACTS
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4.1 Preliminaries

Based on the theoretical framework drawn in chapter II, the present chapter focuses on the analysis of indirect speech acts marked in the selected novels. The chapter explores the speaker’s intended meaning and investigates the purpose and need of opting for indirectness in speech over directness. Indirect speech acts occur in conversational situations such as when a speaker communicates through rhetorical questions, circumlocutions, euphemisms, irony, satirical statements, metonymic expressions, exaggerations, under statements and emphatic statements. The present chapter analyzes the fictional Indirect Speech Acts under different categories- Figures of speech (hyperbole, metaphor, and simile), sarcasm, irony, rhetorical question, circumlocution and euphemism. The extra-linguistic information gathered from the analysis of these indirect speech acts enables the researcher to confirm what kind of perlocutionary effects do the primary illocutionary acts have on the hearer. The reasons for indirectness may be many, such as creating an impact on the hearer which happens through a rhetorical question or a hyperbole, hedging which happens when speaker uses metaphor or euphemistic statements, hiding intentions through ironical and sarcastic utterances or in a circumlocutory speech.

Searle’s classification of speech acts and the five basic types of illocutionary acts have been considered while analyzing the indirect speech acts selected from the novels. The analysis focuses on the forms and functions of the speech acts. The different forms of the types of speech acts would be analyzed with the function of the type of speech acts. The analysis of the conversational passages from the
selected texts is preceded by short contextual backgrounds in which the speech acts have taken place.

4.2 Use of Figures of Speech

4.2.1 Hyperbole

A hyperbole is bold overstatement, or the extravagant exaggeration of fact or of possibility; it may be used either for serious or ironic or comic effect. *(A Glossary of Literary Terms, 1993:85)*

Example:
One woman commenting on the other
‘In all those loose clothes, she looks like a baby elephant.’

The woman exaggerates the appearance of the other woman by comparing her to a baby elephant; an attribute for being fat and short. She didn’t speak it in direct terms but exaggerated it in order to sound humorous. But very implicitly she also expressed how disfigured the other lady looked.

Some examples of hyperboles from the selected novels are as follows.

**Example 1**
A balled fist banged down on the burning skyblue bonnet. It sprang open. The Plymouth looked like an angular blue animal in a zoo asking to be fed.
A bun.
A banana.
Another balled fist slammed down on it, and the bonnet closed. Chacko rolled down his window and called out to the man who had done it.
‘Thanks *Keto!*’ he said. ‘*Valerey* thanks!’
‘Don’t be so ingratiating, comrade,’ Ammu said. ‘It was an accident. He didn’t really mean to help. How could he possibly know that in this old car there beats a truly Marxist heart?’

‘Ammu’, Chacko said, his voice steady and deliberately casual, ‘is it at all possible for you to prevent your washed-up cynicism from completely colouring everything?’

(The God of Small Things, 1997:70)

Analysis

The conversation takes place between Chacko and his sister Ammu as Chacko reacts to the banging on his car by a communist protester. The car’s bonnet is left open as some agitated protester bangs on it. Chacko thanks him instead of showing his anger. Though he is angry, he is also scared of the mob and reacts passively. Ammu observes this and tells Chacko not to do silly things to flatter the agitated communists. She further says how Chacko has kept this secret from everybody that a truly Marxist heart beats in the old car. She also taunts that had the protesters known it, they would not have banged on the car with their comrade inside. Her sarcastically hyperbolic statement is directed at Chacko who calls himself a true follower of Communism. She exaggerates in order to express her disagreement to Chacko’s pseudo-communist ideology.

Ammu’s comment carries the primary illocutionary force of a hyperbole and secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive in the form of an interrogative. But the illocutionary force does not get the perlocutionary effect as desired. Ammu intends to distract Chacko from acting in such a weird manner but Chacko’s response fails Ammu’s illocution. It fails to make an impact on Chacko. Instead, Chacko counterattacks Ammu in the same hyperbolic manner when he asks Ammu to stop colouring everything with her washed-up cynicism. Chacko deliberately becomes extravagant in his choice of words to stop his sister from
offending him. The indirectness in his speech acts as a primary illocutionary force of a hyperbole which also carries an undertone of sarcasm and a secondary illocutionary force of a directive (request) in the form of an interrogative.

4.2.2 Simile

A simile is a figure of speech in which a comparison between two distinctly different things is indicated by the word ‘like’ or ‘as’.

(A Glossary of Literary Terms, 93:67)

Example:
In a zoo, watching the tiger in dim light, a spectator exclaims,
‘The tiger’s eyes are burning like fire!’

The glowing eyes of the tiger are compared with fire using the word ‘like’. A simile brings together two distinctly different objects. Speakers make use of similes in utterances to intensify their speech and make an impact on the interlocutor.

Examples of the use of similes in conversations from the selected novels are as follows.

Example 1
My father sat panting against the mural of the Lord surrounded by the gently animals.
When he caught his breath, he said, ‘my whole life, I have been treated like a donkey. All I want is that one son of mine- at least one- should live like a man.’ (The White Tiger, 2008:30)
Analysis
Protagonist Balram Halwai’s father has been a rickshaw puller all his life. He has never lived a life of dignity. On one of the occasions while he is talking about his misery stricken life, he confesses that his life has been no more than that of a ‘donkey’s’. The phrase *like a donkey* is a simile to implicate a life of pain, affliction and low esteem that he has led. Balram’s father also expresses his desire that he wants one of his sons to *live like a man*. The word ‘man’ is another simile used by Balram’s father to suggest a life of dignity and respect. No father would want his son to be treated as an underdog. An example in the use of the figure of speech, the utterance is an indirect speech act, having the primary illocutionary force of simile and secondary illocutionary force of a Declarative (pronouncing) in the form of a statement. The utterance also reflects the issue of poverty and misery in present day India.

4.2.3 Metaphor
According to Lakoff and Johnson, ‘Metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action and only derivatively a matter of language.’ (1980:153) Abrams defines metaphor as

A word or expression which in the literal usage denotes one kind of thing or action is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing or action, without asserting a comparison.

(*A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 93:67)

Example:
A friend has just come back from Delhi-

‘Delhi becomes a furnace in summer. This place is paradise.’

The metaphor in the above example makes an ordinary phenomenon look extraordinary. Using a word like furnace which epitomizes high temperature, the
speaker implies how unbearable Delhi heat can be and intends to explain how he survived it which he considers an achievement.

Use of metaphor in conversations selected from the novels has been analyzed below.

**Example 1**

The inspector pointed his cane straight at me. “You, young man, are an intelligent, honest, vivacious fellow in a crowd of thugs and idiots. In any jungle, what is the rarest of animals – the creature that comes along only once in a generation?

I thought about it and said:

‘The white tiger.’

‘That is what you are in this jungle.’  

* (The White Tiger, 2008:35)

**Analysis**

This conversation has taken place in Balram’s childhood, when one day the school inspector visits his village school. Balram is a bright student and he makes a good impression on the school inspector with his intelligent answers. The school inspector compliments him on his honesty, intelligence and vivaciousness and calls him ‘the white tiger’, the rarest animal in a jungle. The conversational piece has been loaded with other metaphors like *jungle*, *thugs* and *idiots*. The word *jungle* is a metaphor for a disorganized and chaotic society where nothing is in order just as in a jungle. The words *thugs* and *idiots* are suggestive of the corrupt and dishonest people who rule society. The choice of another metaphor ‘the white tiger’ has been suggestive of an intelligent, fearless and vivacious person who dared to stand up for himself. In the latter utterance the inspector’s emphasis on the spatial deictic term *this* indicates how strongly he affirms that society is no less than a jungle where no order prevails and how he could see the potential in Balram to stand up for himself against the corrupt society. The school inspector’s
utterance bears a primary illocutionary act of metaphor and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (claiming) in the form of a statement.

**Example 2**

The old driver asked, ‘What caste are you?’

‘Halwai.’

‘Sweet makers’, the old driver said, shaking his head.

‘That’s what you people do. You make sweets. How can you learn to drive?’ He pointed his hookah at the live coals.

‘That’s like getting coals to make ice for you. Mastering a car’ – he moved the stick of an invisible gear box – ‘it’s like taming a wild stallion - only a boy from a warrior caste can manage that. You need to have aggression in your blood. Muslims, Rajputs, Sikhs – they’re fighters, they can become drivers. You think sweet makers can last long in fourth gear?’

*(The White Tiger, 2008:56)*

**Analysis**

Balram Halwai, the protagonist of *The White Tiger* is in search of a job. In this connection, he approaches the old driver at the local landlord’s house for a recommendation. The conversation takes place between Balram and the old driver. The old driver wants to know Balram’s caste. This piece of information is of relevance before he approaches the landlord as the master would not employ someone who is not a touchable. The landlords are orthodox people and highly value caste system. Balram says that he belongs to the caste of sweet makers, and implies that he belongs to a caste of touchable and expects the old driver to take his case to the landlord. The old driver is not willing to take Balram to the landlord as Balram looks young and promising. He might prove a threat to the old driver. So, he tries his best to discourage Balram from applying for the job. He doubts whether Balram, who belongs to the sweet makers’ caste, could drive a car.
According to him, only people from the warrior caste make good drivers as they are strong and born fighters as he believes that driving a car is like taming a wild stallion. The driver makes use of a simile in his conversation to make an impact on Balram implying how driving is no less difficult and tactful a job like taming a wild stallion. He names other fighter castes like Rajputs, Muslims and Sikhs who according to him are symbols of aggression. His utterances are meant to intimidate Balram. He raises his doubt about Balram being capable of doing the same and asks him whether sweet makers could last long in *fourth gear*. The utterance is a primary illocutionary act of a metaphor in the form of a rhetorical question put to make an effect on the listener rather than expecting an answer. The old driver uses the expression *fourth gear* as a metaphor for high speed. He indirectly cautions Balram how driving a car is no child’s play. The utterance carries a secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive in the form of an interrogative.

**Example 3**

‘He got into politics because he had to, Ashok – you don’t have a choice in the Darkness! And don’t panic, we can deal with this income tax charge. This is India, not America. There is always a way out here. I told you, we have someone here who works for us – Ramanathan. He is a good fixer.’

‘Ramanathan is a *sleazy, oily, cretin*. We need a new tax lawyer, Mukesh! We need to go to the newspapers and tell them we’re being raped by the politicians!’

‘Listen’ – the Mongoose raised his voice – ‘you just got back from America. Even this man driving our car knows more about India than you do right now. We need a *fixer*. He’ll get us the interview with a minister that we need. That’s how Delhi works.’

*The White Tiger, 2008:121*
Analysis
A conversation between Mr.Ashok and his brother Mukesh is going on in the above extract. Mukesh is being referred to as the mongoose, an animal metaphor attributed to a human for his cunning and secretive qualities. A mongoose is known for killing snakes and rodents by intimidating them. Mukesh is a man who is into politics and gets his work done by bribing people. He intimidates powerful officials and politicians with his money power. The metaphor is appropriate for Mukesh. Mukesh is trying to explain to his America-returned brother Ashok the craft of politics in India. He uses the word darkness as a metaphor for the backward and under-privileged areas of rural India where politics becomes synonymous to exercising power to exploit the poor, illiterate people. He then refers to a person named Ramanathan in Delhi who would help them get rid of the income tax problems they are in. Mr.Ashok retaliates and calls Ramanathan a sleazy, oily cretin, an expression metaphorically used for a crooked and untrustworthy person. Mr. Ashok implies that he does not approve of Ramanathan as a worthy fellow who could help them in that situation.

Mr.Ashok’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of a metaphor and is an indirect request. It has a secondary illocutionary force of a Directive (suggesting) in the form of an exclamatory statement. But Mr.Ashok’s indirect speech act fails to create the perlocutionary effect on Mukesh, as Mukesh ignores the request implied in it and holds on to his decision to get a fixer and not a lawyer as suggested by his brother. He intentionally does not listen to his brother as he is following an unethical means and Mr.Ashok is asking him to handle it legally.

Example 4
‘There is plenty of wine in the trunk of the car,’ Maxine points out.

‘It doesn’t matter,’ he tells her. ‘My parents don’t own a corkscrew.’

(The Namesake, 2003:145)
Analysis

On her mother’s request, Gogol drops by his parents’ place with his girlfriend Maxine while on his way to New-Hampshire. It is his birthday and his mother has invited both of them. Though Gogol has different plans, he does not let down his mother’s request. He takes Maxine along. Keeping in mind the difference in culture, Gogol briefs Maxine about the dos and don’ts of an Indian household. The conversation starts when Gogol informs Maxine that there would not be any wine with lunch which is a common occurrence at her house. Maxine fails to see through the invisible meaning and responds naively that they could take some from the stock they are carrying with them. On this Gogol jests that his parents do not own a corkscrew. He means that his is a house of teetotalers and it is not about running out of wine. There is humour in the manner Gogol introduces his typically Indian household to Maxine, a westerner. Alcohol is considered a taboo in an Indian household. Indian culture does not allow the members of the family to share alcoholic drinks. Though Gogol’s family has settled in the USA and Gogol has grown up amidst the western culture, his family still holds on to Indian values. Although a follower of the western culture, Gogol abides by the rules when he is at home. He finds it difficult to explain it to Maxine for whom alcohol is a part of their meals. To avoid explaining the cultural nuances, Gogol speaks it humorously to lessen the cultural shock that Maxine would get with the revelation. He also makes apt use of metaphor as he acquaints Maxine with the mannerisms of his family. He is trying to keep her expectations within bounds and make her aware of the restrictions she would have to follow while they are at his parents’ place. Gogol’s utterance carries the primary illocutionary force of a metaphor in the form of a humorous statement and secondary illocutionary force of a Directive (suggesting) in the form of a statement.
4.2.4 Irony

Irony expresses an additional comment. Helga Kotoff (2003) assumes that the ironic speaker relies on the hearer’s assumptions to communicate the opposition potential of irony. (Journal of Pragmatics, 35, 2003:1390) M.H. Abrams defines this figure of speech as

A statement in which the meaning that the speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with indications in the overall speech-situation that the speaker intends a very different, and often opposite, attitude or evaluation.’

(A Glossary of Literary Terms, 1993: 97)

Example:

A friend to other

‘If only you realized how much I adore you dropping in at my place at midnight.’

No one appreciates receiving a guest at midnight. The friend doesn’t speak the truth that he doesn’t like his friend’s way but expresses it tactfully through an ironical statement. The irony in the utterance is gentle as it expresses a positive sentiment. The speaker also cares not to hurt his friend’s sentiments. The speaker adopts a friendly way of being offensive.

The novels selected are laden with conversations where irony has been used as an effective tool for expressing the hidden intentions. Some instances of irony analyzed from the novels are as follows.
Example 1

Mr. Ashok put the garland on the great man’s thick, bull like neck.

‘My son,’ the stork said. ‘Returned from America recently.’

The Great Socialist squeezed Mr. Ashok’s cheeks. ‘Good. We need more boys to come back and build India into a superpower.’

*(White Tiger, 2008:104)*

Analysis

The great socialist is a corrupt politician of the area whose only motive is to exploit the poor, illiterate mass and hoard power and money. On one occasion when Mr. Ashok’s father, referred to as the Stork, introduces his son to the great socialist, he admires Mr. Ashok and calls him the future of India. But in reality, he doesn’t want any youth to be part of India’s political system. His real interest lies in the money that foreign returned people like Mr. Ashok could bribe him with. He finds Mr. Ashok naïve and uses him in various unethical practices. It sounds ironic when he says that he wants more boys to come back and build India into a superpower as his real intention is only benefit of self. In this extract Mr. Ashok’s father has been named as the stork. A stork is a bird with long beak and neck and long legs that lives near water but often builds its nest on the top of a high building. The metaphor is suggestive of Mr. Ashok’s father’s ambitious nature. Back in the village he acts as a down to earth people’s man but in reality nourishes high political ambitions. He wants to befriend powerful people at the higher level and gratify his great political ambitions. The politician is sarcastically referred to as the Great Socialist as he has disguised himself as a socialist but in reality practices capitalism. His utterance *we need more boys to come back and build India into a superpower* carries a primary illocutionary act of irony and secondary illocutionary act of an Assertive (suggesting) in the form of a statement.
Example 2

As he was getting out of the car, the Mongoose tapped his pockets, looked confused for a moment, and said, ‘I’ve lost a rupee.’
He snapped his finger at me.
‘Get down on your knees. Look for it on the floor of the car.’
I got down on my knees. I sniffed in between the mats like a dog, all in search of that rupee.
‘What do you mean, it is not there? Don’t think you can steal from us just because you’re in the city. I want that rupee.’
‘We have just paid half a million rupee in 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.’

Finally, I took a one rupee coin out of my shirt pocket, dropped it on the floor of the car, picked it up, and gave it to the Mongoose.
‘Here it is sir. Forgive me for taking so long to find it.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:139)

Analysis

In this incident a one rupee coin falls from Mukesh’s pocket while getting down from the car. He pesters the driver Balram to find it. Despite sincerely searching when Balram cannot locate it, Mukesh abuses him verbally and accuses him of theft. At this, Mukesh’s brother Mr.Ashok reminds Mukesh of how not so long ago they have committed an illegal act of bribing half a million rupees and how it sounds too ironical to bully a servant for a one rupee coin. He says ‘we have just paid half a million rupee in bribe, Mukesh, and now we’re screwing this man over
for a single rupee.’ It is indeed too ironic to harass a poor servant for a rupee coin when the masters do not hesitate to bribe the corrupt politicians.

Mr. Ashok’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of Irony and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (complaining) in the form of a statement. But the illocutionary force in Mr. Ashok’s utterance could not have a perlocutionary effect on Mukesh as he turns a deaf ear to Mr. Ashok’s complaining. Mukesh knows that what Mr. Ashok is saying is true but does not want to lose his face in front of a servant. He does a face saving act in order to defend himself. The verbal irony gets reinforced when Mukesh comments how Mr. Ashok is being too lenient with the servant and how corruption starts with a single rupee. In spite of the humiliation, Balram maintains his poise and behaves obediently. He politely accepts the mistake he has not committed and skillfully takes out a coin from his own pocket and apologizes. Balram’s response carries the primary illocutionary force of Irony and secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive (apologizing) in the form of a statement.

**Example 3**

‘Why didn’t you tell me?’ he said, tightening his hold on the collar, almost choking me. ‘Why didn’t you wake me up at once?’
‘Sir…she said…she said…she said…’
He grabbed me and pushed me against the balcony of the apartment. The landlord inside him was not dead after all.
‘Why did you drive her there?’
I turned my head- behind me I saw all the shiny towers and shopping malls of Gurgaon.
‘Did you want to ruin my family’s reputation?’

*(The White Tiger, 2008:182)*
Analysis

Mr. Ashok’s wife Pinky Madam has left her husband for good. She has bribed their driver Balram without the knowledge of her husband to drop her at the airport in the middle of the night. Mr. Ashok comes to know about the whole incident the next morning and gets livid on Balram. He grabs Balram by the collar and pushes him against the balcony. Balram is too threatened to react. Mr. Ashok starts interrogating Balram about Pinky madam’s act. As a matter of fact Mr. Ashok probably knows why Pinky madam has left him and he is also aware of the fact that Balram is innocent. But he is in a fit of anger and vents it out on Balram. He knows that Balram does not have answers but he is too agitated to behave normally. He even accuses Balram of ruining the reputation of his family. It is too ironic an allegation on Mr. Ashok’s part to blame a poor driver and also too ironical for Balram who always thought himself to be a very loyal and faithful servant to be accused of ruining his master’s family name. Mr. Ashok’s utterance bears the primary illocutionary force of Irony and secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive (blaming) in the form of an interrogative.

Example 4

Rolling down the glass, I held out a rupee – the fellow with the deformed legs took it and saluted me; I rolled the window up and resealed the egg. The talking in the back seat stopped at once.

‘Who the hell told you to do that?’

‘Sorry sir,’ I said.

‘Why the hell did you give that beggar a rupee? What cheek! Turn the music off.’

They really gave it to me that evening. Though their talk was normally in a mix of Hindi and English, the two brothers began speaking in chaste Hindi – entirely for my benefit.
Don’t we give money each time we go to the temple?’ the elder thug said. ‘We donate *every* year to the cancer institute. I buy that card the school children came round selling.’

‘The other day I was speaking to our accountant and he was saying, “Sir, you have no money in the bank. It’s all gone.” Do you know how high the taxes are in this country?’ The younger thug said. ‘If we gave any money, what would we have to eat?’

(*The White Tiger*, 2008:241)

**Analysis**

The conversation takes place between Mr. Ashok and his brother Mukesh where driver Balram has been the target of rebuke. On one occasion while he is driving his masters, Balram gives a one rupee coin to a road-side beggar. He is immediately taken to task and his masters start lecturing him on the value of money. It sounds quite ironic to Balram when they scold him for giving away a single rupee to a poor beggar when their own accountant is saying that they have no money left in the bank as they have spent it all in bribing. The situation looks ambivalent as on one hand Balram’s masters are spending large amount of money to bribe politicians and on the other, they are livid with Balram who spends a single rupee from his own salary on a poor man. The whole situation is ironic.

The utterance ‘*If we give money, what would we have to eat*’ is a primary illocutionary act of Ironic and secondary illocutionary act of an Assertive (complaining) in the form of an interrogative. They are scared to realize that they are on the verge of bankruptcy. They do a face saving act by scolding Balram to hide the truth from him.
4.3 Sarcasm

According to M.H. Abrams

Sarcasm in ordinary parlance is sometimes used as an equivalent for irony, but it is better to restrict it to the crude and taunting use of apparent praise for dispraise.

(A Glossary of Literary Terms, 1993:99)

Example:
A friend is in the habit of coming up with illogical ideas which baffle others. Another friend cannot help reacting to it-
‘Why don’t you publish these wonderful ideas of yours?’

The friend is being ironical in an unfriendly way. Sarcasm is usually intended to hurt the addressee. When someone is sarcastic he also violates the principle of politeness as the tone is crude and taunting. Nonetheless, the hearer understands that his innovative ideas are not so welcome in the social circle.

Conversations from the novels having sarcastic connotations are as follows.

Example 1
‘See, it is like this,’ the older Muslim man said. ‘There is a government medical superintendent who is 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 is having an open auction for that post. The going rate for this post is about four hundred thousand these days.’
‘That much!’ I said, my mouth opened wide.
‘Why not? There is 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 an imaginary table.’ Next, I call all the junior government doctors whom I am supposed to supervise, into my office. I take out my big government ledger. I shout out, ‘Dr. Ram Pandey.’ He pointed a finger at me; I assumed my role in the play.  

(The White Tiger, 2008:49-50)

Analysis

Balram Halwai has taken his ailing father to the government hospital. Many patients are waiting and the doctor is absent. When Balram inquires about the doctor’s whereabouts an old Muslim man who is also waiting for the doctor started revealing the gory truth about how doctors are appointed through bribery and how government hospitals operate without doctors. He also confirms that everything happens in the selfish interest of the local politician whom he calls the ‘Great Socialist’. The old Muslim man doesn’t truly mean the politician to be a great socialist but speaks it sarcastically for the fellow listeners to understand how the man in power exploits people in the name of social work. The utterance reflects a common man’s true perception of a so called great politician’s reality. The old man adopts the style of storytelling to express his anger and frustration against the corrupt system. His utterances carry the primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and the secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a statement.

Example 2

‘Look up from your phone a minute. Have you told Pinky that you’re staying back for good?’

‘Hm. Yes.’
‘What does the queen say?’
‘Don’t call her that. She’s your sister-in-law, Mukesh. She’ll be happy in Gurgaon, it is the most American part of the city.’

(The White Tiger, 2008:121)

Analysis
The conversation takes place between Mr. Ashok and his brother Mukesh who is also referred to as the ‘Mongoose’, while they are travelling in the car. In a casual talk they are discussing Pinky madam, Mr. Ashok’s wife who detests India. The Mongoose wants Mr. Ashok to move base to Gurgaon and asks the queen’s opinion on that. He sarcastically calls Pinky madam queen as she is known for throwing tantrums befitting a queen. Mukesh’s utterance is a primary illocutionary act of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary act of a Directive (demanding) in the form of an interrogative. But Mukesh’s utterance does not receive the desired perlocutionary effect as Mr. Ashok gets annoyed with him for calling his wife queen. As Mukesh is his brother, he cannot be rude to him. But he does not approve of Mukesh’s sarcastic remark meant for his wife and objects to it in a very firm but controlled utterance. He asks Mukesh not to talk of Pinky derogatorily as she is his sister-in-law. In Indian culture a sister-in-law is always mentioned with respect.

Example 3
‘So,’ he said, slicing the meat expertly off the bone, ‘so, what poet are you reading these days, young man?’ He felt a sinister urge to catch the boy off guard.
‘He is a science student,’ said Sai.
‘So, what of that? Scientists are not barred from poetry, or are they?’
‘Whatever happened to the well-rounded education?’ he said into the continuing silence.
Gyan racked his brains. He never read any poets. ‘Tagore?’ he answered uncertainly sure that was safe and respectable. ‘Tagore!’ ….. ‘Overrated,’ he said. ….. ‘Recite us something, won’t you?’

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006: 109)*

**Analysis**

The conversation has taken place between the judge, Sai and her tutor Gyan. As it starts raining very heavily one evening, Gyan stays back at the judge’s place on Sai’s insistence. All of them have dinner together. The judge does not like Gyan. He decides to take him off guard over dinner. He asks him what poets he has been reading. Sai understands the judge’s real intent and comes to Gyan’s rescue as she reminds the judge that Gyan is a Mathematics teacher. She implies that as he does not have any connection with literature, the judge’s question is irrelevant. But that does not stop the judge from intimidating Gyan.

Sai’s utterance fails to make the desired perlocutionary effect on the judge as he continues to interrogate Gyan ignoring Sai’s remark. He sarcastically asks Gyan whether *scientists were barred from poetry* and *whatever happened to the well-rounded education*. His utterances have the primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary forces of an Expressive (criticizing) in the form of interrogatives which are also rhetorical questions. In response to the judge’s sarcastic remarks Gyan suggests Tagore’s name. The judge condemns it by calling Tagore *overrated*. In the whole conversation the judge’s utterances are full of sarcasm which are meant to hurt Gyan’s sentiments. He also infringes the maxim of Agreement as he never agrees to Sai or Gyan’s opinions and violates the principle of Politeness.
Example 4

‘Pathetic,’ Lola told them. ‘You are the police?!’

Because now they were at her mercy and she wasn’t at theirs. ‘Don’t help us all the time and now see, need our help!’

‘Ma’, they called her, ‘Ma, please don’t kick us out. We will do anything for you. We are as your sons.’

‘Hah! Now you are calling me Ma! Very fine and funny. This isn’t how you were behaving a week ago…’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:277)

Analysis

A riot takes place in Kalingpong following the GNLF procession and the rebels are attacking the police. Two police men have escaped the riot and seek refuge at Mon Ami where the two sisters Lola and Noni live. They plead with Lola to give shelter for the night. These are the same police men who had assaulted and misbehaved with the sisters in a previous incident. Finding them at her doorstep Lola’s attitude becomes vindictive towards the helpless police men. She decides to show them their real worth and rhetorically asks them if they are really the police as it is so unlikely that the police would beg for safety from a commoner like her. Lola vents her annoyance and irritation through the rhetorical question. Instead of understanding the real intent of the utterance and leaving the place, the police men start pleading even more by calling her Ma (Hindi equivalent of ‘mother’) which agitates her even more. Upon listening to the ultimate honorific expression for women in Indian culture, Lola retorts sarcastically that calling her Ma actually sounds fine and funny from the mouths of people who have never respected women in their lives. She makes apt use of indirect speech acts to express her anger and humiliation. Her utterance carries the primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive (criticizing) in the form of statements.
Example 5

Jemubhai’s father came to plead.

‘Our family honour is gone. We are lucky Bomanbhai is dead, thank God. It’s the scandal of the town.’

‘Why are you talking like this?’ he said to his father.

‘You are following the script of a village idiot. She is unsuitable to be my wife.’

‘It was a mistake to send you away. You have become like a stranger to us.’

‘You are the one who sent me and you come and say it was a mistake! A fine thing.’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:306)

Analysis

Jemubhai (the judge) has abandoned his wife Nimi following an ugly fall out. He is not aware that Nimi is pregnant. As it becomes a matter of family honour, the judge’s father comes to make peace. He accuses the judge of creating a scandal to which the judge responds in an unexpected manner. He answers in a straightforward manner that Nimi has been highly ‘unsuitable’ to be his wife, hence all the complications. His response is relevant to his father’s allegations on him though he does not make it obvious. Further in the conversation his father also flouts the maxim of Relation and violates the principle of cooperation as he responds to the judge’s reply in a farfetched manner. He holds the Judge’s visit abroad responsible for his present attitude of a ‘stranger’. Past incidents are related without any contextual explanation but the interlocutors are well versed in understanding the intent. The conversation looks incoherent at the surface level but the judge and his father are in perfect sync with each other. The judge sarcastically remarks to his father’s comment that his father is the one who sent him away and now he calls it a mistake himself. Indirectly he holds his father
responsible for his shattered married life. The judge’s remark has a primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary force of an Expressive (blaming) in the form of a statement.

Example 6

‘But we can’t go in,’ Chacko explained, ‘because we’ve been locked out. And when we look through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war. A war that we have won and lost. The very worst sort of war. A war that captures dreams and re-dreams them. A war that has made us adore our conquerors and despise ourselves.’

‘Marry our conquerors, is more like it’, Ammu said drily, referring to Margaret Kochamma. Chacko ignored her.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:53)

Analysis

The conversation has taken place between Estha and Rahel’s mother Ammu and her brother Chacko. They start the conversation while going to receive Margaret Kochamma, at the airport who happens to be Chacko’s ex-wife. Margaret is visiting India with her daughter Sophie after her second husband died in a car accident. Chacko is behaving like a philosopherl best preaching some communist ideologies. Ammu, who is acquainted with her brother’s whimsical attitude, can no longer support his ideas and decides to put an end to it. Chacko is explaining how as Indians we have got used to adoring the conquerors at the cost of despising ourselves. Ammu interrupts him intentionally and rectifies him saying that it might as well be ‘marrying’ our conquerors rather than just ‘adoring’ them. Her sarcasm is a hint at Margaret Kochamma, Chacko’s ex-wife who is a foreigner whom Chacko had married against the wish of the family and now he is lecturing on
how Indians are adoring the conquerors at the cost of despising themselves. Ammu’s utterance is a primary illocutionary act of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary act of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a statement.

Example 7

A leper with soiled bandages begged at the car window.
‘That looks like Mercurochrome to me,’ Ammu said, of his inordinately bright blood.
‘Congratulations,’ Chacko said. ‘Spoken like a true bourgeoise.’

(The God of Small Things, 1997:61)

Analysis

On their way to Cochin, Chacko, Baby Kochamma and Ammu’s family have to stop at the level crossing and wait for the train to pass. The conversation takes place between Ammu and Chacko as Ammu comments on the red blood soaked bandages of a leper as ‘Mercurochrome’, a cheap over-the-counter antiseptic ointment. Use of the figure of speech ‘simile’ is observed as the blood stains on the beggar’s wounds are compared with Mercurochrome. The beggar comes near the car asking for money. Ammu uses the word to point out the unusually red colour of the blood which looks faked to her. She doubts the stains to be some colourful liquid and not genuine blood. Chacko, her brother does not miss this opportunity to make a taunting remark and congratulates her sarcastically by calling her a true ‘bourgeoise’, a simile he used to compare Ammu’s attitude with that of the capitalist middle class. Chacko’s utterance is laden with sarcasm as his congratulating his sister is nothing more than making fun of her. He uses the metaphor ‘bourgeois’ to ridicule how Ammu’s behavior reflects her capitalist attitude that makes her attitude rude towards a poor leper. Chacko’s utterance carries the primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a statement.
Example 8

‘Put up your windows,’ Chacko said. ‘And stay calm. They are not going to hurt us.’

‘Why not join them, comrade?’ Ammu said to Chacko. ‘I’ll drive.’

Chacko said nothing. A muscle tensed below the wad of fat on his jaw. He tossed away his cigarette and rolled up his window.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:64)

Analysis

As Chacko and family are going to Cochin, they come across a procession led by the Communists. The communist protesters are seen stopping the moving vehicles and terrorizing passengers. Sensing some uncomfortable situation, Chacko instructs everyone inside the car to roll up the windows and stay calm. He assures them that the people would not hurt them. Ammu, his sister is miffed by his brother’s over-optimistic and pro-communist attitude. She even calls him ‘comrade’, a term used by communists to show solidarity in the brotherhood and gives him suggestions to think of joining the mass. Ammu means the opposite of what she utters. Her remark is a primary illocutionary act of sarcasm meant to ridicule Chacko’s fanatic pro-communist feelings and a secondary illocutionary act of an Assertive (suggesting) in the form of an interrogative which is also an indirect rhetorical question. She wants Chacko to refrain from dominating others with his fake know-it-all attitude.

Example 9

‘Hello, sister,’ the man said carefully in English.

‘What is your name please?’

When Baby kochamma didn’t answer, he looked back at his co-hecklers.

‘She has no name.’
‘What about Modalali Mariakutty?’ Someone suggested with a giggle. Modalali in Malayalam means landlord.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:80)

Analysis
One of the communist protesters is trying to humiliate Baby Kochamma. As Chacko’s car stops like many others to give way to the Communist Party procession, suddenly a protester comes near the car window and starts talking to Baby Kochamma in a careless and insulting manner. He calls her sister and asks her name. Baby Kochamma is too scared and shocked to react to a total stranger. The man’s presence has been creating a lot of discomfort. She does not answer him in defiance. Her silence does not amuse him and he calls out to his friend telling him that the lady probably does not have any name. In reality, the protester knows why Baby Kochamma is not responding. His utterance she has no name is an indirect speech act directed at Baby Kochamma to have an impact. He acts as if he were talking to a fellow protester. But to his disappointment, the illocutionary act of sarcasm fails to have the desired effect. This makes him angry and he reacts to it in a sarcastic way. He does it on purpose to become ironical in an unfriendly way to build an air of panic among the rich people riding four wheelers. He suggests the name Modalali Mariakutty as Modalali means landlord in Malayalam. He brings in his anti-capitalist communist ideology to criticize a woman who is sitting in a car and looks rich. The protester’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (suggesting) in the form of an interrogative.

Example 10
The bald pilgrims in Beena Mol began another bhajan. ‘I tell you, these Hindus,’ Baby Kochamma said piously.

‘They have no sense of privacy.’
‘They have horns and scaly skins,’ Chacko said sarcastically.
‘And I’ve heard that their babies hatch from eggs.’

(\textit{The God of Small Things}, 1997:86)

\textbf{Analysis}

The humorous conversation takes place between Baby Kochamma and Chacko. As they are waiting near the railway signal on their way to Cochin, a bus full of bald Hindu pilgrims comes to a halt. Baby Kochamma instantly comments on them and passes some derogatory remarks like the Hindus have no sense of privacy. Chacko is well aware of Baby Kochamma’s foul mouth and decides to make fun of it. Adding to her comments he says that even he has heard that the Hindu babies hatch from eggs and Hindus have got horns and scaly skin. It is mockery and Chacko is sarcastically negating Baby Kochamma’s whimsical ideas. Instead of defying her in a straight forward manner, he uses sarcasm in his speech to demonstrate his disagreement with Baby Kochamma. Chacko’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a statement.

\textbf{Example: 11}

‘Then change it,’ his father said simply, quietly, after a while.
‘Really?’
‘In America anything is possible. Do as you wish.’

(\textit{The Namesake}, 2003:100)

\textbf{Analysis}

The above conversation takes place between Gogol and his father Ashoke. Gogol wants to change his name legally from Gogol to Nikhil. He thinks that he has a strange and unusual name which attracts more attention than he as a person does. This feeling is creating discomfort in his life and he is not able to be at ease with
people. Gogol is also against the idea of keeping two different names for a child. So, he is trying to convince his parents to support his idea. His parents come from conventional Bengali families where it is a common practice to give every child a pet name and a good name. Though Gogol’s good name is Nikhil, hardly anybody knows him by his good name. After a series of arguments when the atmosphere of the house becomes somber, Ashoke, Gogol’s father gives his consent for the name change. Gogol is surprised. His father does not find it surprising though. He makes a sarcastic remark that in America anything is possible. The sarcasm in his voice also bears an undertone of grief and defeat. He intends to say that in a country like America where they are already so far away from their own culture, they have to compromise on a lot of things. He makes peace with his son’s decision. Ashoke’s indirect speech act is a primary illocutionary act of sarcasm and secondary illocutionary act of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a statement. He uses sarcasm to express his feelings about the clash of culture.

4. 4 Circumlocution
The Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary defines circumlocution as the use of more words than are necessary, instead of speaking or writing in a clear, direct way. Speakers speak in circumlocution if there is no clarity in thoughts or in order to observe politeness if they hesitate to state the matter in a straight forward manner.

Example: A guest at a wedding is getting ready for the function and it is getting late. The host comes and inquires-

‘I was wondering if you were going to take long before we start the reception.’
The speaker wants the guest to hurry up. But it would look impolite if he says it directly. So, he uses circumlocutory speech. Though it looks like an unnecessarily wordy use of language, it serves the purpose; the speaker conveys the message and the hearer too becomes aware of his actions.

Following is the analysis of circumlocutory utterances found in the novels.

**Example 1**

I just saw a film, sir.’

‘A great film, sir. Lots of dancing. Hero was a Muslim. Name of Mohammad Mohammad.’

‘Don’t waste my time, boy. Go clean the car if you’ve got nothing to do.’

‘Now this Mohammad Mohammad was a poor, honest, hardworking Muslim, but wanted a job at the home of an evil prejudiced landlord who didn’t like Muslims – so, just to get a job and feed his starving family, he claimed to be a Hindu! And took the name of Ram Persad.’

The twig fell out of the Nepali’s mouth.

‘And you know how he managed to pull this off? Because the Nepali guard at this house, whom the masters trusted absolutely, and who was supposed to check up on Ram Persad’s background, was in on the scam!’

*(The White Tiger, 2008:109)*

**Analysis**

Balram has come to know that Ram Persad, the driver in the landlord’s house is actually a Muslim. He wants to seize this opportunity and turns the tables in his own favour. He makes use of this revelation against the Nepali guard who had asked for a bribe in the past to lobby for him. On this account, when Balram gets a
chance, he uses the amazing technique of storytelling and starts unfolding the secret. In his circumlocutory speech he reveals that he is aware of the deal between Ram Persad and the Nepali guard. Indirectly he also hints that he can reveal the secret in front of the masters. He very aptly uses circumlocutory speech to put the whole incident in fiction and yet gets the message properly conveyed. Initially, the guard acts naïve but eventually gives in. Balram’s utterance achieves the desired perlocutionary effect on the old driver. Although he does not utter any real names in his story, the driver could understand his real intent as both of them share a common core of understanding.

Balram’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of circumlocution and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (reporting) in the form of a statement. Balram’s utterance also carries an undertone of threatening. Balram knows his tactic has worked when the twig the Nepali was holding falls from his mouth out of nervousness. He has been successful in conveying his real intent.

**Example 2**

‘So yesterday’s march was a success?’ Chacko said, finally broaching the real reason for his visit.

‘Unless and until demands are met, comrade, we cannot say it is Success or Non-success.’ A pamphleteering inflection crept into Comrade Pillai’s voice. ‘Until then, struggle must continue.’

‘But Response was good,’ Chacko prompted, trying to speak in the same idiom.

‘That is of course there,’ Comrade Pillai said. ‘Comrades have presented Memorandum to Party High Command. Now, let us see. We have only to wait and watch.’

‘We passed them on the road yesterday,’ Chacko said. ‘The procession.’
‘On the way to Cochin, I suppose,’ Comrade Pillai said. ‘But according to Party sources Trivandrum Response was much more better.’

‘There were thousands of comrades in Cochin too,’ Chacko said. ‘In fact my niece saw our young Velutha among them.

(The God of Small Things, 1997:277)

Analysis
Chacko is suspicious about Velutha, the carpenter at his factory being involved in Communist activities. In this regard, he visits a well known communist worker of the village, Comrade Pillai to know the truth. Chacko hesitates to talk about the matter directly as it might hurt Comrade Pillai’s Communist sentiments or would unnecessarily raise his suspicion on Chacko’s sudden interest on such a sensitive issue. So, he tactfully initiates the issue and follows a circumlocutory way to create a background. He begins by asking Comrade Pillai about the overall status of his party’s ongoing processions. Unaware of Chacko’s real intention, Comrade Pillai elaborately discusses matters with him. During the conversation, Chacko tells him about the Communist procession in Cochin and how they had come across thousands of party workers. Without making too much fuss, he then reveals that Velutha was spotted by his niece in the rally. He wants to notice Comrade Pillai’s reaction to his revelation. Chacko could have voiced his suspicions in a direct manner but opts for an indirect circumlocutory approach to make the atmosphere conducive for him as well as Comrade Pillai to talk on the sensitive issue. His indirect speech act is successful in bringing about the desired result as his query does not look out of place and Comrade Pillai does not suspect his intentions. Chacko’s utterances carry the primary illocutionary force of circumlocutory speech and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (reporting) in the form of a declarative statement.
Example 3

Which is when Gogol announces, ‘There is no such thing.’
‘No such thing as what?’ Astrid says.
‘There is no such thing as a perfect name. I think that human beings should be allowed to name themselves when they turn eighteen,’ he adds. ‘Until then, pronouns.’

(The Namesake, 2003:244)

Analysis

The conversation takes place between Gogol and one of his friends Astrid in a party. During the casual talk, his friends come to know about his real name Gogol whom they now know as Nikhil. The discussion takes a serious turn as all his friends become eager to know about the reason behind the name change. Gogol changed his name to avoid all such questions for the rest of his life. Now he finds them hounding him once again. He is baffled by the questions but controls his emotions. He takes hold of the situation as he puts forth his views in a subtle but aggressive manner. When one of his friends uses the phrase such as a ‘perfect name’ Gogol argues that there exists no such thing as a perfect name. He defends that human beings should be allowed to choose their own names. He also pronounces the age for this as eighteen. Gogol’s arguments are baseless but he is not able to control his emotions on the naming issue. He feels that he has suffered a lot for this. He has always detested the name given to him by his parents. His utterances are circumlocutory as he is falling short of words to express his exact emotions. He does not want to hurt his friends’ sentiments either but is unable to resist the urge to vent out his mental agony. His outburst was not aimed at anybody in particular, so sounds circumlocutory. Gogol’s utterance carries a primary illocutionary act of circumlocution and secondary illocutionary force of a Declarative (pronouncing) in the form of a statement.
4.5 Euphemism

To quote M.H. Abrams, euphemism is

An inoffensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing.

*(A Glossary of Literary Terms, 1993:60)*

Speakers opt for euphemistic expressions to lessen the unpleasant impact of the idea expressed.

Example:
Badly hit by recession, the Director of the company announces in the board meeting-

‘The management has decided to layoff two percent of its employees due to economic meltdown.’

The Director breaks a very appalling piece of news. His statement declares that two percent employees are going to be fired shortly. To lessen the unpleasantness, he has chosen the phrases **layoff** and **economic meltdown** for ‘fired’ and ‘recession’ respectively.

Dialogues carrying euphemistic expressions from the select novels are as follows.

**Example 1**

They made me drive them around for half an hour and then told me to head back.

‘Not bad,’ the old man said as he got out of the car. ‘Fellow is cautious and good. What is your last name again?’

‘Halwai.’
‘Halwai…’ He turned to the small dark man. ‘What caste is that, top or bottom?’

And I knew that my future depended on the answer to this question.

(The White Tiger, 2008:62)

Analysis

In rural India, even today, a person’s caste and not his caliber decides his profession. Something similar has happened with Balram Halwai. The landlord’s family is considering the option of hiring Balram as their driver. As the family holds on to certain orthodox values, they are apprehensive whether the surname ‘Halwai’ belongs to the upper or lower caste of the society. This social class disparity is highly evident in the piece of discourse. When the landlord uses the words ‘top’ or ‘bottom’ as he enquire about Balram’s caste, he also implies euphemistically whether Balram belongs to a high caste or a caste of untouchables. It suggests that they have social reservations against low caste people and their decision on whether to give Balram the job rests on this piece of information. Though the old landlord does not make his caste queries very obvious in his utterances, Balram understands the landlord’s real motive. The landlord’s utterances have a primary illocutionary force of euphemism and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (affirming/assuming) in the form of an interrogative.

Example 2

The small man, putting down the newspaper he was reading, turned to me from inside his mandala of books.

‘What did you say?’ he shouted.

‘Nothing.’

He shouted again. ‘Hey, what do you do?’
I grabbed an imaginary wheel and turned it one hundred and eighty degrees.
‘Ah, I should have known. Drivers are smart men—They hear a lot of interesting things. Right?’ ‘Other drivers might. I go deaf inside the car.’  
(The White Tiger, 2008:205)

Analysis
While Balram is checking out books on the footpath book shop, a conversation takes place between him and the book vendor. The bookseller starts talking to Balram and asks about his occupation. Balram animatedly turns an imaginary wheel to show that he is a driver. The bookseller instantly becomes inquisitive and comments that drivers get to hear a lot of interesting things. Balram understands the real intent of the bookseller. The bookseller intends that as a driver, Balram might be in the know of all personal talks of his master. Balram responds in an euphemistic manner. He tells that he prefers to go deaf inside the car implying that he has no interest in other people’s private affairs. He also conveys that even if he knows any personal things about his masters, he will certainly not divulge them to the bookseller. His reply discourages the bookseller from questioning any further. Both interlocutors use euphemism aptly to suit the purpose by choosing appropriate suggestive expressions. The indirect euphemistic utterance of the bookseller fails to make any desired perlocutionary effect on Balram as he chooses utterances which prove to be highly discouraging for the vendor to ask anything more. The utterances have the primary illocutionary force of euphemism and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (stating) in the form of a declarative statement.

4.6 Rhetorical Question
M. H. Abrams describes a rhetorical question as
A sentence in the grammatical form of a question which is not asked in order to request information or to invite a reply, but to achieve an expressive force different from, and usually more effective than, a direct assertion.

(A Glossary of Literary Terms 1993:183)

Example:

Hearing that we were planning a trip to Goa, my friend said-

‘How exciting! Won’t that be fun?’

My friend is overjoyed. She expresses her excitement through utterances which are structurally exclamatory and interrogative respectively. But these are also two perfect rhetorical questions which have been uttered to produce an effect rather than to get an answer. In such a scenario the hearers ought not to answer her like ‘yes, it would be fun,’ rather understand her remark as a forceful response in excitement for a holiday trip.

The characters in the novels have made effective use of rhetorical questions as a device to articulate their emotions. Some examples are as follows.

**Example 1**

‘The minister wants more. It’s election time. Every time it is elections, we hand out cash. Usually to both sides but this time the government is going to win for sure. The opposition is in a total mess. So, we just have to pay off the government, which is good for us. I’ll come with you the first time, but it’s a lot of money, and you may have to go a second or third time too. And then there are a couple of bureaucrats we have to grease. Get it?’
‘It seems like this is all I get to do in Delhi. Take money out of banks and bribe people. Is it what I came back to India for?’

(The White Tiger, 2008:239-240)

Analysis
The conversation takes place between Ashok and his brother Mukesh. Elections are going to commence and Mukesh is educating Ashok about how they follow a trend of bribing the parties to be in their good books. This time he wants Ashok to join him and do the job. He also assures Ashok that as it would be his first time he (Mukesh) will accompany him once. All this sounds farcical to Ashok. He is highly educated and cannot imagine himself carrying out such unethical jobs. He expresses his annoyance through sarcastic remarks. Out of disappointment he points out that it seems like this is all he has to do in Delhi- to bribe politicians. There is an undertone of sarcasm in Ashok’s voice. Ashok’s reaction is very subdued as his culture does not allow him to raise voice against the elder brother. He knows that he cannot go against Mukesh’s wishes but at the same time his conscience does not allow him to be part of corruption. He knows that once he starts doing that kind of job, there is no going back. He is feeling helpless. He asks if this is what he has come back to India for. He vocalizes his inner frustration through this rhetorical question which is, more than demanding an answer, intends to make an effect on his brother. He wants Mukesh to consider his situation and not force him into a job which is against his ethics. Ashok’s utterance has the primary illocutionary force of a rhetorical question and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (complaining) in the form of an interrogative.

Example 2
‘What is your name, boy?’
‘Dharam’
‘What a nice name. Do you know what it means?’
‘Yes, sir.’
‘Does your uncle know what it means?’
‘Shut up’, I said.

(The White Tiger, 2008:265)

Analysis
The conversation takes place between Dharam, Balram’s nephew who has recently come from the village and another driver referred to as Vitiligo-Lips. While Balram and Dharam are sitting in a tea shop and chatting, Vitiligo-Lips comes and starts talking to them. Vitiligo-Lips wants tea and Balram refuses to buy one for him. Vitiligo-Lips knows some of Balram’s secrets like his occasional visits to brothels and has come with the intention to blackmail him. When he realizes that Balram is not paying attention, he makes Dharam a mediator. Though he is talking to Dharam, his utterances are actually directed at Balram. He asks Dharam his name. When he tells his name he appreciates it saying what a nice name it is and asks him if he knows the meaning of his name. Dharam in Hindi means the guiding principles of life. When Dharam replies that he knows the meaning, Vitiligo-Lips asks a rhetorical question to Dharam if his uncle Balram knows the meaning of the word. Vitiligo-Lips wants Balram to know that as he knows his secrets there is no way Balram could avoid him. Vitiligo-Lips wants to justify how Balram has already ruined his principles by visiting the brothels and now he should not deny favours to his friends. The fellow driver’s rhetorical question is meant to create an impact on Balram as he challenges his principles. He does this in front of Dharam so that Balram would not retaliate and give in to his demands in order to save face. Vitiligo-Lips’ utterance has a primary illocutionary act of a rhetorical question and secondary illocutionary act of an Expressive (blaming) in the form of an interrogative.
Example 3

‘But Sahib,’ he had begged, ‘how can I live on this?’

‘All your expenses are paid for – housing, clothing, food, medicine. This is extra,’ growled the judge.

‘What about Biju?’

‘What about Biju? Biju must make his own way. What is wrong with him?’ (The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:55)

Analysis

The judge is a miserly man and would not give a raise to the cook in spite of his serving the household for long years. The cook’s salary is only 25 rupees per month. He has a son and it is very difficult for him to meet all expenses in so little money. The conversation takes place when the cook very politely asks the judge for a raise. But the Judge disappoints him and turns down his request ruthlessly. The judge is the master and the cook is the servant. In this context, the subservient nature of the cook doesn’t allow him to ask for a salary hike directly. Therefore, he uses rhetorical questions to prove his miserable financial condition. ‘How can I live on this?’ The cook’s interrogative utterance functions as a rhetorical question. It intends to mean a hike in salary. The question is an indirect request and doesn’t demand a straight answer. It has a primary illocutionary force of a rhetorical question and secondary illocutionary force of a Directive (pleading). The cook tells his sad story and expects the judge to give him a raise in salary. When this doesn’t work, he asks further, ‘What about Biju?’ He intends to mean that it is not possible for him to bring up his son in so less money. The judge turns a deaf ear to his plea and answers in a similarly rhetorical manner- ‘What about Biju? Biju must make his own way. What’s wrong with him?’

The judge is impervious to the poverty of the cook. He purposely acts ignorant as he does not want to raise the cook’s salary. In his response the judge repeats the
cook’s question to show his irritation and non-cooperation in the whole affair. The question marker what in italics shows that the judge utters it emphatically to intimidate the cook. His response reflects how unconcerned he is with the cook’s problems. The cook would have succeeded if he would have asked for money directly but his position of a servant would not allow him to do so. A servant can never demand money from his master. A direct question would offend his master. But the judge uses the cook’s modest nature to his benefit and refuses to understand the real implications of the cook’s rhetorical questions. In the process, the cook’s indirect illocutionary act fails to get the desired perlocutionary effect. The judge’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of a rhetorical question and a secondary illocutionary force of Commissive (refusal) in the form of an interrogative.

Example 4

She cried for a while, tears taking on their own momentum, but despite herself the image of the begging woman came back. She went downstairs and asked the cook: ‘Did you give them anything?’ ‘No, said the cook, also miserable. ‘What can you do,’ he said flatly, as if giving an answer, not asking a question.

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:265)

Analysis

The police have caught a drunken man as a suspect of the gun robbery at Cho Oyu, the judge’s house. Meanwhile, the GNLF movement is gaining support in the valley. The police are arresting anyone they suspect in order to control the insurgency. Under vague suspicion, the police have tortured an unidentified drunken man. A lady and a man, supposedly the relatives of the tortured man come to the judge’s house pleading for mercy. The judge does not pay any attention to their plea and drive them away. While all this is going on outside the
house, Sai, the judge’s granddaughter is nursing her broken heart. Gyan has left her and now Sai also knows about his involvement with the GNLF. When she comes to know about the poor man and woman in distress waiting outside, she takes pity on them and asks the cook if he has given them anything. A very flat response comes from the cook as he asks Sai what she could do about it. His utterance is in fact a rhetorical question expressing his helplessness in the whole situation. Despite his wish he is unable to extend any kind of help to the couple as the judge has strictly warned against it. His position does not allow him to go against his master’s wishes. The cook’s response to Sai’s question is a primary illocutionary act of a rhetorical question and a secondary illocutionary act of an assertive (complaining) in the form of an interrogative.

**Example 5**

‘Why are you coming here making trouble? We already told you we had nothing to do with the police picking up your husband. We were hardly the ones to accuse him to beat him… Had they told us, we would have gone at once and said this is not the man… we were not informed….What do we owe you?’ said the cook. But he was giving them the atta Sai had brought back… when the judge barked, ‘Don’t give them anything’ and continued his chess game.

*(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:282)*

**Analysis**

The Kalimpong police have caught hold of a man and beat him up severely under suspicion of robbing the judge’s house. The tortured man, however, turns out to be innocent but the damage has been done. One day his wife and father come to Cho Oyu to meet the judge and ask for compensation. They are convinced that the judge is responsible for their man’s arrest. The judge denies to accept any kind of allegations. He does not respond to any of their pleading. Instead, he cautions the
The cook, on the contrary, tries to pacify the matter. He tries to convince them by using rhetorical questions and explains that the Cho Oyu people are not behind the man’s arrest. He urges them to leave the compound without making any further fuss. He further clarifies that if they had known about it they would have personally gone to the police to save the man. The judge has been rude to the poor people but the cook builds a rapport and hence avoids further confrontation. Probably he understands their situation as he has also been the victim of the judge’s apathy in the past. He knows from his experience that the judge is thick skinned and the poor couple is waiting in vain. He is also a loyal servant as he saves his master’s face by talking in his favour. His rhetorical questions though never waited for any answers, have partially been successful in building solidarity thereby making an effect on the poor man and woman. The cook’s utterance, therefore, has a primary illocutionary force of a rhetorical question and the secondary illocutionary force of Commissive (refusing) in the form of an interrogative.

**Example 6**

‘Feeling hot, baby?’ the man like a knot asked Rahel kindly in Malayalam. Then unkindly, ‘Ask your daddy to buy you an Air Condition!’ and he hooted with delight at his own wit and timing. Rahel smiled back at him, pleased to have Chacko mistaken for her father. Like a normal family.

‘Don’t answer!’ Baby Kochamma whispered hoarsely.

‘Look down! Just look down.’


**Analysis**

The conversation takes place when the people of the Ayemenem House encounter a mob of communist protesters on their way to Cochin. As their car comes to a
halt, some of the protesters come near the car with the intention of harassing the so-called luxury loving, car owning rich people. Looking at Rahel, a man asks her if she was feeling hot. The protester’s utterance is indeed a rhetorical question which is directed to intimidate Rahel. His rhetorical question is a demonstration of anger against the rich people as that has been the motto of the rally. Baby Kochamma reacts to it and cautions Rahel not to answer and to look down to avoid the protester. Her response ‘Look down!’ demonstrates her disinterest in talking to him.

The communist protester’s utterance has the primary illocutionary force of rhetorical question and secondary illocutionary force of a Commissive (threatening) in the form of an interrogative.

**Example 7**

‘Will you stop that! Ammu said so loudly that Murlidharan, who had hopped off the milestone to stare into the Plymouth, backed off, his stumps jerking in alarm.

‘What?’ Rahel said, but knew immediately what.

Her spit bubble. ‘Sorry, Ammu.’


**Analysis**

The participants in the conversation are Ammu and her daughter Rahel. As they are waiting inside the car for the railway signal to go off, Ammu catches Rahel making spit bubbles. This makes Ammu angry and she shouts at her. Ammu’s utterance ‘Will you stop that’ has a primary illocutionary force of a rhetorical question and secondary illocutionary force of a Directive (commanding) in the form of an interrogative. She commands Rahel to refrain from it. Rahel understands the implications and apologizes immediately.
4.7 Emphatic Statements
The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary defines an emphatic statement as an answer or statement given with force to show that it is important. The speaker in order to make his point clear emphasizes the expression by speaking it with force. It is a discourse strategy used by speakers to make an impression on the listener and draw attention towards his utterances.

Example:
A salesman showing mobiles to a prospective customer-

‘Sir, these new 3G series cell phones have many interesting features and as an opening offer you get a data card worth Rs.3000/- absolutely free.’

The salesman emphasizes the last words in order to draw the customer’s attention towards the lucrative offer and to make a deal. The force he applies on the phrase absolutely free is deliberate and part of his sales strategy.

Conversations in which fictional characters have used emphatic statements in various contexts have been analyzed below.

**Example 1**

The more the judge’s mouth tightened, the more Bose seemed determined to drive the conversation until it broke.

‘Best days of my life,’ he said. ‘Remember? Punting by King’s, Trinity, what a view, my God, and then what was it? Ah yes, Corpus Christi….

No, I’m getting it wrong, aren’t I? First Trinity, then St. John’s. No. First Clare, then Trinity, then some ladies’ thing, Primrose…Primrose?"
‘No, that’s not the order at all,’ the judge heard himself saying in tight –wound offended tones like an adolescent.
‘It was Trinity then Clare.’
‘No, no, what are you saying. King’s, Corpus Christi, Clare then St. John. Memory going old chap…’
‘I think your memory may be failing you!’
Bose was drinking peg after peg, desperate to wrangle something -

………

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:205)

Analysis

Bose and the judge have known to each other since their London days. After a gap of thirty-three years they have a chance meeting at the Gymkhana dining Hall in Kalimpong. As they start drinking, Bose tries to remember their London days. The judge is not enjoying the conversation as London reminds him of failure. Bose knows it and deliberately wants to drag the conversation. As Bose is trying to recall some names, the judge interrupts him in the middle of the conversation. According to the judge Bose has been wrong in getting the names in the right order and tries to rectify him. Bose is adamant and teases him that his memory has failed him. The judge does not understand the humour and retorts that it is not his but it is Bose’s memory which might be failing him. He puts speaks the words ‘you’ and ‘your’ emphatically to express his displeasure. He articulates his anger in a very subtle manner by disguising it in an emphatic statement. He wants Bose to understand from the tone that his statement has not humoured him. The judge’s utterance has a primary illocutionary force of an emphatic statement and secondary illocutionary force of an Assertive (claiming) in the form of a declarative statement.
Example 2

It was so long since Mutt had gone missing. She would be dead now if she’d been bitten by a snake or she’d have starved to death if lost or injured far away.

‘But FIND OUT,’ he told the cook. ‘FIND HER. RIGHT NOW.’

‘How can I, Sahib?’ He begged… ‘I am trying, I have tried…’

‘FIND HER. It’s your fault. Mutt was in your care. I will KILL YOU. Wait and see. You don’t do your duty. You didn’t watch over her. It was your duty and you let her be stolen. How dare you? How dare you?’

(The Inheritance of Loss, 2006:313)

Analysis

Mutt, the judge’s beloved pet dog has gone missing. Mutt is the only animate being in the world the judge has ever loved in his life. He has been very possessive about his pet. He is on the verge of losing his sanity in the grief. The poor cook becomes the victim of his rage and anger. His voice becomes unusually emphatic when he commands the cook to find the pet (‘FIND HER. RIGHT NOW’). The judge’s emphatic statement is strong enough for the cook to understand that he has no choice but to find the pet. He is scared of his master but gathers courage to express his helplessness in the situation. When he gives in saying that he has tried his best in looking for Mutt, he also intends to mean that he is incapable of doing the job assigned by his master. The judge is furious at the reply and is in no frame of mind to accept defeat. In a rage of anger and to hide his own vulnerability he holds the cook responsible for the mishap even gives him a life threat.

The judge’s utterances carry the primary illocutionary force of emphatic statement and secondary illocutionary force of a Commissive (threatening) in the form of imperatives. The commands are also indirect threats directed towards the cook.
4.8 Conclusion

The present chapter analyzes how the fictional characters in the selected novels make use of indirect speech acts to achieve different conversational goals. A thorough investigation of the dialogues has been done and the dialogues are found to be loaded with indirect expressions as characters make use of various conversational strategies such as use of figures of speech like hyperbole, simile, metaphor, irony and metaphor along with the use of sarcastic remarks, circumlocutory speech, euphemistic statements, rhetorical questions and emphatic statements in conversations. The primary and secondary forces of illocution are identified in the conversations to analyze the indirectness of the utterances. The perlocutionary effects of speech acts on interlocutors in many examples have been analyzed elaborately.

The research findings of the above analysis will be discussed in the concluding chapter.